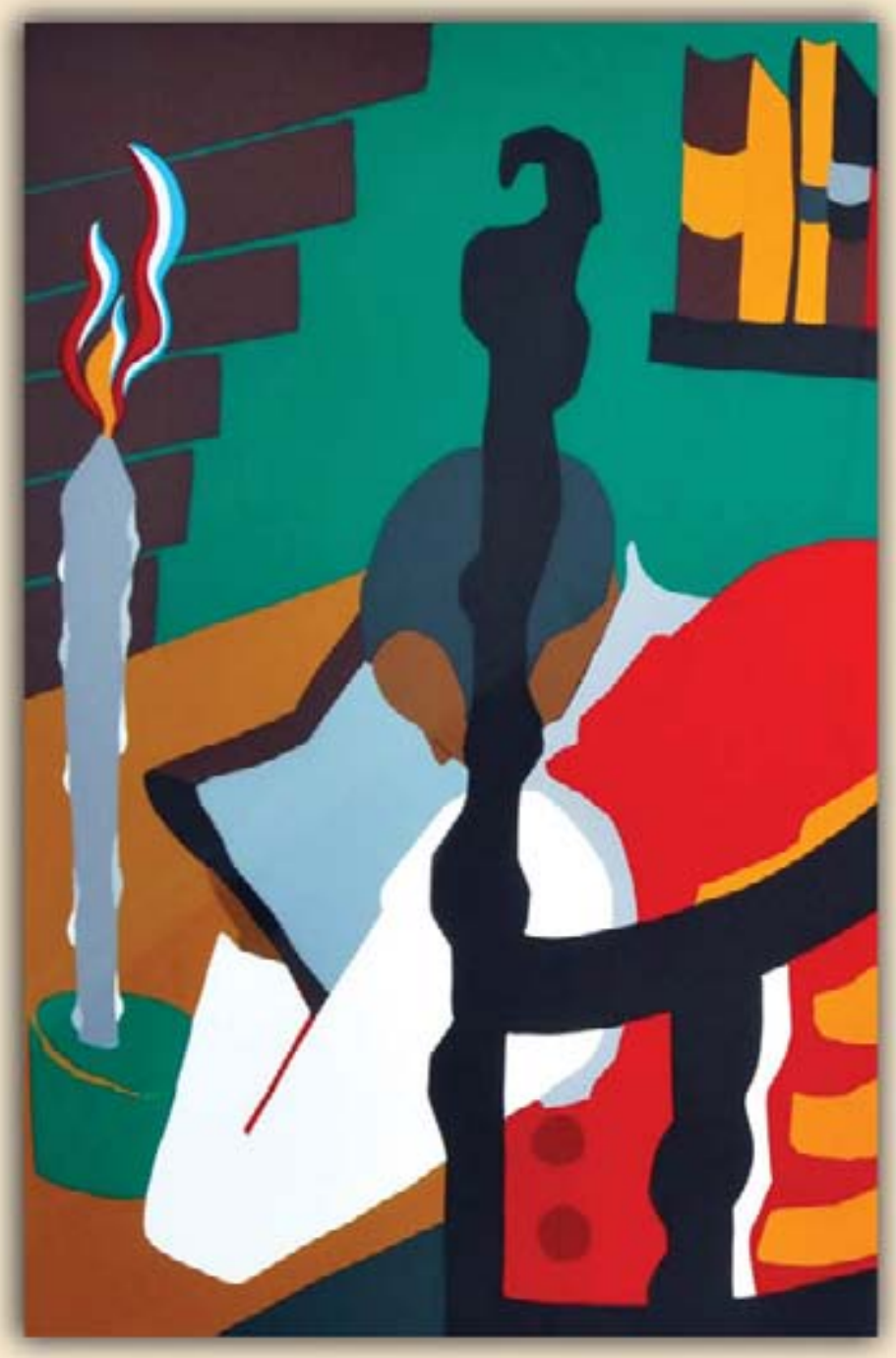
People Get Ready

African American and Caribbean Cultural Exchange



KEVIN MEEHAN

People Get Ready

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People Get Ready

African American and Caribbean Cultural Exchange

Kevin Meehan

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Acknowledgments

ACADEMIC RESEARCH IS NOTORIOUS for requiring the scholar to endure solitude, isolation, and antisocial withdrawal from people and events. Yet the publishing of a book, because it involves and impinges on so many networks and stretches over the course of so many years, can never be described as a solo endeavor. I wish to acknowledge the following people, groups, and places that played an influential role in conceptualizing and completing this manuscript.

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My mother, Dorris Herman Meehan Malik, was and is my first teacher and my first musical role model, and I dedicate this book to her.

Preface

Empire seems to be back in fashion, but look closely and you will see that it is a fashion led by idiots. We are ready for more intelligent uses of our past.

—AYI KWEI ARMAH

AT THE HEIGHT OF ESCALATION in the Vietnam conflict, Juan Bosch, a leading writer from the Dominican Republic and briefly its president, issued a scathing critique of "pentagonism," which is the term he used to identify overdeveloped capitalism in the United States. Under "pentagonism," classic imperialist methods are replaced by a new form of global domination that emphasizes internal colonization within the mother country, transforming what had been the imperial center into what Bosch refers to as a "metropo-colony" (22). Bosch's prophetic view of neocolonialism is colored by his firsthand encounter with U.S. troops, which recently had disembarked in his native land with violent consequences. This 1965 occupation was, however, only the most recent incident in a wave of interventions stretching back a century and a half to the inception of the Monroe Doctrine, which Bosch, like his countryman Pedro Mir, viewed as having its roots in U.S. imperial designs on the Dominican Republic. What may be most striking for readers of U.S. history is Bosch's assertion that "pentagonism does not exploit colonies: it exploits its own people" (21). Likening North Americans to colonized subjects, Bosch argues: "The pentagonized people are exploited as colonies were since they are the ones who pay, through taxes, for the bombers that enrich their manufacturers; the mother country thus turns its own people into its best colony; it is at once a mother country and a colony, in an unforeseen symbiosis that requires a new word to define it" (22). Perhaps even more noteworthy for students of African American history and political economy, Bosch concludes his book *Pentagonism* by likening the Watts insurrection of 1965 to a colonial uprising and by linking Black Power leadership to revolutionary nationalist cadres globally. "Black Power,"

Bosch writes, "was organized—on the basis of a prolonged state of economic and social injustice—as a force intended to weaken the United States' power of military aggression by attacking this power from the rear" (127).

This sort of analysis echoes widely in African American letters ranging across the political spectrum from liberal academic to revolutionary nationalist, and across a historical arc reaching from the present day back to the early-nineteenth-century origins of black nationalist thought by David Walker and others. A good example of African American social critique that parallels Bosch can be found in George Jackson's *Blood in My Eye*, a volume of essays and correspondence composed only a few years after Bosch's *Pentagonism*. Jackson, the imprisoned Black Panther field marshal writing from solitary confinement in San Quentin, offered a similar vision of U.S. society in this second and final book completed days before he was assassinated on the prison yard in 1971. In the essays "Fascism" and "Classes at War," Jackson undertakes a long analysis of political economy, history, and culture before designating the United States as "the prototype of the international fascist counterrevolution" (134). Jackson's description of third-phase fascism—that is, "fascism in its final and secure state," managed by the Rand Corporation, the National Guard, and domestic surveillance of private citizens (143, 174–176)—correlates closely with Bosch's diagnosis of pentagonism. The argument in *Blood in My Eye* that black revolution in the urban centers entails "a really productive assault on the outside enemy reactionary culture, not only on the production level, but in all significant areas of property relations" (176), evokes the attack from the rear envisioned by Bosch.

The first decade of the twenty-first century has been a time of renewed imperial flexing by the U.S. government, increasing contestation by popular movements across the hemisphere, and growing doubt that imperial politics can remain viable as core economies stumble into recession and depression. Against this backdrop, the analytic frameworks articulated by Bosch and Jackson take on an intellectual urgency that even a few years ago would have been hard to imagine. With the concentration on wide-scale domestic and hemispheric militarization as a sequel to old-school colonization and empire, Jackson and Bosch are attentive not only to large economic forces but also to the racial, national, class, and other social vectors that help to shape our militarized political economy. As such, Jackson and Bosch both express a dissident anti-imperial tradition that is of immediate interest to anyone studying the use of cultural, political, and economic resources to oppose contemporary social violence, whether that violence is codified as militarism, neocolonialism, "pentagonism," or some other term. This book stems in part, then, from the urgency of remembering, recovering, and amplifying examples like Bosch, Jackson, and

other sources of anti-imperial struggle in the Americas. Beginning with parallels in Caribbean and African American liberatory discourse at the turn of the twentieth century, I trace the increasing convergence of these traditions in cultural expressions by Arthur Schomburg, Zora Neale Hurston, Jayne Cortez, and Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Individually and as a group, these iconic figures suggest ongoing and intensifying efforts to forge a unified front that might help ally masses of people across boundaries of nationality, language, gender, class, and caste.

While this process of unification is far from accomplished in the early twenty-first century, the cultural work of getting people ready to resist empire is alive and well, resting on the firm foundation outlined in this study. African American and Caribbean writers, artists, thinkers, and everyday people have given the Americas and the world a model of decolonizing thought and action. My hope is that this study helps readers to recall and renew this model in their own diverse fields of endeavor.

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People Get Ready

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People Get Ready

Recalling African American and Caribbean Solidarity

We used to practice off Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, even tried to look like 'em—Yeah, the Impressions was bad.

—PETER TOSH

THE MUSIC OF SOLIDARITY

This study attempts to situate, historically and theoretically, a long tradition of dialogue and collaboration between African American and Caribbean peoples for the purposes of liberation. The basic premise is that within and against the circuits of political, economic, and cultural domination that have structured hemispheric relations in the Americas since 1492, African American and Caribbean solidarity represents a highly developed force for creating decolonizing social change. This legacy is not free of contradictions and misunderstandings on both sides, and the chapters that follow grapple with intellectual elitism, sexism, color prejudice, imperialism, national chauvinism, and other forms of mutual disdain that continue to limit African American and Caribbean solidarity. More fundamental, though, is an ongoing, interwoven struggle to triumph over these pernicious ways of thinking and acting, to move from mutual disdain to the realization of mutually liberating social goals.

At its best, African American and Caribbean cultural dialogue is a music of solidarity. In its choruses, this music articulates exemplary zones of relational community in which understanding is, in Édouard Glissant's conceptualization, not a grasping appropriation (*com-prendre* in the original French) but

rather a process of *donner-avec*, translated as "giving-on-and-with."[1] "Beloved Community," one of the cornerstones of Martin Luther King Jr.'s social theory, resonates in strikingly similar ways.[2] Such openly generous and sharing interactions generate relational knowledge that helps produce freer social reality and at the same time is one of freedom's most satisfying products.

Although written documents are the main focus in this project, significant attention is paid to sound recordings, videotaped performances, and interviews broadcast on television. Accordingly, I want to begin with a concrete example of relational community as it emerges through a *musical* exchange between Curtis Mayfield and Bob Marley. I start here for several reasons. First of all, Mayfield's statement in the song "People Get Ready" and Marley's reply in "One Love" are discrete events separated in time by as much as a decade or as little as a few months.[3] They can and should, however, be considered together as a single unit. In this sense, the songs create an intertextual call-and-response dialogue that embodies the music of solidarity and provides an initial model for the kind of decolonizing cultural dynamic I want to trace throughout this study. The vernacular and demotic qualities of "People Get Ready" and "One Love" constitute important stylistic and existential models for intellectuals, literary artists, and political leaders from each tradition. The mass audiences' embrace of these decolonizing musical messages represents an ideal standard for reception and consumption toward which many African American and Caribbean writers aspire. Further, liberating inter-American dialogue in writing less often emerges with the emphatic, unambiguous force evident in this musical exchange. For all of these reasons, popular culture, understood broadly as people's culture, stands as a motivating, mobilizing force for both African American and Caribbean writers in the twentieth century and beyond.[4] Because an urgent concern with the relationship between writing and popular culture is a defining feature of both traditions, it is important to begin with some sense of what the writers are responding to in popular cultural activity. Marley in dialogue with Mayfield does not exhaust the concept of decolonizing popular culture, but the one love solidarity exhibited in their partnership is paradigmatic.

A second rationale for beginning outside or adjacent to written, text-bound culture is that doing so reminds us that writing is part of a whole spectrum of decolonizing cultural practices from which it draws and to which it makes its particular contribution. Framing an extended analysis of written, electronic, and multimedia culture in this way, with a popular culture–based dialogue about liberation, grounds the study in forms of holistic interdisciplinary inquiry common to both African American studies and Caribbean studies.[5] No single interdisciplinary project can lay claim to comprehensive totality, but working against disciplinary enclosures announces a movement away from

fragmentation and toward unification. This tendency to imagine social reality as a multifaceted whole—as a totality—is, I suggest, a core decolonizing intellectual habit, and is an impulse toward holism shared by African American studies and Caribbean studies. Interdisciplinarity in this particular context may also help reroute a literature-based cultural criticism in which African American and Caribbean encounters emerge more antagonistically than in popular culture, where collaboration and solidarity are more normative.

The kernel of this project stems from a personal listening experience. In the fall of 1994, while house-sitting for one of my professors at the University of Maryland, I turned on the stereo to listen to a compact disc version of *The Impressions Greatest Hits*. Curtis Mayfield was the lead singer of the Impressions and penned most of the group's songs, including "People Get Ready," a mid-1960s soul hit that I had heard on the radio countless times before listening to it on this particular occasion. Musically, "People Get Ready" is a medium- to slow-paced song rooted in a tradition of gospel ballads. The instrumentation is very basic, with Mayfield playing a simple guitar riff that establishes the song's cyclical chord progression over a restrained rhythm accompaniment of bass and drums. What tension there is in the music is created by intermittent chordal padding from a string section in the background to emphasize certain cadences; by melodic phrases played in the string section and punctuated by chime notes on a triangle; by bursts of choral harmony from the other singers to underscore certain phrases; and by a key change halfway through the song, in which the music modulates upward by a half-step. The smooth—even placid—quality of Mayfield's music, however, contrasts sharply with the lyric content, which paints a prophetic story of deliverance for the oppressed-but-righteous people referred to in the title. The singer proclaims, "there's hope for all among those loved the most," while judgment and damnation are meted out to their oppressors. A middle verse in "People Get Ready" is particularly striking for its apocalyptic imagery:

There ain't no place for the hopeless sinner
Who would hurt all mankind, just to save his own.
Have pity on those whose chances grow thinner
For there's no hidin' place against the Kingdom's Throne.

On reflection, what I like most about "People Get Ready," and one of the reasons I wanted to borrow it for the title of this study, is that it offers a powerful synthesis of the secular and sacred cultural traditions developed by African American people during centuries of enslavement and decades of ambiguous second-class citizenship under Jim Crow. Like many other songs from its

period, "People Get Ready" wields these expressive forms to reflect critically on, and contribute emotional support to, the freedom struggles facing black people in the United States, and it thus exemplifies the high standard of theoretical, technical, and political sophistication that has always characterized black popular music in North America.[6]

At that particular moment, though, what struck me in listening to "People Get Ready" was the mnemonic recognition that recently I had been listening to this melody and lyric somewhere else, namely in the anthemic mid-1970s hit "One Love," written and recorded by Bob Marley and the Wailers. Even though the liner notes on the *Exodus* album credit Mayfield as coauthor of "One Love," and though previously I had listened to the cut with Mayfield in mind, now the process was flowing in reverse as I listened to "People Get Ready" with Marley echoing in my head. A year earlier, I had taught a course on Caribbean literature and put together a unit on popular arts, including reggae. The time spent listening to, researching, and analyzing reggae music had firmly implanted most of Bob Marley's songs in my inner ear. What I noticed, then, in listening to "People Get Ready," was that the third verse (quoted above), predicting the imminent demise of ruthless oppressors, is adopted nearly verbatim by Marley, though in taking it up he disperses the words throughout the two separate verses of "One Love":

Let them all pass all their dirty remarks (One love)
There is one question I'd really like to ask (One heart)
Is there a place for the hopeless sinners
Who would hurt all mankind just to save his own? (Believe it)

Let's get together to fight this Holy Armagideon (One heart)
So when the man comes there will be no-no doom (One song)
Have pity on those, whose chances grow t'inner
There ain't no hidin' place from the Father of Creation.

The Wailers alter the rhythm of "People Get Ready," replacing Mayfield's gospel ballad lilt with a prominent original bass line, skanking guitar, and much stronger one-drop drumming. Marley also adds an original melody for the chorus, and this choral phrase is introduced on the piano. While recasting the lyric and embedding the instrumental arrangement in a reggae idiom, the verses of "One Love" hang on to the melodic essence of Mayfield's song as it is laid down in "People Get Ready."

Situating this powerful intertext in a larger historical and theoretical framework has been a challenging intellectual task. The past two decades have seen

the emergence of black transnational studies as an important scholarly field that, in U.S. academies, is located at the intersection of African American, Caribbean, and African studies; poststructualism; and the critique of colonial discourse. In the following chapter, I comment at greater length on the importance of genealogies and analytic paradigms offered by Carole Boyce Davies, Brent Hayes Edwards, Ifeoma Nwankwo, Michelle Ann Stephens, and Michelle Wright, among others. Such critical works productively illuminate not only the Marley-Mayfield connection but also the cultural engagements of Arthur Schomburg, Zora Neale Hurston, Jayne Cortez, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., and Charlayne Hunter-Gault that make up the main objects of study in *People Get Ready*. At the time I was beginning this work, however, the existing scholarship that attempted to deal generally and theoretically with African American and Caribbean encounters tended more often to focus on the social sciences rather than on literary and cultural expression. On one side was a body of anthropological scholarship descended from Melville Herskovits that argued for cultural continuities within an African diasporic context.[7] Opposed to this was a competing body of sociological research that traces a genealogical line of descent from Herskovits's interlocutor and antagonist E. Franklin Frazier. A dismayingly large portion of this sociology-oriented scholarship serves up an oft-repeated theory of psychological differences according to which African Americans suffer from a minority culture complex while Caribbeans (usually meaning black English-speaking West Indians), having grown up in societies where people of color are a majority, are free of any alleged "minority psychosis," and feel themselves equal or superior to any white European or North American influences.[8] This notion of psychological differences is aptly summed up by John C. Walter, who writes: "One might say that the history of the West Indies was characterized by a greater feeling of successes over the white man during and after slavery, by an absence of segregation, and by the practice of intermarriage. The resulting attitude ruled out the massive feeling of uncertainty that developed and remained among blacks in this country [the United States] during and after the slave period" (20).

Against such a theoretical backdrop—full of conflicts, ambivalence, inconsistencies, and aporias—to recollect the case of Bob Marley and Curtis Mayfield trading work so freely, blatantly, and liberatingly was a breakthrough moment. Epistemologically, this musical dialogue about liberation confirmed a gut instinct (much in doubt after initial research) that African American and Caribbean encounters do, indeed, constitute a relational community with decolonizing cultural dynamics at the core. The Mayfield-Marley intertext suggested, as well, the need to look "lower" rather than "higher" in the social pyramid of art forms for a principle of coherent inter-American cultural resistance.

The more I tried to work with this example, by historicizing and theorizing the connections between Caribbean reggae and African American soul, the more I felt confirmed in thinking that cultural contact across the hemisphere could be liberating (and not just divisive, disruptive, and dominating as it often appears to be in the social science literature mentioned above).

Historically, Bob Marley's *donner-avec* response to North American soul and rhythm-and-blues idioms flows most immediately out of his personal experiences as a migrant worker in the United States during the mid-1960s, when he was exposed directly to black popular music (White 36). Beyond these individual experiences, though, he is also part of a whole generation of post–World War II Jamaicans who, listening to rhythm-and-blues radio shows broadcast out of New Orleans and Miami or partaking of sound system dances in Jamaica, digested the music of Fats Domino, Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, Al Green, and many other artists besides the Impressions.[9] This body of North American work is quoted, lyrically and melodically, in Jamaican popular songs from the late 1950s on.[10]

Along with such historical perspectives, we can consider the Mayfield-Marley intertext theoretically as well, beginning with the comparative premise that reggae and soul are both popular musical forms grounded in grassroots religious movements that use prophetic, apocalyptic language drawn from biblical sources to advance black liberation struggles. The social changes contemplated in reggae and soul and their articulation through a shared apocalyptic rhetoric lead directly to questions of decolonization and how the music of one love solidarity might be characterized more broadly as decolonizing culture. Poet, critic, and digital media artist Kalamu ya Salaam has used the terminology of colonizer and colonized in describing African American music, or Great Black Music (GBM) as he puts it. GBM, he writes, "is a conscious choice to create an alternative language of communication, a language which is expressive and affirming of the colonized rather than the colonizer" (Salaam 355). GBM's status as a decolonizing force is evident in Salaam's conclusion that "the social and aesthetic significance of GBM is very precisely its warrior stance in the face of the status quo and its healing force for the victims of colonization. Ultimately, the best of our music helps us resist colonization and reconstruct ourselves whole and healthy" (375). John Edgar Wideman makes a similar point about African American music in the colonial and early republic eras. In "Frame and Dialect: The Evolution of the Black Voice in American Literature," Wideman situates music as part of a larger field of oral culture including "work songs, story telling, dancing, field hollers, religious music, proverbs, riddles, the use of the talking drums and the perpetuation of drum effects after drummers were forbidden." Whereas early African American literary production

faced daunting barriers of the dialect tradition, racism in the publishing industry, and general hostility to nonstereotyped portrayals of black life, the oral traditions "flourished" in ways that promoted African American survival and "exerted demonstrable effects on the manner in which other Americans spoke English" (Wideman 34).[11]

Caribbean literary critics have advanced analogous claims about the impact of music and the comparatively advanced stage of oral tradition culture vis-à-vis Caribbean literature, but nowhere is this argument made more pointedly than in *Natural Mysticism: Towards a New Reggae Aesthetic*, by Kwame Dawes. Caribbean artists seeking to develop modern national traditions in art, dance, and music genres were, according Dawes, able to forge ahead independently from the 1930s onward following examples of both indigenous folk expression and "the use of non-Western elements in European modernism" (16). Writers, in contrast, continued to follow Western literary models more closely until the experiments of Kamau Brathwaite, Wilson Harris, and others began to define a Caribbean literary aesthetic in the 1960s. It was the emergence of reggae in the 1970s, though, that definitively transformed Caribbean writing by presenting "a working class culture [that] asserted itself in its own terms and through a language and discourse that would in time shape the way the entire society defined itself and its artistic sensibility" (18). Consequently, Dawes argues, "any proper understanding of the writing that has emerged in the Caribbean, and particularly in Jamaica, after the 1970s has been directly affected by the emergence of reggae" (17).[12]

With the Marley-Mayfield intertext as an initial reference point, it is easy to argue that what Salaam and Wideman say about African American music (that it provides a mother tongue and a model of progressive cultural freedom struggle) and what Dawes says about reggae and diverse Caribbean musics (that they voice a distinctively postcolonial Caribbean aesthetic) is true as well as in the decolonizing contact zone where Caribbean and African American cultures meet in dialogue.[13] While these theoretical ideas are developed in greater detail in the following chapter, what I want to do now is trace three examples of long-standing African American solidarity with three different Caribbean nations—Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba—in order to solidify a historical basis for viewing one love solidarity as part of a far-reaching and long-standing paradigm for cultural interaction.

Jamaica

The roots of the linkage between Bob Marley and Curtis Mayfield go back much farther in time and open up a field of cultural exchange that is much

wider and deeper than the sympathetic vibrations between the words and music of "People Get Ready" and "One Love." Marley and Mayfield share a particular liberatory rhetoric in their own historical moment, but they are also reaccentuating a pattern of evangelical contact between black people in North America and Jamaica that stretches back to 1783 and the arrival of George Liele in Kingston. Born in Virginia, Liele became known as the most prominent black Baptist preacher in the mainland colonies of the lower South. Throughout the 1770s, he built congregations in Georgia and South Carolina before migrating to Jamaica and establishing the Windward Road Church on a busy thoroughfare that connected Kingston to the eastern part of the island. Using the class-leader system, in which talented lay converts were sent out as missionaries to recruit a new congregation (Little 197), Liele and his followers had, inside of a decade, established a nationwide network of churches variously referred to as "Black Baptist" (Little 199), "Native Baptist" (Chevannes 19), and "Ethiopian" (Chevannes 37). Liele's success, both in North America and the Caribbean, stemmed from his ability to extract a liberating message from biblical sources and convey this message effectively to an audience comprised overwhelmingly of enslaved Africans. When he preached, Liele "spoke in the vernacular and tailored his sermon to the specific emotional needs of his listeners" (Little 190). David George, a boyhood friend of Liele's who went on to become a successful Baptist missionary in Sierra Leone, described Liele's style: "I heard brother George Liele preach. . . . His sermon was very suitable, on 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [Matt. 11:28].' When it ended, I went to him and told him I was so; that I was weary and heavy laden; and that the grace of God had given me rest. His whole discourse seemed for me" (quoted in Little 190).

Liele continued to disseminate his liberatory evangelical style upon moving to the Caribbean. One of his Jamaican followers, William Knibb, frequently took as his text Psalm 68, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her wings" (Chevannes 37). Liele himself, preaching in Jamaica in 1794 shortly after the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution, was thrown into prison on the charge of "uttering dangerous and seditious words." He had delivered a sermon based on Romans 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." Though he was acquitted at trial, Liele's accusers were certain that he had invoked a text on the salvation of Israel in order to foment slave revolt in Jamaica. Horace Campbell also makes the point that Liele and other black Baptist preachers gained ground at this time because their reading skills enabled them to report on abolition movements in England.[14]

From Liele, it is possible to trace a direct line of descent through the major militant grassroots movements and leaders in Jamaican history for 150 years.

These include Sam Sharpe and Paul Bogle, both Black Baptist preachers who organized, respectively, the 1831–1832 Great Slave Rebellion, also known as "the Baptist War" (Chevannes 20), and the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, which were, without question, the two most serious popular uprisings in Jamaica in the nineteenth century. Black Baptist churches also provided a vehicle for Revivalism, a religious reform movement that swept through Jamaica beginning in 1860 and that resulted in Zionism and Pukumina, two popular offshoots from the Black Baptists (Chevannes 21). Both movements continued the practices of baptism and sermons exhorting listeners to remember Africa with pride and expect an apocalyptic deliverance. An anonymous pamphlet posted on the Kingston waterfront's Lucea wharf is indicative of Revivalist expressions:

> I heard a Voice speaking to me in the year 1864, saying, "Tell the Sons and Daughters of Africa that a great deliverance will take place for them from the hand of Opposition. . . . The calamity which I see coming upon the Land will be so grievous, and so distressing, that many will desire to die! But great will be the deliverance of the Sons and Daughters of Africa, if they humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes like the children of Nineveh before the Lord our God." A Son of Africa. (quoted in Chevannes 37)[15]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this tradition was maintained by Revivalist preachers such as Rev. Gordon and Alexander Bedward, the latter of whom appeared at speaking engagements with Marcus Garvey early in Garvey's career and, for Garveyites, played the part of Aaron to Garvey's Black Moses. Following in Garvey's wake, Rastafari articulates many of the same tenets beginning in the 1930s, and at length we can reconnect with the original point of departure, which is Bob Marley's choice to borrow prophecy deliverance lyrics from Curtis Mayfield's song "People Get Ready."

This history of evangelical exchange is crucial for theorizing African American and Caribbean popular culture as a field of decolonizing cultural contact. In his excellent study of Rastafari, Barry Chevannes identifies the rise of the Black Baptist churches in Jamaica with the spread of Ethiopianism. According to George Shepperson's classic definition (which Chevannes quotes), Ethiopianism is based on the rhetorical practice of articulating Ethiopian references in the Bible that had a liberating promise and that, when contrasted with the indignities of plantation bondage, showed black people in a dignified and humane light (249). The international scope of Ethiopianism is impressive. Bengt Sundkler traces the late-nineteenth-century history of the phenomenon in southern Africa, where Rev. Mangena Mokone, seeking autonomy from white-dominated Wesleyan institutions, seceded to form

the Ethiopian Church in 1893 (88). Chevannes refers to Ethiopianism as a broad-based movement that had an impact in both North America and the Caribbean, and Wilson J. Moses has written at length about the profound influence of Ethiopianism on nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century black nationalist ideology in North America.[16] Ethiopianism, then, provides a coherent but flexible cultural logic manifested over time in both African American and Caribbean liberation theologies. It offers another basis for theorizing convergences between the two larger traditions as moments in an evolving decolonizing cultural practice.[17]

Haiti

Zora Neale Hurston's decolonizing ethnography *Tell My Horse*, analyzed closely in chapter 3, exemplifies another legacy of inter-American solidarity, namely the discursive and political ties linking African Americans with Haiti. The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) immediately impressed African Americans, and the memory of it was kept alive during the nineteenth century in speeches, pamphlets, and visits to Haiti by black abolitionists such as Prince Saunders, William Wells Brown, James T. Holly, and Frederick Douglass.[18] Even before word of the colonial uprising in Saint Domingue reached North America, though, Haitians had established a North American presence during the American Revolution by fighting as French soldiers in the battle of Savannah. This military experience proved invaluable to the Haitians when their own war of independence erupted a decade later and they faced and defeated Spanish, British, and, finally, two separate French expeditionary forces. Haiti fired the dreams of African Americans, particularly those with revolutionary leanings. In Charleston, South Carolina, Denmark Vesey, leader of one of the most detailed plans for antebellum revolt, was himself of Caribbean descent and lived for a year in Saint Domingue before coming to Charleston in 1783.[19] Forty years later, Vesey's co-conspirators firmly believed they would receive support from Haitian as well as African sources for their efforts to overthrow white supremacist rule in black majority South Carolina.

Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, Haiti was frequently viewed by colonization societies as a place where free blacks from the United States might emigrate. Actual emigration to Haiti reached a peak in the late 1850s under the influence of James T. Holly, an Episcopal minister who moved to the island with his family and took up permanent residence. Holly gallicized his first name (later accounts refer to him as Jacques) and accepted a standing offer of Haitian citizenship to any person of African descent. Holly survived well into the twentieth century, and his letters to correspondents in North America offer

a rare sympathetic perspective on society and politics in turn-of-the-century Haiti.[20]

Contact between Haitians and African Americans increased dramatically during the generation preceding Hurston and Langston Hughes. Frederick Douglass, having worked hard to deliver the black vote to Republican Benjamin Harrison in the presidential election of 1888, was appointed as high consul to Haiti, where he served from 1889 to 1891. Douglass's public talks from the time recognize the dignity of Haitian people, who walk, he says, "as if conscious of their freedom and independence" (132). His diplomatic dispatches, meanwhile, demand respect for Haiti from the international community and paint scenes of bustling development in Port-au-Prince. In one description of the Haitian capital, Douglass notes "the manifold projects for improving streets, roads, and wharves, and . . . the increasing number of private dwellings in process of erection both within and without the limits of Port-au-Prince. The sound of the hammer and trowel is heard late and early. Soon an electric cable from Port-au-Prince will connect the cable at Môle St. Nicholas and thus bring Port-au-Prince *en rapport* with the outside world" (133). Ultimately, Douglass resigned his commission in 1891 over U.S. attempts to bully Haitians into leasing Môle St. Nicholas as a naval base and coaling station. In his sensitivity to and advocacy for Haitian interests, Douglass's career is a unique chapter in U.S. diplomatic history, and Haitians later acknowledged his support by choosing Douglass as their representative at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago (despite the fact that African Americans were excluded from the proceedings).

During the 1930s, Hurston resided in Haiti as a Guggenheim scholar doing fieldwork research on vodou; Jacob Lawrence inaugurated his famous series format in painting with a set of forty-one captioned canvasses titled *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture*; and Langston Hughes, who lived in Haiti during his own travels through the Caribbean, wrote the moving protest essay "The White Shadows in a Black Land" as well as "The People without Shoes," the latter of which was subsequently incorporated as a chapter in Hughes's autobiography, *I Wonder as I Wander* (26–29). Before that, James Weldon Johnson had spearheaded a determined effort by black intellectuals in America to influence U.S. policies during the American occupation of Haiti (Johnson, *Along This Way* 334 ff.). Beginning in 1920 (though planned as early as 1918), Johnson made several trips to the island in his capacity as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) field secretary and contributed scathing, Walter Rodney–like reports to the *Nation* and the *Crisis*. In his 1920 series "Self-Determining Haiti," Johnson details the role of the National City Bank of New York in pushing for the 1915 invasion, exposes the barbarous behavior of the

occupation forces, asserts the vibrancy of both peasants and elites in Haiti, and discusses the problems of underdevelopment and illiteracy. Interestingly, Johnson calls for literacy training in Haitian Creole, which he says "must not be thought of as a mere dialect" (Johnson, "Self-Determining Haiti" 214).[21] In *Tell My Horse*, Hurston actually gives more credit to the NAACP for effecting the departure of U.S. Marines in 1934 than self-styled national liberator Sténio Vincent. This argument is supported by Brenda Plummer's analysis of the role of black newspapers and lobbyists in helping end the occupation and moderate the level of brutality inflicted on Haitians by Marine forces drawn largely from southern whites (Plummer, "Afro-American Response" 140).

This legacy of travel, reportage, and advocacy survives down to the most recent episodes in Haitian-U.S. relations. These include the more sympathetic coverage provided by African American journalists to Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide (I examine this trend more closely in chapter 5) and the leading role taken by Randall Robinson (then-director of TransAfrica) and Rep. Maxine Waters in supporting Aristide's claim to office; exposing efforts by the U.S. government to destabilize the Aristide presidency with embargoes, propaganda, and military force; and facilitating access to Aristide for Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!* and other reporters willing to cover Aristide outside the paradigms dictated by the U.S. State Department. In literary expression, the Haitian–African American linkage is perhaps best summed up in Jayne Cortez's eloquent bicentennial tribute, "Haiti 2004," published in her recent volume of poetry, *The Beautiful Book* (42–45). Using powerfully dialogic call-and-response techniques, Cortez evokes the Pan-African legacy of Haitian culture ("I say Fon you say Yoruba"), heroic figures from the Haitian past ("I say Toussaint you say Dessalines/I say Christophe you say pissed off"), the problem of internal divisions in Haitian society ("I say lakou de peasant/You say palace elite"), and the constant pressure of predatory neocolonial force ("We say cancel the debt/They say blow up the green cards/sink all the boat people"). In addition to registering Haiti in all its cultural and political complexity, Cortez makes clear that anyone trying to take the measure of Haitian history is confronted by a field of polarized and polarizing judgments within which one must struggle to find a point of orientation and articulation. Grounded in the legacy of political figures like Robinson, Waters, Johnson, and Douglass, and literary precursors like Hurston and Hughes, Cortez delivers a moving portrait of Haiti and Haitians as divided and suffering ("I say money be flying you say violence and poor people dying/I say you say we say Haiti be drinking punishment punch"), but moving forward from a revolutionary past into a troubled but sovereign future ("Haiti be wanting to be Haiti/Not Haiti bye bye not Haiti why why/But Haiti independent revolutionary Haiti").

Cuba

A third example of historical solidarity is the long-standing record of mutual support between Cubans and African Americans. Reciprocal African American and Cuban linkages predate the 1898 U.S. intervention in the Spanish-American War and occur within a wide geographic and institutional context that includes African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church missions in Cuba; Afro-Cuban migration to Ybor City in Tampa, Florida; Cuban baseball players participating in early Negro League competition (and conversely black U.S. baseball teams traveling to Cuba); and diverse Cuban émigré journalism projects dating from the mid-nineteenth century.[22] The friendship between Arthur Schomburg and José Martí, which was forged in a mixed African American and Antillean Masonic temple in New York during the early 1890s, began in this period and continued, even after Martí's death in 1895, to have an impact as a shaping influence on Schomburg's reportage on Cuba in African American journals up through the 1930s. While I examine Schomburg's contributions more closely in chapter 2, it is worth noting here that his contact with Martí, and later with Partido Independiente de Color leader Evaristo Estenoz, critic Gustavo Urrutia, and poets Nicolás Guillén and Regino Pedroso, foreshadow subsequent literary collaborations between Guillén and Langston Hughes, and the pivotal musical partnership between trumpeter Dizzie Gillespie and percussionist Chano Pozo that gave birth to Cubop and Afro-Latin jazz. During a period of Cuban history defined by intense pressure to Americanize island society, these relationships went against the grain by allowing a wider, international audience to learn about Afro-Cuban efforts to participate in Cuban national politics, and, later, by forging egalitarian artistic models in which both Cuban and North American poetry and music were sustained by a two-way cultural exchange, rather than strangled through a one-way process of Cuban assimilation to U.S. hegemony.

If between the Spanish-American War and the rise to power of the revolutionary July 26th Movement these alliances had an implicit liberatory logic, after 1959 the anti-imperial politics of Cuban–African American solidarity become quite overt. Throughout the years when Fidel Castro and the rebels waged guerrilla warfare, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell Jr. was their most outspoken supporter in the U.S. Congress. His speeches in hearings and on the House floor were primarily responsible for convincing the Eisenhower administration to withdraw military support from the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship (Gosse 275). Following the collapse of the old regime, mainstream U.S. media were horrified when the new Cuban government tried and executed the most ruthless of Batista's operatives for well-documented atrocities, including torture and murder; African American journalists, in contrast, were euphoric in reporting Castro's explicit

claims ending racial discrimination, and they treated the summary execution of Batista thugs as the sort of necessary housecleaning that should have happened (but never did) in the United States following the Civil War.[23]

These strong expressions of African American support received an immediate Cuban response in word and deed. Castro's appearance in news conferences with Powell, his photo ops with black children in various U.S. cities, and his legendary stay at Harlem's Theresa Hotel in 1961 were geared to dramatize the revolution's identification with, and intention to highlight, African American concerns. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Cuba provided asylum for militant black political figures such as Robert Williams, Huey Newton, and Assata Shakur. The government provided Williams with funding, a studio, and technical support for the broadcast of Radio Free Dixie, an eclectic mix of jazz, blues, editorials, and news that initially went out over the airwaves on a 50,000 watt signal reaching as far north as Canada.[24] These gestures were matched creatively by Cuban poets who addressed black freedom struggle in poems about Emmett Till, the murder of Black Panther leaders, and more.[25]

The most intense expressions of African American solidarity arguably came during the early years of the Cuban revolution. Robert Williams's departure for China in 1965 is a good historical marker signaling the kind of difficulties that beset Cuban–African American relations as freedom struggles in both countries suffered losses, assassinations, difficulties, setbacks, and frustrations. Despite official decrees from the Cuban government eradicating racism, African American observers have consistently reported lingering signs of racial inequality in Cuba.[26] Williams had complained of Cuba's Foreign Ministry that it "looks like Mississippi in here" (Tyson 292), and this critique is echoed in repeated descriptions over the years of tourist hotels marked by a lockstep correlation between increasingly lighter skin tone among employees and increasing authority of any given employee in the hotel management hierarchy.

At the same time, there is an equally consistent history of African American involvement in programs set up to link Cuba to North American citizens, despite official U.S. government interference. This includes black journalists participating in press junkets organized by Operation Truth in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Joe Louis leading a 1960 delegation designed to spur tourism, James Baldwin and others joining in the unevenly accomplished work of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Johnetta Cole playing a leading role in the much more consistent and successful Venceremos Brigades, Jayne Cortez traveling with the artists' groups organized by Ana Mendieta in the early-to-mid-1980s, and Ntozake Shange's participation in El Primer Encuentro de Teatristas Latino-Americanos y del Caribe sponsored by Casa de Las Americas in 1981.[27] This continuous history is summed up eloquently in Farah Jasmine Griffin's

recent essay "Para Las Chicas Cubanas," written after a May 2001 excursion of writers and artists organized by Charles H. Rowell, editor of the journal *Callaloo*. Griffin embeds the trip within the history of postrevolution African American travel to and consciousness of Cuba, and places her own reflections in a line of descent from insurgent precursor essays and testimony by Baraka and especially Toni Cade Bambara. Opening with the declaration of being "deeply, desperately in love with Cuba" (74), Griffin moves back and forth between troubling observations about Cuban sex workers (typically young black women with older white men), the tension between official pronouncements that racism is over within Cuba and unofficial conversations at night along the Malecon that complicate the official story, and disciplined self-reminders prompted by the realization that Bambara's fiction "insists that I measure the success of social movements in the United States, in Cuba, and elsewhere by the status of black and brown girls" (77). Griffin models both the beloved community imagined by King ("deeply, desperately in love with Cuba") and the *donner-avec* relational knowledge Glissant calls for in *Poetics of the Relation*. In one of its culminating meditations, the essay articulates the mutually illuminating and potentially liberating political and critical insights made possible by the long history of Cuban–African American exchange:

> We descendants of slaves in the United States and Cuba have much to teach each other about our respective nations and our own struggles with indigenous, particular brands of white supremacy. As a start, there is the history of the Cuban nation itself, starting with its fight for independence against Spain. . . . Cuban national identity sought to transcend race. Imagine how differently our own history would have unfolded if at any point our founding fathers had done the same. That they did not meant hundreds of years of racialized exploitation and domination, which helped to make it very difficult for progressive class-based organizing across racial boundaries. It also meant that those persons deemed Black or Negro were able to construct an identity of resistance; an identity that ultimately was not something to be ashamed of, embarrassed about or for that matter "transcended." While our struggle here has been to become "American," it has also been to make "America" recognize that it is not "white." (80)

CONVERGENCES: AN OUTLINE FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The foregoing microhistories make clear that contacts between African American and Caribbean people may be viewed in at least two distinct ways.

Chapter 1 lays out the theoretical framework and methodology for each of these comparative approaches to studying decolonization in the Americas. On the one hand, each culture has a distinct historical trajectory running parallel to the other. Examining these parallel path trajectories, we can trace the process by which specific tools are forged in the quest to achieve decolonizing goals such as reclaiming personal and collective history, mediating social divisions to enable greater unity and mobilization, and achieving greater control over resources, public policies, cultural institutions, or simply self-expression. Simultaneously, on the other hand, African American and Caribbean cultures regularly intersect to generate points of convergence. Drawing on Jean Casimir's notion of the "counter-plantation" and Mary Louise Pratt's writing about contact zones, I theorize African American and Caribbean encounters as a decolonizing contact zone out of which emerge artifacts, styles, and decolonizing effects felt in each individual tradition as well as collectively. Analysis of parallels is valid and worthwhile, and is explored in chapter 1 through a comparison—and contrast—of José Martí and W. E. B. DuBois. A full consideration of such parallels, though, falls outside the scope of this study; instead, the primary focus here is on convergences that illuminate the cultural work of African American and Caribbean solidarity.

Each subsequent chapter in *People Get Ready* concentrates on individual figures—Arthur Schomburg, Zora Neale Hurston, Jayne Cortez, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Jesse Jackson Sr., and Charlayne Hunter-Gault—whose lives and works embody the Caribbean–African American encounter. At the same time, I continue to develop the decolonizing thematics announced in chapter 1 since, at the center of these careers, there is a continuation of attempts to reevaluate popular culture as liberatory and galvanizing, recast the role of native intellectuals within the struggle for cultural decolonization, and transform cultural institutions ranging from libraries and academic disciplines to jazz poetry performance and mass media broadcast news. Chapter 2 examines the work of Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, the preeminent black bibliophile of his generation and founder of one of the world's major black cultural archives, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Through a close reading of Schomburg's speeches at the American Negro Academy and the Negro Society for Historical Research, his articles in *Crisis* and *Opportunity*, and unpublished research sketches, a picture emerges of Schomburg as an intellectual who mediates the aporias encountered when trying to compare the legacies of DuBois and Martí. Puerto Rican by birth and an enthusiastic traveler to Spain, Cuba, and other destinations, not only does Schomburg consistently draw on his transnational experiences to produce a global interpretation of African American culture, but his emphasis on the library as an instrument of popular education marks him

as a staunch populist among elite members of the so-called Talented Tenth. Read in light of John Brown Child's theory of African people's culture and José Luis González's concept of *plebianismo*, Schomburg emerges as a significant point of contact between Spanish Caribbean and African American cultures; his work offers an early Pan-African reading of Latin American and Caribbean history, while on a more general level he advances thinking about popular culture in the Americas.

In chapter 3, we see how in Zora Neale Hurston's *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (1938), ethnographic narrative becomes "possessed" by the Haitian *lwa* Papa Guedé. A neocolonial cultural form is made to speak in a language of indigenous protest against the legacy of U.S. imperialism and local caste, class, and gender oppression. Like Schomburg's populist librarianship and lay historiography, Hurston's displacement of ethnographic authority and her validation of folk cultural agency point up the egalitarian logic of African American and Caribbean contact, and the potential of such contact to reorient existing disciplines and practices toward decolonizing cultural goals.

In chapters 4 and 5, I turn from writers who aim at reforming traditional institutions such as libraries and anthropological practice to consider intellectuals who are also intent on creating new, autonomous cultural forms. Chapter 4 develops the thesis that Jayne Cortez, in her jazz poems dedicated to numerous Caribbean writers and artists, is explicitly responding to and extending the most important black literary movements in the hemisphere, including Negritude in the Francophone Caribbean, Negrismo in Cuba, and the Caribbean Artists Movement. Like writers from these movements who are the subjects of her praise song poems, Cortez contributes to the political project of decolonization, and does so not merely through protest content but also by employing of a full range of techniques aimed at de-alienating the performer from the audience, the audience from personal and collective self, and all subject peoples from the levers of historical agency. With a focus on self-owned publishing, recording, and distribution vehicles, this chapter connects the symbolic expression of contact (viewed here in terms of cross-cultural "saturation," to borrow a concept term from critic Stephen Henderson) with material aspects of the contact zones that link Cortez to Trinidadian and black British publisher John La Rose, Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, and French Guyanese poet Léon Gontran Damas, among others. Cortez's antimacho writing also provides a crucial historical link in the study because, like Hurston in an earlier generation and Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a more recent moment, she articulates a liberating African diasporan creativity while revising it in ways that bring women into the center of historical change.

Chapter 5 considers Aristide, Haiti's popular democracy movement, and the role of African American solidarity in the recent history of Haitian democracy. Internationally, Aristide and the Lavalas movement have been the subject of wildly conflicting characterizations in the mass media. In contrast to mainstream corporate media accounts, a more balanced view of Haitian popular democracy emerges from transcripts of televised interviews from the 1990s between Aristide and Charlayne Hunter-Gault and Jesse Jackson Sr., as well as an appearance by Aristide on an America Online chat group moderated by Hunter-Gault in July 1995. Noting the more sympathetic (but by no means uncritical) approach to Haitian issues on the part of Jackson and Hunter-Gault, I argue that the history of Caribbean–African American dialogue enables both interviewer and interviewee to break through de rigueur imperial assumptions and project a discourse on Haitian popular democracy closer to what Haitians would find familiar (whatever their political stance). More generally, the Aristide interviews sum up the argument in this study by suggesting from yet another angle that one love solidarity offers a framework for rethinking regional and hemispheric identities at a time of continuing crisis in imagining community in the Americas.

The epilogue reprises the argument for using comparative methods to bridge the disciplines of African American and Caribbean studies and for basing pedagogy and curriculum on popular culture examples in the classroom. I explore a classroom anecdote concerning a Jamaican student's reaction to reading Frederick Douglass, and I consider student responses to the continued vibrancy of the Caribbean–African American linkage in the music of Wyclef Jean, who self-consciously follows in the tradition of Curtis Mayfield and Bob Marley. In the recent film *Dave Chappelle's Block Party* (2005), there is a striking difference between Wyclef's call-and-response performance of his song "President," with the marching band from Ohio's historically black Central State University, and the twenty-first-century Caribbean uplift speech he delivers monologically to the band members. Wyclef's speech, which is quoted in full in the epilogue, points up the continuing gap between elite leaders and everyday people, the tension between Caribbean and African American models for analyzing and effecting social change, and the limits of popular culture to function as a vehicle for liberatory cultural activity. Finding and transforming those limits calls for a comparative approach capable of illuminating complex issues of symbolic and political representation surrounding U.S.-Caribbean relations. As an appendix, *People Get Ready* includes a unique interview with poet Jayne Cortez in which she discusses her interaction with the Caribbean artists hailed in the poems that are the focus of chapter 4.

Taken as a whole, the various pieces of this study suggest that the future development of "our America" as a liberating, "counter-plantation" alternative to a hemisphere dominated by U.S. imperialism depends on increasing the kind of recognition of popular culture and social movements pioneered by African American and Caribbean writers and critics.

CHAPTER 1

Theorizing African American and Caribbean Contact

Comparative Approaches to Cultural Decolonization in the Americas

> This system which we call the counter-plantation is a specific social organization encompassing a variety of techniques invented by the workers (enslaved, freedmen and indentured labourers) to oppose the owners and their metropolitan countries. If no direct reference to this organization is found in the official documents, it is precisely because the plantation system did not envisage or conceive of the reproduction *in situ* of the labour force.
>
> —JEAN CASIMIR

From the moment when African people began to be dispersed across the Americas by the Atlantic slave trade, artists, writers, and everyday people of African descent have created linkages that would allow them to communicate and collaborate from diverse global locations. Yet critical efforts to excavate, theorize, and interpret legacies of black internationalism have—as Brent Hayes Edwards has noted about the Harlem Renaissance—been limited to the work of "a handful of scholars" (2–3). For students of literary and cultural production, up to the mid-1990s much of the available theory on African American and Caribbean interaction was, as noted above, sociological in focus and emphasized differences. The pattern of existing scholarly treatments of African American and Caribbean literature has been to avoid comparative approaches,[1] treat comparative methods tentatively and with hesitation,[2] or focus more on individual careers,[3] leaving out longer historical trends and theoretical analysis. Hazel Carby, Laura Chrisman, Paul Gilroy, and Stuart Hall are among the most

productive contemporary theorists of African diasporan cultural exchange; without minimizing their specific concerns, and even in some cases their disputes, as a group these critics focus more on U.S.-U.K., Caribbean-U.K., and U.S.-Africa linkages as routes/roots of exchange, giving relatively less attention to the African American–Caribbean nexus per se.[4]

To be sure, the past two decades have seen the emergence of new critical frameworks in trans-American literary relations, literature of the Americas, and comparative black nationalisms, but the most important developments bearing on the present study have come from the emerging scholarly field of black transnational cultural studies.[5] Beginning with Carol Boyce Davies's 1994 volume *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, books by Brent Hayes Edwards, Ifeoma Nwankwo, Michelle Stephens, and Michelle Wright have significantly amplified the scholarship of forerunners such as Robert Stepto, Michel Fabre, and Melvin Dixon (all of whom are mentioned by name in Edwards's *The Practice of Diaspora*) as well as Martha Cobb, Richard Jackson, J. B. Kubayanda, Edward Mullen, and Miriam DeCosta-Willis, among others. Black transnational cultural studies have expanded awareness of the historical scope, material contexts, methodologies, and terminologies relevant to African diasporan subjectivity, and the present study is intended to complement this vibrant discursive field in several ways.

In terms of historical scope, Nwankwo has traced the operation of black transnational dynamics in the nineteenth century, while Edwards and Stephens focus on the first half of the twentieth century, and Davies and Wright concentrate on more recent decades. The longer timeline that appears when these scholars are viewed a group is crucial for this project, because my approach, while it emphasizes twentieth-century cultural history from DuBois and Martí through to Aristide, Jackson, and Hunter-Gault, includes earlier examples of African American and Caribbean encounters (cited above in the microgenealogies of Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba) and the twenty-first-century dialogues captured in *Dave Chappelle's Block Party*. The assumption in *People Get Ready* is that the project of anti-imperial, liberatory cultural struggle encapsulated by Marley and Mayfield precedes and postdates the enunciatory moment of the Black Power decade. Although the results of this longer struggle are necessarily incomplete and uneven, nevertheless the theory and practice of African American and Caribbean solidarity extend across time and space as a black transnational project whose coherence and continuity reveal an entity "united not by territory but by its own history making" (Stephens 83).

A second aspect of black transnationalist scholarship that is vitally important for this study is the expansive range of material contexts identified by Edwards, Nwankwo, and others as relevant to the production of African

diasporan culture. Edwards has written suggestively that "diaspora" as a cultural historical process "makes possible the analysis of the institutional formations of black internationalism that attends to their constitutive differences" (11). In *The Practice of Diaspora*, Edwards focuses on the "periodical print cultures of black internationalism" (18) as key institutional formations within which diasporan articulations by Jane Nardal and Paulette Nardal, Claude McKay, Eric Walrond, George Padmore, and others take shape. To the list of institutional formations surveyed in black transnationalist scholarship we can add Nwankwo's treatment of nineteenth-century genre conventions and the pervasive influence of negrophobic reactions to the Haitian revolution in art, politics, and economics; Stephens's analysis of Garveyite dress codes and Black Star Line corporate culture; Wright's comparative account of black urban community formation in Berlin, London, and Paris; and Davies's interjected "migration horror stories" in the introduction to *Black Women, Writing and Identity*. All of these analytic frames link literature to material culture and highlight structural forces that determine population flows among various locations that subsequently become meaningful sites for the inscription of African diasporan subjectivity. A critical focus on periodical print cultures is crucial for reading the work of Arthur Schomburg, who wrote extensively in black periodicals such as *Opportunity* and the *Crisis*, and the emphasis on material contexts generally opens the door to analyzing diasporan articulations in other institutional settings that include librarianship (Schomburg), ethnography (Hurston), jazz poetry performance (Cortez), testimonial writing (Aristide), and broadcast journalism (Aristide, Jackson, and Hunter-Gault).

Expanding the historical scope and material contexts for studying Caribbean and African American cultural history is important for the present study, but the principal contribution of contemporary black transnationalist scholarship has been to bring theories of African diasporan history and cultural identity into dialogue with feminism and poststructuralism as these are practiced in the U.S. academy. This is a methodological approach I view with some ambivalence. On the one hand, we can point to a salutary tendency on the part of black transnationalist scholars to present African diasporan cultural history as something that precedes and has an autonomous line of development relative to postmodern, poststructural, and even canonical postcolonial critiques. Wright puts this case most succinctly in *Becoming Black* when she notes that "while prominent postcolonial scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have offered numerous possibilities for a postcolonial subject, their derivations ignore all but those of South Asian diasporic descent, often 'reinventing the wheel' by bypassing those African diasporic works of theoretical significance in favor of dialoguing with their colleagues in poststructuralism" (26). Further,

black transnationalism challenges the exclusion of women and sexual minorities from revolutionary nationalist ideologies and projects. Wright's extended analysis of black nationalist formulations by DuBois, Césaire, Fanon, and Baraka (111–135) and Davies's questioning of male supremacy in attempts by Fanon, Garvey, C. L. R. James, and others to define black nationalist homelands (49–51) clarify the gendered critique of decolonization evident in the work of numerous Caribbean women writers as well as texts considered in the present study, including Hurston's Caribbean ethnography and Aristide's testimonial writing.

On another level, black transnationalism's dialogic engagement with poststructuralism leads practitioners to treat African diasporan cultural identities as subjectivities, which is to say as constructions produced by social, linguistic, epistemological, and psychological labor rather than as essences given simply by nature. Davies's elaboration of terms such as "black," "African-American," and "Caribbean" is extremely illuminating (8–13), as is Wright's use of the philosophical distinction between "Others from within" and "Others from without" to distinguish between, respectively, African American and Caribbean subjectivity (7–8). As a group, though, the same theorists express profound skepticism about the positivity or validity of African diasporan cultural formations. Edwards writes of "unevenness in the African diaspora" (13); Davies describes black women's subjectivity as "a migratory subjectivity existing in multiple locations" (4) that produces "convergence (at least of race and gender) and hence the challenging of specific identity" (8); and Wright traces approvingly the critique of Western metaphysics found in African diasporan counterdiscourses, while derogating any positive formulations of Africanity as "ethnographic information" (26). In the black transnationalist scholarship being considered here, poststructuralism's skeptical force receives more emphasis than constructive efforts that, like Marley's and Mayfield's music, "could be fertile ground for the construction of empathy—ties that would promote recognition of common commitments and serve as a base for solidarity and coalition" (hooks 27). When they evince a strong thread of negativity with the potential to reverse, displace, dissolve, or otherwise deconstruct any positive formulations of diasporan identity, black transnationalist theories should, in my view, be regarded hesitantly, in light of bell hooks's cautionary reminder about postmodern critiques of the subject that "surface at a historical moment when many subjugated people feel themselves coming to voice for the first time" (28).

To the extent that the present study presumes that all the concepts, cultural traditions, public and private institutions, and diverse projects through which Caribbean and African American experiences—both separately and convergently—have been realized are, by nature, constructed, discursive, and historically

contingent, my work embraces black transnationalism's incorporation of poststructuralist paradigms. It is, after all, impossible to think and write as if poststructuralist social critique had not left a mark on U.S. academic disciplines during the past three decades (though given the emphasis of postructuralist methods and vocabularies on difference, ambiguity, aporias, undecidability, and so on, it is paradoxical to confront poststructuralism's implacability, as if poststructuralism is the one contemporary discourse that may never be placed under erasure). If writing about structures of feeling or institutional formations entails writing passages that sound structuralist, positivist, or otherwise pre-postmodern, I hope readers continue to bear in mind my own conviction that such structures and formations associated with Caribbean and African American contact are profoundly historical and as such unfinished and open-ended.

My primary concern, however, is neither to advance nor reject the dialogue between African diasporan theories and poststructuralism, but rather to offer a different and complementary way of reading a specific piece of diasporan cultural history, which is the long-standing encounter between Caribbean and African American people. Davies has argued for conceptualizing the various locations within African diasporan space as "intersecting circles" (55), and the main task of the present study, from a theoretical perspective, is to develop concepts, terms, and methods appropriate to examining the intersection of two such circles. Where Davies argues that diasporic convergences lead to the *challenging* of specific identities, my argument is that convergence also *generates* specific identities, structures, and interventions. When the intersecting circles of African American and Caribbean culture are viewed over time, we can discern a larger, collaborative decolonizing project to which all of the writers and artists considered below make their contribution. To theorize the possibility of this project emerging in a hemisphere grounded in the plantation and its imperialist sequels, I draw upon Jean Casimir's notion of a "counter-plantation" as an alternative logic for organizing hemispheric space. Additionally, Mary Louise Pratt has theorized the space of imperial culture as a "contact zone," and the points at which Caribbean and African American cultures overlap—where the circles intersect—can usefully be characterized as a decolonizing contact zone.

In order to pose comparative readings of Caribbean and African American freedom struggle in ways that recognize both the distinct cultural "circles" and the areas where they "intersect," I find it useful to distinguish between two different comparative approaches. Examining decolonizing cultural production in each separate tradition can be pursued as a comparative project if we consider that interventions by people such as DuBois and Martí evolve on parallel paths relative to each other. Parallel path analysis, as we shall see, reveals both

similarities and contrasts, leading in the end to unresolvable aporias and incommensurable formulations concerning the status of black collectivities and their role in social transformation. A more fruitful comparative approach when considering the long history of African American and Caribbean contact is to concentrate on convergences, or points at which the circles intersect and two separate traditions engage dialogically. In the following chapter, for example, the tension between African American and Hispanic Caribbean views on race and decolonization that limit a harmonious interarticulation of DuBois and Martí are largely mediated in the life and work of Arthur Schomburg. Before developing this line of argument, though, I want to clarify the scope of certain key terms (particularly "decolonizing" and "decolonization") and elaborate more fully the concepts of racialization, counter-plantation, and decolonizing contact zone.

DECOLONIZATION

The terms "decolonization" and "decolonizing" have general and specific meanings in this study that are determined by the frame of reference, which is the intersection of African American and Caribbean history. Most generally, decolonization refers to efforts to transform the economic, political, and cultural apparatus of colonial societies established across the American hemisphere in the wake of Columbus's voyage in 1492 and subsequently in Asia and Africa. Jürgen Osterhammel defines colonialism as "a form of European world rule" (119) and characterizes it as "a relationship of domination between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and of their ordained mandate to rule" (16–17).

Decolonization entails the transformation of this system, moving from external manipulation to various forms and degrees of self-determination. Beginning with the revolt of North American British colonies, Osterhammel identifies three stages of decolonization, including the national liberation of most European possessions in the Americas (1776–1825), the conversion of remaining British colonies to Commonwealth "dominions" (1839–1945), and the full-scale liberation of African and Asian colonial societies after World War II (1945–1980) (37). During this last phase, self-determination was formalized as a fundamental legal right in Chapter XI of the United Nations (UN) Charter and

subsequent resolutions and reports dating from 1960, 1985, and 2000. Though the most recent UN report lists numerous territories that are still administered externally, decolonization as a nominal political process has largely been accomplished.[6]

Political status, however, is only one aspect of a colonial dynamic that encompasses economic and cultural life as well. In fact, political decolonization, whether expressed through flag and anthem independence, incorporation into metropolitan citizenship, or some other arrangement, typically represents limited freedom at best, since economic self-determination is still an unrealized goal for most formerly colonized people. Osterhammel echoes many critics of postindependence global economy when he argues that "as soon as political freedom for economic action was attained, each of the post-colonial governments therefore found itself caught between nationalist self-isolation and humble acceptance of peripheral market opportunities, often by intercession of multinational concerns and international economic organizations. Decolonization gave the ex-colonies freedom of action, but seldom the opportunity to exploit it to full advantage" (117). Amilcar Cabral claims that the demise of direct colonial domination actually intensifies the economic aspects of imperialism in many cases. Theorizing broadly on the basis of his experiences in Guinea Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands, Cabral uses the terms "neocolonialism" and "neocolonial situation" to refer to postindependence societies in which native elites are in thrall to imperialist powers and the fundamental economic reality of colonialism, namely outside control of national productive forces, remains intact.[7]

Just as a colonial society produces economic wealth—tobacco, coffee, sugar, spices, cotton, indigo—for the enrichment of people located elsewhere, and elaborates various political instruments to impose a rule of law from afar, colonization employs distinctive cultural practices to stabilize and reproduce itself. As with the struggle to transform these political and economic structures, achieving freedom from the cultural effects of empire remains an unfinished quest. Zora Neale Hurston, though she is not often recognized for her trenchant critiques of imperialism, reminds readers, in a passage expunged by editors from her 1942 autobiography, *Dust Tracks on Road*, that empire presumes a culturally reinforced mindset based on "the principle of human bondage" (*Folklore* 790). Drawing on the core themes of African American experience, Hurston frames the cultural logic of empire as an enduring mental habit formed during plantation slavery. Hurston writes, "Already it has been agreed that the name of slavery is very bad. No civilized nation will use such a term any more. Neither will they keep the business around home. Life will be on a loftier level by operating at a distance and calling it acquiring sources of raw materials, and

keeping the market open. . . . The idea of human slavery is so deeply ground in that the pink-toes can't get it out of their system. It has just been decided to move the slave quarters farther away from the house" (ibid. 791, 793). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said also refers to the mental habits associated with imperialism and colonialism—what he terms "the imagination of empire." For Said, empire is not only politics and economics but also an ideological formation grounded in the vocabulary of subjugation, dependency, expansion, and authority. Ruling countries evince in their citizens a broad commitment to "the notion that distant territories and their people should be subjugated" and public governmental discourse depends "upon the idea of having an empire." Moreover, though he largely excludes U.S. and African American culture from the discussion, Said shares with Hurston a recognition that cultural patterns from past phases of empire continue to reverberate (Said 9–12).[8] In a manner that both critics would likely find dismaying, the cultural and ideological trappings of empire, rather than fading away over time, have instead undergone an intellectual revival in recent years following the most recent wave of U.S. government interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, and elsewhere.[9] More than ever, it seems appropriate to adopt Cabral's terminology—neocolonialism and neocolonial situation—when referring to cultural matters in formerly colonized zones.

While it is proper, then, to regard the culture of empire as an enduring (and recently resurgent) pattern, this still says little, if anything, about the culture of decolonization. What, in a general sense, are the cultural tasks of decolonization? Here Cabral offers another indispensable formulation. The larger goal of decolonization is national liberation, which Cabral characterizes as "the phenomenon in which a socio-economic whole rejects the denial of historical process. In other words, *the national liberation of a people is the regaining of the historical personality of that people*, it is their return to history through the destruction of the imperialist domination to which they were subjected" (130). The cultural aspects of national liberation, already suggested by the evocative references to regaining personality and returning to history, become clearer if we think of decolonization as a project concretized in social institutions and individual expressions that reorient worldviews, identities, and values previously geared to support the interests of metropolitan ruling classes. Such reorienting often means reevaluating and revindicating local realities ignored or devalued by metropolitan power, as well as reimagining and reconstructing regional and global alliances in ways that oppose, resist, and otherwise present challenges to the interests of empire.

Another facet of cultural decolonization is the work of mediating social divisions imposed by colonialism and intensified under neocolonialism.

Particularly acute in neocolonial situations is the internal division separating native elites and popular masses, what Cabral terms the "dilemma of the petty bourgeoisie" (136). While resolving this split is a comprehensive challenge that involves all sectors in a given society, much of the specifically cultural work of decolonization centers on schools and schooling, because it is there that the split between native intellectuals and masses is introduced and reinforced. Accordingly, a large part of the creative, theoretical, and practical energy of the Caribbean and African American freedom struggle has focused on schools and schooling, with the hope of transforming native intellectuals from the status (envisioned in the nineteenth century by Thomas Macaulay) of colonial puppeteers who are themselves operated by remote control from a metropolitan center.[10] Colonial and neocolonial societies are divided as well—and perhaps most fundamentally—by gender hierarchies, and initial efforts at decolonization too often do not imply liberation for women, especially when anti- and countercolonial resistance is expressed through a strong rhetoric of tradition (Katrak 168).[11] Whether directed at leveling divisive barriers of gender, class, caste, language, or nationality, cultural interventions become most decolonizing when they enable social unification and enhance broad-based democratic empowerment.

The general features of decolonization outlined above emerge in particular ways when the focus is narrowed to a specific analysis of African American and Caribbean solidarity. Caribbean society, the original laboratory for modern colonization, has also produced a vast archive of popular movements, popular cultural forms, imaginative writing, and critical theory devoted to the primary tasks of cultural decolonization—mental reorientation way from metropolitan priorities, mediation of internal social divisions, and transformation of cultural institutions to support the first two goals. Items such as the Saramaka Peace Treaty of 1762; the Haitian constitution of 1804; antislavery writing by Mary Prince and Juan Francisco Manzano; nationalist journalism, political theory, and poetry by José Martí; sociohistorical analyses by C. L. R. James, Fernando Ortiz, and Elsa Goveia; and creative writing by Jean Rhys and Jamaica Kincaid, Aimé Césaire and Maryse Condé, Nicolás Guillén, and Nancy Morejón provide liberatory models known and studied not just in the Caribbean but around the world.

While examples from Caribbean cultural history have typically been prominent in attempts to theorize and enact decolonizing social change, African American culture has less often been viewed as rising from or offering insights about decolonization. In this study, though, I assume that African American culture is a decolonizing tradition for the following reasons.

The "Nation within a Nation" Concept

The idea that African Americans comprise a distinct nation within a nation emerged in the eighteenth century with the birth of black freemasonry under the leadership of Boston's Prince Hall, petitions for emancipation submitted to state legislatures, mutual aid groups such as the Free African Society formed in 1787 by Philadelphians Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, and the founding of Bethel Church by Allen in 1794.[12] Nationalist concepts gained greater articulation and popular currency in the nineteenth century through the work of black abolitionists Martin Delany, Henry Highland Garnet, and others, as well as the convention movement begun by Allen in 1831 and carried forward up through the early 1860s.[13] Midcentury emigrationists, too, advanced the rhetoric of black nationalism, though with a different geo-political orientation than abolitionists focused on domestic activism.[14]

With the failure of Reconstruction and the retrenchment of U.S.-style apartheid under Jim Crow, the turn of the twentieth century saw a renewal of nationalist thinking and activism that continued for five decades. This is true at elite levels, symbolized by groups such as the American Negro Academy and the National Negro Business League, and at the popular level among organizations including the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and grassroots-based historical societies like the Negro Society for Historical Research and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.[15] In 1922 the Soviet Comintern adopted the view of African American people as a "national minority," and this thesis circulated among left social theorists in one form or another for the next several decades.[16] Even after it receded as an orthodox theoretical line, left analysis of black history had a shaping influence on the more recent "internal colony" concept developed by radical historians, political economists, and cultural critics following in the wake of the Black Power and Black Arts movements.[17]

Despite the diverse meanings that have attached to it over the decades and centuries, not to mention the withering critiques that have been leveled against it, the nation-within-a-nation idea is important as an evolving theoretical strand that allows us to pose the black freedom struggle in the United States explicitly as a question of national liberation. Doing so points the way to comparative analysis with Caribbean models of decolonization, and it suggests the relevance of articulating African American cultural history with colonial discourse theory, and with decolonizing movements globally.

The United States as a Colonial Society

Even if the nation-within-a-nation idea is discounted, the fate of U.S. society—and African Americans' place in it—is arguably a colonial problem. The inability to meet basic material needs, generalize political freedom, and integrate all citizens into public life is a contradiction rooted in the country's origins as a string of rapacious settler colonies. When we recall the colonial origins of U.S. national history, its subsequent record of conflicts and crises becomes comprehensible as a protracted neocolonial trauma. Solving these internal problems is a matter of finishing the work of decolonization begun but not completed centuries ago. When black freedom struggle defines the cutting edge of progressive social change nationally, it is right, as Nikhil Singh has done, to characterize African American culture as a force for "decolonizing America" (174–211).

African Americans in the World System

Viewed internationally as a force in the global political economy, the role of U.S. ruling elites consistently has been to impose and maintain neocolonial relationships wherever possible. Against this backdrop, any efforts to inhibit, challenge, undo, or reverse what Samir Amin has termed "U.S. hegemonism" (74–91) are efforts that rightly should be labeled decolonizing. Using these criteria, African American culture, in its moderate as well as its more radical manifestations, is readily situated as decolonizing, and we can point to numerous examples of African American involvement in and leadership of anticolonial struggles over many generations. A major ambiguity about African American culture, dealt with throughout this study, is that black writers from the United States not only resist U.S. hegemonism, they also can and do support it in numerous ways. Such developments as Penny Von Eschen analyzes in *Race against Empire*, her account of midcentury black internationalism—namely, a retreat from militant anticolonialism in the late 1940s, and a return in the later 1950s to a cultural Pan-Africanism stripped of its radical anticolonial politics (3, 6, 167–189)—remind us that society is open-ended, dialectical, and subject to shifts and turns. Depending on conjunctions of political, economic, and personal factors in a given moment, African American people can, like other Americans, act in imperialist ways as Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice have lately made clear. What I argue in this study, though, is that neocolonial words and deeds coming from African Americans are temporary deviations and that, in African American cultural history, decolonizing tendencies are more fundamental and normative.

Colonial Discourse Theory in African American Studies

A final rationale for reading African American culture through the lens of decolonization is the precedent set by critics who, especially from 1960 onward, have taken up specific terms from colonial discourse theory to describe African American social realities. Cynthia Young, in analyzing the impact of third world anticolonial movements on the emerging Black Power movement in the early 1960s, traces how LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), Harold Cruse, and others, after gaining firsthand exposure to the Cuban revolution, began conceptualizing their own cultural revolution as a struggle for decolonization (18–19). Subsequently and consistently, discussions of black intellectual formation have borrowed analytic language from studies of colonization and decolonization. Locating black intellectuals in a privileged class, which he compares to African elites, Manning Marable argues in *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* that "although the race/class dialectic of the United States cannot be accurately described as neocolonial, it is undeniable that the process that gave birth to a Black elite here is virtually identical to that of modern Africa" (135). Cornell West and bell hooks, in *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life*, continually raise issues of imperialism and empire in their dialogues, and though West does not explicitly invoke colonial paradigms in "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual" (reprinted in *Breaking Bread*), hooks's response to West's essay reframes the issue of black female intellectual development around the related tasks of "decolonizing the mind" and "vigilant interrogation of sexist biases and practices" (160–161). Frantz Fanon is perhaps the theorist of decolonization invoked most often in discussions of African American culture, and his concept of the native intellectual has circulated repeatedly in recent decades. Writing about the genesis of the Black Arts Movement, for instance, Amiri Baraka invokes Fanon to describe himself and his peers on the brink of declaring for cultural nationalism (*Reader* 496–497, 499–500). This thread is echoed and extended by Joy James in *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals*. James's argument is framed by an opening anecdote describing the author's search for a copy of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and a concluding reflection that charts a course for black intellectual engagement modeled explicitly on Fanon's developmental model of the native intellectual (187–189).

In individual chapters that follow, I refer to other instances where analysts of African American culture apply terms and concepts usually associated with colonial discourse. For instance, John Brown Childs uses Cabral's theory of people's culture to interpret Arthur Schomburg's historiography, and Jayne Cortez situates her own work as a jazz poet and intellectual/organizer as part

of worldwide struggles over communication technologies oriented toward "the breaking of the chains of colonialism and the continuing struggle for full independence" ("Opening Address" 422). The point I want to emphasize here is that, without minimizing the range of different ways that critics situate African American culture as decolonizing (even with a single topic, black intellectual formation, we see a variety of approaches), it is clear that there are numerous precursors for the sort of critical mediation attempted in this study.

DIVERGENT RACIALIZATION

In the foregoing comments on decolonization, African American and Caribbean cultures have appeared as distinct entities, and rightly so. Theodore Allen, in *The Invention of the White Race*, has one of the clearest discussions anywhere analyzing the difference between plantation social structures in the Caribbean islands versus continental North American colonies (which later became states). According to Allen, the fundamental dynamic across the board was a need to suppress the insurgent energy of laboring classes through effective forms of social control. In particular, ruling elites needed to search for and create out of the existing population a buffer class between themselves and the growing mass of black laborers. In the Caribbean, lighter-skinned people of color were recruited into the buffer class and accorded marginally greater social autonomy in exchange for exerting control over the darker masses. In continental North America, beginning in the 1680s European workers came to fill this buffer role, resulting in the exclusion of all people with any darker pigmentation from social authority regardless of skin tone. Racial protocols developed divergently, first as a by-product of the contest for social control and eventually taking on a semiautonomous ideological life. With some exceptions in both regions (such as the temporary inclusion of mulattoes in the social buffer class in Georgia), the basic racial pattern was a tripartite white-black-mulatto model in the Caribbean contrasted with a rabid binary distinction between white and black in North America (Allen 10–16).[18]

Building on Allen's foundation, we can see that a long list of historical considerations—material as well as discursive—supports the idea of separate spheres and caution against any effort to conflate Caribbean and African American social realities. The contours of African American history are shaped by factors including demographic minority status for people of African descent, continental geography, a single national experience combining several regions, white supremacy founded on a rigidly demarcated binary opposition between the socially constructed categories of black and white, and the predominance

of binaristic racial structures over other socially constructed divisions such as language, national origin, religion, class, and ethnicity, even when, as in recent years, social theorists argue for a more nuanced pentagonal structure of racialization.[19] For each one of these factors, Caribbean history offers a contrasting version: demographic majority or near-majority status for people of African descent; insular geography; a single regional experience combining several nations; white supremacy based on comparatively fluid demarcations between black, white, and mixed categories; and, finally, the comparatively stronger influence of other socially constructed divisions including language, national origin, class, and ethnicity and comparatively less influence (though by no means an absence) of racial structures. Such differences, though, are not the only point of departure for thinking about the structuring and transformation of hemispheric space. Colonization and decolonization both produce unifying dynamics along with the sort of differentiations mentioned above.

THE COUNTER-PLANTATION: A DECOLONIZING CONTACT ZONE

Modern colonial societies were designed to exploit a range of resources for the benefit of corporations and national governments located in various western European countries. While particular social formations arose to move material wealth such as precious metals (in the Southern Hemisphere) and animal furs (in the North) from America to Europe (Weatherford 1–38), this study is most concerned with the fallout from plantation societies that began in the Caribbean and that were based on "an agrosocial system of slavery developed in its harshest form" (Lewis 2). Plantation societies spread outward from the Caribbean where climate and soil permitted, stretching finally from Maryland to Brazil in a socioeconomic zone referred to by Immanuel Wallerstein as "the extended Caribbean" (103). The phrase "extended Caribbean" is redefined as a cultural zone by Peter Hulme in *Colonial Encounters* (3–5), and I retain this layer of meaning in order to posit a material starting point for African American and Caribbean cultural dialogue. This helps to understand the oppressive dynamics of colonialism and imperialism as a Pan-American process encompassing both Caribbean and African American historical experiences, but how can we move from a focus on vectors of oppression and emphasize instead vectors of liberation that define the work of cultural decolonization? Where might we find some material grounding for the type of liberatory cultural work exemplified in the Marley-Mayfield exchange? Rather than thinking of "People Get Ready/One Love" as an isolated example, how might we situate African American and Caribbean contact as a coherent cultural practice?

Another indispensable critical tool in broadening the base of inquiry, and formulating a general principle of inter-American decolonizing culture, is Jean Casimir's concept of the counter-plantation. In describing Caribbean social formations, Casimir uses the term to refer to the "social area outside the dominant system" (*Caribbean* 63).[20] Where the plantation, as empire's leviathan, spews its negations of humanity across the centuries, the counter-plantation contains both negation and productive creativity. Casimir writes:

> The influence of the peasantry was neither comprehended nor admitted by the established powers and their intellectual elites. Its behaviour was framed and protected by denigrated institutions which in turn it endeavors to shield. Specific norms governed the establishment and the organization of families, land ownership and access to property, the administration of the domestic economy and peasant mutual aid, the development of rural communities (free villages), religion and language. A system of life flourished without the peasants concerning themselves unduly about the patronage of the metropolis and its lieutenants.
>
> This system which we call the counter-plantation is a specific social organization encompassing a variety of techniques invented by the workers (enslaved, freedmen and indentured labourers) to oppose the owners and their metropolitan countries. If no direct reference to this organization is found in the official documents, it is precisely because the plantation system did not envisage or conceive of the reproduction *in situ* of the labour force. (*Caribbean* 79)

Although Casimir poses the counter-plantation as a process of social development specific to the Caribbean, his definition of the Caribbean as "Plantation America" recalls Hulme and Wallerstein, and is flexible enough to support a corollary argument: just as plantation society is a more extensive phenomenon whose social structures and effects reach beyond the Caribbean archipelago, so does the counter-plantation extend past the islands and coastal areas usually regarded as regional geographic boundaries. The orientation of Casimir's project is quite compatible with the sort of bottom-up recovery of black historical agency outlined in African American studies by Zora Neale Hurston, W. E. B. DuBois, George P. Rawick, Lawrence Levine, Peter Wood, John Gwaltney, Gladys-Marie Fry, Carol Stack, Jacqueline Jones, Robin D. G. Kelley, Michael A. Gomez, and others.[21]

Such an expanded definition of the counter-plantation allows us to view the intertextual dialogue between Marley and Mayfield as both a contemporary event and as an expression preceded and prepared for by centuries of

collaboration at the popular cultural level. The apocalyptic evangelical rhetoric shared by the composers fits readily within a general framework of resistance to the social forces of imperialism. My assumption in this study is that counter-plantation dynamics operate extensively across the hemisphere and demarcate spaces and times in which liberating cultural, political, and economic activities challenge the imperialist structures of the plantation and its sequels of export agriculture, export processing zones, and de-industrialization in metropolitan centers. Most important, the counter-plantation offers a starting point for thinking about moments of convergence when African American and Caribbean people meet and combine their energies to produce liberating results. As a whole, this study seeks to expand the counter-plantation concept in order to illuminate such convergences and claim them as a coherent, continuous decolonizing project.

As the microgenealogies of African American contact with Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba presented in the introduction make clear, the conjuncture of personal experience, historical momentum, and solidarity rhetoric that culminates in Griffin's essay "Para Las Chicas Cubanas" or Cortez's poem "Haiti 2004" is part of a pattern shaped over centuries by evolving counter-plantation dynamics. Just as the dominant social order of the plantation has changed and mutated—without disappearing altogether—so has the counter-plantation developed new manifestations while preserving its basic characteristics of dialogue, collaboration, and relational community in the service of mutual aid. These characteristics undergird African American and Caribbean encounters, structuring them as the sort of space described by Mary Louise Pratt as a "contact zone." In Pratt's conception, the phrase "contact zone" indicates "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (6). For the most part, Pratt analyzes contact between colonizer and colonized, focusing on the extent to which relations and identities forged through contact are co-determined (rather than the result of one-way diffusions of dominant metropolitan culture). Contact zones, as Pratt theorizes them, feature "copresences, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within *radically asymmetrical relations of power*" (7, emphasis added).

African American and Caribbean solidarity, though, proceeds from and gives rise to a special type of contact zone that is decolonizing. By defining the field of inquiry for this study as a decolonizing contact zone, my intention is to adapt Pratt's concept to reflect the fact that colonial and neocolonial encounters also feature contact between diverse colonized people struggling toward greater self-determination. One key premise of decolonizing contact zones, as

I am imagining them here, is that they strive to replace the radical asymmetries of colonial society with radically egalitarian power relations. In addition, this particular contact zone is an African diasporan public sphere. The human actors and cultural products that make up such public spheres, according to Paul Gilroy, articulate a "critique of the commodity form to which black humanity was reduced during the slave period" (*There Ain't No Black* 198). While no single example works as an exhaustive paradigm for, or perfect realization of, Caribbean and African American solidarity, the accretion of examples, gathering in time and space, indicates a historical pattern in which freedom struggles converge in the interest of mutual recognition and support.

DUBOIS AND MARTÍ: PARALLEL PATHS

At this point, we can refer to two distinct ways of posing the relation between Caribbean and African American cultural history, one grounded in an awareness of differentiations (which can be analyzed as parallelisms) and the other in convergences. While the bulk of this study concentrates on convergences, I want to underscore the importance of convergent analysis by considering for a moment how reading cultural decolonization through the lens of parallelisms generates both striking resonances and frustrating aporias. Against a differential backdrop, any comparative argument for parallel paths of cultural development in the Caribbean and African America depends, for the most part, on metacritical efforts to justify the analogy likening black freedom struggle in the United States to nationalist struggles in the Caribbean that are more commonly viewed as decolonizing. A potential point of articulation, one that shows both the possibilities and the limits of parallel path analysis, can be found in the work of W. E. B. DuBois and José Martí, whom I consider here as their generation's two primary critics of imperialism in the Americas.

Among intellectuals closest to him historically, Martí is preceded as a theorist of Latin American cultural autonomy by Argentinian politician and romantic novelist Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, and followed by Uruguyan modernist critic and philosopher José Enrique Rodó as well as Peruvian Marxist journalist José Carlos Mariátegui. While Mariátegui seems closest to Martí's vision of a southern cone consolidated around indigenous cultural forms, Sarmiento and Rodó both reveal a lingering colonized mentality in their emphasis on European "civilization" as a bulwark against, respectively, gaucho and Yankee "barbarism."[22] Elsewhere in the Caribbean, Haitian politician and anthropologist Joseph-Anténor Firmin and Trinidadian educator and critic John Jacob Thomas articulate nationalist cultural theories in a Caribbean and

Pan-African context. Though both are anti-imperialist in their outlook, Firmin and Thomas remain less oriented toward the Americas in a wider, hemispheric sense, and in this regard they mirror DuBois. On the North American scene, meanwhile, DuBois stands nearly alone as an anti-imperialist prophet of decolonization in Africa and the Americas, beginning with his doctoral thesis, "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade, 1638–1870."[23]

DuBois is probably most well known for his statement "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line" (*Souls* 3). DuBois applies this thesis not only to domestic affairs in the United States but globally as well, leading him to denounce imperialism as a form of white supremacy. "The present hegemony of the white races," DuBois writes, "means the right of white men of any kind to club blacks into submission, to make them surrender their wealth and the use of their women, and to submit to the dictation of white men without murmur, for the sake of being swept off the fairest portions of the earth or held there in perpetual serfdom or guardianship" (*DuBois Speaks* 1:205–206). Martí's work, meanwhile, has long been recognized as a watershed for anti-imperialist thought in modern Latin America. As a response to late-nineteenth-century U.S. expansionism, which he refers to as "attempts at domination by a nation reared in the hope of ruling the continent" (*Inside the Monster* 367), Martí calls repeatedly for the consolidation of the Southern Hemisphere from the Rio Bravo to the Magellan Straits under the sign of "Nuestra América." "Hometowns that are still strangers to one another," he writes, "must hurry to become acquainted, like men who are about to do battle together. . . . The trees must form ranks to block the seven-league giant! It is the hour of reckoning and of marching in unison, and we must move in lines as compact as the veins of silver in the Andes" (*José Martí* 288–289).[24]

In theorizing resistance, DuBois and Martí echo each other in numerous ways, particularly by recovering the culture of working people of color as a shaping force in American history; by invoking romantic ideologies to define the popular; by posing hybrid cultural identity as the foundation and harbinger of a new, more liberated social reality; and by expressing faith in the transformative power of culture, both for the oppressed and the oppressor. For DuBois, African American people constitute a central, determining presence in U.S. history. "Your country?" he writes in *The Souls of Black Folk*. "How came it yours? Before the Pilgrims landed we were here. . . . Actively we have woven ourselves with the very warp and woof of this nation" (214–215). In Martí's emancipatory vision, Latin America "must save herself through her Indians"; corrupt governments are overthrown by "the natural man, strong and indignant," who "has not been governed in accordance with the obvious needs of the country"; "workmen" constitute the core group through which

"the new men of America" are defined; and the body that allegorically encompasses the transformed society is a *cuerpo pinto*, painted or colored, in Esther Allen's translation, "a motley of Indian and criollo" (*José Martí* 289, 290, 291, 294).[25]

While Martí and DuBois both look forward to the future by putting working people of color at the cutting edge of social change in the Americas, they also face backward, in terms of intellectual history, by drawing heavily on romantic ideologies to construct their notions of the popular. Most prominent, perhaps, is the tendency seen in both writers' work to equate popular culture—and the working people of color who produce it—with nature. Thus, in his chapter on the sorrow songs in *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois says of the songs' composers, "Like all primitive folk, the slave stood near to Nature's heart" (210). Martí's reference to "the natural man" in "Our America" is part of a leitmotif that runs throughout the essay, emphasizing "the abundance that Nature, for the good of all, has bestowed on the country," and celebrating "the natural people," who, "driven by instinct, blind with triumph, overwhelmed their gilded rulers" (*José Martí* 290, 293).[26]

Tracing all the levels at which romanticism shapes DuBois and Martí is a topic that properly requires more exposition than the present occasion allows, but it is possible to make several additional schematic points. The idea of the noble savage, a key romantic trope that both DuBois and Martí put into circulation, may at first seem dubious since, with hindsight, we can see that it replaces negative stereotypes of blacks, Amerindians, and peasants with a more positive—but still stereotypical—perception. As it comes down from Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, though, the noble savage concept is actually derived from Rousseau's reading of political principles in the Iroquois Confederacy, a polity that Rousseau viewed as a presenting a more desirable model for organizing human society.[27] As the basis of a new, more egalitarian social contract, and one that is, moreover, rooted in indigenous American culture, the romantic primitivism in Martí and DuBois has a utopian significance that deserves to be recognized as politically progressive, or at the very least interpreted more sympathetically when placed in full historical context.

Two other aspects of romanticism, the tendency to pose ideal types and to value folk culture as the source of national myths or legends, are also at work in DuBois and Martí. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, has written provocatively about how these tendencies come together as enabling factors in the production of nationalist consciousness first in nineteenth-century Europe and then as a cultural export through the circuits of empire. When folk culture is idealized as a representational model for the social, it provides a primary means for transcending or sublimating divisive conflicts in the present

moment; in so doing, it helps create the possibility for socially divided groups to experience "deep horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 7). I am not arguing here that Martí and DuBois simply reproduce nineteenth-century European nationalist ideologies (though the terminology of nation does appear in both writers' work), but I do think that they are drawing on romantic nationalist discourses to imaginatively consolidate their own communities. The impact of romanticism in twentieth-century African American and Caribbean writing does not end with DuBois and Martí, but rather is felt for many years to come. In chapter 3, I consider how Zora Neale Hurston wrestles with constructions of Caribbean peasants—the so-called folk—as primitive, and in chapter 5 I examine Jean-Bertrand Aristide's engagement with revolutionary formulas grounded in romance narrative.

Another important way in which Martí and DuBois resemble each other—and here we see them once again looking forward historically—is in their assertion of hybrid cultural identity. Though probably thought of less often in this connection than Martí (whose coinage of the phrase "*nuestra mestiza América*" is one of the departure points for theories of *mestizaje*), DuBois's discussion of "double consciousness" affords a logical place to construct a comparative reading with Martí and the *mestizaje* tradition in Latin American and Caribbean critical theory.[28] In describing double consciousness, DuBois offers a psychological reading of African American cultural identity: "One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (*Souls* 5). DuBois's vision arguably extends to the entire U.S. body politic, which he also constructs as hybrid. This hybrid notion comes into play when he positions African Americans at the center of national history—"woven . . . with the very warp and woof of this nation"—but it also is present in a political analysis like the one we find in "The Conservation of Races," DuBois's first address to the American Negro Academy. Together with DuBois's separatist argument that "Americans of Negro descent, as a body," must "maintain their race identity," is a statement arguing for the peaceful coexistence of races within the larger national community. "We believe," he states, "that, unless modern civilization is a failure, it is entirely feasible and practicable for two races in such essential political, economic, and religious harmony as the white and colored people of America, to develop side by side in peace and mutual happiness, the peculiar contribution which each has to make to the culture of their common country" (*Du Bois Speaks* 1:84).

Martí, in elaborating the notion of mestiza/o cultural identity, imagines a social model that would incorporate all the cultural strands present in Latin America, including European, indigenous, African, and Creole mixtures. "What a vision we were," Martí writes,

> the chest of an athlete, the hands of a dandy, and the forehead of a child. We were a whole fancy dress ball, in English trousers, Parisian waistcoat, North American overcoat, and a Spanish bullfighter's hat. The Indian circled about us, mute, and went off to the mountaintop to christen his children. The black, pursued from afar, alone and unknown, sang his heart's music in the night, between the waves and the wild beasts. The campesinos, the men of the land, the creators, rose up in blind indignation against the disdainful city, their own creation. We wore epaulets and judge's robes in countries that came into the world wearing rope sandals and Indian headbands. (*José Martí* 293)[29]

Marti also captures the idea of mestiza/o society as a composite of the various cultural groups in the following image: "Our feet upon a rosary, our heads white, and our bodies a motley of Indian and criollo we boldly entered the community of nations" (ibid. 291).[30]

The final commonality I want to point to in the work of DuBois and Martí is their shared belief in the efficacy of cultural struggle. In *The Souls of Black Folk* and throughout his career, DuBois continually returns to the theme of civilization, and the idea that "the Negro people, as a race, have a contribution to make to civilization and humanity, which no other race can make" (*Du Bois Speaks* 1:84). Martí, too, believes that cultural work by writers and teachers will cement bonds of understanding within "Our America," and may ultimately turn the tide against North American aggression. "Neither," he writes, "should we seek to conceal the obvious facts of the problem, which can, for the peace of the centuries, be resolved by timely study and the urgent, wordless union of the continental soul" (*José Martí* 296).[31] Both writers emphasize cultural cures, forms of creativity and pedagogy that will improve both the oppressed and oppressor. "The European university must yield to the American university," claims Marti (ibid. 290),[32] while DuBois devotes several chapters of *The Souls of Black Folk*, including an entire short story, "Of the Coming of John," to the issue of education, which he refers to as "the central problem of training men for life" (1). Such an emphasis on culture and learning necessarily places intellectuals in a pivotal, even a hierarchically superior position, and neither Martí nor DuBois fully resolves the contradiction of intellectual elitism. DuBois's sociological pronouncements give some hint of his anxieties regarding the black masses. In "The Conservation of Races," he writes: "We are diseased, we are developing criminal tendencies, and an alarmingly large percentage of our men and women are sexually impure" (*Du Bois Speaks* 1:83). Martí, for his part, writes rather disdainfully of the Latin American masses and their need—their desire, actually—to be governed from above: "The uneducated masses are lazy and timid about matters of the intellect and want to be well-governed" (*José Martí*

291).[33] Martí warns, too, of the "vengeful and sordid masses" [*masas vengativas y sórdidas*] (ibid. 295; *Política de Nuestra América* 43) in North America as one of the reasons why the United States poses such a threat to the hemisphere. DuBois's concept of the Talented Tenth, an elite cadre of black intellectuals charged with completing the tasks of racial uplift, finds a strong echo in Martí's vision of historical change in which "the present generation is bearing industrious America along the road sanctioned by our sublime forefathers" (*José Martí* 296).[34]

Even as Martí and DuBois characterize social change in terms of a hierarchical relationship between intellectuals and masses, they also set the stage for transforming this relationship by associating themselves and their liberatory vision with the cultural activity of working people of color. Thus, for DuBois, the primary expression of black cultural identity, of black soul, is the body of sorrow songs produced by slaves. "By fateful chance," he writes, "the Negro folk-song—the rhythmic cry of the slave—stands to-day not simply as the sole American music, but as the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side of the seas. It has been neglected, it has been, and is, half despised, and above all it has been persistently mistaken and misunderstood; but notwithstanding, it still remains as the singular spiritual heritage of the nation and the greatest gift of the Negro people" (*Souls* 205). Martí, in the final passage of "Our America," unites all of Latin America with imagery grounded in indigenous cultural references: "For the unanimous hymn is already ringing forth, and the present generation is bearing industrious America along the road sanctioned by our sublime forefathers. From the Rio Bravo to the Straits of Magellan, the Great Cemi, seated on a condor's back, has scattered the seeds of the new America across the romantic nations of the continent and the suffering islands of the sea!" (*José Martí* 296).[35] "For the unanimous hymn is already ringing forth" poses a unifying musical voice as the cultural dominant. The Spanish phrase "*himno unanime*" is a generic signifier that does not indicate any specific type of music, but the musical reference is filled out later in the sentence when Martí invokes the image of *el cóndor*, an Andean bird related to the vulture that appears on the coins of several South American countries. This reference to the condor immediately links the passage to the popular song "El Cóndor Pasa," perhaps the single most well known Andean folk melody. The effect is to code Martí's "unanimous hymn" as southern hemispheric and popular in origin. Like DuBois on the sorrow songs, Martí here asserts popular song as the source and the sign of future resistance culture. In the final image of the sentence, meanwhile, the image of the Great Cemi moving through the southern skies over both Latin American and the Caribbean ("the suffering islands of the sea") unifies these regions as a cultural-geographic bloc, while Martí's use of

indigenous signifiers cements the anti-imperialist tenor of his discourse. Cemi is a Taíno agricultural deity "often represented in the form of a tricornered clay object" (*Jose Martí* 437, n.9), while the condor on which he travels is Qechua in origin and offers a perfect symbolic counterpoint to the American eagle. Cemi's action in this image is ambiguous: Esther Allen's admirable translation renders the key verb as "scattered," but the Great Cemi could also be read as irrigating, sowing, and ejaculating, and this introduces the problem of sexual politics within revolutionary discourse, something that will be a recurring issue throughout this study.[36]

RACE IN THE AMERICAS: APORIAS

As we can see, then, there is much common ground to speak of in the work of Martí and DuBois. Each theorist offers an analysis of social oppression and a culturalist formula for transformation and liberation that seems compatible with the other, particularly in the way that each stresses popular cultural sources as the basis of a decolonizing project in the Americas. In fact, the possibility of an articulation between Martí and African American writers has been attempted recently. The concept of "Our America," specifically, has been invoked as the basis of a "new cultural history of America" (Saldívar 64), as a framework for "bridging the Americas" (Coser 2). In both cases, critics envision a hemispheric formation that includes black writers from North America.[37]

While this gesture is exciting, politically and theoretically, both Saldívar and Coser detach African American writers from their immediate context and insert them rather too quickly into a Latin American model without confronting the ways in which Latin American and African American cultural history are also in tension with each other. This tension surfaces in the DuBois/Martí comparison particularly when we delve more deeply into both writers' construction of race. On the surface, DuBois's description of African American "two-ness" and Martí's notion of "*nuestra mestiza América*" resonate in the sense that both concepts project an identity model that is mixed and hybrid, comprised of multiple, reconstructed origins and projecting forward into quintessentially "new" social forms. Martí, though, is almost always talking about an Amerindian-European encounter when he elaborates on mestiza/o cultural identity. As we saw above in the concluding passage from "Our America," Martí's references are drawn from a blending of Taíno and Qechua traditions. The status of black people and African diasporan cultures within a mestiza/o formation is difficult to assess because Martí's comments on race matters differ widely from, on the one hand, his journalistic reports that echo African

American anger about racial violence and correlate with a black middle-class view of racial uplift, to, on the other hand, more theoretical statements that reject racial vocabulary and concepts completely.

We know that Martí spent most of his last fifteen years (1881–1895) in exile in the United States. His analysis of North American life during the Gilded Age is generally superb. Martí's essays range across topics such as prize fight boxing matches, agricultural exhibits, bibliophile society meetings, mob violence against Italians in New Orleans, and much more. Taken as a whole, his U.S. commentaries deserve to be recognized as a neglected precursor of the sort of cultural studies projects that have achieved prominence in the U.S. academy during the past several decades. Most important for our purposes, his reports are full of fascinating accounts of post-Reconstruction black life. Martí's dispatches from the United States during the 1880s include a moving eulogy of Henry Highland Garnet, of whom Martí writes, "he prepared [fugitive slaves] to live in his house and his church, and they listened to him as to a Messiah and obeyed him as if he were Moses" (*Inside the Monster* 69).[38] Martí's journalism consistently transcends the superficial quality of most foreign correspondent writing geared to create *tableau vivants*, or seemingly live reports of daily life in North America. For example, in an 1889 article exploring the growth a "*pueblo nuevo*," or new nation, born in the United States during the decades following the Civil War, there is a detailed description of black New Yorkers:

> The parents of these dandies and dudes, who greet each other with waist-deep bows, and these full-lipped beauties, with black faces and kinky hair, are those who twenty-five years ago, their cotton shirts stained with blood and their backs striped by the lash, sowed rice and tears in the same ground, and harvested cotton with dragging steps. Thousands of well-to-do Negroes live in the vicinity of Sixth Avenue. They love without fear; they raise families and fortunes; they talk and make public their opinions; even their physical appearance has been altered by their spiritual state. It is a pleasure to see the respect with which they greet their bearded, frock-coated elders, and the courtesy with which the young men take leave of their sweethearts on the corner. They discuss the minister's sermon, the happenings of the lodge, the success of their lawyers, or the achievements of some Negro student who has just graduated from a medical school at the top of his class. All hats rise at once as one of their doctors rides past in a fine carriage. (*Inside the Monster* 124–125)[39]

The details in this tableau signal education, professional status, and material wealth ("a fine carriage"), cementing a portrait of black New Yorkers as highly

civilized, upper-middle-class citizens. Martí also emphasizes intergenerational bonds of intimacy and a display of group consciousness in the final scene in which "all hats rise at once."

Social violence, and lynching in particular, captured Martí's interest. In a piece on "*el problema Negro*," he notes that celebrations marking the Emancipation Proclamation anniversary are muted in 1889 by concern for black people in the South and the sense that "not a day goes by without the sound of gunshots" (my translation).[40] Describing an 1887 lynch mob in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Martí's outrage compares with the fury of an Ida B. Wells, and his writing expresses a strong sense of solidarity: "Not in vain do we notice a trace of hopelessness in the speech of cultured Negroes, and this moves us to hold out our arms to them" (*Inside the Monster* 213).[41] An 1892 essay published in the Mexican journal *El Partido Liberal* describes in graphic detail a lynching that had occurred in Texarkana, Arkansas; in the same essay, the effects of this violence are registered in another anecdote describing a group of black emigrants from Oklahoma who are passing through New York en route to Liberia in order to live "where they do not set fire to our men" (*José Martí* 310).[42] In these anti-lynching pieces, as in Martí's other *crónicas* dealing with African American life, there is an identification with elite figures such as doctors, lawyers, and ministers, those whom Martí refers to as "cultured Negroes." In spite of this classist tendency, these cultural dispatches are important evidence that Martí achieves consciousness of and solidarity with black people's experiences in the United States.[43] Susana Rotker has described Martí's *crónicas* as "a space of condensation" in which objective descriptions of daily life are inscribed within literary devices, resulting in a dialectical tension that elevates the reportage above its immediate historical moment. In the texts surveyed here, this distinctive and satisfying tension stems from the combination of detailed *tableau vivants* and emerging ideas about racial uplift. Martí's reporting on black life in the 1880s and 1890s fuses historicity with a transcendent idealism, and as such, these dispatches exemplify the potential to achieve what Rotker calls "the poeticization of the real" in Martí's writing (see Roker 52, 162, 255).

When he moves away from thick descriptions of contemporary life, though, and theorizes hemispheric culture more generally in public speeches and essays, Martí's ability to connect with black experiences in North America seems increasingly tenuous. At stake here is a tension between Latin American and African American understandings of racial ideologies and politics, and Martí's particular location within the history of *mestizaje* as a Cuban, Latin American, and Caribbean literary and critical discourse. I have already referred to Theodore Allen's materialist explanation for divergent racialization patterns across the hemisphere in which a rigid black/white binary system in

North America contrasts with a relatively tripartite black/mixed/white framework according to which Caribbean societies ascribe color and caste status. This distinction is echoed by a host of comparative scholars, including Frank Tannenbaum, Stanley Elkins, Eric Williams, Vera Rubin, Nicholas Kanellos, and others who associate the tripartite model not only with Caribbean societies but with all of Latin America.[44] In working out race politics, or how to engage and transform social relations within this tripartite racialized sphere, the middle term identifying mixed-race status is arguably the most important in Caribbean and Latin American cultural history, where it is the subject of multifaceted and often conflicting articulations around the terms "mestizo" and "mulato." Rendering *mestizaje* schematically is no easy task, but we might begin by pointing to a dominant version in which mixed-race characters, imagery, and concepts work as tropes to imagine the unification of divided and hierarchized social spheres. We can trace this dominant version of *mestizaje* through Cuban abolitionist writing, Latin American national romances, Afro-Antillean poetry, and Martí's own framing of *nuestra mestiza América* as a utopian hybrid subject. As we have seen already, though, Martí positions blackness marginally in "Our America," privileging Euro/Indio encounters and the Amerindian archetypes of Cemi and the condor.

Over the decades and centuries, Latin American and Caribbean writers and critics have posed important variations and challenges to the idea of *mestizaje* as a "conceptual panacea" (Torres-Saillant, "Inventing the Race" 16). Keeping in mind the risks of oversimplifying, we might group these counterdiscourses provisionally under three large headings: revolutionary nationalist *mestizaje*, critical feminist *mestizaje*, and critical Pan-Africanist *mestizaje*. For practitioners of revolutionary nationalist *mestizaje*, including Martí, the later Nicolás Guillén, and Nancy Morejón, racial categories are subsumed in a larger national identity. Critical feminist *mestizaje*, as elaborated in the work of Lorna Williams, Vera Kutzinski, and Rosemary Feal (who coined the term), views mixed-race images as "the crossroads where race, gender, sexuality, and class intersect in the symbolic image of the *mulata*" and tends to see in such images the silencing of women of color and the rearticulation of white male authority rather than utopian unification in dominant *mestizaje* articulations (Feal 89–91). Critical Pan-Africanist *mestizaje*, meanwhile, emphasizes the cultural and political (rather than strictly biological) aspects of race mixing. Mixed-race characters testify to an enduring presence of African-descent people in the Americas—indeed, they signify the blackness of the Americas—and here blackness is defined, according to Colombian novelist and essayist Manuel Zapata Olivella, not by "their black skin, but their rebelliousness, their antislavery struggles, their union with the indian in order to combat the oppressor. . . . *Mestizaje* against racism has

always been the formula of life against classist societies in the history of all the peoples of the world" (quoted in Feal 96). Similar perspectives are elaborated in the work of Yvonne Captain-Hildalgo, Richard Jackson, J. B. Kubayanda, Ian Smarth, and others who embody a social critique that, in the estimate of Feal, "stretches across cultures and races within a conciliatory ideology that tries to privilege racial mixture while sustaining blackness as an identity" (96).

Such a commitment to sustaining blackness as a resistant New World identity makes critical Pan-Africanist *mestizaje* a potential point of contact between Latin American and African American social critique, yet this orientation is not evident in Martí's more theoretical writings on race. In the essay "Mother America" [Madre América], delivered originally as an address to the Socieded Literaria Hispanoamericana of New York in 1889, Martí's vision of U.S. history reduces North America to the stock archetypal figures of the Pilgrim and the adventurer or frontiersman. The African American presence in U.S. history is trapped within a discourse that is pure Southern plantation tradition fantasy. "And in the manorial mansions of the South," Martí writes, "all is minuet and candlelight, and choruses of Negroes to greet the master as his coach draws up to the door, and silver goblets for the fine Madeira wine" (*José Martí Reader* 104).[45] Arguably, the tone of this passage generates ironic distance from the scene described, but there is nothing internal that disrupts the image, no reference, for instance, to rebellion, resistance, or any other type of freedom struggle on the part of enslaved blacks. Later in the same section of "Mother America," when Martí describes the U.S. Civil War and its aftermath, there is a more insurgent, empowered image of "a million emancipated men" who "before a century [of nationhood] had passed hurled the litter to the ground" (ibid.)[46] Ultimately, though, the African Americans about whom Martí writes so movingly in his journalism now appear displaced from the national dynamic. The principal historical forces in post–Civil War U.S. society derive from the same preindependence sources, the Pilgrim and the adventurer, that Martí identifies as the avatars of North American liberty. In Martí's formulation,

> the factors that set the nation on its feet appeared again, accentuated by war, and beside the body of the gentleman, dead among his slaves, were the Pilgrim (who refused to tolerate a master above him or a servant below him, or any conquests other than those made by the grain of wheat in the earth and by love in the heart), and the shrewd and grasping adventurer (born to acquire and move forward in the forest, governed only by his own desires and limited only by the reach of his arm, a solitary and dreaded companion of leopards and eagles)—both Pilgrim and adventurer fighting for supremacy in the Republic and the world. (ibid. 104–105)[47]

While such comments are consistent with a racialization strategy that marginalizes blackness, a more frequent tendency in "Our America" and other essays is to offer comments that disavow race completely. Recall, for example, the argument made in "Our America" that "there can be no racial animosity because there are no races." When scrutinizing this statement, it is important to be sympathetic to the writer, whose aim here is to overcome racial barriers through a discourse of universal humanism that seeks, among other things, to reject white racist violence in Cuba and white supremacist beliefs as erroneous, prejudicial, and politically disastrous for the cause of Cuban national liberation.[48] The desire for humanist transcendence is evident in the sentences that follow: "The soul, equal and eternal, emanates from bodies that are diverse in form and colors. Anyone who promotes and disseminates opposition or hatred among the races is committing a sin against humanity" (*José Martí* 296).[49] Moreover, Martí's humanism is driven by radical politics: revolutionary nationalism provides the impetus for many of Martí's statements on race in Cuba. His stated goal in the essay "My Race" is to transcend racial differences in order to achieve "public and individual happiness, which can only be obtained by bringing people together as a nation" (*José Martí Reader* 160).[50] By tending to privilege spirit over body, Martí (like DuBois) follows a fairly orthodox Hegelian path when working out his sublimations of race, but for Martí, such sublimations occur on the material base of a revolutionary battlefield. He continues in "My Race": "On the field of battle, dying for Cuba, the souls of whites and Negroes have risen together in the air" (ibid. 161).[51] At its most extreme, however, this line of analysis produces statements that seem to deny the existence of racist practices or at the very least to flatten out the difference between white supremacist displays and black nationalist organizing. He writes, "White and black racists would be equally guilty of racism" (ibid. 107).[52]

At this point, despite his moving articles on white racist violence and black daily life in the 1880s and 1890s, Martí's revolutionary nationalist *mestizaje* is about as far away as it can be from a DuBoisian approach to thinking and writing about race. For Martí, Pan-Americanism yields liberatory visions of cultural unification in the service of anti-imperial struggle. On race matters, however, Martí takes a very different path that is incommensurate with African American cultural and political paradigms. DuBois, for his part, shares with Martí a militant stance against imperialism and an ambivalent view of popular culture—both welcoming and shunning its expressions; over the course of his career, though, DuBois is surprisingly inattentive to Latin America, so much so that it constitutes a massive blind spot in an otherwise unmatched record of scholarship and activism. A comparative reading of DuBois and Martí—one that situates them in relation to each other as prophets of decolonization and

in relation to the generations of African American and Caribbean scholars, artists, and activists who have extended their legacies—faces the difficult task of illuminating their commonalities while indicating as well the points at which comparative analysis breaks down into aporias and antinomies. This parallel path comparative approach is valid, particularly when it attends to cultural specificities, but its full elaboration lies outside the scope of this study.

What other reading strategies can comparatists bring to bear on the cultural documents of Caribbean and African American dialogue? At the end of *Black Cosmopolitanism*, Ifeoma Nwankwo calls for scholarship that seeks to "minimize the material and representational tensions in the service of political advancement without negating differences" among diverse African diasporan people and counterdiscourses (209). Although DuBois and Martí lead comparative readers down something of a blind alley, particularly when it comes to articulating African American versus Latin American concepts of racialization and racial community, Arthur Schomburg is an important though underappreciated avatar of decolonization, whose efforts tell another kind of story based in convergence rather than parallelisms. Working in the same time frame as Martí and DuBois, and in fact a personal acquaintance and intellectual as well as political colleague of both, Schomburg demonstrates that it was possible to harmonize Hispanic Caribbeanness and North American blackness in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century decades. John Henrik Clarke memorably expressed this capacity to transcend competing affiliations when he wrote that Schomburg "referred to himself as a Puerto Rican of African descent, [and] had no problem being of service to the African American and Puerto Rican communities" (4). Schomburg's historiographical writing, collecting, and librarianship provide suitable objects for the kind of scholarship called for by Nwankwo.

In his lived experience, Schomburg embodies the idea of convergence that functions as the basis of another comparative strategy for reading cultural decolonization in the Americas. Not only is there an emancipatory project emerging in distinctive parallel ways among Caribbean and African American people and analyzable in comparative as well as contrastive terms (as we saw with DuBois and Martí); as well, these parallel paths repeatedly converge at moments of mutual struggle in which the political goal of full emancipation is energized through music, spirituality, writing, and other cultural practices that articulate the drive to freedom, autonomy, and self-hood. Without discounting the historical determinations that underscore Caribbean and African American differences, studying a figure like Schomburg bolsters the theoretical claim that African American and Caribbean encounters create decolonizing contact zones grounded in counter-plantation dynamics, and supports the historical

claim based on microgeneaologies of contact with Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba that patterns of convergence are a significant (if not, in fact, a normative) feature of inter-American life. Schomburg not only bridges between DuBois and Martí; his mediation of African American and Hispanic Caribbean approaches to decolonization strengthens each individual tradition. Schomburg's efforts to recover, preserve, and popularize black history throughout the hemisphere transcend ethnic barriers separating African Americans and Caribbeans, while challenging class barriers that divide and vitiate each group internally. Schomburg's interventions and legacy enable both groups to mount more effective challenges to U.S. imperialism, and demonstrate the transformative potential of convergent Caribbean and African American liberatory energies.

CHAPTER 2

Vested in the Anonymous Thousands

Arthur A. Schomburg as Decolonizing Historian

> The well-known colored cooks are exceptional partly because their names are known, whereas the true creative genius in cooking as in all folk arts, is vested in the anonymous thousands.
>
> —Arthur A. Schomburg

THE DIVISION SEPARATING colonized intellectuals from the masses is one of the fundamental structuring devices of colonial societies. Yet African American and Caribbean writers have never met this fractured social reality with automatic or uniform acceptance; on the contrary, the stratified relation between intellectuals and the masses has, over the decades, served repeatedly as a focal point for opposition and resistance to colonial and neocolonial power. Traveling on separate paths, but with recurring moments of intertextual contact and direct collaboration, African American and Caribbean intellectuals have continuously registered and criticized colonial and neocolonial stratifications; in creative writing and critical theories that reevaluate the status of popular culture as the basis of a liberatory, decolonizing social praxis, they also set out models for reconfiguring social hierarchies. As the previous chapter's consideration of W. E. B. DuBois and José Martí suggested, however, oftentimes comparative articulations result in aporias and antinomies. The differences between African American and Caribbean epistemologies, politics, cultural styles, and so forth, particularly when they emerge antagonistically, often signal yet another layer of divisive colonial or neocolonial stratification.

The work of Arthur A. Schomburg as a bibliophile, lay historian, and librarian achieves decolonizing effects that transform the foregoing discussion in

several fundamental ways. Schomburg's blend of Pan-African and Pan-American perspectives bridges many of the conceptual gaps separating DuBois and Martí, both of whom he knew and worked with personally; as such, Schomburg integrates and synergizes African American and Caribbean cultural traditions more fully than his luminary peers. The views Schomburg expressed in his historical essays, and perhaps more important, his populist orientation as a collector, archivist, and librarian, challenge the class elitism that DuBois shares with many other vanguardist intellectuals in both the United States and the Caribbean. Schomburg anticipates the move among later generations of African American and Caribbean intellectuals to create new cultural institutions and closer ties to everyday people as primary tasks of decolonization. Indeed, Schomburg's broad hemispheric cultural literacy and consistent regard for the "anonymous thousands" echo in all of the figures—Zora Neale Hurston, Jayne Cortez, Jesse Jackson Sr., Charlayne Hunter-Gault, and Jean-Bertrand Aristide—whose work is surveyed later in this study.

CONVERGENCE

If Schomburg remains, in his life and work, an exemplary figure of convergence, surely one of the reasons is his long residence in New York City, itself a paradigmatic contact zone. Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, one of the classic accounts of Caribbean and African American interaction in early-twentieth-century New York, casts this encounter in negative, conflictual terms, but the past two decades have witnessed numerous excavations of this cultural and political history that present African diasporan linkages in fuller perspective, emphasizing both tensions and cooperation.[1] Rodrigo Lazo and Laura Lomas have examined the nineteenth-century social forces that led Cuban exiles, including José Martí, to make New York City a base of operations while pursuing dreams of freedom and independence and imagining themselves as, in Lomas's words, "migrant Latino subjects" (12). As we saw earlier, Martí's presence in New York brought him into direct and for the most part sympathetic contact with a black middle class that was then formulating the ideas and language of racial uplift. While the number of Puerto Rican migrants in New York remained small—under 1,500 during most of Schomburg's life (Hoffnung-Garskof 5)—larger numbers arrived from other Caribbean locations from the turn of the twentieth century up through the 1920s and 1930s, when immigration laws drastically curbed the flow of Caribbean migration to the United States (O. Patterson 237).[2] Numerous firsthand accounts from Schomburg's contemporaries such as Hubert Harrison, Richard B. Moore,

Claude McKay, C. L. R. James, and James Weldon Johnson reveal the geography, politics, voices, and imagery of Caribbean–African American dialogue at the time. In essays and memoirs, reportage such as the November 1925 special issue of *Opportunity* dealing with the Caribbean presence in Harlem, and a full range of creative expression, this convergence often generated intense conflicts—over political strategy (for example, the great feud between DuBois and Garvey, or fights among black leftists over party doctrine), material resources, and the authority to define black cultural identity. With equal or greater frequency, though, convergence manifested itself in expressions of solidarity, pride in racial community, and a sense of shared struggle.

Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof aptly describes early-twentieth-century New York City as a metropolitan setting characterized by "a narrow overlap between the multi-racial world of Antillean nationalism and the multi-ethnic world of black institutions" (40). Schomburg was a pivotal figure in this setting because he spoke effectively to and from multiple national, racial, and ethnic groups without belonging completely to any one constituency. According to Hoffnung-Garskof, Schomburg's "migration" within and through these convergent social spheres formed a condition of possibility for his archival work and the diasporan consciousness that is Schomburg's intellectual legacy. Writing about Schomburg, Hoffnung-Garskof argues that by "negotiating his own identity as a West Indian in Puerto Rico, a Puerto Rican in the Cuban independence movement, and a foreign Negro in Harlem and Brooklyn, he laid the foundations for the idea of an African diaspora that we have inherited" (ibid.). Within his historical moment, Schomburg forged links among and between Anglophone West Indians, Haitians, and Spanish speakers from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere in Latin America, and in doing so he lived out a regional and hemispheric politics of unification that had few (if any) precedents. Not only did he link the disparate Caribbean groups with each other, and with the highest echelons of African American cultural and intellectual life, he also formed a cross-class, intraracial bridge between the avatars of racial uplift and everyday people. Looking more broadly, beyond Schomburg's own epoch, he connects the nineteenth-century liberal romantic and nascent revolutionary nationalism of Martí with more fully articulated revolutionary nationalist developments of the later twentieth century. Schomburg's personal style was unassuming and modest, but his convictions were quite militant. In his epistemology; in his fusion of Pan-African, Pan-Caribbean, and Pan-American cultural understanding; and in his work as a bibliophile, historian, and librarian, Schomburg put into practice forms of cultural activism that articulated, consolidated, and advanced diverse modes of decolonizing intellectual labor.

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg was born on January 24, 1874, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, one year after the abolition of slavery there, the child of a Puerto Rican father of German ancestry and a mother from St. Croix. He died on June 10, 1938, at Madison Park Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, from complications related to a dental infection. During his life, Schomburg was most well known for his legendary book-collecting and prominent status as a Prince Hall freemason, and today he is justly celebrated as the founder and original curator of the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Over the course of his forty-five-year career, which dates from the early 1890s, when he migrated to the United States and began anglicizing his name, to the late 1930s, Schomburg worked—outside of his day job—as a writer, lecturer, and leader in various political and intellectual organizations, including the Club Borinquen, Las Dos Antillas, and the American Negro Academy. His achievements and affiliations mark Schomburg as an important though neglected figure in twentieth-century African American and Caribbean cultural history. Indeed, Schomburg's story is a pivotal example of the kind of profoundly decolonizing possibilities that are generated when African American and Caribbean experiences converge in solidarity.

It is not, however, a story that is particularly easy to narrate and place in proper perspective. In part, this is because his primary written work comprises a dispersed body of speeches and historical essays that have only recently become available in a collected edition (and even then not in their entirety). Another difficulty is disciplinary in nature. What analytic vocabulary is appropriate to discuss the work of assembling a 10,000-item collection and deciding what to do with it? Similarly, how does one incorporate an account of Schomburg's institutional organizing, his founding and leadership roles in political groups, Masonic lodges, and black academic societies? Also, while he was counted as a friend and sometimes as an influence by notable figures as wide-ranging as José Martí, W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Alain Locke, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Aaron Douglas, and John Henrik Clarke, Schomburg, a man who lacked all academic credentials and retired after working twenty-five years as a bank clerk, is often treated as a background, second-tier intellectual player whose greatest significance lay in his awesome collection of books and memorabilia that could provide data to be processed by more talented or scholarly writers and artists.[3]

In working toward an interpretation of his compelling but elusive story, my own starting point is the idea that Schomburg represents a bridge between Martí and DuBois and resolves—in the same generation—many of the tensions and aporias discussed in the previous chapter. This in itself is a noteworthy achievement to the extent that it unifies the anti-imperialist energies of Martí

with the black liberation strategizing of DuBois and creates a conceptual model for viewing the Americas as a whole entity with intertwining roots in antiracist and anti-imperialist freedom struggle. The blending of Pan-African and Pan-American paradigms, which is a direct result of Schomburg's cross-cultural existential experience, takes the best of both Martí and DuBois and strengthens them, producing a more radically decolonizing synthesis. I will first consider Schomburg in relation to Martí, mainly focusing on Schomburg's historical essays. While these essays share Martí's Pan-Americanism, and especially the sense of Latin American cultural unity, they differ from Martí because they offer an understanding of Latin America that is more defined by its historical African presence and that is, ultimately, more empowered for the anti-imperial fight against the United States. After that, I will suggest the kind of challenges Schomburg represents for DuBois and the Talented Tenth–led uplift project by considering Schomburg's collecting, archival work, librarianship, and membership in black learned societies, all of which I group under the larger rubric of institution building. As with the viewpoint developed in his historical essays, Schomburg's work as an institution builder acquires its decolonizing valence directly from his existential blending of African American and Caribbean experience. John Brown Childs, in an important reading of Schomburg, which I refer to in more detail below, argues that Schomburg's archival work, because it "emphasizes the creative power of the people," represents a step forward from Talented Tenth models for black intellectual labor in which intellectuals claim the task of having to "reshape, refine, and give voice to" popular or folk culture (69). While Childs frames his analysis almost exclusively in terms of African American culture and history, it is equally important to see Schomburg's development as an outgrowth of his Puerto Rican heritage—and particularly the dimension of Puerto Rican culture that the writer and critic José Luis González refers to as plebeianism. By juxtaposing the ideas of Childs and González, and suggesting their basic compatibility as lenses through which to view Schomburg, I am reinforcing the claim that we must consider both African American and Caribbean influences—and ultimately their intersection or convergence—as the source of Schomburg's decolonizing views and interventions.

SCHOMBURG AND MARTÍ: QUESTIONS OF RACE

Schomburg's connections with Martí began biographically at the level of personal acquaintance. Arriving in New York as a teenager in 1891, Schomburg carried introductions to several *tabaqueros*, who were among the most informed and politically active Antilleans in the city.[4] Immediately, Schomburg

became involved in Spanish Caribbean independence movements, including Los Independientes, which had been formed by Flor Baerga and Rafael Serra, his initial contacts on the Lower East Side, as well as the Club Borinquen and Las Dos Antillas (Sinnette 20). He served as secretary of Las Dos Antillas, a group that expressed the united efforts of Puerto Rican and Cuban nationalist exiles and that was a member organization of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano headed by Martí. Writing in the 1930s about another Cuban patriot, Antonio Maceo, Schomburg recalls his own final contact with Martí:

> I saw Martí one spring morning at 60th Street and Broadway during the year 1895 soon after the Key West frustrated attempt to land arms. He voiced the hope that everything would eventually turn out right. He was calm, cheerful, and convincing. It was the last time I saw this great man. Previous to this occasion we met at a called meeting of the Club Borinquen at Sotero Figueroa's home on Second Avenue and 62nd Street, New York, where a paid spy created a furor with Gonzalo de Quesada, later Cuban Ambassador at Washington, D.C. Rosendo Rodríguez and I were selected to escort José Martí out of danger to the West Side of the city where he resided and see that no harm came to his person. Soon thereafter, Martí journeyed to the home of Maximo Gómez in Monte Christo, Santo Domingo, saw Antonio Maceo in Haiti and touched him with his gentle hands. He inspired Maceo to again take up arms against Spain. (Piñero de Rivera 178–179)

Schomburg's involvement in revolutionary nationalist struggle waned following the death of Martí and Maceo in battle, and the reduction of Puerto Rico and Cuba to colonial and semicolonial status, respectively, following the Spanish-American War. His work as an intellectual, though, was only beginning. The full range of Schomburg's writing, including essays, printed versions of speeches, research plans, correspondence, and more, can be found in books; bound volumes of periodicals such as the *Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and *Negro World*; boxes at the Schomburg Center; microfilm reels there and at the Library of Congress; and assorted archives in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Nashville (where he served briefly as librarian at Fisk University), among other locations. A representative group of essays appeared in 1989 in an indispensable bilingual anthology edited by Flor Piñero de Rivera. The contents of this volume touch on music, literature, visual arts, history, and political economy, among many other topics, and they reveal a thinker every bit as Pan-American in orientation as José Martí. Consistent with his early political activity, Schomburg's view of Latin America begins in a dialogue of solidarity with Cuban culture and politics, which is reflected in the large number of essays devoted to Cuban

themes. Cuban culture and politics were subjects Schomburg returned to consistently until the very end of his life. Conceptually, he also expands outward from the Puerto Rican–Cuban nexus to comment on colonial Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. In another essay not included in the Piñero de Rivera anthology, "The Economic Contribution by the Negro to America," Schomburg makes his most encompassing statement about Latin American cultural identity. "Wherever the English ruled," Schomburg writes, "we have had to combat a very prejudiced and arrogant system of oppression. In the Spanish and French colonies the rule was milder, in consequence of a system of judicial laws which predicated a better understanding of the complex relations between master and slave" (53). Schomburg concludes with the assessment that "the Negro found himself at the end of the eighteenth century a vital factor in every phase of the development of Latin America" (ibid. 62). The argument about plantation slavery being milder under Spanish and French colonialism is debatable (though numerous, more well credentialed scholars have made it as well), but what I want to emphasize here is Schomburg's assumption that, for analytic purposes, Latin America constitutes a coherent entity, and that culturally as well as politically this entity is distinct from North America.[5] In terms of its epistemology and politics, then, Schomburg's writing manifests a Pan-Americanism that resonates strongly with Martí's idea of "Nuestra América" as a culturally unified zone stretching "from the Rio Bravo to the Straits of Magellan."

Of equal if not greater importance are two differences that allow us to distinguish Schomburg's version of Pan-Americanism from Martí's. First, Schomburg is much more committed than Martí to historicizing his delineations of Latin American cultural identity. Second, Schomburg's version of Latin America is more inclusive and ultimately more empowered politically in the confrontation with North American force—which is quite surprising given Martí's stature as the definitive revolutionary nationalist from his region. The key to both of these differences is that Schomburg, unlike Martí, has a parallel investment in Pan-Africanism. By this I mean that in addition to viewing Latin America as a coherent entity (as does Martí), Schomburg places the contribution of people of African descent at the center of any inquiry concerning culture, history, and politics in the hemisphere. As with his Pan-Americanism, this is both an epistemological and a political claim. It is epistemological in the sense that his essays imply we cannot come to know Latin American history in any meaningful way without centering the African presence in that history. At the same time, there is a political aspect to his Pan-Africanism because, just as Schomburg views the different societies in Latin America as sharing a similar origin and fate politically (as does Martí), so, too, does he consider the political fortunes of

people of African descent to be fundamentally linked—both across the hemisphere and globally.

Let me now turn to the first point of differentiation between Schomburg and Martí, which is the greater commitment on Schomburg's part to historicizing. A good example of Schomburg's method can be found in his essay describing a book-buying trip to Cuba in 1932. Published in the February 1933 issue of *Opportunity*, the essay includes wonderful cultural studies–style descriptions of the institutions that supported black literary culture in Machado-era Cuba, including the Club Atenas and the daily newspaper *El Diario de la Marina*, with the Sunday column "Ideales de una Raza," penned by Gustavo E. Urrutia.[6] There are also tributes to the leading writers of the time and an extended discussion of the work and viewpoints of Nicolás Guillén. Woven into this reportage, though, is Schomburg's account of the entire history of black cultural contributions in Cuba and the Americas from the time of Columbus on. He includes remarks about Juan Cortéz, a black comic actor and poet in colonial Mexico; Manuel Socorro Rodríguez, the "first Negro librarian" who "held office at Santa Fe de Bogota in Central America"; and nineteenth-century writers including the poets Juan Pastor and Plácido and the slave narrator and poet Francisco Manzano, among others (Piñero de Rivera 182). This type of commentary is consistent with Schomburg's approach throughout his career, as we saw above in the 1915 text, "The Economic Contribution to the Negro in America," which includes commentary on a pre-Columbian African settlement in Panama; Schomburg's own archival research on the origins of a black New World presence in the highly cultured African enclave dating back to fourteenth-century Sevilla, Spain; and references to subsequent contributions in literary and popular arts, military campaigns, agriculture, textiles, mining, and industrial science achievements such as the tempering of cane juice. The summary effect of these details is to produce a vision that contrasts sharply with Martí's impressionist and dehistoricized rendering of *el negro* in "Nuestra América" as singing "his heart's music in the night, between the waves and the wild beasts." Against that often cited line from Martí, we have to consider Schomburg's claim that "there is not a single field of industrial activity in which the descendents of the African have not contributed their mite toward an improvement of the conditions which the gold seekers and pleasure hunters were wont to overlook" ("Economic Contribution" 54). Moving the image of black people from despondency to agency, and from marginality to centrality, as Schomburg does, is in itself important, but here I am emphasizing that we should perceive a methodological difference, and not just a difference in content, when we examine the contrasts in how Martí and Schomburg represent Latin America. Schomburg's comparatively greater commitment to a historical

method I would liken to the diachronic mode in structuralist poetics, while Martí is more prone to a synchronic mode of analysis that diminishes the importance of historical chronology. The extent to which this is valid as an overall reading of Martí's method is a topic for further investigation, but it certainly applies to his treatment of contributions by black people to Latin American culture and political economy. To sum up this first point of contrast between Schomburg and Martí, my argument is that we can link this difference in method to Schomburg's Pan-Africanism and to the absence of Pan-Africanism in Martí's intellectual profile.[7] Valuing historical method, which manifests itself as a will to diachronicity in Schomburg's work, is an epistemological and political priority for scholars who deal with the suppressed and embattled culture produced by people of African descent in the Americas. Conversely, to ignore, dispense with, or otherwise minimize historical method is a symptom of affiliation with dominant culture perspectives whose history can be assumed in confidence.

The other major difference between Martí and Schomburg, which I also ascribe to Schomburg's Pan-Africanism, is the more inclusive and ultimately more empowered view of Latin America that emerges in Schomburg's writing. While Schomburg's primary affiliation is with Spanish-speaking cultures, he also—to a much greater extent than Martí—identifies with and includes Francophone, Lusophone, Anglophone, Dutch-speaking, and various Creole-speaking constituencies when writing about Latin America and the Caribbean.[8] Most important, and running almost equal with his interest in Cuban history and culture, is Schomburg's fascination with Haiti, and particularly the role of Haitian president Alexandre Petion in providing money, arms, and a printing press to Simón Bolívar at a point when the Liberator's political fortunes were at low ebb.[9] The point I want to make here is that Schomburg's Pan-Africanism draws him to investigate and invoke the history of black freedom struggles not only in Spanish-speaking Latin America but also in Haiti, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Brazil, Suriname, Jamaica, and elsewhere. Schomburg's heightened interest in racial community also leads him to include information about the contributions of women of African descent, such as Teodora Ginés and Micaela Ginés, who were "bandolin players in the orchestra that rendered music in the churches of Santiago de Cuba during the year 1580" (Piñero de Rivera 182). The result is a more complete, inclusive Pan-Americanism.

Pan-Africanism also produces a stronger, more empowered Pan-Americanism than what we see in Martí's writing. Much of the urgency in Martí's "Nuestra América" stems from a perceived lack of unity and a resulting vulnerability on the part of Latin America vis-à-vis the United States. In

contrast, Schomburg, when he views Latin America through the lens of race politics, sees "Nuestra América" as more advanced than North America. As we saw above, Schomburg argues, in "The Economic Contribution by the Negro to America," that the administration of slavery under Spanish colonialism resulted in more emancipation and greater legal protection for free blacks and mulattoes. That essay ends with a creolized vision of historical progress that places concepts reminiscent of Rodó and Hegel within in a Pan-African and working-class framework. Schomburg makes the Rodoean point that civilization is more advanced in Latin American countries, although the logic behind Schomburg's claim—that Latin America had offered more freedom to people of African descent—defies the elitist and Eurocentric prejudices of Rodó's *Ariel*. And while, for Hegel, the world spirit moves from east to west (settling ethnocentrically in Protestant Germany), in Schomburg's view the spirit of civilization and progress is heading "northward" through the American hemisphere. Schomburg writes, "As Negro slavery began in the West Indies and South America and crept northward, so also will come to the United States the gradual dissolution of the problem of color in the general problems of a progressing human race" ("Economic Contribution" 62).

SCHOMBURG AND DUBOIS: QUESTIONS OF LANGUAGE AND CLASS

Schomburg's synthesis of Pan-Africanism and Pan-Americanism also connects with, and holds challenges for, the vanguardist uplift project pursued by DuBois and other African American intellectuals prominent during the early twentieth century. To understand the nature of this challenge, we can recall a comment made by Alain Locke, in his essay introducing *The New Negro* anthology, claiming that "the American Negro is . . . acting as the advance guard of African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century Civilization" (14). Pan-Africanism looks, in this formulation, like racial uplift applied on a global scale, with the Talented Tenth providing vanguard leadership. Rooted in the legacy of nineteenth-century colonization and missionary society activism is the perception that Africans and people of African descent elsewhere in the Americas are the clients or beneficiaries of African American advocacy and civilizing agency. As we have just seen, Schomburg takes a very different view of African diasporan relations in the hemisphere. People of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean are at the forefront of their own emancipation. As such, they are harbingers of eventual full liberation for African Americans, and not the other way around, as Locke would have it.[10]

Just as Pan-Africanism transforms Pan-Americanism and leads Schomburg to formulate views that contrast with Martí, so does Pan-Americanism inflect Schomburg's Pan-Africanism, giving it a less U.S.-centric orientation.

The impact of Schomburg's cross-cultural, African American–Caribbean experience goes far beyond this issue of political theory couched in a historical essay. In fact, Schomburg's challenge to DuBoisian uplift is much more comprehensive, and to fully appreciate it, we must now turn to the collecting, archiving, librarianship, and work in black learned societies, which I refer to collectively as Schomburg's institution building. After giving a sense of this institutional activism in its various formats and phases, I interpret these efforts in light of Childs's theory of African American people's culture and González's view of plebeianism as an aspect of Puerto Rican culture.

Most generally, Schomburg considered archival preservation and research as an integral part of black freedom struggle. The opening lines of "The Negro Digs Up His Past," Schomburg's contribution to *The New Negro* anthology, place the antiquarian impulse within a distinct cultural and political frame. "Though it is orthodox to think of America as the one country where it is unnecessary to have a past," he writes, "what is a luxury for the nation as a whole becomes a prime social necessity for the Negro. For him, group tradition must supply compensation for persecution, and pride of race the antidote for prejudice. . . . Among the rising democratic millions we find the Negro thinking more collectively, more retrospectively than the rest, and apt out of the very pressure of the present to become the most enthusiastic antiquarian of them all" (231). For Schomburg, archival work was needed, first and foremost, to help vindicate the racial community from the slanders of so-called scientific racism. While pseudo-scientific racist propaganda had been flourishing on both sides of the Atlantic since the inception of the slave trade, and growing more systematic and vociferous throughout the eighteenth century as a kind of gothic flip side to Enlightenment culture,[11] the rise of social Darwinism in the United States in the late nineteenth century led to an unprecedented outpouring of antiblack, white supremacist publications.[12] This outpouring occurred against the backdrop of the period known in African American historiography as the Nadir, the time of greatest political disfranchisement for African Americans, a time of continual race riots, lynchings, and other forms of white political violence.[13]

White racist propaganda from the Nadir affected Schomburg personally and profoundly influenced his own sense of mission. We know this from notes Schomburg made of *Retrospection*, an obscure publication by the white U.S. historian Hubert Howe Bancroft. After typing out two foolscap pages of quotes from Bancroft's text, including statements like "The freed African in America is a failure," Schomburg wrote by hand, "Where are our Negro historians, our

defenders, who have let Bancroft commit such a dastardly crime against the Negro race?" (Sinnette 41). These sentiments are echoed in "Racial Integrity," a text originally delivered by Schomburg in July 1913 as a speech to a summer seminar for black teachers at the Cheyney Institute in Pennsylvania and subsequently reprinted as a historical society pamphlet, and later still as an essay in Nancy Cunard's 1934 edited collection, *The Negro*. Schomburg returns to the topic of Bancroft's misrepresentation, and he notes the omission by Bancroft of details about Crispus Attucks fighting at the Boston Massacre and the involvement of Peter Salem at the battle of Bunker Hill. "Where," he laments, "is our historian to give our side's view, and our chair of Negro history to teach our people our own history? We are at the mercy of the 'flotsam and jetsam' of the white writers. . . . We need the historian and philosopher to give us, with trenchant pen, the story of our forefathers and let our soul and body, with phosphorescent light, brighten the chasm that separates us" (Schomburg Papers Reel 10, Frames 596–597).

It probably comes as no shock that racial vindication is not the motive cited by most bibliophiles as a primary inspiration. Schomburg's biographer, Elinor Sinnette, points out that book collectors most often ascribe two other rationales for their activities, including book collecting as a "delightful diversion," a sort of art-for-art's-sake approach, and book collecting as a monetary investment. In contrast, Schomburg, as we have seen, "viewed his collecting as a serious avocation firmly linked to combating ignorance and prejudice" (Sinnette 44). In trying to understand Schomburg's archival work as a serious avocation possessing not only a basic principle—racial vindication—but also a defining method, I focus on three organizational challenges that follow each other in roughly chronological order: assembling the archive, choosing a venue for public access, and putting the archive to use as a resource for scholarly and creative work. In grappling with these tasks and the issues they raised, Schomburg made choices about what he was doing, and we can discern coherence and consistency in his actions over a period of more than four decades.

First, there is the matter of assembling the archive. Fellow collector Arthur Spingarn, a wealthy white philanthropist closely associated with the founding of the NAACP, once remarked that "whenever I discovered an interesting trail leading to Negro books, I invariably found that Schomburg had either been on it before me or else was following very close behind" (ibid. 83). Beginning sometime before 1910 and becoming more systematic after he helped found the Negro Society for Historical Research in 1911, Schomburg had, by the mid-1920s, assembled a collection that included a signed first-edition copy of Phillis Wheatley's poems, an original Benjamin Banneker almanac, works by French novelists Alexandre Dumas Sr. and Jr., treatises by eighteenth-century African

philosophers Amo and Capetein, Haitian state papers along with correspondence and military orders penned by Toussaint Louverture, an original copy of David Walker's *Appeal*, a set of Frederick Douglass's speech manuscripts, and much more. In amassing this collection, one of Schomburg's most important initial guides was a handwritten copy of *De la littèrature des Nègres*, by Henri-Baptiste Grégoire, also known as the Abbé Grégoire. Schomburg was given this copy of Grégoire's text, and he used it as an initial roadmap for authors and titles (ibid. 91).

How he proceeded and succeeded is a mixture of networking, discipline bordering on obsession, and sometimes unbelievable luck. Locally, Schomburg and his fellow New York bibliophiles formed a kind of mutual aid society among themselves. George Young had worked as a Pullman porter and acquired many items in his travels. Richard B. Moore for many years operated the Frederick Douglass Book Store on West 125th Street in Harlem. After Schomburg moved to Brooklyn in 1918, he lived on the same street as Jesse Moorland. Schomburg might buy, sell, or trade with any of these individuals. Outside of New York, there were several means by which Schomburg could pursue his collecting mission. He traveled widely in the United States at the behest of the Prince Hall Masons, and he used his trips to acquire material and widen his own circle of contacts. Though he only traveled one time to Europe, Schomburg managed to extend his network there as well. Sinnette's commentary gives a sense of how Schomburg exploited his connections to the utmost. "Single-minded and shameless," she writes, "Schomburg called upon friends who traveled or lived abroad to assist him. Alain Locke was regularly given lists of items to look for on his almost yearly trips to Europe. It was not unusual for Schomburg to send a note to James Weldon Johnson just before Johnson departed on a trip to Central and South America, asking him to track down some rare documents or books, often attaching the names of specific dealers to the note" (92). While this extensive local, national, and global network advanced the archival project as it was designed to do, sometimes the acquisition process came down to a random encounter. In an interview with Schomburg's biographer, Pura Belpré, the first Puerto Rican librarian hired to work at the New York Public Library (even before Schomburg), remembered the following anecdote:

> I'll never forget the excitement in his eyes. He had been trying to find these old sermons . . . these were very important and he had written everywhere to locate them. One night he came to the library and then went out to a neighborhood restaurant for some coffee. All of a sudden as he was drinking his coffee this large package on the counter caught his eye. . . . It was wrapped in yellow paper and a bit of the wrapping was torn away and he could read a

little. . . . It was the sermons. . . . He bought them on the spot from a young man who seemed too willing to sell them and he brought them straight back to the collection. (ibid. 91)[14]

As the collection grew, the question of storing it became increasingly urgent, and we can now consider the second organizational challenge related to the collection, which is Schomburg's need to direct public access. By the mid-1920s, Schomburg's archive had expanded to the point where his home at 105 Kosciusko Street in Brooklyn was bursting at the seams. Richard B. Moore remembered that "both the living room and dining room floor were filled, ceiling to floor," while Schomburg's son, Fernando, recalled that there were "books from the cellar to the top floor in every room including the bathroom." According to Sinnette, Schomburg himself supposedly remarked jokingly that his wife had given him an ultimatum regarding the books that were crowding their home: "either they or she or the children would have to leave!" (ibid. 87–88, 136, 224). Schomburg had also grown frustrated with how the collection was being utilized. He had occasionally offered his archive as the basis for public exhibits, but he also opened it privately to fellow bibliophiles; black luminaries like DuBois, Locke, Carter G. Woodson, and Marcus Garvey; as well as less well known intellectuals, writers, amateur historians, and so on. Even as early as 1913 he had lamented, "Having books is so tedious. It is annoying to a collector when a book is loaned and it requires going after" (ibid. 43–44).

Actively but discretely, Schomburg began to look for a buyer, and he had plenty of offers in the mid-1920s. He reported in correspondence that J. E. Kwegyir Aggrey sought to purchase the collection for the Achimota School in Gold Coast, West Africa. An offer of several times the eventual selling price came in from a would-be purchaser who insisted on retaining absolute control over the collection. Allegedly the request came from Henry Ford, who wanted to bury Schomburg's treasures in a time capsule in Dearborn, Michigan. Sinnette reports that Schomburg rejected this scheme angrily. No doubt it reinforced the notion of a conspiracy by white "flotsam and jetsam" ideologues to corral and misrepresent the facts of black history. Despite lucrative offers from numerous far-flung places and prestigious university libraries, Schomburg preferred that the collection "should remain at home" (ibid. 136). Ultimately, he negotiated with the New York Public Library to have it house his collection in the Harlem branch on 135th Street as an addition to the fledgling Division of Negro History, Literature, and Prints. Library officials applied for and received, in March 1926, a $10,000 grant from the Carnegie Foundation to meet Schomburg's asking price for the collection. Once the items were transferred, Schomburg used part of the money to take a long-dreamed-of book-buying and research trip

to Europe, which resulted in several hundred more volumes making their way directly into the new public library holdings.

Schomburg's vision of archival work did not end at assembling a collection and making it widely accessible in a public library where Harlemites were the primary intended audience. He also had distinct ideas about how to use the collection once it was relocated. Above and beyond offering evidence of cultural attainments that would counter white racist propaganda, Schomburg saw the collection as providing the resources to develop a "systematic and scientific" approach to a new history of the race ("The Negro Digs Up His Past" 231–232). Writing as a lay historian who had himself been publishing since 1904, Schomburg spoke of three defining principles of this new project in racial historiography. "Three outstanding conclusions have been established," he argued, continuing:

> First, that the Negro has been throughout the centuries of controversy an active collaborator, and often a pioneer, in the struggle for his own freedom and advancement. Second, that by virtue of their being regarded as something "exceptional," even by friends and well-wishers, Negroes of attainment and genius have been unfairly disassociated from the group, and group credit lost accordingly. Third, that the remote racial origins of the Negro, far from being what race and world have been given to understand, offer a record of credible group achievement when scientifically viewed, and more important still, that they are of vital general interest because of their bearing upon the beginning and early development of human culture. (ibid. 232)

In addition to fueling such scholarly work, Schomburg also hoped his collection might inspire artistic endeavors. Sinnette's account of the months and years following the arrival of Schomburg's collection at the 135th Street library confirms that it had just such an impact in the creative life of Harlem. According to Sinnette, the head librarian, a remarkable woman named Ernestine Rose, quickly cultivated the third-floor area that housed the collection into a meeting place and exhibition space where young writers such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and others mingled daily over books, visual art, and displays of newly composed artworks by people like Aaron Douglas, William Braxton, and Louise Latimer (ibid. 135).

With his collection serving as a catalyst for what became the Harlem or New Negro Renaissance, Schomburg could begin to see a fuller realization of his vision for archival work. Not only had he assembled and made widely available archives that aided the cause of racial vindication, but his collection also now fed the work of creative artists whose products would constitute the future

contributions of black people to world civilization. Thus far Schomburg, in his collecting and librarianship, can be seen as consistent with Talented Tenth notions about intellectual, cultural, and political development. In particular, the idea that the archive might be a source of cultural raw material that could be fashioned into high art or fine art by talented creative genius is one that resonates with the core impulses of racial uplift ideologies espoused by DuBois, Locke, and others. Schomburg, though, repeatedly showed an ambivalence about Talented Tenth formulas and strategies for racial advancement. To conclude this chapter, I want to explore this ambivalence by considering his involvement in African American nation-building institutions, particularly those learned societies and schools that promoted black intellectual formation, and by looking as well at an unfinished research project into African American foodways that Schomburg sketched out and left in his papers. Both examples reveal striking departures from Talented Tenth orthodoxy, seen in skepticism about the elites whom DuBois referred to as "exceptional men" ("Talented Tenth" 33) and in Schomburg's contrasting belief in the potential for "rank and file of the fields" ("Racial Integrity" 10/597) and the "anonymous thousands" (Unpublished typescript 3) to supply racial creativity and a culture of resistance. I relate this departure from Talented Tenth orthodoxy at least in part to the impact of Schomburg's decolonizing, cross-cultural experience.

In order to best appreciate his break with the kind of intellectual and cultural race politics embodied by DuBois and others who subscribed to the Talented Tenth concepts, it is worth recapping briefly the ways in which Schomburg was very much in synch with his historical moment and the currents of middle-class African American life. In particular, we have already seen how, in building his collection, Schomburg depended on and then contributed back to the network of social institutions that comprise the core of black nation-building efforts. Carla Peterson, in her study of black women reformers in the antebellum and postbellum North, draws attention to four pillars of a middle-class African American "ethnic public sphere" in the nineteenth century. According to Peterson, Prince Hall lodges, the black church, the black press, and the national convention movement comprised "a set of broader institutions designed to provide intellectual and political leadership to the African-American population as a whole" (10–11). This history is relevant in two ways that illuminate Schomburg's immersion in the main currents of African American social history during his entire adult life. First, nineteenth-century institutions did not suddenly disappear when the calendar flipped over to 1900. While we can note the demise of national conventions as such after the end of the Civil War, and while we might want to point to the rise of new middle-class institutions such as learned societies, advocacy groups like the NAACP and Urban League,

and the growth of historically black colleges and universities, three of the four nineteenth-century institutions—Prince Hall lodges, the black church, and the black press—rolled right on into the new century (and on into the twenty-first). Thus the template of black middle-class nation-building institutions offered by Peterson retains much validity for Schomburg's period.

Second, if we relate this institutional template to Schomburg's life, we discover that he was extremely active in at least two of the three pillars that carry over into the twentieth century. In her biography, Sinnette refers to Schomburg as the prototypical joiner who belonged to as many as thirty organizations at one time, and it is crucial to see Schomburg in this light, as a quintessential institution builder. As a young immigrant from Puerto Rico, we recall, he was closely involved in Las Dos Antillas and the Partido Revolucionario Cubano. After facing disillusionment with the failed independence efforts, and having married and started a family with an African American woman, Elizabeth Hatcher, he threw his considerable energies into middle-class African American national institutions. He rose to the rank of Grand Secretary of the New York Prince Hall Masonic Temple. He was active throughout his life in the black press. He contributed numerous articles to monthly journals like the *Crisis* and *Opportunity*, wrote a column for the *Amsterdam News*, and wrote long, essayistic letters to the editor of the *New York Age* and other African American newspapers. He was keenly interested in the fate of history programs at historically black colleges and universities, and served for several years as librarian and collection development specialist at Fisk University. He counted as personal acquaintances DuBois, Locke, Charles Johnson, James Weldon Johnson, and Carter G. Woodson. He helped found one learned society, the Negro Society for Historical Research, and served from 1918 to 1928 as president of another, the American Negro Academy. Historian Alfred Moss, in his account of the latter organization, refers to it as "the voice of the Talented Tenth" (298). Intellectually, Schomburg nowhere embodied the Talented Tenth paradigm more fully than in his lifelong fascination with books, and in his belief in the power of printed words to serve as an effective means of black liberation. All of this is to say that however one characterizes the mainstream of middle-class African American social and intellectual life in the early twentieth century, Arthur Schomburg was at the very center of that life.[15]

And yet even as he epitomizes many African American middle-class and Talented Tenth values, Schomburg differs with these ideologies in crucial ways. Compared with the Talented Tenth insistence that only the formally educated could supply the ranks of race leadership, Schomburg had higher regard for nonelite African Americans and more ambivalence about educated individuals. The lionizing of educated elites as the necessary and inevitable leadership class

is one of the hallmarks of the Talented Tenth concept. In his 1903 essay defining the Talented Tenth, DuBois claimed that "the Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men" ("Talented Tenth" 75). Posing the rhetorical question "Was there ever a nation civilized from the bottom up?" DuBois drives home his argument with the assertion that "it is, ever was, and ever will be from the top downward that culture filters. The Talented Tenth rises and pulls all that are worth the saving up to their vantage ground" (ibid. 20). Here DuBois is following in the footsteps of his intellectual hero, Rev. Alexander Crummell, who had earlier written of "the need of trained and scholarly men of a race to employ their knowledge and culture and teaching to guide both the opinions and habits of the crude masses. The masses nowhere are, or can be, learned or scientific. The scholar is exceptional, just the same as a great admiral like Nelson is, or a grand soldier like Caesar or Napoleon" (6). These are sentiments and ideas that DuBois himself went on to criticize and revise in the 1940s, but certainly statements like the ones above represent the dominant core ideas associated with Talented Tenth race politics throughout the period when Schomburg was active.

However much he subscribed to these beliefs through his commitment to black middle-class institutions and his undying love of books, Schomburg himself nevertheless expressed sharply contrasting opinions, beginning with his criticism that "the modern school with its many books but without systematic lectures turns out many graduates who are lacking in retentiveness" ("Racial Integrity" 10/583). Against the Olympian confidence of DuBois, Crummell, and others in the superiority of educated elites, Schomburg takes a more measured view of education and its effect on the formation of black leaders. "The University graduate," Schomburg writes, "is wont to overestimate his ability. Fresh from the machinery that endows him with a parchment and crowns him with knowledge, he steps out into the world to meet the practical men with years of experience and mother wit" (ibid.). Where DuBois, Crummell, and other Talented Tenth voices insist that civilizing race leadership is the exclusive prerogative of educated elites, Schomburg is not so sure. In his view, "we need in the coming dawn the man who will give us the background for our future, it matters not whether he comes from the cloisters of the university or from the rank and file of the fields" (ibid. 10/597).

Further evidence of Schomburg's distance from Talented Tenth orthodoxy comes from an unpublished typescript for a project to record a history of African American foodways. Schomburg wanted "to show how the Negro genius has adapted the English, French, Spanish, and Colonial receipts taught him by his masters . . . ; and how he has modified them to express his own artistic powers" (1). In the foodways project, we find almost a direct counterstatement

to DuBois's conviction that civilization only trickles down from the top. For Schomburg, in contrast, black genius and artistic powers bubble up from below in the rolling boil of pots in a kitchen. Moreover, Schomburg explicitly downplays the idea of "exceptional" people, which is so pivotal to Talented Tenth thinking. Instead, Schomburg locates historical agency in the black working masses, those to whom he refers as the "anonymous thousands." "The well-known colored cooks," he writes, "are exceptional partly because their names are known, whereas the true creative impulse in cooking as in all folk arts, is vested in the anonymous thousands" (3).

In an important commentary on the foodways project, John Brown Childs enumerates the many ways in which Schomburg's model of intellectual labor throws down the gauntlet to DuBois and the Talented Tenth partisans. Focusing on Locke and Charles Johnson as main vocalizers of the Talented Tenth program, Childs traces their tendency to view popular or folk culture as "raw," "fragile," "rural," "artifactual," and infected with an alleged sense of "inferiority" (71–74). Pitted against this construct, which is consistent with the ideas we saw previously coming from DuBois, Crummell, and others, is the concept of people's culture embedded in Schomburg's foodways project. Here we find popular culture to be "whole," "systematic," "domestic," a form of "living knowledge," "ceremonial, symbolic, and African," expressive of "continuity" (between country and city, past and present, Africa and diaspora), an "indicator of cultural resistance," and a "rejection of European dominance" (77–81). These contrasting views of popular culture are related to notions of intellectual identity and intellectual labor that likewise clash. The Talented Tenth thinkers place themselves in the heroic role of transforming the raw material of folk culture in order to "reshape, refine, and give voice to" the voiceless folk. What role is left for the black intellectual, though, when people's culture, as in Schomburg's conception, is living, self-sustaining, and thriving with or without the specialized input of the scholar? For Childs, the main intellectual labor implied by Schomburg's model is to "illuminate the very intricacy and strength of the people's thought" (87). The primary benefit derived from this act is the opportunity for the black intellectual to eliminate the distance between himself or herself and the sustenance provided by people's culture. As Childs puts it, "adrift and veering from the folk, the intellectuals can reduce their alienation from their people, and so counteract their own subordination to the wider society they confront in their academic enclaves" (ibid.). This powerful interpretation of Schomburg turns the Talented Tenth program completely on its head—or perhaps sets it right side up.

Childs casts his commentary in a decolonizing light with a footnote posing Schomburg as a forerunner of Amilcar Cabral, who argued that under colonial

repression, culture resides with the masses, and the burden is on progressive intellectuals to "return to the source" in order to find their place in the struggle for national liberation (89 n.54). Like most of the suggestions in Childs's essay, I find this one persuasive and valuable in giving Schomburg his due by placing him in proper perspective as a theorist and practitioner of cultural decolonization. At the same time, this internationalizing reference to Cabral is a marginal comment on Childs's part, and the vast majority of the essay situates Schomburg within a fairly strict boundary of African American history, culture, and politics. Indeed, there is little discussion of Schomburg's Caribbean grounding, apart from some boilerplate biographical details. In an analysis that otherwise is massively illuminating, to not treat Schomburg as the deeply cross-cultural person he was seems like a potential blind spot—both because it omits information that could prove useful in understanding the foodways project and its attendant intellectual model and because it threatens to erase or at the very least downplay Schomburg's Puerto Rican legacy. This goes beyond a rudimentary question of cultural identity, because quite a bit is at stake in Childs's essay. Viewing Schomburg through the lens of people's culture, we can see more clearly how his life and work challenge the divisive internal split between black intellectuals and black masses, and the splits between different African diasporan communities. We need to be able to ask: in the genesis of such a powerful vision of black intellectual labor, what status, if any, should we accord to Schomburg's Puerto Ricanness?

To address this question, José Luis González's concept of plebeianism is extremely helpful. Throughout his collection of essays, *Puerto Rico: The Four-Storeyed Country*, González argues for a bottom-up view of Puerto Rican culture that is quite similar to the one Schomburg expounds in the foodways project, and which Childs elaborates in his own essay. Puerto Rican society, for González, is made up of four "storeys" or levels corresponding to demographic and cultural shifts. The foundational first level represents the period of longest duration and greatest impact on Puerto Rican national culture and consists of the contributions made by enslaved Africans from the time of Columbus down to the mid-1800s, at which point a second level was added on by two separate waves of working-class European migrants (González 11–12). This is when Schomburg enters the scene historically, emerging as a product of the first two levels.[16]

The concept of plebeianism, the subject of another essay in the volume by Gonzáles, concerns the problem of cultural influences among the four levels. When the upper floors of the national house become decadent, as they have in Puerto Rico according to González, who or what determines the shape of national culture? Here González turns to Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset for the term "*plebeianismo*," which Ortega coined in a 1950 essay

fragment on Goya.[17] González borrows the term mordantly, I would say, for it is hard to imagine a more Eurocentric thinker than Ortega, while González is passionately anticolonial, Pan-Caribbean, and socialist, but in this instance Ortega formulates a thesis on working-class autonomy that resonates with González's view of Puerto Rican culture. According to Ortega, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spain the aristocracy no longer provided a leading example for society, and in this vacuum common people generated a new popular national culture: "Our people recreated for themselves a sort of second nature that was informed by qualities that were basically aesthetic" (quoted in González 75). Gonzalez sees the same process occurring in Puerto Rico after 1898, with the eventual end products being not bullfights and popular theater (as in Spain) but *plena* (music), baseball, basketball, and show business (79–80). González also embraces the term "plebeianism" to describe these developments because—as for Ortega—it serves as a contrast with the more familiar "popularism." Popularism, according to González, is "the selection from above of forms from below that are not intended as models. Plebeyism is the creation of models from below and their imposition on what lies above" (80). While González, in this essay, is analyzing a period somewhat later than Schomburg's career, plebeianist cultural forms were in preparation throughout the early twentieth century. Moreover, the potential for plebeianism is already a part of Puerto Rican culture given González's bottom-up view of the four levels, and this is precisely the kind of cultural process Schomburg is pointing to in his plan for the foodways project.

Once the connection is made between plebeianism and the foodways project—and made generally, I would say, in regard to Schomburg's career and methods—three additional insights follow that complement Childs's theory of people's culture. First, by viewing Schomburg's work as an expression of plebeianism—which correlates with Childs's conception of it as people's culture—we are now able to retain a clearer sense that Schomburg's Puerto Rican experience informs his own theory and practice. This in itself is valuable since Schomburg's Puerto Ricanness sometimes seems on the verge of disappearing in accounts of his life and work.[18]

Second, plebeianism offers a satisfying way of thinking about Schomburg's engagements with "high" culture artifacts and ideas. Because plebeianism entails "the creation of models from below and their imposition on what lies above," we can see more clearly how Schomburg is wrestling with black middle-class institutions, and even dominant culture institutions, and giving them a people's culture imprint. It would even seem possible for so-called high culture to be "vested in the anonymous thousands" and used for other plebeianist purposes without the anonymous thousands having to incur problems of bad

faith and assimilation. In fact, with plebeianist cultural logic in mind, there is, arguably, less a sense of Schomburg trying to slot himself awkwardly into the Talented Tenth program and more a sense of him transforming those ideas, from the bottom-up, through his way of setting up the archive, writing his essays, and otherwise managing to disseminate his decolonizing historical perspective.

Finally, juxtaposing González's plebeianism with Childs's people's culture may yield some explanatory insights. As a concept, people's culture illuminates the political and theoretical implications of Schomburg's work, but one thing it does not begin to answer is why Schomburg could pose such a challenge to the Talented Tenth program and why he could do so at that particular moment. Focusing on people's culture together with plebeianism suggests that the bottom-up viewpoint that runs so counter to Talented Tenth orthodoxy is part of Schomburg's cultural and political formation as a Puerto Rican of a certain generation. Schomburg's original milieu is working class, and plebeianism—the cultural logic of the working masses—is dominant in Puerto Rican culture generally in González's account. Through a long-term cross-cultural experience, that particular formation is inserted within another particular cultural and political formation—the Talented Tenth and its apparatus of nation-building institutions—and the result is a decolonizing effect that transforms both. It is impossible to make sense of interventions such as his body of historical essays or the lifetime of archive building without acknowledging the cross-cultural African American–Caribbean experience as a decolonizing crucible in which Schomburg found his worldview, his distinctive voice, and the resources to build a popular institution that thrives to this day.

DECOLONIZING MEDIATIONS

Schomburg's synthesis of Pan-Americanism and Pan-Africanism marks him as a crucial mediating figure who, in his own historical moment, bridges many of the chasms separating Martí from the tradition of black freedom struggle in the United States. At the same time, his emergence from working-class origins in Puerto Rico led Schomburg to pose profound challenges to the vanguardism of DuBois, Locke, and other intellectuals associated with the Talented Tenth concept. Though he never adopted revolutionary socialism, like his compatriots Sotero Figueroa, Jesús Colón, and Bernardo Vega, or like his contemporary Caribbean peers Hubert Harrison and Claude McKay, or like later writers and activists such as C. L. R. James, Amiri Baraka, and even the late DuBois, Schomburg ought to be seen as much closer to these radical voices than he

is typically given credit for being. His references to Europeans engaged in the colonial enterprise as "malefactors," "man-hunting," and "parasites" ("Economic Contribution" 51) could hardly be surpassed in militance by James or Baraka or Walter Rodney. His orientation toward black working people, "the rank and file of the fields" and "the anonymous thousands," is, as we have seen, an organic outgrowth of his own experience and the wider currents of plebeianism running through Puerto Rican culture. This orientation infuses every part of Schomburg's career and does so in a way that challenges the middle-class frames of reference characteristic of racial uplift.

Another way to recover the decolonizing dynamics of Schomburg's career is to see him as resolving the neocolonial division between black intellectuals and masses that constitutes, along with gender and heterosexist elitism, one of the main pitfalls of uplift vanguardism. Indeed, by embracing elements of black middle-class ideology while simultaneously working to make black middle-class nation-building institutions more responsive to and reflective of people's culture, Schomburg is closing the class divisions symptomatic of neocolonialism and thus actively engaged in decolonizing cultural work. Bringing Childs and González together allows us to see this very clearly. Schomburg's historical essays, with their insistent diachronic force, challenge the romantic formulations of DuBois and Martí on African American and Caribbean folk culture and anticipate the more objective commentaries typical of later periods in New World intellectual history. Finally, his steadfast commitment to institutionalizing and controlling black cultural production is a clear precursor of the sort of decolonizing strategies pursued by revolutionary artists and thinkers who sought to shift the institutional grounding of freedom struggle and move it closer to everyday people. Schomburg's work as an institution builder directly anticipates, and to some extent literally lays the foundation for, people like Hurston, Cortez, and Aristide.

All of the conclusions above summarize the importance of Schomburg for scholars interested in working out a comparative approach to African American and Caribbean studies, or developing critical methods that could bring to light the decolonizing aspects of African American and Caribbean cultural dialogue. Yet in closing this chapter, I would also like to suggest how Schomburg remains an exemplary and relevant model of intellectual labor as we move forward in the twenty-first century. His essays on Puerto Rican and Spanish painters of African descent, on West Indian composers, on a souvenir photograph from a Pan-American Congress containing the fragmentary image of a statue dedicated to Antonio Maceo, and so on, remind us that cultural studies methods—which Schomburg uncannily anticipates—have their precedent in the multidisciplinary, diachronic approach of African American

studies, a field that Schomburg certainly helped to create. Perhaps most important, Schomburg anticipates a course of scholarly and existential dialogue between African American studies and the various houses of Latin American and U.S. Latino studies. If during the past two decades one of the primary goals of major academic organizations in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean has been to increase progressive interdisciplinary dialogue across languages, races, ethnicities, and nationalities, Schomburg's career shows how this is possible and why it is a good thing to do. For a U.S.-based audience, Schomburg as an Afroborinqueño Pan-Americanist underscores the importance of viewing race in comparative, hemispheric terms, whether as a matter of scholarship or political strategizing. In literary studies, scholars such as Yvonne Captain-Hildalgo, Martha Cobb, Miriam DeCosta-Willis, Carolyn Fowler, Richard Jackson, J. B. Kubayanda, William Luis, Ian Smarth, and others have continued to develop the field of Afro-Hispanic literary history and criticism. For the Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino side of the dialogue, Schomburg as a Pan-Africanist offers a provocative challenge, which is an argument for preserving, rather than sublimating, transcending, or otherwise disavowing, the terminology of race.[19] Schomburg continues to use racial vocabulary and to situate his Pan-American scholarship within a framework of black freedom struggle for the primary reason that he saw white supremacy continuing to thrive in the contemporary world of "Nuestra América." For example, his 1912 essay on Evaristo Estonez and the Cuban government's massacre of the Independent Colored Party summarizes in three pages much of the material covered in great detail by Aline Helg in her award-winning publication *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912*. "Many Cuban Negroes curse the dawn of the Republic," Schomburg writes. "The black men of Cuba have taken to the woods because conditions are intolerable" (Piñero de Rivera 75). While Martí envisioned the withering away of racial classifications and race thinking in favor of the culture and politics of revolutionary nationalism, Schomburg shows how it is possible, and even necessary, to honor the nationalist and anti-imperialist Pan-American legacy of Martí while retaining a Pan-African commitment as well.

CHAPTER 3

Decolonizing Ethnography

Zora Neale Hurston in the Caribbean

> One is forced to believe that some of the valuable commentators are "mounted" by the spirit and that others are feigning possession in order to express their resentment general and particular. That phrase "Parlay cheval ou" is in daily hourly use in Haiti and no doubt it is used as a blind for self expression.
>
> —ZORA NEALE HURSTON

AT THE HEIGHT of the Great Depression, in 1936 and 1937, African American novelist and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston traveled to Jamaica and Haiti on consecutive Guggenheim grants in order to study folk religion. It was during this period that Hurston produced her best-known piece of writing, the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. After her time in Haiti was cut short by a mysterious stomach ailment—caused perhaps by a *boko*, or vodou priest, who was guarding his turf against the anthropologist's prying gaze—Hurston returned to the United States, where she completed *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, a nonfiction text based on her Caribbean fieldwork. Successive generations of African American anthropologists have faithfully preserved her legacy as an anthropologist and a Caribbeanist, but outside this community of scholars the primary transcript of Hurston's Caribbean sojourn languished in relative obscurity from its publication in 1938 up through the mid-1990s.[1] With the reissue of *Tell My Horse*—in separate editions by Harper Collins and the Library of America—and given signs that under the influence of feminist and colonial discourse theory a new wave of interpretive scholarship on this text is emerging, the time for reconsidering and reclaiming Hurston's neglected Caribbean narrative has certainly arrived.[2]

After providing a brief overview of the structure and contents of *Tell My Horse*, I want to suggest the important contributions Hurston makes to the theory and practice of anthropological writing and cultural decolonization. In the context of the current project, Hurston echoes Schomburg in her ability to work within existing cultural institutions and discourses to transform the relationship between intellectuals and the masses. Like Schomburg, she works to undo the class elitism of black vanguard intellectuals and map out cultural and political terrains that include elites but in which popular agency is normative. Hurston, though, brings gender dynamics to the fore and clears a space for women in the representation of popular agency. In *Tell My Horse*, then, Hurston transforms the sexual politics of African American and Caribbean solidarity and makes the decolonizing contact zone more universally liberating.

Though Hurston employs a wide range of writing styles, *Tell My Horse* is best read through—and against—contemporary theories of ethnographic representation. Hurston exposes the implicatedness of ethnographic projects (including her own) in imperialist political economy and moves to decolonize ethnography by manipulating it away from a tendency to represent native populations as exotic and dependent Others. Hurston challenges this dominant rhetorical strategy by portraying informants who undercut the ethnographic authority of her narrator and by scripting delineations of Caribbean culture in which fables of self-reliance displace fables of dependency. Also part of Hurston's decolonizing project are the gendered and gendering cultural descriptions that make up the core of her ethnographic practice. *Tell My Horse* stands out in the history of critiques of colonial discourse by offering harshly critical narratives about the limits of decolonization for women in the Caribbean. Hurston uses her ethnography, then, both to criticize dominant narratives of decolonization and to expand the scope of cultural decolonization by equating this goal with the struggle to author a female subject. Hurston is able to project this complicated vision of inter-American solidarity, shaped by the intersections of race, class, gender, and nationality, because she simultaneously invokes more than one tradition in Caribbean travel writing. On the one hand, *Tell My Horse* echoes the signal tropes of a dominant—and dominating—line of commentary that stretches from Columbus down to Hurston's contemporary and fellow Boasian anthropologist Melville Herskovits. At the same time, *Tell My Horse* also derives its perspective and rhetorical strategy from a dissident tradition of African diasporan travel and cultural production radiating outward from the Caribbean in all directions across the hemisphere. The representative figures in this tradition include maroons, enslaved Africans who were transshipped within the Americas, present-day migrant workers, and luminary African American travelers such as Frederick Douglass, James Weldon Johnson, and

Langston Hughes. What unifies this dissident tradition, and its expressions both written and nonwritten, is a denunciation of impoverishment and imperialism, a celebration of the liberating potential of Caribbean civilization, and a commitment to advocating Caribbean sovereignty.

One of Hurston's most neglected book-length works, *Tell My Horse* is a generic hybrid, a travelogue/ethnography that recounts more or less chronologically her two-year sojourn in the Caribbean during 1936 and 1937. Placing this voyage historically, it comes at the peak of Hurston's prolific career. With support from the Guggenheim Foundation, Hurston vacated a position in the Federal Theatre Project in New York City, where she had helped to organize the celebrated Harlem unit. Proposing "to make an exhaustive study of Obeah (magic) practices . . . to add to and compare with what I have already collected in the United States," Hurston traveled briefly to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, then to Jamaica in April 1936, where she resided mostly with the Accompong Maroons, and finally to Haiti, in September 1936 (Hemenway 226–231). During the seven weeks following her second arrival in Haiti, when she was learning Kreyol and making local informant connections, Hurston wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Boyd 287–294).[3] Like every U.S. citizen who came to Haiti at this time, Hurston's presence there was overshadowed by the nineteen-year occupation of the country by U.S. Marine Corps forces from 1915 to 1934.[4] In terms of overall regional history, which had been marked since the Spanish-American War by four decades of direct U.S. military intervention in the Caribbean, her trip came during a period of relative cooling off that was prompted by economic depression at home and the installation of pro-U.S. dictatorships in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This was the time of "Good Neighbor" rather than "Big Stick" policies in the region (Fierher 4).

Tell My Horse reads like a compendium of the styles and strategies Hurston employed throughout her career. The writing in it ranges from subtly rendered history and portraiture to incisive (albeit debatable) political analyses, from bodacious accounts of travel adventures and striking ethnographic description of religious ceremonies to straightforward folklore cataloging. The text of *Tell My Horse* is divided into eighteen chapters spread out across three sections. The first four chapters deal with Jamaica and focus on the effects of British colonialism, such as social stratification, racial ideologies, and sex/gender relations. Hurston also details a female initiation ceremony, life among the Accompong Maroons, peasant burial rites, and duppy stories. The last thirteen chapters deal with Haiti and are divided into two parts. "Politics and Personalities of Haiti" includes political analysis, a historiography of the Haitian state written in a mytho-prophetic voice employed by Hurston in her novels to recount black history in epic form, and a troublingly ambiguous account of the 1915 U.S.

invasion. "Voodoo in Haiti," the final section, contains Hurston's taxonomy of vodou spirits and numerous descriptions of vodou culture in process. There is an appendix that catalogs the music and drumming of Haitian folk dances, and one chapter, titled "Women in the Caribbean," that bridges Haiti and Jamaica in Hurston's commentary. I mention this transition chapter last in order to emphasize that it warrants special notice for the way it breaks new ground—methodologically, epistemologically, and politically—by positing gender as a category than can critically mediate cultural-political divisions in the Caribbean.

The existing criticism on *Tell My Horse* is sharply divided. Gwendolyn Mikell, who wrote the entry on Hurston for an encyclopedia of women anthropologists, describes Hurston's ethnography as "pioneering, her methodological approaches solid and almost avant-garde" ("Zora Neale Hurston" 218). Léon-François Hoffmann, one of the deans of Haitian literary scholarship, called it "the first respectful treatment of vodun in American letters" (80). At the other end of the spectrum, Caribbeanist J. Michael Dash criticizes Hurston for a long list of offenses, including her evocation of "sensationalist travelogues of white American visitors to Haiti," her "dismaying apology for the Occupation," and her "alarming and racist references to the weaknesses of the Haitian character" (*Haiti and the United States* 59). Hurston's biographers see the stylistic diversity of *Tell My Horse* as problematic. Robert Hemenway dismisses it as her "poorest book, chiefly because of its form" (248), and Valerie Boyd concludes that "it is an ambitious, flawed mix of reportage, folklore, political commentary, and travelogue" (321).[5]

ETHNOGRAPHY AND IMPERIAL TRAVEL NARRATIVE

A major reason for this uneven reception (and certainly this is the biggest challenge in reading *Tell My Horse*) is the difficulty in situating Hurston's roving narrator and the comparative cultural commentary that issues forth from this first-person narrative voice. The problem is that the narrator is ambiguous about her position(s) within a social setting structured by imperialism. Like every anthropological voyage before and since, Hurston's Caribbean sojourn occurred against a backdrop of European and North American domination of the region. In addition to the historical context provided by a particular event such as the U.S. occupation, anthropology as a discipline is mired generally in the project of empire building, leading one scholar to dub anthropology "the child of imperialism" (Bolles 65).[6] Politically, economically, and culturally, imperialist domination constitutes a direct condition of possibility for

Hurston's fieldwork experience. Her response to the history of imperialism in the Caribbean, however, vacillates between criticism and seeming embrace.

At times the narrator is an incisive critic of the legacy of European colonialism—a Frantz Fanon twenty years earlier and with feminist-oriented gender consciousness—who attacks imperial discourses and social practices. In Jamaica, for instance, where Hurston claims "it is the aim of everybody to talk English, act English and *look* English," racism and patriarchy combine under British colonialism to the detriment of black women, who are trod upon systematically in the native bourgeoisie's "stampede whiteward." Hurston's narrator labels Jamaica "the Rooster's Nest" because, as she explains, "black skin is so utterly condemned that the black mother is not going to be mentioned nor exhibited. You get the impression that these virile Englishmen do not require women to reproduce. They just come out to Jamaica, scratch out a nest and lay eggs" (*Folklore* 279, 280, 282).

Hurston's critical point of view on race, gender, and power in a colonial setting strongly echoes the earlier writing of African American travelers to the Caribbean. Indeed, it is important to situate *Tell My Horse* as a highly developed expression of the discursive and political legacy surveyed in the introduction that includes Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, and many others. In particular, James Weldon Johnson's NAACP field reports and his journalism in the *Nation* present an extremely critical view of the U.S. occupation that seems to inform Hurston's own sense of Haitian political economy. Though typically she constructs her narrative in such a way that the Haitian characters challenge her narrator's own American-biased perceptions, she herself clearly was aware of the revisionist angle expressed by Johnson. In one exchange, Hurston's informant in Port-au-Prince disputes the notion that the American forces intervened to make Haiti pay its foreign debts to America and France. Instead, the informant claims that this $40 million debt was foisted on the Haitians after the invasion, a sequence and a figure also cited in an unsigned 1926 article in the *Crisis* that was almost certainly penned by Johnson.[7] Following this colloquy, as she rips into the hypocrisy of efforts by Haitian president Sténio Vincent to characterize himself as the second national liberator (after Toussaint) since the Marines had departed during his tenure, the narrator of *Tell My Horse* insists that "the N.A.A.C.P., The Nation and certain other organizations had a great deal more to do with the withdrawal of the Marines than Vincent did and much more than they are given credit for" (351). Hurston also uses the exchange with her anonymous Port-au-Prince informant to register critical commentary on the 1937 massacre of Haitian braceros, or migrant sugarcane workers, at the Haiti–Dominican Republic border.[8]

While Hurston thus takes her place in a long tradition of African American commentators who respond to Caribbean societies critically but with sympathy and solidarity, at other times the narrator seems thoroughly invested in Yankee imperialism. For instance, the chapter describing the U.S. occupation treats this ordeal as a positive development in nation building, as the chapter title, "Rebirth of a Nation," indicates. Readers might be inclined to perceive a veiled ironic reference to D. W. Griffith's infamous film *Birth of a Nation*, which would make the occupation an exercise in white supremacist nation building. Certainly on the surface, though, Hurston's narrator unabashedly celebrates the arrival of U.S. warships in Port-au-Prince, claiming, "The smoke from the U.S.S. *Washington* was a black plume with a white hope" (337). Meanwhile, her pronouncements on Haitian character, such as her contention that lying is a "habit [that] goes from the thatched hut to the mansion" (346), situate this text in another long line of commentators—those European and North American travelers to the region who, beginning with Columbus, find some pathological flaw in Caribbean identity and who, as well, stress the necessary and inevitable dependence of Caribbean natives on the modernizing influence of superior, colonizing forces.

Columbus initiated the European discourse on Haiti and the Caribbean with his 1493 *Letter of Christopher Columbus on the Discovery of America*, a text that inaugurates the imperialist tradition of depicting Caribbean society as tainted by underdevelopment, ignorance, and superstition. Human settlements in Juana (Cuba) are described in the *Letter* as primitive and undeveloped. There are "no towns or cities situated on the sea-coast, but only some villages and rude farms," and farther inland the native settlements are "small and without any government" (2–3). Columbus finds the Taino natives of Hispaña (Hispaniola) "by nature fearful and timid" yet "of simple manners and trustworthy." Though they trade gold for baubles "like persons without reason," nevertheless they are "of excellent and acute understanding," and ready to accept Columbus as divine. "They firmly believe," Columbus writes of the Taino, "that all strength and power, and in fact all good things are in heaven, and that I had come down from thence with these ships and sailors" (5–6). The idea of native ingenuousness functions as a crucial factoid in Columbus's attempt to sell the Spanish Crown on a colonizing mission based as much on the promise of Christianizing pagan souls as on the prospect of gold.

By the time of Moreau de St. Méry, who wrote about colonial Saint Domingue on the eve of revolution, indigenous people had long since been replaced by mulattoes and blacks as the focus of white travelers' protoethnographic observation.[9] Numerous commentators precede Moreau in detailing the interracial

mores of Saint Domingue, which was known popularly as the "Babylon of the Antilles" and the "second Sodom" (Dayan, "Codes of Law" 42). It is, however, Moreau's monumental *Description topographique, physique, civilie, politique, et historique de la partie française de l'île Saint-Domingue* (1797/98) that contains, in its descriptions of vodou rituals, the first extended treatment of Caribbean popular culture. Moreau responds to vodou with both fascination and revulsion, characterizing it as "this system of domination on the one side and of blind submission on the other" (54). In spite of the secrecy that, according to Moreau, surrounds the practice of vodou, he offers a full description of a ceremony. Moreau's text emphasizes the physical aspects such as the dress and bodily movements of those possessed during the ritual. "Faintings and raptures take over some of them," he writes, "and a sort of fury some of the others, but for all there is a nervous trembling which they cannot master. They spin around ceaselessly. And there are some in this species of bacchanal who tear their clothing and even bite their flesh" (58).

There is no mention of vodou as a spiritual system with a fully developed theology. In Moreau's denunciation of vodou as a "dark cabal" and "terrible weapon" (59), the anticlerical and antiroyalist sentiments of a French Enlightenment thinker achieve simultaneous expression with the anxiety of a French colonial overlord in a society about to explode. "The members propose some plans," according to Moreau, "they stop some overtures, they prescribe some action which the Voodoo Queen supports, always as the will of God, and which do not always have public order or public tranquility for their object. . . . After all, voodoo is not a matter of amusement or enjoyment. It is rather a school where those easily influenced give themselves up to a domination which a thousand circumstances can render tragic" (58–59). While admitting the power of vodou (even white interlopers are liable to be possessed at a ceremony), Moreau insists on the perception of popular religion as sinister and pathological.

In nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century travel writing, pathological designations continue to apply in descriptions of vodou. They are broadened, though, to describe Haitian culture generally in texts whose main function was to evaluate Haiti's commercial possibilities in the wake of a nationalist revolt and embargoes by France and the United States. Where Moreau had emphasized the threat posed to colonial civil society by what he viewed as a morass of popular superstition, British writer John Candler typifies the argument, still current in Hurston's time, that majority rule in postrevolutionary Haiti resulted in a return to the jungle. Published in 1842, Candler's *Brief Notices of Hayti: With Its Condition, Resources, and Prospects* laments the demise of the plantation system, particularly on Haiti's southwest peninsula. "The old mountain estates are fast declining," Candler writes, and he describes the land

as "ruinate" (144). Believing, like most of his European and North American contemporaries, in the wisdom of returning Haiti to a subordinate place in the world system, Candler emphasizes the potential for reestablishing an export economy based on coffee and sugar. The fact that Haitian peasants are not pursuing cash crop strategies, or not pursuing them as diligently as he thinks they might, leads Candler to assert "the natural indolence of the people" (159). Still, Candler is optimistic that modern improvements are possible: "education and the spread of gospel truth only, were needed to make this land one of the finest on the face of the globe" (143–144).[10]

The European and North American tradition of commentary reaches its nadir in the narratives of U.S. voyagers whose presence in the Caribbean increases after 1898 and the Spanish-American War. In 1906, traveling to destinations he had helped subjugate during the previous decade while serving as a high-ranking officer in Cuba and then as commander in chief, Theodore Roosevelt described Haiti in a letter to his son. Noting the "green, jungly shores and bold mountains" of these "great, beautiful, venomous tropical islands," Roosevelt is gripped by a vision of "the desperate fighting, the triumphs, the pestilences, all the turbulence, the splendor and wickedness, and the hot, evil, riotous life of the old planters and slave owners" (quoted in Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers* 2–3). The colonial past constitutes an unstable foundation on which have sprung up nightmarish contemporary social relations characterized by "the decay of the islands, the returning of Haiti into a land of savage negroes, who have reverted to voodooism and cannibalism" (ibid.). Throughout the years between 1910 and 1940, images of Haiti and Haitians, brought back to American readers in press accounts and sensationalist novels, travel diaries, and memoirs of occupation officials, deviate hardly at all from the fantasy projection script recorded in Roosevelt's letter. A partial list of titles suggests the contours of U.S. popular imagination where Haiti is concerned: *Diane, Voodoo Priestess*; *Where Black Rules White*; *The Magic Island*; *A Puritan in Voodooland*; *The White King of La Gônave*; *Cannibal Cousins*; *Black Baghdad*. These images reinforced an elusive but ironclad veil of cultural difference effectively thrown over Haitian society by white American writers. The key to this discursive veil is a pattern of binary oppositions that will sound depressingly familiar to any student of modern ideologies of race and gender. As Dash argues in *Haiti and the United States*, Haiti and Haitian people were consistently coded as Other by U.S. commentators seeking to textualize Caribbean encounters for white readers in North America.[11]

Even Melville Herskovits, the esteemed scholar of New World African survivals and Hurston's one-time associate at Columbia University, participates in this pattern of representing Caribbean culture as pathological. Herskovits's

Life in a Haitian Valley, published just a year before *Tell My Horse*, is the most important anthropological text on Haiti authored by a U.S. writer prior to Hurston's visit. In the chapter "What Is 'Voodoo'?" Herskovits vigorously attacks the popular North American prejudice that, largely due to the excesses of vodou, Haitians live "in a universe of psychological terror." Debunking these popular misconceptions, Herskovits identifies vodou as "a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the life of the Haitian peasant." Even more specifically, in Mirebalais, the village where Herskovits did his fieldwork, vodou signifies "a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit possession or merely a dance" (139). So far, this reads like a progressive cultural relativist judgment. At the margins of his text, though, Herskovits reiterates the dominant North American image of Haitian society as pathological, thus complicating his own position as humanist and cultural relativist. "Some Wider Implications" is a speculative chapter at the end of *Life in a Haitian Valley* in which Herskovits connects his analysis of Haiti with "larger problems" (300) in cultural studies. In particular, a study of vodou might, he suggests, illuminate aspects of the "Negro problem" in the United States, since understanding Haitian society can "throw light on the way in which American Negroes have met and are meeting their own social situation" (303). Herskovits, though, reverts to traditional imperialist travelogue rhetoric when he attempts to describe Haitian psychology and refers to "the characteristic instability of attitude and emotional expression found in the Haitian" (298). Beneath a culturalist gloss on the unhappy collision of French and West African customs, Herskovits is recycling old colonialist anxieties about miscegenation. "As regards the Haitian," he concludes, "it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization" (299).

While, as a group, these texts authored by white U.S. writers exhibit a hyper–race consciousness that gives them their own national cultural specificity, they should also be seen as part of a larger tradition of depicting Caribbean culture as flawed and in need of outside assistance. Hurston's own narrator, when she celebrates the stabilizing influence of the U.S. intervention, or when she generalizes about the Haitian character, voices this triumphalist ideology of empire that stretches back through Roosevelt, Candler, and Moreau, to Columbus.

Can we possibly sort out the conflicting tendencies of this problematic narrator, who inscribes both the liberating tradition of African American travel writing and the oppressive weight of imperialist culture in the Caribbean?

The solution begins with realizing that Hurston's narrator is not the locus of authority—or the sole locus of authority—in the text. Instead, there is a constant parade of informants who talk back to the roving narrator, criticizing her judgments and refusing—more and more frequently as the narrative unfolds—to cooperate with her fieldwork inquiries. As such, this ethnographizing narrator functions more as a persona, as a character in a larger (ethnographic) drama. Once we dethrone Hurston's roving narrator, we can then look for clues to the narrative politics of this background drama, which, in my view, has a strong anti-imperialist message. In fact, Hurston adapts and adopts the language of vodou spirit possession as a strategy for staging scenes of social protest, and in her descriptions of Caribbean culture, fables of self-reliance increasingly come to displace the fables of dependency that mark the early part of the text. Moreover, as I suggest in the conclusion of this chapter, her ethnography derives much of its decolonizing force from the emphasis placed in the text on exposing the gender politics that shape Caribbean culture. On several levels, then, Hurston actually reconstructs an anti-imperialist ethnographic rhetoric that repudiates the instrumental marketplace logic that would convert Haitian and Jamaican cultures into exotic spicy morsels and/or manipulable social science data. Ultimately, Hurston refuses to serve up Haiti or Jamaica, either in easily digested popular stereotypes or authoritative ethnographic pronouncements. Hurston not only presents a criticism of ethnography and the dominant tradition of representing Caribbean culture, she also elaborates a model for decolonizing cultural production consistent with the legacy of African American and Caribbean solidarity that is the focus of this study.

ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE LANGUAGE OF INDIGENOUS PROTEST

About halfway through the text, after a mytho-prophetic account of Haitian history and a catalog of vodou deities and their characteristics, Hurston begins to present scenes of vodou culture in process. At this point she has traveled to the Isle de la Gônave, located in Port-au-Prince Bay, about thirty nautical miles west-northwest of the Haitian capital. This location was made notorious in the cultural mythology of the occupation with the arrival of Faustin Wirkus, a Marine Corps sergeant who, in 1923, was parachuted in to oversee tax collection and was, in time, allegedly crowned king by the island's 10,000 inhabitants. Hurston has disparaging things to say about Wirkus, who in a sensationalistic autobiography styled himself "the white king of la Gônave." What interests me here, though, are the stories she records concerning some stone relics scattered

about the island, left behind by the long-since-exterminated Taino population. The stones are priceless to the Haitians, who consider them to be sacred, inhabited by *lwa*, or vodou spirits, yet American Marines—Wirkus's subordinates—are collecting the stones for their own use as souvenirs, marketable trinkets, or museum pieces. In itself, this scenario captures much of the logic of unequal exchange that characterizes cultural imperialism (Schwarz 178). One of Hurston's stone tales, however, reveals a particular form of indigenous backlash against the American bureaucratic war machine:

> We heard about one famous stone that had so much power that it urinated. It was identified as Papa Guedé, who had ordered it to be clothed, so it wore a dress. It attracted so many people and caused so much disturbance indoors that the owner had it chained outside the door. One of the American officers of the Occupation named Whitney saw it and finally got it for himself. It was a curious idol and he wanted it for his desk. The Haitian guard attached to Whitney's station told him that it would urinate and not to put it on his desk but he did so in spite of warning and on several occasions he found his desk wet and then he removed it to the outdoors again. They said he took it away with him to the United States when he left. (*Folklore* 401)

While somewhat oblique as a criticism of the occupation (even though the implications of pissing on state papers seem straightforward enough), this vignette inscribes a narrative politics of resistance that emerges more explicitly when the identity of the *lwa* inspiriting the prodigious stone is traced throughout the text. Papa Guedé is described in a subsequent chapter as "the deification of the common people of Haiti. The mulattoes give this spirit no food and pay it no attention at all. He belongs to the blacks and the uneducated blacks at that. He is a hilarious divinity full of the stuff of burlesque. This manifestation comes as near a social criticism of the classes by the masses in Haiti as anything in all Haiti. . . . He bites with sarcasm and slashes with ridicule the class that despises him" (494).

Even more important in deciphering the narrative politics in *Tell My Horse* is the fact that Hurston's title links her text with the protest of Papa Guedé's servitors. "Tell my horse" is an English-language equivalent of the Kreyol phrase "*parlay cheval ou*," which is uttered by devotees to signal the onset of spirit possession by Papa Guedé. The *lwa* mounts a subject "as a rider mounts a horse," and, guided by the spirit-rider, "the 'horse' does and says many things that he or she would never have uttered un-ridden" (495). Hurston also insists that serving Papa Guedé can be a means for expressing veiled or coded protest by those who "are feigning possession in order to express their resentment general

and particular. That phrase, 'Parlay Cheval Ou,' is in daily, hourly use in Haiti and no doubt it is used as a blind for self-expression" (496). This identification with the *lwa* of social protest serves as the crux of Hurston's larger text-building strategy: "tell my horse" is a blind for Hurston's own self-expression, allowing her to criticize not only the U.S. presence but also the locally compounded practices of race, class, caste, and gender oppressions that Caribbeans inflict on one another. In Hurston's hands, then, ethnography becomes "possessed"; she makes it speak in a language of indigenous protest. In addition, though, we should view *Tell My Horse* as a critique of ethnography as a form of knowledge and see Hurston as working to produce a dissenting form of transnational culture grounded in the logic of a decolonizing contact zone. In particular, *Tell My Horse* manifests the sort of "critique of the commodity form" Paul Gilroy has associated with African diasporan manipulations of public space (*There Ain't No Black* 198).

To specify how this oppositional framework applies in Hurston's case, we have to recall the description of anthropology as "the child of imperialism" and consider how ethnography collaborates at a crucial moment in the history of empire by coding and commodifying indigenous cultures—producing them in ways that maintain a subordinate relationship to metropolitan power.[12] Working mostly with Latin American models, Armand Mattelart has characterized the postcolonial process generally as one of global restructuring beyond the network of nation-states. Formerly colonized territories and the people who live in them are both objects and subjects in this struggle—players as well as the prize vied for by multinational capital. Mattelart defines the terms of the struggle of third world peoples as a fight between dependency and self-reliance. In particular, this period of restructuring political economies beyond the framework of nation-states is characterized by the increasing use of cultural technologies to help solve the political problems that inhibit the further accumulation of capital:

> The culture industry, and in a broader sense the information industry, is increasingly considered in our societies not only as an economic way out of the crisis [in accumulation] (notice that information has been set up as an essential factor of production, a basic resource), but equally as a political way out of the crisis (one no longer talks only of the information industry but also the information *society*). As a producer of consensus between groups and classes, as much at the national as at the international level, it is called upon to participate in the restructuring of attitudes or to use the words of [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, who takes his desires for reality, to allow a "new planetarian consciousness" to be elaborated. (14)

Even progressive and radical ethnographers must contend with the way in which anthropological labor helps manage the transition from direct colonial rule to indirect neocolonial domination (interestingly, *Tell My Horse* looks at examples of both) by packaging indigenous cultures. In this analytic view, ethnography figures as a culture or information industry apparatus that serves the interests of multinational capital by commodifying or streamlining ethnographized cultures for smoother insertion in a revised global order. This insertion can occur through any number of forms ranging from ethnographic films (*The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Serpent and Rainbow*, and so forth), to country profiles for the World Bank or U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) studies on how to manipulate local leadership most effectively.[13] Within the specific framework of representations of Caribbean culture, what links ethnographic writing like Herskovits's and even Katherine Dunham's with the history of European and North American travel culture from Columbus to the present is the production of a symptomatic vision of Caribbean "natives" as dependent in some way on first world society.[14] Sometimes childlike, sometimes savage, always archetypally underdeveloped, Caribbean societies consistently appear in ethnographic travel documents as desperately needing, if not desperately seeking, outside intervention of some kind.

FIRE TALES: DEPENDENCY VERSUS SELF-RELIANCE

Against this backdrop of predatory transnationalism, however, Hurston presents instead a pattern of dissident transnationalism. If, as anthropologist and cultural theorist Johannes Fabian argues, anthropological writing is "a praxis of representation in a context of power" (767), *Tell My Horse* also must be seen as a textual practice that reconfigures the typical power relations enacted by anthropological texts. Hurston disengages from ethnography's codification/commodification program by constructing an ethnographic drama in which fables of Caribbean dependency are displaced by fables of self-reliance. Though there are many series of scenes that establish this pattern, I will confine myself to two anecdotes concerning the use of fire, which I take to be an archetype for the Promethean, politically charged force of technology in the colonial encounter.

When she arrives at the Maroon compound in Accompong, during the Jamaican leg of her journey, Hurston honors the community as a site of successful black liberation, yet she notes critically the stagnation produced by centuries of isolation from the flow of world events:

> Standing on that old parade ground, which is now a cricket field, I could feel the dead generations crowding me. Here was the oldest settlement of freedmen in the Western world, no doubt. Men who had thrown off the bands of slavery by their own courage and ingenuity. The courage and daring of the Maroons strike like a purple beam across the history of Jamaica. And yet as I stood there looking into the sea beyond Black River from the mountains of St. Catherine, and looking at the thatched huts close at hand, I could not help remembering that a whole civilization and the mightiest nation on earth had grown up on the mainland since the first runaway slave had taken refuge in these mountains. They were here before the Pilgrims had landed on the bleak shores of Massachusetts. Now, Massachusetts had stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Accompong had remained itself. (*Folklore* 293–294)

Hurston finds the present-day Maroons "very primitive"—what amounts to a historical cul-de-sac. A clear sign of this stagnation is the fact that "there was not a stove in all Accompong. The cooking, ironing and whatever else is done, is done over an open fire with the women squatting on their haunches and inhaling the smoke" (ibid. 295). Very quickly, this arouses an interventionist impulse in Hurston and leads to her most active engagement with Caribbean people in the entire narrative:

> I told Rowe [the leader of the Maroons] that he ought to buy a stove himself to show the others what to do. He said he could not afford one. Stoves are not customary in Jamaica outside of good homes in the cities anyway. They are imported luxuries. I recognized that and took another tack. We would build one! I designed an affair to be made of rock and cement and Colonel Rowe and some men he gathered undertook to make it. We sent out to the city and bought some sheet tin for the stove pipe and the pot-holes. I measured the bottoms of the pots and designed a hole to fit each of the three. The center hole was for the great iron pot and then there were two other holes of different sizes. Colonel Rowe had some lime there, and he sent his son and grandchildren out to collect more rocks. His son-in-law-to-be mixed the clay and lime and in a day the furnace-like stove was built clear across the side of the room so that there was room on it for pots and pans not in use. The pot-holes were lined with tin so that the pots would not break the mortar. Then we left it a day to dry. We were really joyful when we fired it the next day and found out that it worked. Many of the Maroons came down to look at the miracle. There were pots boiling on the fire; no smoke in the room but

a great column of black smoke shooting out of the stove pipe which stuck out of the side of the house. (ibid.)

Beyond Hurston's justified pride in Maroon history, despite her politic sensitivity to cultural values shaped by economic class position (the Maroons had seen stoves as "imported luxuries"), and beneath a strong argument for Pan-African solidarity (conveyed in the final image of rising black smoke), which suggests that successful black liberation in the twentieth century demands a hybrid union of intellectual and physical labor, the details in this anecdote coalesce into what is, fundamentally, a fable of dependency. Hurston narrates from the position of a semidivine Prometheus bringing fire and general modernizing technical skills to lesser mortals. The Maroons occupy this latter position as recipients of the Promethean gifts and confirm the asymmetry of the contract by viewing as a "miracle" the process that Hurston has just laid out in detail for readers to whom (presumably) the account will make logical sense. To be fair, the new stove looks more like an enlightened case of sustainable, appropriate technology than a suspect case of profit-motivated technology transfer, but my reading emphasizes the message—encoded in an ostensibly friendly encounter—that Caribbean development depends, necessarily and in this case happily, on the modernizing North American culture that Hurston bears.

This visit must be read against another fire tale that appears very near the end of *Tell My Horse*. After a night of touristic partying at the home of one of her patrons in Port-au-Prince, Hurston and her host receive an invitation to attend a different kind of party in Aux Cayes, a city on the southern coast of Haiti.

[The invitation] had been passed along by word of mouth of market women until it came to the young woman in Port-au-Prince. . . . What kind of ceremony was it going to be? It was to be a ceremony where food was to be cooked without fire. Real food? Yes, a great pot of real food—enough to feed all of the people attending the ceremony—would be cooked without fire. Was such a thing *possible*? The young woman asked for a cup and saucer, a fresh piece of laundry blue, a cup of cold water and a fresh egg. No, she did not wish to acquire the egg herself for fear that we might believe that she had one prepared. Dr. Reser [Hurston's host] went out and got one himself and gave it to her. She placed it in the cup at once. Poured some of the cold water on it and covered the cup with the saucer and made a cross mark with the bluing. Then she bowed her head and mumbled a prayer for a few minutes. None of us could catch the exact words of what she said in that prayer. When it was over, she lifted the saucer and offered the egg to Dr. Reser with

a diffident smile and told him to break it. He refused on the grounds that he had on his best gray suit and did not wish to have it spatter over his clothes. At last he broke the egg very carefully and found it was done. That was startling enough. But the realest surprise came when the egg was found to be harder in the center than anywhere else. The young woman now begged him to eat the egg. He was so reluctant to do so that it was necessary for her to coax him a great deal, but she prevailed at last and he ate the egg. Then she assured him that he would never die of poisoning. He would always be warned in time to avoid eating poisoned food or touching poisoned surfaces. Would he now accept the invitation to the ceremony? He would, with great unction and avidity. (523–524)

Hurston and Reser duly attend the ceremony, which she describes in great ethnographic detail, noting the physical makeup of the *hounfort* (vodou compound), the menu for the feast, the clothing of the vodou servitors, the music and dance steps associated with the ritual, and so on. At length they eat the food, but Hurston's first world appetite for anthropological data is still not satisfied. She writes:

How was the food cooked? I do not know. Dr. Reser and I tried bribery and everything else in our power to learn the secret but it belongs to that small group and nothing we could devise would do any good. Dr. Reser knew the girl who had boiled the egg in cold water very well indeed. I would say that they are very intimate friends. He concentrated upon her finally, but all she would say was that it was a family secret brought from Africa which could not be divulged. He kept at her and she yielded enough to say that she could not tell him until he had been baptized in a certain ceremony. He went to the trouble and the expense to have the baptism. After that was over, she returned to her original position that it was an inherited secret which she could not divulge under pain of death. So this is how far we got on with the food-without-fire ceremony. (524–525)

At this point, we might ask, did Hurston *really* see the egg cooked in cold water, or the feast cooked without fire, and if we cannot trust this story, what about the rest of *Tell My Horse*? Yet what is ingenious about the narrative is that, like the young woman from Aux Cayes, it resists such prying interrogative demands. The dynamics of Hurston's blocked attempt to decode the ritual text transfer to and serve as an allegory for readers' own efforts to unpack the information in Hurston's ethnography. Like the African family secret at the heart of the vodou ceremony, the truth content of Hurston's account is not so much put into doubt

as it is put beyond the reach of instrumental reason, manifested here in the fieldworkers' attempt to gain, by "bribery and everything else in our power," access to the local technical know-how contained in the ritual.

Instead, what we are left to chew on is the fact of this indigenous resistance and its implications for reading the narrative politics of *Tell My Horse*. As I suggested earlier, my inclination is to see this as a fable of self-reliance that displaces the earlier fable of dependency used by the narrator to encode her encounter with the Accompong Maroons. Hurston's engineering skills are ultimately irrelevant in a cultural setting where Haitians are technologically self-sufficient and cannily able to fend off two ethnographers with their insistent demands.[15] In this Haitian fire tale, it is the Caribbeans who appear semidivine, not Hurston, and no amount of ethnographic sleuthing will rationalize or secularize their feat. The food-without-fire description not only blocks the narrator's gaze, and that of her readers, but it also repudiates the modernizing program of first world social sciences. It is, then, as a form of grassroots cultural resistance that the alleged magical aspects of Haitian folk religion assume their meaning in Hurston's text. *Tell My Horse* does not present a romanticized picture of vodou as primitive magic, or as an essential marker of savage identity in the bush. Rather, vodou becomes coded as magical in the context of an encounter with predatory first world science. Actually, the possibility that vodou practices have scientific—rather than magical—status is something that Hurston considers in her chapter on zombies. In it, she records a conversation with a Haitian doctor who speculates that "many scientific truths were hidden in some of these primitive practices that have been brought from Africa." As in the case of the food-without-fire incident, though, these "scientific truths" are withheld: despite attempts by the Haitian doctor to unlock the secrets of peasant herbalists, "never had he been able to break down the resistance of the holder of those secrets" (480). For Hurston, asserting the magical aspects of vodou must be seen as a strategy of representation, that is, as an effort to describe the ethnographic encounter in a way that preserves the resistance of Haitian peasants.

All of this brings us back to questions of representation: how Caribbean cultures have been imagined, and for whom. Once released into the marketplace, *Tell My Horse* does not perform as expected (that is, by serving up the ethnographized culture for easy consumption). Caribbean people are not presented as exotic morsels—noble savages, bloodthirsty savages—neither are they transformed into manipulable data for social planners. What they "are" is strategically left indiscernible. Combined with the black liberationist itinerary, the anticolonial and antisexist protest, and the movement toward depictions of Caribbean self-reliance as the text moves geographically from Jamaica to Port-au-Prince and into the Haitian countryside, the inscriptions of *Tell My Horse*

enact a formal logic that radically reworks ethnography, orienting it toward pragmatic liberation via African diasporan cultural politics.

GENDER, REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE, DECOLONIZATION

Up to this point, I have concentrated on showing how Hurston decolonizes ethnography by making it speak in a language of indigenous social protest, and by disrupting the institutional practices of an imperialist cultural marketplace. But I have considered only in passing the role of gender analysis in her anthropology. Yet gendered and gendering cultural descriptions are at the core of her ethnographic method, and since *Tell My Horse* expands the scope of decolonization by equating Hurston's research with the struggle to author female subjectivity, it is both appropriate and necessary to now centralize the question of gender and decolonization. Hurston's work in *Tell My Horse* places her precisely at the point where cultural decolonization intersects with the work of women writing. In addition, her nearly unique status as a black female anthropologist in the field during the 1930s—at once an anthropological insider by virtue of her talents, training, and ambition, as well as an outsider by virtue of closeness to the experience of her informants and exclusionary racist and sexist social practices—creates possibilities for North American and Caribbean dialogue with the potential to mediate, or at least illuminate in important ways, the divisions separating first and third world women. To conclude my argument for the importance of *Tell My Horse* as a theoretical and practical model of cultural decolonization, I consider how Hurston explores the legacies of colonialism in the Caribbean from the standpoint of female sexuality—particularly through the use of stories about failed romance—while examining closely how her rhetoric articulates and negotiates the tension between solidarity among women, on the one hand, and, on the other, a first world/third world division. Significantly for the larger argument of this project, Hurston's ability to apply the decolonizing logic of African American and Caribbean solidarity in this way transforms the blind spots of gender elitism that limit the liberating potential of revolutionary nationalism for women.[16]

In Hurston's ethnography, gendered cultural descriptions play a crucial mediating role and deserve special mention. Her dialectical formula, "It is a curious thing to be a woman in the Caribbean after you have been one in these United States" (326), asserts a relation between Hurston's identity and that of her informants on the basis of gender (firsthand experience of what it means "to be a woman"). Simultaneously, it differentiates Hurston from her informants at the level of national community and regional geopolitics. In

addition, this formula presumes a similarity between the highly differentiated social terrain in Haiti and Jamaica, both of which are subsumed under the regional terminology of Hurston's chapter title. Thus gender is posed as a category that can mediate social divisions in the Caribbean as well as enable communication (and, potentially, coalition) across the international division of labor separating North Americans and Caribbeans, as well as Caribbeans from one another.

Much of what Hurston writes in *Tell My Horse* deals with the struggle for control over female sexuality and how the cultural definition of "woman" is constructed and contested within the matrix of Caribbean colonial culture. Consequently, gendered cultural descriptions permeate Hurston's accounts of Caribbean mores. A curry goat feed given in her honor in St. Mary's Parish, Jamaica, is noteworthy because it "has never been done for another woman." The feast itself is described as "utterly masculine in every detail" (284), and Hurston's catalog of the menu is full of phallic imagery: cock soup, ram goat, banana dumpling, and more. Particularly in the first five chapters of *Tell My Horse*, Hurston's insistent gendering of social texts centralizes the focus on sexism in a way that lets her explore and criticize women's oppression as a foundational element in Jamaican society. For example, Hurston pays close attention to the sexual division of labor among the groups she visits and gives repeated, extensive treatment of the official and unofficial routines used to enforce gender roles. "If she is of no particular family, poor and black, [a Caribbean woman] is in a bad way indeed in that man's world," Hurston writes. "She had better pray to the Lord to turn her into a donkey and be done with the thing. . . . It is just considered down there that God made two kinds of donkeys, one kind that can talk. The black women of Jamaica load banana boats now, and the black women used to coal ships when they burned coal" (327).

In addition to exposing a racialized sexual division of labor that brutalizes black Caribbean women, Hurston focuses extensively on marriage customs. Marriage rites constitute a key cultural arena in which sex, class, and color caste ideologies reproduce a rigidly stratified Caribbean social weave. Through marriage to richer and/or lighter-skinned women, propertied men ensure inheritance and color privilege. Because rich men will not marry outside their class, upper-class women have a comparative benefit—even over their Yankee counterparts—in that their standard of living is guaranteed (as long as the Caribbean native bourgeoisie remain capitalized). Yet the price of this security is complicity in a system in which "all women are inferior to all men by God and law" (326–327). In addition to being coerced by an external social machinery (statutes, property and paternity laws, and so forth), women are taught to internalize the proper behavior and consciousness through a variety of rituals.

One extended passage records a Jamaican prenuptial initiation rite that concludes with a strict interpellation code being drummed into the bride-to-be: "The whole duty of a woman is love and comfort. You were never intended for anything else. You are made for love and comfort. Think of yourself in that way and no other" (292).

Hurston's early hintings at the male hypocrisy enshrined in marriage customs (286–287) are confirmed subsequently in the chapter "Women in the Caribbean." She recounts several anecdotes from both Haiti and Jamaica that describe the fate of women who are separated from men by class and/or color. As Hurston discovers, "the man has no obligation to a girl outside of his class. She has no rights which he is bound to respect. What is worse, the community would be shocked if he did respect them" (328). Rich and/or mulatto men court and seduce poor and/or black women only to abandon them in favor of more appropriate marriage partners (328–330). Though the selection criteria and standards of behavior for men toward marriageable women are influenced by color, and certainly work to confine darker-skinned women to the most disenfranchised conditions, it is economic class, in Hurston's understanding, that intensifies the oppressive nature of marriage institutions. In borderline cases where there is the possibility of a man treating a woman with some decency, class pressure reinforces exploitative action on the part of men. One union between a middle-age couple from a working-class background stands out as a telling exception to the litany of woeful marriage stories in *Tell My Horse* (287), suggesting again that economic status has a critical role in determining how individual experiences will be articulated within the framework of gendered and racialized social institutions.

In her investigation of how culture shapes the sexual life of women in the Caribbean, Hurston also highlights various forms of resistance against rampant sexism. Possession by the Haitian *lwa* Papa Guedé—the voice of strong social protest—permits one woman to cry out, before committing suicide, against the heterosexism that has censured her lesbian identity (496–497). The premarital female initiation rite Hurston observes in Jamaica constitutes a form of women's solidarity existing in the interstices of patriarchal sex-role formation. Though appearing at first glance to be the ultimate socialization of women (by women) as male sex objects—Ishmael Reed in his foreword to the Harper Perennial edition characterizes this scene as "the cultivation of Geishas for the delight of prospective grooms" (xiv)—it is worth reconsidering this ritual, in which a community of women stimulate the bride-to-be with an aphrodisiacal ganja tea and "light-fingered manipulation down the body" until she "swoons" in orgasm (291). Could we not reread this ritual as a counterinstitution establishing the priority of a woman-identified path to female sexual fulfillment?

On the whole in Hurston's account, Haitian women seem to suffer less extreme sexist abuse than their Jamaican counterparts. Interestingly, the use of gendered descriptions tapers off in the Haitian portion of the book, indicating perhaps that daily life was getting comparatively less sexist for Hurston. The gendered difference between Haiti and Jamaica is evident in the epithets Hurston assigns to each country: Jamaica, as we have seen, is "the Rooster's Nest," while Haiti is termed "the black daughter of France" (360). In Haiti, gender appears most centrally in Hurston's descriptions of androgynous cultural expressions within the realm of vodou. Stones identified with Papa Guedé are dressed in grass skirts, while cross-dressing is emphasized as an element in the rite associated with Guedé's "cousin," Baron Samedi. Erzulie Freda thoroughly confounds the gender categories. Although she is described as the quintessence of bourgeois sentimentality and heterosexuality (Hurston's Erzulie embodies "the ideal of the love bed"), typically it is men who are the mounts for Erzulie. In choosing her own "husbands," Erzulie also reverses the marriage power dynamics criticized at length earlier in *Tell My Horse* (383–393).[17]

Overall, Hurston's sense of gender politics in Haiti squares with the commentary of other observers who have noted the egalitarian aspects of vodou culture with regard to gender, and the economic and social power of Haitian market women.[18] Hurston portrays vivid scenes of empowered Haitian women who typically combine a position as *manbo*, or vodou priestess, with prominent political or economic activities. Examples include the feast-without-fire passage, in which the invitation to attend the feast is "passed along by word of mouth of market women," as well as an earlier chapter, "The Black Joan of Arc" (360–367), which recounts the military and political triumphs of Celestina Simon, a *manbo* who ruled the country along with her father for a brief period beginning in 1908. While there is a sexual division of labor in Haiti, gender differences appear to be defined more by complementarity than by power imbalances.

At the same time, Hurston does not romanticize or idealize the conditions of women in Haiti. Simon falls from power in an ironic twist after repudiating a vodou-sanctioned "marriage" to a sacred goat, Simalo, in order to pursue marriage to "a man of position and wealth" (363). The marriage plot fails, Simon and her father are thrown out of the presidential palace, and she lives out her days as "an elderly woman living in poverty in the South" (366). And, as Hurston's "Women in the Caribbean" chapter implies, the problem of patriarchal legal codes extends throughout the region—including Haiti. When looking at Hurston's portrayal of the effects of Haitian law, it bears emphasizing that as the focus in *Tell My Horse* moves from the urban center to the outlying rural regions, the conditions seem to improve for women, with scenes of

women's oppression giving way to scenes of active and empowered women. Like her Haitian indigenist contemporaries, but to an even greater extent, Hurston reevaluates the opposition between Westernized bourgeois social structures and African-influenced peasant structures that forms the basis of so much European and North American travel writing on the Caribbean and especially Haiti. Throughout her text, Hurston consistently teases out the sexual politics of social formations within which both Jamaican and Haitian women struggle for control over their bodies. On what basis, though, does Hurston connect with the condition of Caribbean women? What kind of solidarity is it that allows her to perceive and expose Caribbean gender politics?

While gender functions in *Tell My Horse* as a dialectical category that can throw into relief interlocking social divisions based on race, color, class, and nationality, Hurston never minimizes those differences in order to assert a simple or transparent sisterhood. Rather, Hurston continually marks her position as a woman from the United States. The opening passage of "Women in the Caribbean" goes on from the initial statement, "It is a curious thing to be a woman in the Caribbean after you have been one in these United States," to specify North American gendered life in terms that seem to deny the oppression of U.S. women: "The majority of the solid citizens strain their ears trying to find out what it is that their womenfolk want so they can strain around and try to get it for them" (326). With characteristic jagged harmony, this statement celebrating women's alleged good fortune in the United States is placed side by side with her extended, muckraking account of sexist political economy in the Caribbean. "Of course," Hurston writes, "all women are inferior to all men by God and law down there," and her depiction of "sex superiority" is replete with stories of rape, abandonment, and "the old African custom of polygamy"—though she also claims, concerning marital infidelity in the Caribbean, that "the finer touches of keeping mistresses come from Europe" (327). In one of the few passages containing actual bodily description, Hurston details the physical effects of neo-slave labor on black women in Jamaica. The narrative focuses on "their big toes thickened like a hoof from a life time of knocking against stones" and concludes with the comment, "everywhere in the Caribbean women carry a donkey's load on their heads and walk up and down mountains with it" (ibid.).[19] If we read back from these descriptions to the ebullient, bodacious passages concerning the life of women in the United States, the latter images seem even more incompatible with the stark picture of poverty, physical pain, and emotional abuse suffered by Caribbean women. Such passages function as indicators of the narrator's own relative privilege. Yet it is crucial to pick up on a level of dissembling that makes Hurston's claim to privilege more a narrative mask than an objective truth claim. Even a surface acquaintance with

her U.S.-based writing confirms that Hurston has compressed a meaningful, ironic silence into the phrase, "after you have been a women in these United States." What is silent here, what goes without saying because for Hurston to say it would dissemble about her relative privilege, is an awareness of women's oppression in America.[20] This goes without saying also because it is not necessary to articulate such oppression for the "you" that is mentioned several times in this chapter, "Miss America, World's Champion Woman" (326). Silence about women's oppression in the United States is thus a gendered silent crux in *Tell My Horse* that signifies to those who can read its (apparently) absent text. Self-ironizing rhetoric (which operates throughout *Tell My Horse*) helps to validate descriptions of women's experiences in the Caribbean by making clear Hurston's awareness that she occupies a different location within the social machinery of imperialism than the place occupied by her female informants. Much of the impact of Hurston's decolonizing critique stems directly from this ironic approach and its effectiveness in registering the difference between first and third world women's experiences.[21]

Recognizing Hurston's self-conscious awareness of divisions within the category "women" is a prerequisite for grasping the utopian aspects of *Tell My Horse*, which center around possibilities for dissident transnational communication and the political corollary of coalition across colonial barriers. Her ability to articulate differences in the construction of gender roles presumes an underlying identification with the oppressive conditions she encounters among Caribbean women. Not only is the narrative driven—made possible—by a silent presumption of the oppressive conditions of women's life in the United States; clearly Hurston is also experiencing abuse and condescension in interactions with many Caribbean male informants, and this becomes another ground of solidarity with Caribbean women. When she is accosted by Jamaican interlocutors—"darkish men who make vociferous love to you but otherwise pay you no mind" (326)—Hurston's narrative registers her own vulnerability to being scripted into the roles assigned for women in the Caribbean. With an irony that, in this case, directly conveys her anger rather than veiling it, Hurston complains that "if you try to talk sense, they [Caribbean men] look at you right pitifully as if to say, 'What a pity! That mouth that was made to supply some man (and why not me) with kisses, is spoiling itself asking stupidities about banana production and wages!' It is not that they try to put you in your place, no. They consider that you never had any" (ibid.).

The shared reality of living gendered female experience as alienation, negation, silencing, and displacement is a condition of possibility for Hurston being able to see and write about kinds and degrees of difference among and between Haitian, Jamaican, and North American women. Despite the distance

introduced between herself, seen as a first world anthropologist, and her informants, seen as superexploited third world laborers and household slaves, Hurston produced a text that stands as a mediating commentary not only within the Caribbean (it bridges the two legs of her journey by incorporating stories from both Haiti and Jamaica) but also between the Caribbean and North America. Even today, at a point in time when strategies for progressive anti- and counterimperial coalitions across national and regional boundaries are desperately needed, *Tell My Horse* stands out as an inspiring example of how such connections might be elaborated.

Perhaps most important for present-day readers and writers, *Tell My Horse* exposes the tension between the theory and practice of representing potentially decolonizing encounters and, ultimately, subverts the existing production modes of high theory in the process. Hurston accomplishes this by displacing social science discourse in favor of spirit possession, and by voicing a critique of ethnography as an institutional practice designed to reinforce stereotyped conceptual models of dependency and modernization. When we add to this an awareness of how gender analyses negotiate first world and third world divisions between women, it becomes clear that Hurston herself is addressing the role of cultural theory as a key problem in articulating cross-cultural dialogue. Moreover, because Hurston insists in her ethnography that we focus on writing as a form of social action, the vision of her as politically naive or hidebound needs seriously to be reexamined.[22] The writing subject that emerges from *Tell My Horse* is adept and even radical (especially when it comes to global issues) in her ability to navigate the cultural marketplace, to negotiate the cultural politics of inter-American relations, and to comment on these realms from her position as an African American woman anthropologist. The resulting style in *Tell My Horse*—hybrid and authority-subverting—constitutes not a structural flaw, but rather what Johannes Fabian terms a "critical epistemological diagnosis" of the ethnographic endeavor, which is to say "a struggle with the 'means of production' of discourse that include autobiography, political economy, relations of power, scientific canons, and literary form" (765). The implications of this critique as spelled out by Fabian are profound. "Perhaps," he suggests,

> we dare not say what we dare not hope: power relations must change. What can experimenting with genres or the critique of writing accomplish toward that end? Well, to begin with, they can help, have already helped, to undermine the kind of objectivity and the neutral nature of scientific prose. But is there a guarantee that oppressors will be less oppressive just because they become self-conscious? Consciousness-raising can only be preparatory to a critique which might have a chance of being truly subversive. (768)

While Hurston was not a writer committed to frontline political organizing, her layered, resistant writing in *Tell My Horse* reminds us how cultural representations and the institutions within which they are promulgated form a key link in maintaining oppressive imperialist power relations, as well as necessary sites of anti- and countercolonial resistance. This is a lesson that must be learned by anyone interested in decolonizing ethnography as a rhetorical and institutional practice in which diverse cultures come to terms.

Hurston's intervention, like Schomburg's, aims at reforming an existing cultural institution, remaking it according to the logic of a decolonizing contact zone in which ethnic, gendered, and class hierarchies are reversed and displaced in favor of cross-cultural articulation and popular agency. Jazz poet Jayne Cortez works in and through existing institutions as well, but in the next chapter I want to trace how African American and Caribbean solidarity converge in her work to generate the tentative emergence of new institutions that link publishers, recording artists, and literary movements with the global audiences they seek. The creation, control, and defense of new institutions advance the goals of cultural decolonization by providing a platform for intellectuals and masses to collaborate more equitably and for artists such as Cortez to refine the language of solidarity through more effective cross-cultural symbolic expression.

CHAPTER 4

Red Pepper Poetry

Jayne Cortez and Cross-Cultural Saturation

If Jazz has a future it will only be in the sphere of international (or what some people would call "multicultural") cooperation and collaboration to contest the aesthetic, political, and economic domination of post-colonial capitalism (regardless of the color of the capitalist). When will the people who create the music control the production, distribution, and consumption of the music?

—KALAMU YA SALAAM

There's just a back and forth movement that we've all had. And you know living in New York City, with so many people from the Caribbean right here, who are *friends*, it's just a back and forth, kind of give and take response to each other. You know, we're in the same struggle, you see, and we share the same ancestors, we have the same—you know, we're talking about the transatlantic slave trade and its consequences. We are *there*, we're together. We organize together.

—JAYNE CORTEZ

LIKE ARTHUR SCHOMBURG and Zora Neale Hurston, contemporary jazz poet Jayne Cortez is a person whose life and work testify to the continuing impact of New York City as a pivotal hub of decolonizing cultural contact.[1] In Cortez's case, her encounters with Caribbean writers, artists, and musicians begin in New York but connect her to a network of institutional linkages that extend far beyond her local scene. Cortez's life and poetry are defined by collaborations with major figures in the Caribbean Artists Movement, the

Negritude movement, and the Cuban revolution (to name just the most prominent formations engaged in this chapter), and these relationships clearly reflect efforts to realize the project of "cooperation and collaboration to contest the aesthetic, political, and economic domination of post-colonial capitalism" called for by Kalamu ya Salaam. The idea of institutional linkages is important generally because it supports the primary thesis of this study, which is that African American and Caribbean dialogue exists as a continuous decolonizing tradition that converges in individual lives and works. More specifically, though, in this particular convergence and the institutional conditions that make it possible and comprehensible, we can see manifested a dissident transnational poetics born of resistance to neocolonial social dynamics, in which creative energies—what the late Trinidadian and black British publisher John La Rose terms "brilliant episodes of invention" (30)—push explicitly yet undogmatically toward liberating personal and social changes.

Jayne Cortez's esteemed place in contemporary U.S. and world poetry is founded first of all on her own prodigious accomplishments in combining jazz and poetic expression. Since publishing *Pissstained Stairs and the Monkey Man's Wares* in 1969, Cortez has gone on to issue twelve volumes of poetry and nine recordings, all well received by a wide range of reviewers, and most of them produced by her own publishing house, Bola Press.[2] She has appeared in poetry, jazz, and art festivals throughout the world; had her work translated into twenty-eight languages; been featured as performer and/or expert commentator in film and video productions such as *Poetry in Motion*, *Nelson Mandela Is Coming*, *TriBeCa*, *Ana Mendieta: Fuego de la Tierra*, and *Yari Yari*, among others; and, throughout this period, put organizational energy into creative groups such as PEN, Poetry Society of America, Poet's House, and Organization of Women Writers of Africa (OWWA), as well as major intellectual projects including the Focus on Southern Africa series (at the Countee Cullen Library in Harlem), Yari Yari (an OWWA conference), and Slave Routes (at New York University).

Foundations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts have supported Cortez's work with grants, while scholars have responded with anthologies,[3] interviews,[4] and critical appraisals. Early reviews by Nikki Giovanni, Haki Madhubuti [Don L. Lee], and Eugene Redmond emphasized the poet's ability to interweave jazz and blues as structural and thematic elements; combined with her revolutionary antiracist and anticapitalist focus, this situated Cortez squarely in the black aesthetic and new black poetry frameworks.[5] D. H. Melhem has been Cortez's most important chronicler and interpreter, with two combination interview-commentaries that place Cortez's work in the widest

range of biographical, political, and aesthetic contexts. In conversation with Melhem, Cortez discusses the conjunction of work, civil rights activism, and cultural experiences in theater and music that inform her distinctive blend of class-conscious, black liberationist, internationalist, jazz-inflected militance. Jon Woodson, in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, expands usefully on the importance of bodily images, surrealism (Cortez refers to her style as "supersurrealism"), Pan-Africanism (including the influence of praise songs, griotic performance, and spiritual practices rooted in Ifa rituals and belief), and Léopold Sedar Senghor.[6] Many poems by Cortez focus on women's oppression and resistance, and her relevance to contemporary women's writing is underscored in Fahamisha Patricia Brown's introductory comments on Cortez in the *American Women Writers* anthology as well as Penelope Rosemont's introduction to the poems included in the anthology *Surrealist Women*. Melhem points out that Cortez herself views her woman-centered poems as "human rights poems" ("*MELUS* Profile" 74).

Most recently, Kimberley N. Brown and Aldon Nielsen have assessed Cortez's work in light of poststructuralist and postmodern theories.[7] Based on readings of Cortez's most militant poems—among them "There It Is," "Rape," "To the Artist Who Just Happens to Be Black," "They Came Again in 1970 and 1980"—and drawing on the title of Cortez's third volume of poems, *Scarifications*, Brown makes a strong case for the continued relevance of black aesthetic art and criticism. Such work demonstrates, as Cortez's poems do, a method for "how one can theorize through scars" (K. Brown 69). Against post-structuralist claims that Black Arts and Black Power are "simplistic" and "essentialist" movements, Brown argues that writers and critics in this tradition of "scarification theory" combine hypothetical knowledge with experience, deconstruct whiteness as universal, and present complex definitions of blackness as suffering, resistant, and healing (69, 82). In *Black Chant*, Nielsen sounds a similar note to Brown. "Mainstream critics today," he writes, "are far more likely to assume they already know what was said during the Black Aesthetic period and reargue the issues from there than to revisit the documents themselves" (17). As part of his recovery project reclaiming experimental work produced by post–World War II African American writers, Nielsen locates Cortez in a rich context of movements ranging from the Dasein and Umbra groups to Russell Atkins and the writers publishing in the Cleveland-based journal *Free Lance*, as well as writers recording with jazz artists (Elouise Loftin), musicians writing and recording poetry (Cecil Taylor), and more familiar literary work from the period by Melvin Tolson, Amiri Baraka, and Ishmael Reed. Cortez takes her place within a wide stream of radical innovators whose "calligraphy of black chant" challenges New Criticism's reactionary isolation of the poetic

word, while elaborating a "populist modernism" that anticipates/surpasses Charles Olson's projective verse concept and deconstructs the opposition between oral and written language well before the North American arrival of Barthes, Derrida, and Kristeva in translation (Nielsen, *Black Chant* 12, 26, 30, 32, 50, 153).

In a separate essay relating Cortez to experimental work by contemporary women performance artists, Nielsen focuses on the poem "I See Chano Pozo," tracing it through several versions in which the text permutates from page, to studio recording, to live stage performance. Most interestingly for the purposes of this chapter, Nielsen explores the concept of "capillary currents," or cross-cultural resonances, that link Cortez not only to the great *conguero* Chano Pozo, who is invoked in the title, but through him to the vast literary work of Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén ("Capillary Currents" 233 ff.). In fact, the capillary currents that Nielsen begins to explore are much more explicit and extensive in Cortez's oeuvre. Readers and listeners following these currents will find themselves flowing into a network of seventeen Caribbean-inspired poems revealing lived relationships, poetic allusions, and musical responses that are fully saturated with cross-cultural Caribbean connections. It is this nucleus of poems within Cortez's larger body of work that warrants her consideration as another example of how African American and Caribbean cultural dialogue takes shape as a decolonizing convergence.

Like the praise song to Chano Pozo, who came out of his Havana neighborhood, El Solar de Africa, to school Dizzie Gillespie in Afro-Cuban rhythm, cowrote such Afro-Cuban jazz classics as "Manteca" and "Cubano Be, Cubano Bop," and toured internationally with Gillespie's big band before being shot to death in a Harlem bar in 1948, the earliest of Cortez's poems in this vein are tributes to Cuban musicians.[8] Also in this category is "Chocolate (CHOK-OH-LAH-TAY)," Cortez's tribute to Armando "Chocolate" Armenteros, the virtuoso trumpeter featured in *Cachao: Como Su Ritmo No Hay Dos*, Andy Garcia's documentary on Israel "Cachao" López, the Cuban jazz bassist and composer who lays claim to the title of *mambo* creator. "When I Look at Wilfredo Lam's Paintings" celebrates the great Cuban painter and underscores Cortez's links to international surrealism, while in two more recent poems she hails another Cuban painter, Gilberto de la Nuez, and the multimedia creative phenomenon Ana Mendieta. Three poems—"Visita," "Adupe," and "In 1985 I Met Nicolás Guillén"—tell the story of Cortez's successful quest to meet fellow poet Guillén and chronicle her wider experiences in Cuba. Although half of the Caribbean-based poems deal with Cuban figures, Cortez connects with the Francophone Caribbean as well through "At a Certain Moment in History," which is dedicated to Aimé Césaire, and "The Red Pepper Poet," Cortez's elegy for the third

founding father of Negritude, Léon Gontran Damas. "Haiti 2004," referred to in the introduction, is a bicentennial tribute to the hemisphere's first black republic. Not neglecting representatives of the Anglophone islands, Cortez eulogizes Jamaican dub poet Mikey Smith in "I and I," while "States of Motion" offers a moving tribute to reggae's creative geniuses Peter Tosh and Bob Marley (as well as all those among the previously mentioned figures who were deceased at the time it was first published in 1994). There are passing references to Grenada in "Clarification/1984" and "Everything Is Wonderful," and "Shaking Things Up" is a one-off tribute to the late Trinidadian-born-and-London-based labor activist, poet, bookstore owner, and publisher John La Rose. Finally, the poem "Rum," included in a publication to accompany a thirty-year retrospective exhibit of sculpture by Cortez's husband, Melvin Edwards, is a more generalized commentary on Caribbean life circling around the riff "Caliban for literature/ Rum for reality" (*Fragments* 20).

In the pages that follow, I begin with a close reading of "Shaking Things Up" and show how the poetic details both draw upon and illuminate a network of institutional histories and linkages. Cortez and La Rose converge in the project of establishing poetry within an array of decolonizing cultural practices designed to revolutionize writing, reading, speaking, listening, publishing, learning, and more. Convergence for Cortez also entails immersion in diverse forms of Caribbean culture. I explore this process of immersion through reading several poems dedicated to Cuban artists. Because recorded versions also exist for each of these poems, it becomes possible to trace convergence, immersion, and cultural dialogue at the level of sound and performance that is central to Cortez as well as this project, which began with the musical dialogue between Marley and Mayfield. Like critics Brown and Nielsen, I argue for the continued relevance of black aesthetic cultural theory and Stephen Henderson's new black poetics in particular. In this case, my method is to apply Henderson's concepts of "mascon" and "saturation" in order to distinguish between musical and symbolic saturation, and to suggest a nuanced range of levels and modes of cross-cultural immersion in Cortez's Cuba-inspired poetry. Finally, having established a spectrum or range for cross-cultural saturation, I situate "The Red Pepper Poet" within that spectrum.

While not every version of every poem registers the same degree or type of saturation, overall, Cortez's poetry is quite deeply and successfully immersed in Caribbean culture and politics. This is important because it further clarifies the idea of African American and Caribbean dialogue as a decolonizing sphere that converges and progresses in individual lives and works. By connecting with three of the major cultural zones in the Caribbean, Cortez counters the neoimperial politics of regional fragmentation with an anti-imperial

politics of regional unification. On another level, the poems surveyed in this chapter demonstrate the salubrious effect of African American dialogue with Caribbean culture. In Cortez's Caribbean-inspired poetry, Henderson's new black poetics arguably is preserved and broadened when diasporan "mascon" elements coexist with the strictly national. A final methodological lament: although linearity demands the sequential presentation of the poems, theoretical concepts, and resultant readings, all three modes of engagement summarized here—close reading, institutional history, and applied Henderson—are relevant and necessary to any understanding of any one of the poems treated in this chapter.

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY: JOHN LA ROSE

"Shaking Things Up (For John La Rose)" is one of Cortez's many praise songs and can be found in *Foundations of a Movement*, a unique 1991 volume celebrating the tenth anniversary of the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books. The fair had been inaugurated in 1982 by John La Rose, one of the founders (along with Kamau Brathwaite and Andrew Salkey) of the Caribbean Artists Movement in 1966. La Rose, the owner of the London-based New Beacon Bookstore and New Beacon Press, organized the book fair with Jessica Huntley, who owned Bogle-L'Ouverture Editions, another independent London-based publishing house that, like La Rose's, specialized in Caribbean and third world books. Following a conversation with Darcus Howe, of the Race Today Collective, and a subsequent invitation from La Rose, Cortez attended the book fair every year beginning in 1985, and in 1990 she opened the event with a reading (see Appendix).

Because the text may be difficult for readers to locate, and because Cortez has revised the original, I quote the poem here in its entirety with the author's permission. This version, which was published in *Wasifiri* (Winter 2006), is a slightly edited update received through personal correspondence with Cortez in 2003.

The Carnival on Eastern Parkway
Boys in copper scouring pad hairdos & military fatigues
Girls camouflaging spaces with their
braids bushes dreadlocks & marcel waves
Women dressed as gladiators
grinding down on seats
in front of a soca band

Oil workers smeared with moca jumbi mud
Rumbellious honey bees
crammed into metallic body stockings
purple insect ladies kissing
red winged black skeleton men
on this Labour Day
Eshu Day
Monday
Carnival day spreading
like you
Lord Political Activator
with your bookfair mouth
of radical speech patterns
making all negatives into positives
all positives into institutions
of science education & culture
Everything united
Everyone participating
Avoiding the potholes
Accelerating the pace
at the tone of the bass moaning like
an ostrich in heat
Solitude murdering itself inside
tooth pockets of gingivitis
The storm masquerading as a tribe of pigeons in
blue sequined boots & yellow berets while
strolling next to agitated peacocks strutting in
green aviator glasses
Cults doubling up in solos of new habits
Solidarity walking the pavement in aluminum shoes

The governing trope in "Shaking Things Up" is carnival, which Cortez invokes through reference to the diasporan version that is mounted annually on Labor Day along Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway. What is La Rose's connection with carnival that Cortez should choose to make this allusion the centerpiece of her poem?

As well as being a general solidarity nod to La Rose's Trinidadian national culture and noting its dispersion into Cortez's home turf as a massive Trini-inspired but now Pan-Caribbean event, this core trope also salutes La Rose's role as coauthor of two important books on carnival. *Attila's Kaiso*, which

was published in 1983 but initially written with calypso king Attila the Hun (Raymond Quevedo) and circulated in the 1950s, is described as "the first serious study of the calypso" ("A Profile of John La Rose" 27), while *Kaiso Calypso Music*, published in 1995, is a dialogue with the most prominent latter-day calypsonian, David Rudder. Many contributors to *Foundations of a Movement* refer to La Rose's enthusiasm for participating in jump-ups and communicating a comprehensive view of carnival. Winston Best, for many years a teacher and member of the black education movement in Britain, met La Rose in 1965 when Best was a college student conducting research on calypso and carnival. As Best remembers, "John not only offered me a great deal of insight into the movement, but more than I had bargained for, he set his advice within a very sharp political context. He painted for me a most lucid and vivid picture of the Trinidad scene as it then was, gave a very erudite account of the history of calypso, carnival and the steel band movement and even went on to predict what might happen to the Trinidad situation under Eric Williams" (*Foundations* 12). Upon moving to Britain, La Rose remained active in carnival activities there, particularly the Notting Hill Carnival. Beginning in the mid-1970s, his sons Michael and Keith organized a sound system, Mas Camp and Carnival Band, around the theme of people's war, and eventually the Association for a People's Carnival (APC) (Alleyne, *Radicals against Race* 66–73).

Adopting a creative mask for performances that carry potential political force is central to carnival tradition, and is an aspect of carnival culture taken up frequently by carnivalist writers who imaginatively explore the prospects for social transformation in Trinidad and elsewhere. This sort of gesture is seen C. L. R. James's 1929 short story "Triumph," where James begins by describing the oratory and stickfighting of men from the Port of Spain barracks yards who are "for that season ennobled by some such striking sobriquet as the Duke of Normandy or The Lord Invincible," and then focuses his narrative introduction on the moment when "mimic warfare was transformed into real and stones from 'the bleach' flew thick" (*C. L. R. James Reader* 29). Later examples occur in works such as Sam Selvon's "Calypsonian," Kamau Brathwaite's poem "Caliban" in *The Arrivants*, Derek Walcott's "The Spoiler's Return," Willie Chen's stories "The Stickfighter" and "The King of Carnival" in *The King of Carnival and Other Stories*, Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*, and Edwidge Danticat's *After the Dance: A Walk through Jacmel Carnival*—to name a just few other Caribbean writers who have engaged with carnival. Cortez taps into this rich reservoir of meanings when she shifts the focus from Brooklyn Carnival to La Rose himself with a simile personifying him as "Lord Political Activator": "Carnival day spreading/like you/Lord Political Activator." By dubbing him Lord Political Activator, which is exactly the type of sobriquet mask

assumed by calypsonians during carnival season, Cortez acknowledges in a culturally literate way La Rose's history of radical activism. Though his political work in Trinidad is not referenced directly in the poem, La Rose certainly deserved the title Cortez has bestowed on him, with a record that begins in the 1940s in Trinidad when he joined with members of the Negro Welfare Cultural and Social Association (NWSCA) to form the Workers Freedom Movement (WFM), and continues into the 1950s when La Rose became general secretary of the West Indian Independence Party (WIIP) and was later involved with the Oilfield Workers Trade Union (OWTU). At the OWTU, he was active during a period of struggle culminating in radicalization of the union by George Weekes and the so-called Rebel Movement, whose platform instituted the principle of "*one man–one vote*" (*Foundations* 122, 151). Although he moved to England in 1961, La Rose remained the European representative of OWTU until his death in 2006, a fact that might be seen to echo faintly in the line "oil workers smeared with moca jumbi mud."

In London, La Rose continued to organize grassroots movements that addressed Caribbean and other black British migrant concerns about housing eviction, discriminatory educational practices in British schools, international support for imprisoned writers and progressive activists, police brutality, and continuing racist violence against black British populations (especially young people). Numerous pieces in *Foundations of a Movement* testify to La Rose's impact on the rallies, marches, and other manifestations that came about in response to the New Cross Massacre of January 18, 1981, in which thirteen mainly Caribbean-heritage teenagers were killed when a birthday party they were attending was firebombed by white racists. Writing about La Rose's insistence on open-forum mass meetings to plan strategy, multiracial coalition, and success in convincing masses of people to accept the discipline of the New Cross Massacre Action Committee, and noting the effect this leadership had on the Black People's Day of Action on March 2, 1981, black British educator and Black Parents Movement member Roxy Harris comments:

> The political importance of John's approach was made dramatically clear on the Black People's Day of Action itself. Nobody who was there could ever forget the sight of the quiet dignified figure of John at the head of this massive demonstration surrounded by many militant youths full of wild feelings, but who totally accepted his leadership. It is no coincidence that the mass black insurrections in British cities began the following month. The frustrated black youth at last had a clear political framework and sense of direction through which to channel their anger. It is highly significant that their violent reactions were not "race riots" taken randomly against white

people in general but were very specifically directed against the police who had oppressed them for so long. When the state responded throughout the 1980s by allowing more space and opportunities for black people in British society, we were able to benefit without being isolated by having the majority of white British society against us. (*Foundations* 60–61)

As Cortez develops her apostrophe to La Rose, the lyric begins to register this history more specifically:

Lord Political Activator
with your bookfair mouth
of radical speech patterns
making all negatives into positives
making all positives into institutions
of science education & culture
Everything united
Everyone participating

The phrase "making all positives into institutions/of science education & culture" signals first and foremost awareness of the book fair as an important institutionalized event. Beyond and beneath that, "institutions/of science education & culture" gives poetic shape to decades of work on La Rose's part. This started with the New Beacon book service, first located at his and Sarah White's home on Albert Road in Finsbury Park, later moving to its present position round the corner on Stroud Green Road. Then came the publishing, which was inspired by and served as a platform for cultural developments, including the Caribbean Artists Movement and the George Padmore Supplementary School (the latter as an initial response to British educational discrimination). These "science education & culture" institutions grew into the Black Parents Movement, and eventually resulted in the formation of the so-called Alliance, which brought the Black Parents Movement together with the Black Youth Movement and the Race Today Collective to comprise the principal group representing the black presence in England up through the mid-1980s.

Even though "Shaking Things Up" is a personal tribute, in the end the poem concentrates less on La Rose as a single persona. Brian Alleyne, in his recent study of La Rose and the New Beacon circle, evocatively characterizes the network of institutions surrounding New Beacon as an "archipelago of cultural activism" (*Radicals against Race* 68, 195), and this network resonates as a social backdrop for Cortez's phrase, "Everything united/Everyone participating." After those lines, the lyric moves away from the figure of John La Rose as "Lord

Political Activator" and back into the carnival crowd to consider the process of and prospects for political movement. Cortez writes:

Solitude murdering itself inside
tooth pockets of gingivitis
The storm masquerading as a tribe of pigeons in
blue sequined boots & yellow berets while
strolling next to agitated peacocks strutting in
green aviator glasses
Cults doubling up in solos of new habits
Solidarity walking the pavement in aluminum shoes

The lines "Solitude murdering itself inside/tooth pockets of gingivitis" hit with a surrealist force that is typical in Cortez's poetry, while the string of activated participles—"murdering," "masquerading," "strolling," "strutting," "doubling up," "walking"—captures a sense of progressive energy bubbling amid everyday people in the crowd that is consistent with the poet's own grassroots orientation. By folding La Rose's persona back into the crowd, moreover, Cortez has accomplished the complex task of accurately projecting the personality and political style of a leader who consistently is lauded for his humility.[9] Most important, perhaps, the poem captures a dialectical braiding not only of individual and collective but also of culture and politics. It in no way diminishes, and arguably enhances, the intellectual and aesthetic pleasure of La Rose's cultural interventions to recognize how completely rooted they are in his work with radical working-class organizations. By situating her politicized poetic tribute against the backdrop of people "playing Mas" and "jumping up," Cortez recognizes how, for La Rose, organizing frames cultural work while, reciprocally, cultural work feeds back into the organizing, enriching and clarifying it.[10] Drawing on extensive interviews with La Rose and others, Alleyne interprets book publishing and distribution as a politically significant means of enabling "socially subordinate persons" to "build up a store of cultural capital and with it their self-assurance in the face of various classist and racist exclusions they experienced in Britain" (*Radicals against Race* 131). In an earlier version of his project chronicling the New Beacon circle, Alleyne further argues that

> [La Rose] and his comrades turned to political activism and to intellectual/cultural resources in the form of radical literature for tools with which to construct counter-hegemony and resistance to domination. In book publishing and book selling, La Rose and his colleagues sought to politicise the

exclusionary cultural forms and practices of reading and writing as they were objectified for blacks in Britain. Their book selling and publishing activities were informed by a drive to disseminate the cultural history of those generally excluded from the master narratives of the rise of the modern world system. ("Slow Builder and Consolidator" 34)

A final trace of institutional history finds La Rose himself theorizing the linkages between neocolonial labor patterns, political struggles for worker empowerment, and cultural creativity. La Rose's 1995 essay "Unemployment, Leisure and the Birth of Creativity" appeared originally in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and was reprinted in the *Black Scholar*, a journal where both he and Cortez have served on the editorial board and where Cortez's poems have appeared for decades. La Rose's analysis begins with a survey of working-class campaigns throughout the twentieth century to standardize the eight-hour workday, and a comment on capitalist production modes. As postindustrial methods require less and less human inputs, making obsolete the concept of an eight-hour day, societies face the choice between "a shorter working day, a shorter working life, and more time for rest, recreation, and cultural activity" or "the continual growth of an international crisis of the underclass, with its expectations and life experiences, the descent into the drug economy with its various consequences, and the emergence of what has been called in Europe, especially during the recent French general elections, the world of 'social exclusion'" (La Rose 29). Proceeding in a materialist manner, La Rose traces "the general contraction of the labor force as a proportion of the population" and tabulates the sorry statistics that prove metropolitan elites are indeed opting for social and political choices ensuring that deindustrialization results not in "rest, recreation, and cultural activity" for the majority, but the relentless production and reproduction of an international underclass. While this perspective is not news for people who have lived under colonial domination, La Rose's analysis is noteworthy for his insistence that pathology is not the only or the inevitable result of material deprivation and social exclusion. As La Rose argues,

for tens of millions of the world's people, especially during the period of colonialism in their histories, "social exclusion" from regular work and income has been a long-term and dire experience. Yet social exclusion was not social death; social exclusion, with its enforced leisure, produced forms of cultural creativity which engendered marvels of reality, "le realism merveilleux," in Jacques Stephén Aléxis's phrase or in the words of Alejo Carpentier: "lo real maravilloso." (30)

This politicized rendering of marvelous realism as social transformation is a pivotal idea in Aléxis's "Prolegomena to a Manifesto on the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians," and worth fuller elaboration, but what is most important to follow here is the point where La Rose connects these transformations specifically to carnival culture. "In the Caribbean," he writes,

> the unemployed, in their enforced leisure, created Calypso, the famous mass popular Carnival and Steelband. It was the unemployed in Port of Spain, Trinidad, who created the language, the music, the dance, the instruments, the organizations, which gave birth and originality to these institutions. They were like any other artists—with time for withdrawal into intense moments of creativity, working for hours and hours at their art form and producing brilliant episodes of invention. (ibid.)

La Rose goes on to connect this pattern of creating out of a condition of "enforced leisure" to Jamaican reggae and African American spirituals, blues, and jazz. Here we have an explicit interarticulation of Caribbean and African American experience within a materialist framework of neocolonialism, and a suggestion of how cultural energy generated in such conditions carries a decolonizing, utopian valence with universalist implications that increase the more late-capitalism generalizes conditions of social exclusion across previously stratified boundaries of race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender. As La Rose concludes, "this theoretical outline provides the framework for a different apprehension of social exclusion beyond the negative function of social death" (31). In Cortez's poem, the trauma of social exclusion may be found in the "solitude" that murders itself "inside/tooth pockets of gingivitis." Her reference to "new habits" correlates with La Rose's claim that the creative fruit of neocolonial enforced leisure can point to positive transformations (in this case, new personal habits), while "solidarity walking the pavement in aluminum shoes" inscribes a more public, political type of transformation. Both Cortez and La Rose have consistently pushed toward such transformations in their work as artists, intellectuals, publishers, and activists.

MUSICAL VERSUS SYMBOLIC SATURATION: CUBA AND GUILLÉN

Tracing the convergence of institutional histories may further illuminate other poems in this series. "I and I" and "States of Motion" become richer with the knowledge that Cortez toured with both Mikey Smith and Peter Tosh. "Compañera," in addition to invoking the work and memory of Ana Mendieta

(*siluetas*, petroglyphs), is significant as a doorway into all of the Cuban poems, for Mendieta was a close friend and next-door neighbor of Cortez's, and it was through this connection that Cortez traveled to Cuba in 1981 with a delegation of anti-embargo artists. At the same time, Cortez had long known of Guillén's work—as well as the Negritude writers Césaire and Damas—through translations by Langston Hughes that were included in an anthology edited by Hughes, which leads us down another institutional route back to the Harlem Renaissance, suggesting once again the need for comparative approaches tuned in to the idea of how individual lives are shaped by a decolonizing convergence (Appendix).

In turning to the Cuban poems, though, another challenge (or opportunity) is presented by the fact that Cortez has recorded versions—and sometimes more than one version—of "Chocolate," "I See Chano Pozo," and "Adupe." One of the many important arguments running through Aldon Nielsen's *Black Chant* is a claim that experimental African American writing compels readers to follow the text beyond the page, particularly into engagement with sound effects grounded in jazz and blues music.[11] This is particularly the case with a writer like Cortez, who has almost as many recordings in circulation as books of poetry, who is herself a trained musician (on the cello), and who has commented repeatedly on her role as a poet in relation to music and musicians.[12] In "Poetry Music Technology," a prose statement from the 1991 volume *Poetic Magnetic*, Cortez claims that "by using music, and technology, I'm trying to extend the poet's role, which means, the poet in this situation becomes the band, the pen, paper, books, research, instruments, words and all the possibilities of the technology. . . . I am trying to move this combination of poetry, music, the poetic use of technology to a higher level. It's the poetic use of music, the poetic use of technology, the poetic orchestration of it all" (6). Despite Nielsen's judgment that "Cortez's recorded reading to music differs little from her unaccompanied reading style" (*Black Chant* 221), in many cases, when her poems are performed with musical accompaniment, they change in important ways, as Cortez herself notes about "I See Chano Pozo" (Melhem, *Heroism* 204). For many reasons, then, there is an urgent need to assess the musical elements—vocal, instrumental, and other aural effects—in Cortez's Caribbean-based poems.

The analytic vocabulary and method developed by Stephen Henderson in *Understanding the New Black Poetry* has yet to be surpassed as a heuristic device in the study of contemporary African American poetry. What I hope to demonstrate in this section of the chapter, after summarizing Henderson's critical approach, is that his theories are also valid in illuminating the cross-cultural aspects of Cortez's Caribbean-inspired poems. Such concepts as "mascon" and "saturation" can help readers identify and assess verbal or textual references to

Caribbean music; performative references to Caribbean musical styles; other nonmusical symbolic references to Caribbean culture, history, politics, and geography; and the overall effect made by these interwoven allusive gestures.[13] Henderson's framework allows us to ask critical questions such as: What idioms are appropriate for registering Caribbean cultural immersion? Where are these idioms surfacing in the mix of verbal and performative musical references? How does Cortez situate Caribbean musical and symbolic references in idioms that are national(ist), diasporan, or some as yet unspecifiable blending?

Understanding the New Black Poetry is a 400-page anthology that includes a 70-page introduction entitled "The Forms of Things Unknown" and a 15-page postscript entitled "Biographical Notes," with names, dates, and relevant information on the poets included in the anthology. Henderson's introduction is a critical manifesto in which he presents the African American poetic tradition as a dynamic product of formal expressions such as ballads, odes, sonnets, and experimental free verse interacting with folk expressions such as work songs, blues, spirituals, sermons, and more. Three principal categories—theme, structure, and saturation—aid the critic in identifying and evaluating the interplay of formal and folk genres in the new black poetry. "The great theme of Black poetry, and indeed of Black life in the United States, is liberation," Henderson writes (*Understanding* 20), and this theme achieves particular nuances in the various genres. Also relevant for the current discussion is Henderson's comment that liberation at that time included a "denial of white middle class values of the present and an attendant embrace of Africa and the Third World as alternative routes of development" (ibid. 18). This embrace of Africa and the third world is very characteristic of Jayne Cortez's poetry as a whole and the Caribbean-based poems in particular.

In writing about structural elements of new black poetry, Henderson emphasizes two main ideas: black speech as poetic reference and black music as poetic reference. Under the heading of black speech, he includes a wonderful catalog listing characteristics of black linguistic elegance, reflects on the use of blunt or rough style and obscenity, and introduces the important concept of mascon words. Explaining mascon, Henderson notes that "NASA invented the acronym to mean a 'massive concentration' of matter below the lunar surface after it was observed that the gravitational pull on a satellite was stronger in some places than in others. I use it to mean a massive concentration of Black experiential energy which powerfully affects the meaning of Black speech, Black song, and Black poetry—if one, indeed, has to make such distinctions" (ibid. 44). For Henderson, mascon expressions include words like "rock," "roll," "jelly," "bubber," and "jook," and phrases like "Hold to His hand, God's unchanging hand," "If you don't want me, baby, give me your right hand," and

"Shake a Hand, Shake a Hand" (ibid. 45). Cortez employs many of the linguistic elegance techniques in Henderson's list, and when the poetic occasion demands bluntness, she is equally at home with the rough and obscene. Indeed, while "Chocolate," "I See Chano Pozo," and "Adupe" are not particularly rough or obscene poems, Cortez is known as a poet quite capable of throwing down imagery that is memorably violent, bodily, and scatological. There are many mascon expressions in her Cuban poems and her Caribbean-based work as a whole, but immediately this raises several important questions. Do Cortez's mascon formulations transcend a national(ist) framework and achieve successful cross-cultural resonance? Can we say that her poetry includes mascon formulations rooted in Caribbean experiences? I think the answer is yes to both questions, but that remains to be demonstrated.

With respect to black music as poetic reference, Henderson again offers a useful catalog of ways in which "Black music lies at the basis of much Black poetry" (ibid. 47). With Cortez's reputation as an artist who performs and records her poetry with other trained musicians, it should not be a surprise to find important musical references in her Cuban-inspired poems. As is the case with mascon expressions, though, we have to examine closely the extent to which her musical references, both verbal and performative, qualify as cross-culturally literate.

The final major category, saturation, is Henderson's effort to provide critical terminology for evaluating the degree to which a poem communicates "Blackness in a given situation" and maintains "a sense of fidelity to the observed and intuited truth of the Black experience" (ibid. 62). Where theme and structure are more objective or descriptive/analytic, saturation is a notoriously subjective category. This is not to say it is a bad category, just more subjective. In a 1975 essay, "Saturation: Progress Report on a Theory of Black Poetry," Henderson elaborated on saturation, stating that

> degree of saturation is a concept of meteorology which is useful to use. For example, just as the atmosphere may be 70 percent saturated with moisture, so theoretically may a poem be 70 percent or more, or less, saturated with Blackness, with the referent being on the one hand fidelity to the "observed," i.e., personal and historical truth of the Black Experience; and on the other, to the intuited truth as embodied in the cultural forms, especially the music, of the folk life. (107)

Rather than holding a referendum on saturation as a concept, what I find more interesting in this context is to ask how saturation applies to Cortez's Caribbean-based poems. In particular, is it possible to claim that Cortez, who

arguably produces some of the most saturated black American poetry, achieves saturation in Caribbeanness as well?

Cortez's chorus in "Chocolate," "i like the way you blow your horn," lyrically frames the poem as a response to trumpeter Armenteros's performance, and, appropriately, the majority of images refer either directly or sometimes more elliptically to an aspect of Chocolate's musicianship.[14] Lyrically, the poem achieves cross-cultural saturation with references to Cuban locations (especially Havana), food (especially *yuka* or cassava), Cuban weather (especially hurricanes), and musical forms, including mambo, salsa, cha-cha, and rumba.[15] Musically, as performance, the poem achieves its heaviest saturation in two sections that form an intensely structured rhythmic bridge between the longer, more discursive and rhythmically free-flowing sections. In Cortez's solo recording, made in a 1982 reading in New York City where she shared the stage with Ted Joans, her delivery changes markedly in the lines "you keep the mambos inflamed/you keep the sambas in tune/you keep a tango in slides." This happens again, for a longer interlude, in the lines "through the bell through the navel through the impulses who/through the sweat through the veins through the felt covered boom/you keep the tangos in oil/you keep meringues in chrome/you keep a cha cha implunged." In both sections, Cortez's rhythmic shift announces the distinctive clave pattern associated with the Cuban *son*, which is the building block for all Cuban dance forms. The *son* clave pattern is always a variation of five notes distributed over a four-beat space, divided into a syncopated 3-2 or 2-3 sequence that can be notated /// // or // ///. In the first bridge of "Chocolate," this pattern emerges completely only once, as a full 2/3. Appropriately, it appears immediately after Cortez's lyric calls attention to rhythm and the way Chocolate's tone strides and modulates ("stridulating") "through time effects":

[/ /] [/ / /] [/ /]
you keep the mambos inflamed/you keep the sambas in tune/you keep a tango in slides

With the second bridge, a 3/2 pattern is more pronounced:

[/ / /] [/ /]
through the bell through the navel through the impulses who

[/ / /] [/ /]
through the sweat through the veins through the felt covered boom

The instruments and voice in Cuban *son* play off the clave pattern—rarely on the beats—and though it is hard to notate this formal element in Cortez's bridge, clapping or hitting two sticks (any two objects will do) along with the recording reveals that in this section her vocal metrics fit seamlessly with a 3/2 beat.

The clarity and intensity of musical saturation in these bridges derive from the fact that a voice-driven solo performance is necessarily concentrated and focused. In the version of "Chocolate" recorded with musicians on the album *Maintain Control*, Cortez's evocation of the *son* clave beat is much less pronounced because she is responding to a range of musical ideas coming from the band. In this recording, musical saturation is indicated initially by Bern Nix's guitar pattern, which is a I–IV–V progression readily linked to "Guantanamera" or any number of *sones*. Bassist Al McDowell and drummer Denardo Coleman tend to straighten out the rhythm, pulling Nix in the direction of Nigerian highlife as well as occasional hints of Haitian *konpa* with downbeat cymbal splashes, but a background percussion section including congas, cowbell, and *guiro* (scratcher) pushes the sound back toward saturation in Cuban musical idioms. Cortez responds to the more eclectic diasporan (as opposed to strictly Cuban national) musical mix by introducing African lyrics to signal solo breaks after stanzas four, five, six, and midway through seven.[16] In making the above distinctions, I am trying to indicate a difference in kind, not degree, of musical cross-cultural saturation.

Consideration of "I See Chano Pozo," which appears on the 1982 record *There It Is* and in a live performance filmed on a soundstage for *Poetry in Motion*, Ron Mann's movie from the same year, yields similar analytic results. Intense lyrical saturation is immediately evident: with the long list of African-named Cuban drums and the naming of Santeria secret societies, "Lucumi, Abakua," listeners are chanted into the presence of Chano Pozo. The performative musical saturation is also intense, though the musicians disperse or defamiliarize Caribbean musical idioms. Aldon Nielsen has written a definitive account of the nuances that make these two performances distinct from each other though remaining similar as expressions of "difference within familiarity" and "the core of possibility in jazz text" ("Capillary Currents" 228). There is no need to rehearse Nielsen's excellent observations in detail, though I would say I hear more "familiarity" within the overarching "difference" of the music (assuming that familiarity in this context means proximity to Cuban music as poetic reference, and difference means distance from same). In the terms of my applied Hendersonian framework, there is more cross-cultural musical saturation than would be allowed for in Nielsen's comment that, musically, the guitar and bass "seem to be free of strict key" and "never settl[e] into the prefabricated chord that an audience might intuit" (ibid. 227). While the guitar does range freely

around a modal reference point, to my ears the bass is very close to the signature riff from "Manteca." Though masked by the modal guitar, the faster tempo, and the harmolodic swirl of other instruments present, this bass structure is apparent on both recorded versions and counts as a cross-cultural musical mascon aspect that lends the piece more Caribbean familiarity than difference.

In the case of "Adupe," which, of the three published poems dedicated to Nicolás Guillén, offers the most comprehensive response to Guillén's work, there is more divergence between the music and lyrics. Lyrical cross-cultural saturation in "Adupe," and the poem's resultant decolonizing force on that level, could not be any greater. Cortez engages intertextually with a wide range of Guillén's texts, evokes personal and collective Cuban history in powerful anti-imperialist terms, and uses allusion to summon the legacy of José Martí in a way that recalls Arthur Schomburg's historical vision discussed in chapter 2, in the process advancing the gap-closing work begun by Schomburg earlier in the century.

"Adupe," Cortez tells us in a glossary, means "thanks in the Yoruba language of Nigeria" (*Somewhere in Advance of Nowhere* 119). Immediately this title situates the poem in one of Cortez's favorite genres, the praise poem, and in a Pan-African framework that is relevant to the work of Guillén, who claimed in "Son #6," "Yoruba soy" (I am Yoruba) (*Patria o Muerte!* 136). Structurally, "Adupe" can be divided into five sections. Lines 1–26 contain an exposition that alternates several times between negation and affirmation, beginning with the opening, "1981/& I did not find Nicolás Guillén/but I found Cuba/the Cuba in Nicolás Guillén's poetry" (*Somewhere in Advance of Nowhere* 7). Initially, we may view this structure of alternating negations and affirmations through the lens of biography, since Cortez indeed was frustrated in her attempts to meet Guillén and could not do so until a return trip in 1985.

Rhetorically, the effect of Cortez's oscillations is quite interesting and powerful. The opening negations immediately situate Guillén in a number of larger contexts that (unlike the absent individual Cuban poet) are present to the speaker of the poem. The first of these contexts is clearly national—"I found Cuba/the Cuba in Nicolás Guillén's poetry"—and Cortez in her subsequent lines elaborates on the terms through which Guillén poetically expressed his own Cubanness. In describing Guillén's verse as "poetry dedicated to his two selves/his two sides," Cortez is referring to Guillén's "La balada de los dos abuelos" (Ballad of the two grandfathers), which traces an intertwined history of white and black ancestry that eventually converges in the voice of a mulatto speaker. This vision, though, may also be situated as a poetic extension of Martí's multiracial nationalism in "Mi Raza" and his racially hybrid characterization of Latin American cultural identity in "Nuestra América."

In "Visita," another poem dedicated to her search for Guillén, Cortez makes explicit the association between Guillén and Martí. The speaker's pilgrimage to Guillén's hometown of Camagüey is routed through Santiago, "where," she writes, "Jose Martí is buried like/a perfect poem/where spirit of Antonio Maceo sits like/a bronze sunrise/where beauty of Mariana Grajales who/saw her fifteen sons fall into/claws of fifteen buzzards/circulates" (3).

In addition to establishing this larger national context for Guillén's poetry, Cortez also uses the negation/affirmation device to situate Guillén in an international context of anti-imperialist conflict. Guillén's poetry is "not exotic, but Zydeco/Not Miami but Havana/not tweet tweet but Mau Mau" (7). With these lines, Cortez expresses an epistemic need to negate or cut through the frames available to her as a visitor from the United States in the hope that she can establish more authentic paradigms for articulating her experience of Cuba. Her oppositions assume a Manichaean split in the Americas between North and South of the type posed by Martí in "Nuestra América," and though coming from the global North herself, Cortez clearly affiliates with resistant versions of the global South—"Not Miami but Havana." This larger contextualizing of Guillén is potentially decolonizing in two ways. First, in a move reminiscent of Schomburg in his essay "The Economic Contribution of the Negro to America," Cortez confers radical potency on the South. We see this in the vision that surfaces later in "Adupe"—"I ran along the Malecon of his poetry/& found a poverty imbued/with the power to drive straight through/a northern frente frio" (9). Here we might want to compare Cortez's vision with Schomburg's view of progressive Latin American social developments that are destined to transform North American apartheid, as well as with Martí's image (expressed at the end of "Nuestra América") of steadily advancing Latin American peasantry. She seems to have reached a point of articulation that combines the strongest elements in each. Second, the fact that her affiliation reaches across the North-South divide signals a potential for breaking through the Manichaean borders erected by U.S. imperialism. As a framework for viewing the hemisphere, this is closer to Schomburg than either Martí or Guillén, but the anti-imperialist militance in Cortez's poetry keeps her in cross-cultural dialogue with the Cuban revolutionaries.[17]

In the second section of "Adupe," which runs from lines 27 through 70, the rhetoric shifts from alternating negation and affirmation to strict affirmation that remains consistent throughout the rest of the poem. This section consists of a series of deeper immersions in Guillén's poetry, which is imagined by the speaker as Paris, a favela, a séance house, political content, a shell-lined pelvis, stamina, boxing gloves, the Malecon, and a stadium. Section three, running from lines 71 through 85, offers an interlude of praise with the repetition of

the word "*adupe*." Section four, in lines 86 through 97, is another immersion in Guillén's work, though this time we see Cortez's dialogical response to a single poem. Riffing on "Tengo" (I have), Guillén's famous poem about revolutionary transformation in Cuba, Cortez's speaker announces a list of things that belong to Guillén—determination; revolutionary thought; African and neo-African languages including Gulla, Efik, Fulani, Twi, and others; *bomba la conga bomba*; Negrismo; Socialismo; and (my favorite) "completeness of life in poetry" (10). The final section, extending from lines 98 through 111, is a coda of praise. Cortez repeats her ritual naming of "Nicolás Banjo Guitar Mbira Guillén" and offers a series of participle phrases that—as in the poem "Shaking Things Up"—activate and agitate the world created by the poem and present us with Guillén in the act of "making his mark" (10).

Up to this point, the themes and images in "Adupe" appear to create Cuban or Cuban–African American mascon moments that establish and enhance cross-cultural saturation. However, there are issues of exoticism and imperialism circulating in the poem that threaten to disrupt the cross-cultural synergy. Addressing this tension allows me to wrap up lyrical analysis and touch on musical saturation in "Adupe." Cortez herself addresses the issue of exoticism in the opening section when she characterizes Guillén as "not exotic but Zydeco." In fact, the literary debate over exoticism was heated during Guillén's early years as a writer, with his friend and fellow poet Regino Pedroso calling in his lyric poem "Black Brother" (*Hermano negro*) for black Cubans (and symbolically for writers and intellectuals) to "tone down your bongo a bit" (*enluta un poco tu bongo*) and "silence your maracas for a while" (*silencia un poco tus maracas*) (quoted in Gómez García 223, 228–229). This debate continued to rage after 1959. Cuban poet, critic, and editor Pedro Perez Sarduy has recalled how the first Cultural Congress of Havana in 1968 became a focal point for younger creative intellectuals—he names Nancy Morejón, Miguel Barnet, and Sara Gomez, among others—who wanted to see "the desegregation of national culture and the dismantling of folklorism solely as a category of what, within the Cuban context, smelled, tasted and sounded black" (*Foundations* 160). On the surface, I would read Cortez's line "not exotic but Zydeco" as a comment on the legacy of Negrismo, and Cortez's negation/affirmation that, unlike many writers in the Negrismo generation, Guillén himself never treated Afro-Cuban music, language, spirituality, and so on as a folkloric spectacle that was alternately humorous, pathetic, or horrifying.[18]

On a less obvious level, Cortez's comment—"not exotic but Zydeco"—is also relevant for her own work, and opens an important critical horizon since the problem of exoticism is not limited to the Negrismo writers but has long plagued representations of Cuba dating all the way back to Columbus. In

Cortez's case, her surrealist montages oftentimes serve up image clusters that could indeed be read as exotic, as in the lines "I walked through/the séance house of his poetry/& came upon fiesta sizzling/in a bubble chamber of Aztec clouds" (8). Is the insertion of "Aztec clouds" in a Cuban setting an image that surrealistically shatters national boundaries in order to create new radical alliances, or does it ahistorically constellate exotic Latin American fragments via the cultural logic of a postmodern sublime? In "Visita," the desire "to meet Nicolás Guillén/before leaving the/1952 turquoise Studebaker/the 1948 red painted Dynaflow Buick/the 1955 lemon yellow Chevy/& the steamrolling diesel truck in the sky/honk honk honk" (5) conjures a vision disturbingly close to *Buena Vista Social Club*–style imperial nostalgia. Without question, such images occur alongside a strong anti-imperialist montage—right before the séance house passage in "Adupe," Cortez imagines elite Cuban exiles "acting like disjointed/chiefs of staff/like broken stags roaming/in everglades of khaki teeth/& clandestine scrotum" (8)—but the overall meaning, if we look just at the montage sections, is ambiguous. Cortez solves this tension, and tempers the drift toward exoticism, by balancing the synchronic movement of her surrealist montage with diachronic passages that anchor the poetic representations in history with images of and allusions to slave revolt, nationalist revolt, and socialist revolt. This, again, harkens back to Schomburg's historical vision and method, which I argued in chapter 2 was distinguished from Martí's writings on race precisely by its stronger preference for diachronic writing. As with her challenges to Manichaean divisions in the hemisphere and her assertions of Latin American political agency, Cortez seems to have forged a language capable of mediating the tensions and contradictions from earlier periods, thereby advancing the tradition of African American and Caribbean dialogue.

Arguably, then, Cortez resolves the pitfalls of exoticism lyrically, but what of the music in "Adupe"? Musically, does the poem shed any light on how to process the line "not exotic but Zydeco"? Immediately, this leads us into complex issues of musical saturation. As a verbal reference, zydeco—a term not included in the glossary for *Somewhere in Advance of Nowhere*—indicates Afro-Creole music from Louisiana. What are the implications of ascribing this term to Guillén? What prevents this from being interpreted as imperialist recoding of Cuban culture in North American terms? One possible answer is that, of all the folk musics elaborated in North America, zydeco is one of the few (if not the only one) that incorporates a 3/2 *son* clave rhythm. In the United States, this rhythm is what drives New Orleans second-line bands, as well as the hambone beat popularized by Bo Diddley. What I am suggesting is that, consciously or not—it could have been a fortuitous case of wordplay—Cortez chose a North American musical reference that correlates with a key rhythmic structure in

Cuban music, and the logic of this conjunction is decolonizing to the extent that it reveals lines of contact, communication, continuity, and shared culture at the mass level. Aldon Nielsen, Geoffrey Jacques, and others have traced what amounts to musical "capillary currents" linking Cuba and New Orleans, making it reasonable to see this connection—zydeco, the 3/2 clave, and Guillén—as logical and possibly even mimetic (a reflection of actually existing musical links).[19]

If we consider Caribbean music as poetic reference in the performative aspects of this jazz text—the meter of the words as well as the recorded music-text version of "Adupe"—the issue remains complicated. Fundamentally, Cortez expresses decolonizing cross-cultural saturation, though in this case we are facing yet another type of mediation or dispersal. While she refers in the text of "Adupe" to Guillén's verse as "poetry in 6/8 time" (7), the meter of the music recording is 5/4. Like the bulk of Cortez's recordings, it evokes a North American jazz fusion sound rather than a direct one-to-one musical response to Afro-Cuban rumba, *son*, or other forms, or even the sort of musical dispersals and mediations seen in "Chocolate" and "I See Chano Pozo." One might make a case that the uncommon five-beat measure implies a mediated response to the *son* clave, which, as we saw above, is always a variation of five notes distributed over a four-beat space, divided into a syncopated 3-2 or 2-3 sequence. There is one place in "Adupe," however, where Cortez does achieve a profound response to Afro-Cuban music, and this is in the metrical pattern of the final section. Here we have a chorus, very similar in format to the intensely structured rhythmic bridge of "Chocolate" and the "Lucumi, Abakua" chant in "I See Chano Pozo." The longer lines in this section of "Adupe," such as "digging up roots and making his mark" (10), also carry the 3-2 *son* clave beat, though Cortez's diction in the recording plays off the beat and, together with the rhythm players, pulls the performed lyric back toward North American jazz time. What is most distinctive about this final section, though, is the heavy emphasis in Cortez's speech on dactyls—the metrical foot comprised of three syllables in a pattern of stressed-unstressed-unstressed. In Spanish, this unit is known as *una esdrújula*. As in "Chocolate," whereas previous sections of the poem are free-flowing rhythmically and the poetic impact is based on expansive narrative content, here the narrative content is compressed into short repetitive phrases, and the impact is much more dependent upon meter. The dactylic form that the language takes in this section corresponds not to colonizing iambic English but instead to the dactyl-based Nation Language of the Anglophone Caribbean. This is the argument that Kamau Brathwaite makes in *History of the Voice*: that Caribbean English is dactylic rather than iambic (12). Cortez, then, at the moment of greatest immersion, has translated

the message and technique of Guillén's poetics to her native language and generated a Caribbeanized English.

"Adupe," in the end, does exhibit some measure of musical saturation in Caribbean cultural idioms. Vocally, Caribbean language is a poetic reference but as dactylic Nation Language. Instrumentally, African American difference (as opposed to Caribbean familiarity) is more emphatic in "Adupe" than in either "Chocolate" or "I See Chano Pozo" (in any versions of these jazz texts). My point here is not to make a hierarchical value judgment, because it does not diminish the aesthetic pleasure or the decolonizing political valence of "Adupe" to argue that, musically, it is less fully saturated in Caribbean cultural references than the other two poems. The voicing of Nation Language in "Adupe" correlates with Guillén's own Pan-Caribbean tendencies and suggests yet another way in which the dialogue between a Caribbean creative intellectual such as Guillén and his African American counterpart such as Cortez can converge in a moment of cross-cultural saturation.

More generally, what I hope to be demonstrating here is a rationale and method for giving equal weight to evaluating lyrical and musical aspects of a jazz text, especially when that text is constituted in African American and Caribbean cross-cultural dialogue. Marking distinctions and differences among these three Cuban-based poems is actually desirable to the extent that doing so reveals variety and a spectrum of modes by which a jazz text enters the field of cross-cultural dialogue. Not all texts are saturated in the same way: cross-cultural saturation manifests on multiple levels (musically and lyrically, at a minimum), and the critical apparatus should try as much as possible to take these different levels into account in generating analytic insights or illuminations. Arguably, in "Adupe," the printed lyric creates and enacts solidarity more directly and explicitly than the music. And to reiterate, rather than diminishing the aesthetic or political value of the poem, deeper lyrical saturation in "Adupe" is evidence that written modes have evolved over time, to the point that African American writing can match or even at times surpass the decolonizing force of musical dialogue.

CROSS-CULTURAL SATURATION: DAMAS

Having experimented with a method for tracing cross-cultural saturation in Cortez's Cuban poems, I want to conclude this chapter by applying the method to "The Red Pepper Poet," her poem eulogizing Léon Gontran Damas. As with nearly all of the writers and artists who are the subjects of Cortez's Caribbean-based poetry, Léon Gontran Damas was an acquaintance and personal friend

of Cortez's. When they met in the late 1960s, Damas was in the final decade of his productive career. Talking about Damas in conversation, Cortez's voice is particularly warm and animated when she describes their "very close, brother-sister friendship" (Appendix), and clearly Damas holds a special place for her among the many Caribbean artists with whom she has crossed paths.

A native of French Guiana, Damas was a child of the colonial bourgeoisie with mixed-race ancestry on both sides of his family. An asthmatic and stutterer who suffered as a child, Damas traveled for schooling to Martinique and Paris where, with his fellow students Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sedar Senghor, he had been one of the founders of Negritude. Damas was an avid reader of Etienne Léro's *Légitime Défense* in 1932, and he helped publish *L'Etudiant Noir* in 1934. Among his Negritude peers, he was the first to publish a volume of poetry—*Pigments*, in 1937—the first to write a notebook about returning to his native land—*Retour de Guyane*, in 1938—and the first to edit an anthology of Francophone poetry by black writers, in 1947.

While numerous homages to Damas appeared following his death in 1978, *Léon-Gontran Damas: Spirit of Resistance*, by Femi Ojo-Ade, is the only book-length study of Damas's achievement as a writer.[20] Ojo-Ade offers an excellent catalog of typical Damasian poetic elements, drawing mainly on examples from *Pigments*, which remains Damas's most well known volume. A primary theme for Damas is a critique and denunciation of the long history of modern colonialism, including white supremacy, the Atlantic slave trade, plantation slavery and its aftermath of poverty for the black masses and assimilation for the colonial bourgeoisie, and continued European barbarism in Africa. Frequently, Damas voices explosive anger through biting sarcasm and humor directed both toward the colonizing Other and the colonized petit-bourgeois self. Some of his poems convey sadness and weariness, while all are motivated by and evoke profound immersion in racial history and heritage. Stylistically, Damasian imagery includes blood, wind, night, drums, scenes of enslavement, contemporary visions of police and military violence, urban poverty and despair, and competing icons of French and African diasporan culture (such as the memorable contrast between violin and guitar that encodes the psychological fight against assimilation in "Hiccups"). In later poems, Damas also included U.S.-based imagery of lynching and antilynching protest. Damas's prosody is famous for its short lines, often containing one or two words, or even syllabic fragments, which produce a striking percussive quality. Ojo-Ade, along with many commentators, relates this metric quality that enhances the militant urgency of Damasian poems to "the frenzy of the drum" (121) as well as to the influence of Langston Hughes's experiments with jazz and blues and even Damas's own stuttering. Another important aspect of Damas's poetic technique

is the repetition of simple words as a structuring principle. Not only does this correlate with a percussive, drum-inspired prosody, it also reflects a popular and participatory emphasis (Ojo-Ade 118).[21] Finally, Ojo-Ade notes the dramatic and performance-based quality of Damas's poetry (122).[22] Each one of these thematic and formal features is evident in Cortez's work as well, making Damas another important model for her own poetic practice.

Cortez's tribute to Damas, "The Red Pepper Poet," was written on the occasion of his death in 1978. The poem works as a memorial service and clearly falls into the praise song genre that, as we have seen, Cortez favors. The title plays on the name of Damas's hometown, Cayenne, but signals as well Damas's heated lifelong struggle against colonialism, racism, and poverty.[23] Speaking about the poem and Damas, Cortez told me: "I wrote 'The Red Pepper Poet,' and called it 'Red Pepper,' because he was very hot and very intense and direct and that kind of a person. . . . When he commented on something or somebody, he sort of was able to go straight to the core of it and do it in two or three words, just like his poetry—rhythmic—and just like that with that curious gleam in his eye. He was very poetic, ironic, and precise" (Appendix). In the text of the poem, Cortez celebrates Damas's "natural slashing attitude" and eulogizes him as "Red Pepper Poet with the bull-roarer tongue" and "this freedom fighter/this great warrior/dangerous orphan/ibeji among ibeji/[. . .] who fought so well/so long so many places so many times in/this world of so much suffering" (*Coagulations* 56). With encomiums like these, "The Red Pepper Poet" is easily situated within the thematics of liberation that Henderson identifies as typifying the new black poetry.[24]

Structurally, "The Red Pepper Poet" uses both black speech and black music as poetic reference in numerous ways. There are many examples of what Henderson terms black linguistic excellence, including virtuoso naming and enumerating, hyperbolic imagery, and metaphysical imagery. Often, these techniques combine to produce mascon expressions. In addition to the string of epithets I just cited, for example, Cortez further describes Damas as a "mean banjo player," "dignified volcano," "a hum of furious tornados," "like the eye of a hurricane going home," "arriving on the concourse/the odor of rum and manioc in his hair," and "great pain carrier poet/who carried his pain into the forest/like earth carries the amazon river" (54–55). While surrealist poetics have always been a significant part of Cortez's practice, Henderson's category of compressed and cryptic imagery allows us to view Cortez's surrealist techniques—particularly her striking juxtapositions of bodies and machines—as an aspect of new black poetry. In "The Red Pepper Poet," compressed and cryptic imagery sometimes results in mascon expressions that suggest an African milieu, as in the lines, "Listen to the shrill evening falsettos/and the filing down

of teeth/hatchet dancers carving up shadows/knife men entering with lips of purple plated chrome/scar tissues opening their pigments/into the 21st century" (53–54).

What is most interesting to me about these examples of black speech as poetic reference, and the related clusters of mascon imagery, is the broad imaginative geography they evoke when viewed as a whole. At one end of the spectrum there are phrases that gesture toward African scenes and experiences. In the middle, occupying the broadest bandwidth, so to speak, are phrases like "banjo," "volcano," "hurricane," "rum and manioc," "amazon," and "boni" (the name of one of the maroon or bush negro groups in French Guiana), that situate Damas in his native horizon of Caribbean and Latin American reality. Finally, at the other end of the spectrum from the African milieu, some of Cortez's imagery signals a North American perspective. In "The Red Pepper Poet," though, she taps into those aspects of African American culture—for example, "deep zydecos" (54) and "mardi gras mass" (55)—that are the closest to Damas's Francophone Caribbean home base. Viewing this imaginative geography as a whole, it seems clear that Cortez's mascon expressions evoke an entire range of African diasporan experiences.

Henderson's other main structural category is black music as poetic reference. We have already seen how some of Cortez's virtuoso naming techniques and mascon words incorporate black musical references—for example, "mean banjo player" and "deep zydecos." If we reread these references through Henderson's terminology on black music, they would arguably fall under the category of casual generalized references and assumed emotional responses. Along with the banjo and zydeco imagery, drums are another key element in the matrix of musical associations used to gloss the character of Damas. Cortez writes:

If you hear a solo wind
. . . . . .
at the pulse of the hawk's scream
at the moment
when fifty drums hemorrhage
in the middle of the rhythms
when the hurricane turns
. . . . . .
in that position beyond all grief
at that second
this very instant
Won't you dance for the Red Pepper Poet
with the bull-roarer tongue (56)

Here the assumed emotional response is one in which the poem's memorial service experience rises to a pitch of catharsis and transformation—"that position beyond all grief." Cortez uses music to frame the moment of greatest crisis and intensity—"when fifty drums hemorrhage/in the middle of the rhythms"—and then jump-cuts into the hyperbolic imagery of hurricanes that she has been developing throughout the poem. Not only does this jump cut make the emotional register for music consistent with the other poetic devices used to evoke Damas as a revolutionary, transformative cultural figure, with the injunction, "Won't you dance for the Red Pepper Poet/with the bull-roarer tongue," Cortez addresses readers directly, drawing them into the creative vortex of the poem as listeners, dancers, and participants.

Henderson's final category is saturation, and bringing it to bear on the challenging cross-cultural poetics of "The Red Pepper Poet" will allow us to conclude the comparative analysis undertaken in the present chapter. Tentatively, I would argue that, in terms of cross-cultural Caribbean and Pan-African experience, this poem—like "Adupe"—is more fully saturated in its speech references than in its musical references, and within the realm of music, verbal references are more saturated than the performed music. To return to the idea of imaginative geography, I claimed earlier that the speech references included a full spectrum of African diasporan linkages, with the greatest number falling in the category of Caribbean and Latin American experiences. I hear a much narrower musical spectrum when listening to the recorded version of "The Red Pepper Poet," which is more strictly rooted in North American jazz idioms. This cut comes from the 1980 recording *Unsubmissive Blues* and features Cortez accompanied by her regular drummer from the Firespitters, Denardo Coleman. Many times Coleman's drumming has struck me as funky and fusion-oriented. Other times I have heard it as freer and in a line of descent from Max Roach, Billy Higgins, Ed Blackwell, and others. Though I leave the door open to future illumination, I have yet to hear distinctly Caribbean, Latin American, or West African drumming styles in Coleman's playing, and definitely not on this cut.

What I am arguing, then, is that the Caribbean/Latin American and Pan-African mascon images that dominate "The Red Pepper Poet" are delivered in a very national(ist) African American musical package. As we have seen throughout this chapter, in certain recordings, such as "Chocolate" and "I See Chano Pozo," Cortez does achieve quite a bit more cross-cultural saturation musically. Where her work approaches a cross-cultural maximum in music is in recordings of poems that include mbira, kora, and other West African instruments. In these recordings, such as "I Wonder Who," or "Into This Time" on the CD *Cheerful and Optimistic*, we might actually find the inverse of what happens in "The Red Pepper Poet" and "Adupe": there national(ist) black

American mascon expressions are delivered in an African musical package. The fact that "The Red Pepper Poet" and "Adupe" are more fully saturated in Caribbean experience through linguistic rather than musical references does not mean they are unsuccessful or even that they would not be comprehensible to Caribbean readers and listeners. In fact, in our interview, Cortez testifies to her rapport with Caribbean audiences. As she explains, "I've read in Cuba, in Guadeloupe, in Trinidad, in Martinique, and in French Guiana. The reception, or the comments, were always very interesting, a lot of questions about the work, the images, and about the struggle in the United States, about what we're doing here, and about music" (Appendix). What this reading does attempt to show is the value of Henderson's theory in enabling a more precise and nuanced analysis of a fascinating body of cross-cultural poetry. While Henderson's theory opens up new perspectives on Cortez's Caribbean-based poetry, the converse might also be true. This particular body of work might lead us to understand Henderson's theory in new ways. In particular, the dense Caribbean and Latin American imagery in "The Red Pepper Poet" suggests—as in the Cuban poems and "Shaking Things Up"—that African American mascon imagery and structures extend beyond national boundaries. If Cortez's poetry is any indication, the mascon reservoir of new black poetry includes core Caribbean and Latin American materials as part of a Pan-African, diasporan cultural inheritance.

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

A quote from Cortez's opening address at the 1990 International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books brings the concept of decolonizing contact zones into clear focus:

> This is the arena where the necessary changes in the life documented and explored on paper, on vinyl, on film, on computer, through extra sensory perception, through subliminal images, through oral traditions, translations and the latest communication invention can be found. Many of us here are from countries, cultures, and classes that were colonized by Britain, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and other countries. One of the most significant changes to happen in this century is the breaking of the chains of colonialism and the continuing struggle for full independence. It is important that we keep on bubbling on, and that the Book Fair keep fire under the pot, and that we keep turning tools of information into weapons for progressive change. The transmission of negative information can be reversed. One

soldier carrying a guided missile can bring down a ten million dollar jet airplane. ("Opening Address" 422)

This passage makes explicit the sort of rearticulation, repositioning, and reconstruction of avant-garde poetics that readers/listeners can trace in her verses. Intellectuals—artists, publishers, critics, and everyday people—are transformed as social actors within new institutional groundings symbolized by the book fair and carnival jump-ups. As I hope this chapter has made clear, Cortez's presence there is not a random or one-off event, but fits into a larger pattern. With very few exceptions, her Caribbean-inspired poems are responses to people she met and interacted with personally. Poetic content for these pieces comes not only from the particular histories, geographies, climates, and cultural practices associated with each named Caribbean artist but also draws from a deeper well of resistance traditions encompassing Rastafari, Santeria, maroonage, and more. The connections in Cortez's writing on the Caribbean reveal the counter-plantation as a well-constructed infrastructure of resistance that includes La Rose and the Caribbean Artists Movement, Guillén and the Cuban revolution, Damas and Negritude, and more. While her writing, organizing, and statements such as the 1990 book fair address suggest how poetry may contribute to the specific challenges of decolonization, the next and final chapter turns the focus onto testimonial writing and broadcast journalism and the potential for counter-plantation culture to operate there in support of radical political activity. A series of televised interviews from the mid-1990s between Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Jesse Jackson Sr. and Charlayne Hunter-Gault are fraught with tension, but ultimately Jackson and Hunter-Gault succeed in providing a mass forum where Aristide is free to represent himself and the Haitian popular democratic movement in terms that correspond to his self-defined expression in sermons, radio broadcasts, and testimonial writing. As Cortez argues above, communication technologies can become "weapons for progressive change," and the "transmission of negative information can be reversed." In this dialectical exchange and successful outcome, we can see further accentuations of counter-plantation culture and its repertoire of creative expression and institution building.

CHAPTER 5

Mass Media Contact Zones

Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Dialectics of Our America

The artist and writer must find a form which corresponds not only to the sound of their own voice, but one which can be understood by the people about whom he writes, one which conforms to their symbolic representations of life. . . . He must courageously search among all traditional forms to find the one which corresponds to his own sensibility. . . . He must find in the treasure house of popular forms not elevated to being works of art, the forms that have the potential for being raised to the level of a creative aesthetic.

—JACQUES STÉPHEN ALÉXIS

We say: "In the town of Grand Goave, they're making problems for us, in Hinche, in Papaye. When, oh Father, are we going to live in peace?"

And our Father responds: "You will live in peace when you wrap your faith and your commitment together in a people's church that will permit the people's power to come to a boil in a people's revolution—so that this country can breathe free."

–JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE

While in Florida, you are closer to Haiti than to Washington.

–JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE

THE HISTORY OF Caribbean and African American solidarity finds another powerful expression in recent efforts to support the struggle for democratic rule in Haiti. After sketching out a view of Haitian popular democracy in its national or domestic context, the bulk of this chapter focuses on the central

role played by African American journalists Jesse Jackson Sr. and Charlayne Hunter-Gault in disseminating the rhetoric of Haitian democracy internationally to a mass audience in the United States and beyond.

In light of the framework for cultural decolonization explored throughout this study, the emergence of Haiti's popular democratic movement and its most prominent voice, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, represents the further development of popular religion as a source of insurgent consciousness and institutional bases for popular action. During the past forty years, liberation theology has been enormously important as an ideological wellspring throughout Latin America, and Aristide's deft articulation of its premises in a Haitian national context invites comparison with Hurston's manipulation of vodou spirit possession, the Ethiopianist legacy invoked by Marley and Mayfield, and Santeria and Ifa references in Cortez's poetry. The mobilizing force of Aristide's rhetoric derives both from its organic relation to the language of popular democratic struggle as worked out in national romances and manifestos authored by predecessors such as Jacques Stéphen Aléxis and Jacques Roumain, and from the fact that Aristide transforms this language in crucial ways. In particular, his speeches and writing invoke liberation theology to pose a model of collaboration between intellectuals and masses that embraces popular spirituality and thereby challenges the gender and class elitism that limited earlier decolonizing movements in Haiti.[1]

Viewed from the standpoint of institution building and institutional change, liberation theology provides a pivotal (though not exclusive) locus of popular empowerment through its network of base ecclesial communities. In their concern for fostering popular literacy, health care, education, and other forms of self-directed action, base communities may be grouped with previously considered cases of cultural autonomy such as Schomburg's book collecting and librarianship, or Cortez's success in creating self-owned recording, publishing, and distribution operations. Similarly, just as Schomburg, Hurston, and Cortez transform institutionalized rhetorical practices such as historiography, ethnography, and jazz performance poetry, Aristide participates in a wider use of testimonial writing as a means of articulating the goals of Haitian popular democracy and enabling international solidarity networks to connect with Haitian struggles. These national or domestic efforts on Aristide's part helped bring him to power, leading to the crisis of exile in the early 1990s and ultimately to contact with African American journalists at work in U.S.-based media outlets. The ensuing dialogues with Jackson and Hunter-Gault reenact the decolonizing cultural logic of one love solidarity and transform establishment broadcasts to the point where they transmit rather than interrupt the language of Haitian popular democracy.

ARISTIDE AND THE NEW NATIONAL ROMANCE IN HAITI

In simple terms, the social movement of the early 1990s that bore the name Lavalas was a loose-knit collection of organizations forged in the fight to bring down what was then the most recent expression of entrenched neocolonialism in Haiti, that is, the thirty-year spectacle of Duvalierism. Lavalas clearly was galvanized by the projects of liberation theology, but the movement in its entirety includes a wide range of social forces, and many of the groups gathered under the Lavalas banner actually predate the historical birth of the popular church in the Americas, in 1969.[2] Peasant associations, for instance, are contemporary extensions of the traditional Haitian peasant work group, or *konbit*. Women's organizations have existed at the grassroots level among marketplace women for centuries in Haiti, while elite-sponsored attempts to forge cross-class alliances among women can be traced to the 1934 founding of the Haitian Ligue Feminine d'Action Sociale (Chancy, *Framing* 40). The most important social formation developed specifically as a part of liberation theology is the ecclesial base community, or *ti kominote legliz* (TKL) in Kreyol. Aristide describes a typical TKL in his testimonial narrative, *In the Parish of the Poor*:

> The one room inside the little shack is crowded with young people, and a few who are not so young. It's hot. A young woman standing at the back is directing the discussion. What are those words we hear people saying? *Libete*. Liberty. *Dwa moun*. Human rights. *Teyoloji liberasyon*. Liberation theology. A pot of hot rice and beans is being distributed, paid for by contributions from everyone present. What is this place, what is this group, why are they gathered here under the light of one bare bulb to talk about liberty? You know what this is, brothers and sisters, as well as I do. This is an ecclesial base community; in Haiti, we call them *ti kominote legliz*. Today you can find groups like this all over Latin America; there are more than 300,000 of them in our hemisphere. I work with them, brothers and sisters, and so do you. (13)

The National Front for Change and Democracy (FNCD), the official political arm of the Lavalas movement formed around the 1990 election, historically represented the effort to build an effective law-making instrument based on a coalition of TKLs, peasant associations, and women's organizations, as well as youth groups, neighborhood vigilance brigades, human rights groups, labor unions, professional groups, associations of the unemployed, and more. At the heart of this political project is a cultural challenge of finding the symbolic means to imagine such a coalition and articulate its will in concrete public

utterances. Aristide's writing and his oral statements (mainly sermons, radio broadcasts, and political speeches, though he has also recorded an album of music) function precisely as symbolic vehicles for imagining coalition.

If liberation theology offers epistemological and pragmatic organizing tools for forging a unified national culture based on the agency of women and the poor, this process finds its corollary in written narrative in the form of the testimonial, or *testimonio*. John Beverley's classic account defines the genre in the following way:

> a novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet (that is graphemic as opposed to acoustic) form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events she or he recounts. The unit of narration is usually a life, or significant life experience (for example, the experience of being a prisoner). Since, in many cases, the narrator is someone who is either functionally illiterate, or if literate, not a professional writer, the production of a testimonio often involves the tape recording and then the transcription and editing of an oral account by an interlocutor who is an intellectual, journalist, or writer. (70–71)

Beverley's analysis focuses primarily on how testimonial writing functions internationally, mainly as a tool of solidarity that represents previously silenced subaltern perspectives within "global circuits of power and representation" (16). Aristide's texts certainly operate at this level in ways that both validate and extend Beverley's model. Of particular interest is the way that Aristide produces a south-south circuit of power and representation that differs from the north-south dialogue, which for Beverley is an implicit paradigm of international communication via the *testimonio*. Breaking through the barriers of language and racial prejudice that have historically isolated Haiti from its Latin American neighbors, Aristide recalls the assistance given to Simón Bolívar by nineteenth-century Haitian leaders (*Parish* 11–13), and he asserts the basic similarity of his own story and those of others who work "in the campos and the barrios of our common hemisphere" (ibid. 3). Here Aristide is revoicing the kind of internationalism that is a central element in the classic novels of Roumain and Aléxis. Both earlier writers depict the material conditions of migrant agricultural work as an integral part of their characters' development. Their narratives situate the experience of Haitian peasants and displaced urban dwellers as part of a broad pattern repeated across the Caribbean and Latin America. Contact with broader Latin American cultural and political realities is the catalyst that radicalizes Manuel in *Governeurs de la rosée* and Hilarion in *Compére Génèral Soleil*. It is in Cuba that Manuel learns the value of collective

action by participating in the sugarcane workers' strike, and when he returns to Fonds Rouge in Haiti, he recalls this activism using the Spanish word "*huelga*." Hilarion, meanwhile, achieves his own maximum critical consciousness in the context of a strike action in the Dominican Republic, where he is working as a bracero. Though Aristide only had a brief opportunity to translate this internationalism into statecraft, a clear Pan-American and Pan-African orientation is reflected in official Lavalas policy regarding bilateral and multilateral foreign aid.[3]

Testimonial writing also has typical forms of meaning and instrumentality that register on the national level. Aristide draws on these formal codes to consolidate Haitian identity in ways that pose a substantial challenge to previous efforts at achieving cultural unity via the novel tradition. Testimonial narratives presume a high level of popular historical agency as well as direct involvement by intellectuals in forms of popular action such as peasant associations, base communities, labor unions, and so on. In themselves, these are not radical departures from the kind of representations of popular masses and committed intellectuals that Roumain and Aléxis strove to articulate in their novels. Where Aristide really begins to take Haitian national discourse in new directions is in his use of the testimonial to recast the relationship between intellectuals and popular institutions, and to challenge the potential of literature to function as a liberating, culturally unifying institution.

Beverley writes persuasively about the significance of the attempt in testimonials to offer a new model and a concrete practice of forms of solidarity between intellectuals and "subaltern communities." Within literary traditions, what is the relationship posed between literature and popular or subaltern culture? Latin American modernism offers a "vertical model of representation" exemplified in Pablo Neruda's poem "The Heights of Machu Picchu," though here one could easily substitute the work of Haitian writers from the Indigenists down to Aléxis and beyond. Against this vertical model, in which "only the voice of the poet can redeem" the culture and history of the (allegedly) silent masses, the testimonial poses a horizontal model that questions the privileged status of literary intellectuals and resituates literary labor as a form of solidarity practice (Beverley 16–18). In a testimonial like *In the Parish of the Poor*, posing the intellectual/masses relationship as horizontal goes much further toward establishing the cultural unity that is called for, but not fully achieved, by Roumain and Aléxis. This kind of leveling of the hierarchical division between intellectuals and masses, which appears above in Aristide's description of TKLs, is very akin to the repositioning of theological labor in liberation theology and suggests again how Aristide takes up the testimonial as literary corollary to the nonwritten forms of cultural activity in the base communities.

The context for these challenges comes from the emergence of new social movements, with new popular democratic protagonists and forms of subjectivity, and the impossibility of integrating existing literary forms with these emerging movements, or even producing liberating depictions of insurgent popular culture via a literary text. As Beverley puts it, "testimonio appears where the adequacy of existing literary forms and styles—even of the dominant language itself—for the representation of the subaltern has entered into crisis" (92). In the Haitian novel tradition, this crisis revolves around the issues of gender and popular religion, and often these issues are conflated as in Roumain's tendency to make his women peasants the most superstitious, the most identified with vodou practices. Testimonial narrative simultaneously sharpens the crisis of existing literary forms and offers a means of intervening in that crisis. Testimonial, again, appears in close relation to liberation theology, offering a means to express in writing the paradigm shifts worked out in the base community projects. As a written artifact, *testimonios* are surely representations, simulacra that at best produce images of popular cultural activity and images of interaction between intellectuals and masses. Rather than encountering this as an irresolvable contradiction, one perhaps glossed over with a defense of literature for its own sake, testimonial narrative poses concrete exigencies for entering into this particular form of writing. In Aristide's case, testimonial narrative responds to a condition of exile and separation from his primary audience, which is everyday Haitian people, and his primary means of communication, which is spoken Kreyol and its characteristic genres—the sermon, the proverb, the radio broadcast, the folk song. In 1989 and 1990, when *In the Parish of the Poor* was being prepared, Aristide had been relieved of his duties as pastor of St. Jean Bosco Church and was thus separated from his parishioners and the weekly forum of the pulpit. Against this backdrop, a testimonial provides a means of reconnecting, of reconstituting the speech community dispersed by hostile authorities. Testimonial writing poses itself—obviously, explicitly, flagrantly—as a simulacrum, but it is not less effective politically or less coherent intellectually because of this.[4] On the contrary, its strength derives from being able to offer an adequate articulation of the kind of popular democratic process that Lavalas represents in Haitian national life.

Aristide's contribution to the history of democratic struggles in the hemisphere needs to be understood, then, from the vantage point of language, narration, and even genre, as well as other aspects of statecraft. However we evaluate his fate as a political figure, his presence on the political stage is inseparable from his successful efforts, as a writer and speaker, to revitalize the narrative traditions for expressing nationalist sentiment in Haiti. While not completely discarding the canonical approach to national romance handed down in the

Haitian novel through Roumain, Aléxis, and others, Aristide's written and spoken interventions shift the grounds of passionate patriotism in decisive ways. Revising Doris Sommer's formulation that Latin American national romances found the polis upon eros, one might say that in the new national romance, the Haitian polis is built instead upon *agapé*.[5]

I have focused mainly on the discursive roots of this shift in Christian liberation theology, particularly the reconception of popular religion as an active force for social change. Behind these and other specifically literary developments are the numerous grassroots democratic movements whose activities during and after the ouster of Jean-Claude Duvalier in February 1986 prefigure the emergence of Lavalas as a hegemonic political force. These popular organizations, whose history has yet to be fully recorded, provide Aristide with a reading and listening audience and an activist constituency and therefore serve as enabling preconditions on which his words depend. His writing and speeches, meanwhile, codify and conjugate as public political discourse the more democratic nation-building energies initially nurtured in the TKLs, workers' syndicates, women's organizations, neighborhood associations, students' unions, rural co-ops, and so on. In rewriting the national romance, Aristide has recast the language used to define the Haitian body politic and has been a central figure in forging a progressive hegemony that had not existed in Haiti since the days of the revolutionary alliance between black leaders like Toussaint, Henri Christophe, and Dessalines; mulatto *affranchis* like Petion and Rigaud; and the black masses of Saint Domingue. Perhaps most radical is how far the new national romance in Haiti re-creates the body politic as a more egalitarian space where women, and particularly poor Kreyol-speaking women, enter the scene of Haitian history as the principal producers of a liberating social praxis.

MASS MEDIA CONTACT ZONES

The foregoing account is intended to summarize rhetorical and institutional developments related to the emergence of Aristide and Lavalas in a Haitian national context. References to the testimonial genre provide an initial springboard for considering Haitian popular democracy from an international perspective and for considering the wider question of how images of and rhetoric about Haiti are disseminated through diverse forms of globalized information technology. *In the Parish of the Poor*, a work initially dictated in Kreyol into a cassette recorder, translated into English, published in the United States by a progressive Christian press (Orbis Books), and addressed primarily to Latin American readers, is literally inconceivable outside the kind of solidarity

networks that Beverley identifies as the cultural infrastructure for testimonials. Like other examples of the genre, Aristide's work presumes a diverse, transnational community of dissident collaborators involved in publishing, translating, distributing, reading, and teaching the given text. The content disseminated through this network is provocative and suggests a still wider scope for the testimonial in terms of audiences and utility. In addition to the south-south dialogue established through references to liberation theology and the historical ties between Bolívar and Petion, Aristide opens up a new channel in south-north communication by speaking to Haitians who live overseas. He writes: "My generation is running away from Haiti, with its dark corners and byways. I want to call them back before they begin their fruitless travels" (*Parish* 8). Out-migration is a major social dynamic eroding the daily fabric and future potential not only of Haiti but of many Caribbean and poor, southern countries as well. Aristide's utopian vision appeals directly to the Haitian diaspora, the nation's so-called tenth department, to "come back, live in misery, build a new way," but here, too, his address widens out to include the idea of South Americans living in the North:

> Of all people, you—brothers and sisters—know what it means to build a new way when everyone who is working on the new construction is living in misery. You have seen the people scavenging for food on the garbage heaps of Rio de Janeiro, and you have seen them starving in the barrios of Panama City. You know how hard it is to build Utopia on a garbage heap; indeed, it is hard to build even a decent poor man's home there. But that is all we ask, a decent poor man's home and no more corruption, no more inflicted misery, no more children bathing in sewage. (ibid.)

As a rhetorical intervention, this call to reverse the flow of migration cuts directly against dominant neocolonial patterns that reinforce the flow of goods, services, and value away from the south and toward the north. Like the internal, national discourse associated with Aristide and Lavalas, this south-north dialogue fundamentally asserts the agency of the Haitian people.

A question remains, I think, about how "popular" the testimonial actually is on an international level. However potentially progressive a work like *In the Parish of the Poor* is, how many people outside of Haiti actually have access to the words and visions promulgated through the institutional networks associated with the testimonial? One wishes the scope of the genre were wider, because it is certain that the images of Haiti and Haitians disseminated through mass media outlets of television, radio, and print journalism have been categorically less sympathetic, progressive, and respectful of Haitian culture and history.

Robert Lawless and Paul Farmer have traced in great detail the record of what Lawless calls "Haiti's bad press," that is, the contemporary flow of stereotyped images of Haitians in U.S. corporate media, images that stem directly from the hostile travelogue tradition discussed in chapter 3. Lawless catalogs some of the current iconography, including undifferentiated boat people, AIDS sufferers, cannibals and zombies, and more (4–27). To this litany might be added references to Aristide's "recklessness" and descriptions of him as "radical and anti-American" and "mentally unstable."[6] Aristide was ousted by a military coup in September 1991. In reporting about the crisis that ensued, and in particular about the decision to send U.S. troops back to Haiti in 1994, references to the potentially liberating idea of "defending democracy," which at least presumes the existence of popular political will in Haiti, were contradicted by competing references to the imperialist idea of "nation building," which recapitulates the travelogue tradition by asserting the instability and ungovernability of Haiti—that is, the absence of a nation—while placing the responsibility for national development on outsiders.

Progressive, radical, and underground reporting—in journals such as the *Nation* and *NACLA* in the United States, the Kreyol journal *Libète* in Haiti, and *Democracy Now!* in electronic media—has systematically challenged this tendency to replay earlier approaches to representing Haiti and Haitians. Among the major mass media outlets in the United States, though, there has been a consistent pattern of negating any sense that Haitians have a hand in determining their own history. This tendency is perhaps less surprising if we consider network news broadcasts and major print dailies such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in structural terms, as key parts of what Althusser terms the "communications apparatus" (154). The key function of such ideological states apparatuses (ISAs) is to create perceptions and models of subjectivity—Althusser would say to interpellate subjects—in ways that help to reproduce existing social relations. In this specific case, this means the U.S. corporate media help to perpetuate the idea of Haiti as a recipient of U.S. initiatives—military, political, economic, cultural, and otherwise. If one accepts the notion that Haiti has always had, and can only have, dependent, client-state status, then the U.S. government's course of action seems more normal and legitimate.

Against this backdrop, the work of Jesse Jackson Sr. and Charlayne Hunter-Gault in covering the 1991–1994 Haitian crisis stands out dramatically as a departure from the normal operating procedures of mainstream U.S. television journalism. Hunter-Gault interviewed Aristide during a botched effort to restore him in 1993, and both Jackson and Hunter-Gault interviewed him again prior to his successful return in October 1994. During this time span, Aristide's presence as a leading source in televised news stories on CBS, ABC, and NBC

had declined from 51 percent immediately following the 1991 coup to 22 percent on the eve of his return, and the positive/negative coding of Aristide (based on descriptors used in news reports) shifted from 74/26 percent to 49/51 percent. Meanwhile, the media frames used in reporting on Haiti between 1991 and 1994 concentrated exclusively on U.S.-oriented thematics such as restoration of democracy, social violence, U.S. foreign policy, U.S. domestic campaign implications, and refugees (Soderlund, *Mass Media and Foreign Policy* 30–31, 46–47, 65–66).[7]

While there is tension in each of the three interviews, all have significant openings that emphasize the agency and subjectivity of Aristide and, by extension, the Haitian people and that offer Haitian as well as Pan-African media frames for the events of 1991–1994. This brings us back to the central concern of this study, which is the historical impact of African American and Caribbean collaboration in efforts to create more liberated, democratic social spaces across the hemisphere. In these transcripts, Aristide's popular democratic discourse reaches out internationally in yet another direction than those previously indicated (that is, Haitian diaspora and solidarity networks based in liberation theology movements), toward dialogue with African Americans. The implications of this exchange challenge—in the name of democratic liberation—the concept of a Manichaean division of the hemisphere into "two Americas."

The first interview I look at occurred between Aristide and Jesse Jackson Sr. It aired initially on September 28, 1994, as a special edition of the CNN talk show *Both Sides with Jesse Jackson*. I consider this interview as a template for how African American–Caribbean dialogue can subvert the normal mass media cultural logic where Haiti is concerned. In particular, this interview is a model because it follows a certain conversational rhythm—from extreme resistance to greater openness—that is repeated in Aristide's two interviews with Charlayne Hunter-Gault.

The immediate context for the interview is provided by the events of late September 1994, as the scenario that would bring Aristide back to Haiti for the first time in three years was finally unfolding. Former president Jimmy Carter and former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell had traveled to Haiti and brokered an agreement with Haitian general Raoul Cédras, who had ruled Haiti for three violent years following the September 1991 coup. At first, Aristide was noticeably and bitterly silent about the agreement, which did not clearly call for Cédras to leave Haiti, but then several days later Aristide appeared at the U.S. Pentagon to receive a twenty-one-gun salute and express his support. After exchanging polite opening pleasantries, the interview begins with Jackson asking Aristide about his change of attitude, and Aristide responds with a nonanswer:

JACKSON: At the very outset, you did not—not, you told me, embrace the Carter-Cédras arrangement. What troubled you about it?
MR. ARISTIDE: As I said, for democracy, we need reconciliation. First we need a state of law. So neither vengeance nor retaliation, neither impunity nor vengeance. We have to build a state of law through peace, reconciliation, and justice. (J. Jackson 1)

Jackson returns to this topic no less than six times before posing the question in such a way that Aristide will answer it. At length, Jackson asks Aristide "what did you say to them [Pentagon brass] or tell them that would make you feel secure enough to govern once you get back to Haiti?" (ibid). This completely shifts the focus more onto Aristide by emphasizing his active role in governing rather than his passive role in reacting to U.S. policy, and immediately the interviewer is rewarded with a longer, more responsive answer. Similarly, in the second segment of the broadcast, Jackson is forced to ask a question about different definitions of amnesty for the coup leaders four times before getting an answer that goes beyond a stonewalling flurry of public policy buzzwords on the topic. The key issue at stake in both segments is that the questions are, in their initial format, disempowering. They situate power and agency with Carter and Cédras rather than with Aristide, and Aristide resists engaging on those terms. Once the rhetoric of the questioning shifts in a direction that accords more agency to Aristide, his responses become lengthier and more free. Increasingly, Aristide is less guarded about his own feelings, opinions, and analyses. In explaining the argument against general amnesty for the coup leaders, for instance, much more of Aristide's personality comes through. "Once you have crimes against humanity," he argues, "you cannot talk about amnesty. You cannot talk about blanket amnesty. . . . And I'm glad when I hear President Clinton talking about those criminals the way he did. And, I support him because he was sharing truth with the world" (ibid. 2).

In discussing why he will serve out only the remainder of his term rather than adding on three years to make up for the time of exile, Aristide says, "In serving our people, we accept the move from sacrifice to sacrifice" (ibid.). This is the language of liberation theology, which arguably is a more authentic vehicle for Aristide's point of view than the sort of public policy rhetoric used as a blocking device earlier in the interview. As his answers open up to reveal more of his own personality, Aristide also introduces more references to the historical agency of the Haitian people, referring to them as "peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peace lovers" (ibid. 3). Finally, Aristide expresses himself in populist terms that are more typical of his style as the interview moves to a close. He says, for example, "In Haiti, people will be talking [about how long U.S. troops should

stay]. And it's a very good thing for a president to listen to the people" (ibid.). While Jackson thanks Aristide "for being so open and honest" at the end of the broadcast (ibid.), this rapport is something that obviously is achieved only with some difficulty. Even though, outside the context of this interview, Jackson and Aristide are friendly acquaintances with a history of working together, as the host of a CNN news talk show, Jackson is structurally situated as an adversary, given the record of U.S. media in generating bad press about Haiti. Within this institutional structure, Jackson's willingness to challenge the cultural logic of the media ISA by acknowledging the autonomy of Haiti and Aristide is crucial in transforming the tone and content of the exchange.

This pattern of initial stonewalling, followed by freer exchanges that challenge the terms in which Haiti can be represented, is even more dramatically evident in two interviews Aristide did with Charlayne Hunter-Gault for the newsmaker segment of the *MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour*. The first interview is a testament to noncommunication. It aired on October 22, 1993, as it was becoming clear that Haitian coup leaders were reneging on the so-called Governor's Island Accord, which had been signed earlier in the year and which called for Cédras and his principal cohorts, General Philippe Biamby and Michel François, to depart by October 30. Lead-in remarks by news anchor Jim Lehrer set up the interview in terms that create a hostile frame of reference. Lehrer refers to Aristide as "the duly elected president of Haiti" (Hunter-Gault, Show #4782, 2), implying Aristide is currently powerless, a passive bystander caught up in the pull of greater forces. Lehrer's summary of the situation assumes the worst while reinforcing the idea that history is being made somewhere else, and by someone other than Aristide: "He was to have returned to both (his country and the presidency) on October 30 under a United Nations–arranged deal that appears now to be very much in jeopardy" (ibid).

The scenario facing Aristide at this point was, to be sure, grim, but the whole focus of the interview, initially, is on getting Aristide to admit defeat. As an interviewer, Hunter-Gault oscillates between incredulity at Aristide's statements that he still intends to fulfill the terms of the Governor's Island Accord—"How do you plan to go back? Are you going to just fly in, or what?" she asks Aristide at one point—and a kind of pedagogical persistence in asking certain questions about Aristide's concern for his own personal safety, the safety of Robert Malval, who was then serving as prime minister, and the effects of the embargo. Like Jesse Jackson Sr., Hunter-Gault has to pose many questions several times before getting anything resembling a direct response, and in some cases the dialogue simply collapses. At this time, for instance, the disinformation campaign waged against Aristide throughout his tenure as president was at its height. CIA-authored documents alleging Aristide's mental instability had appeared in the

Congressional Record, and Hunter-Gault asks Aristide to comment on this issue. "I respect those who say that, but I reject what they say because it's garbage," he responds, adding, "they said worse about Martin Luther King" (ibid. 5). Hunter-Gault continues with the line of questioning, asking Aristide why the CIA would be behind this (paid off, according to Aristide, by drug traffickers with money to hire D.C. lobbyists). She asks—again incredulously—"Are you accusing the CIA of being complicit with drug traffickers," until finally Aristide terminates the exchange, saying, "We don't have time to lose about this garbage" (ibid.). The interview ends curtly, with Hunter-Gault's somewhat frustrated comment, "Well, Mr. President, thank you for being with us" (ibid. 6).

Hunter-Gault interviewed Aristide again on October 12, 1994, three days before his return to Haiti. The tone of this second interview is much more lively. Aristide is more willing to engage with the interviewer's questions, and more open to introspective commentary within the space of the interview itself. This new tone on Aristide's part has everything to do with the fact that Hunter-Gault is asking very different kinds of questions. Her willingness to pose more sympathetic questions may be tied to background political circumstances, which had substantially changed for the better in the interim. Whatever the reasons, though, it is unmistakable that whereas in the first interview, Hunter-Gault (in a manner consistent with communications ISA logic) framed Aristide as a powerless figure and greeted his resistance to this framing with incredulity and incomprehension, in the second interview her questions break through this logic and invite Aristide to represent Haiti and himself on his own terms. Given this opening, Aristide produces a vision of Haitian society and its role in hemispheric and world history rooted in the Lavalasian notions of cultural unification, Pan-African liberation, and the historical agency of the poor.

The first half of the interview remains fairly buttoned-down as Aristide moves through answers to questions about his personal safety, his position on amnesty for the coup leaders, whether his supporters will be as violent as the coup regime, and the need for education and health care development in order for the country to "slowly move from misery to poverty with dignity" (Hunter-Gault, Show #5074, 4). The dialogue begins to open up, though, on two issues that take up the entire second half of the interview: class tensions in Haiti and Aristide's reflections on how he has changed during his three years of exile, spent mostly in the United States. On the first topic, Hunter-Gault asks Aristide to respond to alleged complaints from the Haitian elites about his unwillingness to work with them in the past. Aristide defends the Lavalas record, but says, "Now we don't talk about the past. Let's talk about the future." In response to Hunter-Gault's question, "Well, what would you say to the businessmen of Haiti now?" Aristide offers the following statement:

> I need you, because you and I will lead the nation. We have to work together. As the head of state, I have the responsibility to provide security to you, to your capital to move towards a free market. Those who want to invest, their rights must be respected, and their rights, as during our seven months, will be respected. Those who will have jobs, their rights will be respected. This is a question of respect for every single citizen, those who invest and those who are working. The state cannot lead the nation without the private sector. And the private sector cannot lead the nation without the state. We have to be together. (ibid. 5)

On one level, to hear Aristide talk about free market economics, the need for investment, and the importance of respecting capital seems like listening to a complete antithesis of the liberation theologian who five years earlier was preaching "*Leve tab-la*" (Upend the table). What seems to be a compromise position, though, actually contains several strong populist statements. To begin with, Aristide defends workers just as strongly as business elites with the assurance that "those who will have jobs, their rights will be respected." This makes any discussion about rights dialectical and inclusive, not a one-sided defense of business: there is no discussion about capital that does not also include labor as an equal partner in generating wealth. Similarly, his comments on the links between nation, state, and the private sector are consistent with the drive toward national unification that is an enduring quest in Haitian literature and politics going back through Aléxis and Roumain to the early republic and revolutionary era, and Aristide brings these elements together—discursively, at least—in a way that still has not been accomplished decisively in Haiti. If we recall the argument of Michel-Rolph Trouillot that Haiti is a country in which the state has traditionally been set against the nation, what might seem like a sell-out compromise on Aristide's part—namely, entering into the discourses and practices of statecraft—is actually an attempt to redefine the predatory Haitian state in radical ways.[8] In particular, as we see in this quote, he uses the rhetoric of unification to insist on a more egalitarian social contract in which the state and private sector recognize and respond to the interests of the people/nation. As he does elsewhere, then, Aristide's definition of the state in this interview includes—is premised on, really—the idea of a central historical role for the majority population in Haiti.

Even more dramatic is Aristide's response to a series of questions from Hunter-Gault about how he has changed personally, and how his perception of the United States has changed, as a result of his time here. To the first query on this topic, "Today are you the same man you were when you left Haiti?" (ibid.), Aristide responds in French. The transcript indicates only the opening

words—"*Je suis*"—and then parenthetically the phrase "speaking French." In itself, this is a radical opening, a rupture in the dominant and dominating logic of the U.S. corporate media that forces reality into a certain mold by adhering to an English-only code that goes without saying until a transgression of ten or fifteen seconds of untranslated, unsubtitled, unvoice-overed French makes it evident. The context for this eruption is important, because Aristide prefaces his statement with a personal remark to Hunter-Gault. "I know you know French," he says, "and I have my way to say it in French, and then I'll try to translate it if I can" (ibid.). This completely shifts the power relations of the interview, leading Hunter-Gault to respond, "Good, because I don't think I'm prepared to translate it at this point, but please," and then after the statement, "I think I know that, but let me hear you translate it." What is it that Aristide says to Hunter-Gault, in code, as it were? The transcript notes the following:

> PRESIDENT JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE: I will try. I am the one I was to be, in the future the one I have to be. So you have to grow up, but while you are growing up, you cannot deny your roots. You cannot deny the seeds of your education. So you are learning day after day to become better. You are building the future today in the light of the past, without denying your identity. You and I will have our forefathers coming from Africa. How could we deny that? We cannot. But at the same time, day after day, we have the light of knowledge, of experience, helping us to grow up. This is the dialectic which we cannot forget about. (ibid.)

The exchange is not over at this point, and after talking with Aristide about the presence of American troops—"it's always beautiful to see weapons protecting lives, instead of killing lives," he says (ibid.)—Hunter-Gault returns to a kind of pedagogical mode in her questioning, asking Aristide to characterize "the lesson you've learned, if any, from your dealings with the American government" (ibid. 6). Rather than stonewalling as he did in the previous interview, though, Aristide continues to talk about dialectics and turns the issue of agency around, posing in effect a counterquestion: what lesson has the U.S. government learned from its dealings with Haiti? The exchange goes as follows:

> MS. HUNTER-GAULT: It's sounding as if you've made some new peace with America, because your relations have not always been easy with this country. How would you characterize the lesson you've learned, if any, from the dealings with the American government?
> PRESIDENT JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE: I think, as I said, we cannot deny the dialectic which cross the field of knowledge, and when someone

says, oh, you've changed, it's also maybe because that one changed to see you the way you are. So this dialectic can help us growing together as global citizens, living in an interconnected community where I have to learn from you while you are learning from me, and together we can make it better. And I think it's a new relationship we have between Haiti and the United States, built on mutual respect, dignity for both sides.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How do you feel about America now? I mean, once upon a time when you were in Haiti as president, you had a lot of anti-American things. Has any of that changed, all of that?

PRESIDENT JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE: That's why it's good to see the future today in the light of yesterday. Today, right now, we have the troops, the U.S. troops in Haiti, side by side, with the Haitian people, the same way the Haitian soldiers were in the battle of Savannah, side by side with the American troops, fighting for the independence of the United States. Wonderful it was, as it's wonderful today to move the same way. . . . Together we are sending hope to the world. We are sending the light of peace and reconciliation to the world. And I am really proud to see Haiti can play this historic role, while the world is assuming its responsibility. (ibid.)

TRANSFORMING THE DIALECTICS OF "OUR AMERICA"

The exchanges contained in the Aristide interviews are readily situated within the cultural and political history of decolonizing contact outlined in this study. On one side is Aristide, who comes from a long tradition of Haitian intellectuals working out a liberating relationship to the popular masses in their country, trying to create an effective means of imagining, and articulating in words and deeds, a popular democratic movement. For Aristide to speak with analytical and emotional intensity about the "historic role" of the Haitian people, not only nationally but hemispherically and even globally, makes perfect sense if we situate him in the wake of Roumain and Aléxis, Haitian women writers such as Marie Chauvet and Marie-Thérèse Colimon-Hall, and a liberation theology movement which in Haiti is the latest development in a rich legacy of popular anti-imperial resistance through religion. These are the lines of descent for a discourse that asserts the protagonism of the Haitian masses and reveals the collective effort of Haitian intellectuals, over many generations, to express this protagonism in language that would counter the class and the gender elitism common in oppositional discourses. That Aristide is the product of this genealogy is reflected in his populism, feminism, nationalism, and anti-imperialism.

On the other side of the dialogic exchange, Jesse Jackson Sr. and Charlayne Hunter-Gault are the inheritors and animators of their own historical experience. As we have seen in the preceding discussion of Zora Neale Hurston's Haitian fieldwork, and more generally in the microhistory of African American contact with Haiti, the transnational aspects of African American history offer Jackson and Hunter-Gault a perspective for viewing Aristide in much less hostile and alienating terms than he is typically seen by mainstream corporate media purveyors of Haiti's bad press. Aristide himself uses these transnational linkages to connect with Hunter-Gault during their second interview, when he speaks of "our forefathers coming from Africa" and when he highlights the presence of Haitian troops fighting on behalf of U.S. national liberation at the battle of Savannah. Another more recent shaping force on their perspective as mass media journalists is the involvement of both Jackson and Hunter-Gault in the history of the modern civil rights movement. This is true for Hunter-Gault, who de-segregated the University of Georgia, and for Jackson, whose credentials include leading roles in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Poor People's Campaign, PUSH, and the Rainbow Coalition.

Jackson and Hunter-Gault were also shaped by the most immediate historical developments at that time, when a wide network of African American individuals and institutions worked diligently to keep U.S. government attention focused on Haitian politics, and the cause of Haitian democracy, following the 1991 coup. The primary engines in restoring Aristide and the democratic process were undoubtedly the hundreds of thousands of Haitians who resisted the coup in Haiti and were killed, wounded, or went into hiding; the tens of thousands of Haitians who influenced U.S. politics through their decision to flee Haiti by sea; and the thousands of diasporan Haitians who participated in North American–based solidarity efforts including mass marches, print journalism, and think tank activities. Translating this agenda in the United States, though, was largely a product of one love solidarity practiced by African Americans, including high-profile hunger strikes first by Katherine Dunham and then Randall Robinson, and regular congressional hearings and legislative initiatives sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus as a whole and Charles Rangell, Maxine Waters, Cynthia McKinney, and Kwesi Mfume in particular. These networks were essential to articulating Haitian interests in terms of concrete policy decisions such as the Governor's Island Accord, the embargo, the decision to secure Aristide's return with U.S. troops, and so on.[9]

The historical roots of the dialogue in these interviews, then, reach back centuries and project forward to the moments immediately surrounding the media events. As we have seen throughout this study, the long history of the counter-plantation includes constant criss-crossings between African America

and the Caribbean, which, while not erasing the unique characteristics of each, nevertheless open up many avenues of communication and collaboration. Moreover, Jackson and Hunter-Gault are products of the civil rights era and, as a movement grounded in grassroots religious culture, principles of nonviolence, literacy training, and black liberation, the civil rights movement has much in common with Lavalas. All of this provides a historical and cultural background for understanding why, despite the horrendous track record of U.S. corporate media in misrepresenting Haiti and Haitians, Aristide would be inclined to grant interviews to African American television reporters, and why the transcripts would turn out the way they did.

While the historical framework laid out in this study provides a satisfying explanation for the content of these televised encounters between a Haitian president and his African American interlocutors, the Aristide interviews with Jackson and Hunter-Gault are structurally and theoretically significant in several respects, which, when elucidated, may bring to provisional closure the main lines of argument in this study. I want to consider the theoretical implications of these interviews from three angles: as a case of direct contact and collaboration between African American and Caribbean intellectuals; as examples of intellectual engagement in a popular culture medium; and as interventions that challenge and transform the vision of a continent divided into two Americas.

As an example of direct interaction between African American and Caribbean intellectuals, these interviews help to concretize and validate the main premises of this study. In particular, Aristide's dialogues with Jackson and Hunter-Gault represent clear evidence to support the idea that African American and Caribbean solidarity is a primary source of cultural decolonization in the Americas. Throughout the previous chapters, I have emphasized a process of convergence in which Caribbean and African American people have met, in struggle and in pleasure, to create and refine cultural forms that reach across regional nuances, difference, and aporias to express shared interests. The interviews considered in this chapter provide another powerful manifestation of the decolonizing contact zone because they offer examples of direct interaction and collaboration. The discourse emerging from the interviews makes clear both the force of regional differences and the potentially liberating force of one love solidarity. We particularly need an awareness of African American–Caribbean relational community and its distinctive *donner-avec* logic to assess adequately what transpires in these interviews: how Aristide is pulled in the direction of making neocolonial statements but also how he resists and rearticulates the televised encounter as a decolonizing intervention; how Jackson and Hunter-Gault participate in neocolonial cultural logic by framing questions

that assume Aristide's and Haiti's dependent status but also how they create a different kind of opening by posing other questions that give Aristide freer rein to represent himself and his country in his own terms. While the preceding chapters help to clarify how this liberating dialogue takes shape, the interviews solidify and round off the inquiry by offering concrete and historically current manifestations of a legacy that is active in the present moment.

The second theoretical issue I want to consider is the importance of the televisual medium. Part of why I chose to end with examples of nonprint culture is because this sharpens the polemical questions I have been trying to raise about literary culture and its possibilities and limits as a means of decolonization. Often in the preceding pages I have pursued this polemic by posing literary texts against other kinds of written texts—for example, Zora Neale Hurston's ethnography in chapter 3, or Aristide's testimonial in the present chapter. Implicit in these oppositions and juxtapositions is an affirmative answer to John Beverley's framing question regarding the testimonial: "Are there experiences in the world today that would be betrayed or misrepresented by literature as we know it?" (69).[10] To conclude the study, though, I wanted to push the polemic further and bring it full circle, in a sense, to the opening opposition between, on the one hand, decolonizing popular culture, as represented in the intertextual, Ethiopianist dialogue between Curtis Mayfield and Bob Marley, and, on the other hand, cultural decolonization as codified in the canons of Caribbean and African American writing. While it is a primary concern of this study to track the history of African American and Caribbean writing as responses to the challenge of popular cultural activity, and to comprehend this dialectic between written and oral culture as a central, motivating problem in the evolution of decolonizing literatures, turning at the end to television interviews moves the trajectory outside the realm of written texts.

This shift is crucial, theoretically, because quantitatively and qualitatively the Aristide interviews represent another development in intellectual engagement with popular culture. Quantitatively, these broadcasts reached viewers numbering in the millions, and potentially are open to nonliterate audiences in the Caribbean, the United States, and elsewhere. In terms of audience, then, Aristide's interviews with Jackson and Hunter-Gault have the kind of potential mass appeal that previous generations of black intellectuals have tried to achieve, and toward which they have gestured through efforts to incorporate vernacular culture in writing.

Qualitatively, television is oral and aural as well as visual. Such qualities amplify the quantitative impact of the liberating moments produced in these conversations, particularly the moment when Aristide responds in French to Hunter-Gault's question about how his identity changed during his sojourn

in the United States. The subversive impact of this exchange derives from the physical shock of hearing something other than "standard" English broadcast in an uninterrupted flow over corporate media airwaves that are set up precisely to suppress such language. To be sure, the content of Aristide's comment cuts against the grain of U.S. imperial designs by asserting the dynamic history of African diasporan linkages in the hemisphere. But the form in which his language takes shape is even more of a challenge to the media apparatus that serves here as a conveyance. In the written texts examined in this study, there is a strong tendency to equate orality with liberation, and the successful inscription of orality frequently comes to represent the horizon for successfully achieved decolonizing literature. The Aristide interviews demonstrate in the most dramatic terms the potential for oral utterance to disrupt entrenched power and unify divided allies through dialogue.

Finally, these interviews offer a way of thinking about decolonizing culture that challenges the Manichaean "two Americas" framework that has served so usefully as an oppositional theory during the past century. Martí's analysis helps to understand the initial tensions that mark the Aristide interviews. When Jackson and Hunter-Gault ask Aristide to articulate a position that denies Haitian agency, authority, and self-determination, and when he resists this cultural logic, then we do in fact have a "two Americas" scenario being enacted. Aristide speaks, here, as a voice from "Nuestra América," the diverse assemblage of cultural and political entities in the southern half of the hemisphere that are gathered up as a unit by virtue of a common fight against U.S. imperialism. Jackson and Hunter-Gault, in their capacity as corporate media operatives, constitute themselves as representatives of "that other America which is not ours." It is important to add, moreover, that Jackson and Hunter-Gault act as voices of the global North despite their evident personal regard for Aristide and empathy with the cause of Haitian democracy.

This kind of North-South tension is not the only thing happening in the Aristide interviews, though. When Aristide begins to speak more freely, talking in French, reversing the imperialist logic in questions that assume his presence in the United States can only produce changes in one direction, we are moving beyond the "two Americas" framework and entering another rhetorical and existential paradigm. If, at times, African American and Caribbean encounters produce the Manichaean split envisioned by Martí and his successors, these transcripts remind us how those encounters can also generate dialogue in which binary divisions break down. Aristide made this point himself in an Internet chat session moderated by Hunter-Gault in July 1995 for America Online. Aristide's comment, "While in Florida, you are closer to Haiti than to Washington" ("President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Internet Interview"), breaks

down received geopolitical concepts (Florida aligns with Washington) and invites the U.S.-based reader/interlocutor/Web surfer to reorient and reconfigure (Florida realigns with Haiti).[11]

Also transformed in the contact zone of the interview are types of cultural resistance based on binary models of opposition. In the freer expressions of the Aristide interviews, a liberating, counterimperial circuit of cultural activity comes into view. One important implication of the subversive openings registered in the interviews is that there are, in fact, more liberated locations within the United States, "that other America which is not ours." Part of the collective work of resisting imperialism is to connect with and through such openings and make the most of them. This mediating of "two Americas" Manichaeism is precisely the kind activity that is consolidated and advanced by Schomburg, Hurston, and Cortez, and that serves as a foundation and template for Jackson and Hunter-Gault in the Aristide interviews.

It is crucial to recognize, and the interviews underscore this idea, that African American–Caribbean dialogue has the potential to generate this sort of opening but does not produce decolonizing culture automatically. Aristide, on his side, needs the possibility of a sympathetic North American audience that Jackson and Hunter-Gault represent in order to break through the veils of mutual incomprehension that binary opposition imposes on both sides of the imperial encounter. Additionally, Aristide needs this audience if there is any hope of sidestepping or rewriting the neoliberal, neocolonial script created for him by the U.S. government and the communications ISA as a condition of returning under the protection of U.S. troops.

Jackson and Hunter-Gault, for their part, need to be called into a more radical relationship to Aristide and the Haitian crisis. Aristide's dialogic summons pulls at the limits of their citizenship, transforming Jackson and Hunter-Gault from hegemonic North American news reporters into black intellectuals wielding popular culture against the grain of U.S. imperialism to help rearticulate, symbolically and politically, the terms of U.S.-Haitian relations. When Hunter-Gault asks Aristide, "Are you the same man you were three years ago?" instead of Aristide confessing, at Hunter-Gault's prompt and before millions of U.S. viewers, the extent to which his term of exile has tamed and civilized him, the conversation becomes a dialogue between two black intellectuals perpetuating a legacy of decolonizing cultural activity. Only through their combined efforts, in dialogue and collaboration, does this subversion of neocolonial media culture have a chance to emerge. Even though, in the memory of those who saw any or all of these broadcasts, the waters have probably closed over these moments, critical commentary can help to recall ruptures in a major communications ISA and illuminate once again the potential of African American–

Caribbean dialogue to mobilize popular culture for the purpose of decolonizing the Americas.

POSTSCRIPT: 2000

I was staying with friends in Port-au-Prince during the 2000 U.S. presidential election and watched the early returns with them. Just before electricity went out, Florida was announced for Gore, and when the blackout hit, we fired up *lumettes* and enjoyed the candlelit glow in a festive mood. The next morning, we listened to the ensuing debacle on transistor radios, and the first piece of expert commentary out of most Haitian mouths, in houses and on the streets, was the phrase "coup d'etat."

Democracy is an unfinished project in Haiti, but this is equally true across the Caribbean and in the wider arena of Pan-American societies—including the United States. Whereas most of the scholarly accounts of Aristide's election, exile, return, and reelection focus stereotypically on how the radical firebrand was chastened by his sobering exposure to U.S. political culture, Aristide himself has always asserted that culture is a two-way street. Just as Haitians continue to learn from their experiences in the world system, so does the world have positive lessons to draw from Haiti. As other nations in the Caribbean and the Americas search for answers to their own political, cultural, and economic dilemmas, the revitalization of the Haitian national romance and its disruptive force—even in first world media venues—is one of the most important lessons any of us can derive from the history of Aristide and the popular democratic movement in Haiti.

POSTSCRIPT: 2004–2007

There is a great Kreyol word, *teledjol*, which refers to word-of-mouth networks, what we might call the grapevine in colloquial English. *Teledjol* is always the best source for alternative viewpoints on Haitian society, and in many cases it produces critical insights about the United States as well (for example, calling the 2000 presidential fiasco a coup d'etat). In the United States, though, very few have access to firsthand sources who can relay the latest *teledjol* on Haitian affairs. The next time you listen to a National Public Radio report on Haiti, or read the *New York Times* version, ask yourself whose *teledjol* is being projected through the mass media echo chamber (including its liberal bastions), and it

will become even clearer why the sort of openings described above in Aristide's interviews with Jackson and Hunter-Gault are important.

Against this forbidding backdrop of bad press and attacks on Aristide from across the political spectrum, what critical perspectives are available on the forced departure of Aristide in 2004? In light of that crisis, how should we now think about the fate of Aristide and popular democracy in Haiti? One observation is primary: it is essential to broaden any discussion beyond the question of President Aristide's personality, which is where much of the diplomatic debates and mainstream media have been focusing (and indeed where much of this chapter has focused). Typically, in reporting the events of 2004, mainstream U.S. media followed the verbal brick-throwing of antigovernment forces, making the crisis out to be a referendum on Aristide, who is (still) described as a "Communist," "demagogue," "despotic," "murderer," "vile dictator," and so forth. Paradoxically, in coverage that emphasizes the president's personality, Aristide himself is rarely present in the reporting except through his enemies' characterizations. Only in the week before his controversial departure in March 2004 did Aristide's voice emerge at all in the mainstream media, and after that it vanished again apart from the activism of Rep. Maxine Waters and Randall Robinson, among others, and the alternative media coverage provided by Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!* If it is not about Aristide, what else might be at the root of the crisis? In *Haiti's Predatory Republic*, political scientist Robert Fatton focuses most of his attention on the fifteen years during which the Haitian popular movement coalesced under the sign of Lavalas and struggled to sustain a democratic opening. The complexity of Haitian electoral politics, neoliberal economics, and destabilization tactics by the U.S. government are three factors that Fatton suggests have deeply influenced the course of recent events.[12]

I want to conclude on a conceptual note. Lavalas, I suppose, is now a discrete period in Haitian history, and we are essentially starting the postmortem analyses. While one can be glad that Aristide and his family got out without being shot, the manner of his departure remains unclear, and UN peacekeepers, though welcomed in the countryside, have not prevented riots, casualties, and the continued suffering of Lavalas militants in Haitian prisons. The suppression and unraveling of Lavalas should not be equated with the demise of popular democracy in Haiti, however, for the current crisis really is 500 years in the making and is not likely to be resolved during the lifetime of anyone currently struggling to make things better in Haiti and the Americas. Ultimately, Haitians, along with the rest of us on the planet, will have to find a more equitable way to live or we will perish.

In the meantime, the potential loss of Aristide, or more properly what he represents historically, and the way in which this crisis has played out suggest a

historical regression. Adapting Jurgen Habermas's argument about "refeudalization of the public sphere" (195) and Ernesto Laclau's claim that capitalism on a world scale preserves "pre-capitalist relationships in the periphery" (40), social theorists increasingly cast globalization in regressive terms as a return to feudalism rather than a movement forward to more perfect forms of capitalism and democracy.[13] In Haiti, this process unfolds in a uniquely Caribbean form: neoliberalism is producing a return to earlier historical patterns of piracy and maroonage, with the predatory elites in the role of neofilibusters while the Haitian people re-create their historic role as rebel slaves in the fields and mountains pursuing a destiny outside the state forms that reject their humanity.

One Love in the Classroom

Why Comparative Links between African American Studies and Caribbean Studies Matter

I WANT TO CONCLUDE with a final reflection on the role of culture in decolonization, and more specifically on the legacy of convergence that makes African American and Caribbean cultural dialogue a pivotal decolonizing tradition in the Americas. At the same time, I want to project the analysis and the argument beyond a strictly demarcated, formalist cultural critique, for Schomburg, Hurston, Cortez, and Aristide are important not only because of their liberating cultural expressions but also for their broader social engagements; their insistent linking of cultural activity with political, economic, and other social arenas; and the existential models they provide of how to make decolonization a way of life.[1]

VISIBLE AND AUDIBLE OBJECTS

While I have not referred to it explicitly thus far, my theoretical approach in the previous chapters draws upon the following claim by Pierre Macherey, who writes in *A Theory of Literary Production* that "the text constructs a determinate image of the ideological, revealing it as an object rather than living it from within as though it were an inner conscience. . . . Art, or at least literature, because it naturally scorns the credulous view of the world, establishes myth and illusion as visible objects" (132–133). Viewed against the backdrop of entrenched mythologies about empire, about racial and psychological differences dividing Caribbean from African American people, about the naturalness or

at least inevitability of a host other hierarchies used to construct and maintain internal neocolonial dynamics and a regional international division of labor, the writers, artists, and cultural expressions surveyed above are invaluable for their clarifying impact. Schomburg's plebianist and redemptionist historiography makes such imperial mythologies visible objects, to use Marcherey's terminology, by confronting them head-on, returning agency and dignity to people of African descent and breaking down class hierarchies that limit racial uplift ideologies. His collecting represents the primary accumulation of cultural capital, while his librarianship socializes and democratizes that capital in ways that enable future generations to continue his intellectual struggle for the full realization of black and universal freedom. Hurston's ethnography dramatically produces U.S. and Caribbean racial ideologies (as well as ideologies of gender, class, caste, and religion) as visible objects that may then be treated with more critical attention than would normally be the case when we are embroiled in racialized identities and racial politics as immediate lived experiences.

Just as Hurston, through her embrace of spirit possession as a rhetorical strategy in *Tell My Horse*, points the way to decolonizing engagement with Caribbean culture, Cortez and Aristide make decolonization—as opposed to imperial mythologies—both visible and audible. In Cortez's case, this comes through print publication and multimedia performances, both live and recorded, that reveal the saturation of Black Arts poetry with Pan-Caribbean and Pan-African imagery, archetypes, and musical idioms. Aristide, as we have seen, found in his dialogue with African American interviewers Jesse Jackson Sr. and Charlayne Hunter-Gault an effective vehicle for interrupting the imperial flow of information through U.S. media outlets. Instead, the Aristide interviews facilitated by Jackson and Hunter-Gault refashion that apparatus into a conduit for the verbal styles and political perspectives of Haiti's popular democratic movement.

To sum up in Machereian terms, one of the things we find at the convergence of African American and Caribbean history is a highly evolved cultural tradition with a legacy of deconstructing imperial myths and illusions as well as articulating dissident myths and political discourses that help restructure and reconstruct hemispheric society as a nonimperial community. The negative or critical aspect of this convergence has many counterparts in the American hemisphere and globally, and during the past four decades the critique of colonial discourse has increasingly brought these anticolonial traditions to light, principally for academic readers. It is arguably less common to find examples of nonimperial community building being articulated, and articulated in corporate mass media for wider audiences. The true value and significance of African American and Caribbean solidarity may be its capacity to make visible

and audible the reconstructive aspect of decolonization that replaces hierarchy with the egalitarian logic of one love solidarity.

DECOLONIZATION AS A WAY OF LIFE

Whatever else its limits, this study, because of the Machereian emphasis, carries the burden of a formalist impulse that tends, ultimately, to reify literature, ethnography, theology, historiography, and other genres surveyed above into an ahistorical process of cultural production located midway between ideology and scientific knowledge. Taking the inquiry out of history also depoliticizes it, and that runs counter to the transformational project of decolonization (however much illumination, erudition, or uplift the analysis might strive to realize).

One way of responding to this theoretical problem is to focus on pedagogy and the uses to which we put literary and other texts in the classroom. Here I want to briefly recall a real-life anecdote that captures in striking terms the potential impact of African American literature on Caribbean students. It suggests as well the contrast—even the conflict—that runs as a counterpart to the decolonizing convergence of African American and Caribbean cultural history. In an undergraduate section of World Literature II that I taught some years ago at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, we concluded an opening discussion of Frederick Douglass's 1845 *Narrative* (still included in volume 2 of *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, in the section titled "Varieties of Romanticism") with a piece of testimony from a Jamaican woman who expressed her shock at the brutality of the conditions experienced by Douglass. "I never heard that slavery was so violent," she explained, and added that the only reason she had any awareness of the conditions experienced by enslaved people in Jamaica was because she had a grandfather from Accompong. Pursuing the conversation after class, I asked my Jamaican student what she thought about African American history now, after having read and discussed Douglass. "You know," she replied, "it's like a secret history of war between us, what we think about each other. We were always taught that blacks in this country were like nothing, people without culture. Always complaining about things that were over with a long time ago. Now I don't know, and I don't know why we weren't taught about this history of slavery in school." Just as our discussion of Douglass challenged and reconfigured this student's perceptions of African American (and, to some extent, Caribbean) racial identity and history, Schomburg, Hurston, Cortez, and Aristide can (separately or as an ensemble) create the same type of critical openings in classroom situations. By drawing attention to how different paradigms of

racial identity and racial politics converge in tension and in harmony across the hemisphere, and by emphasizing the iconography, rituals, and protocols of nonimperial relational community, discussion of these figures and their cultural expressions can provide students and teachers with a greater range of choices about how to position themselves in racialized and imperial political situations occurring outside the classroom. Pedagogical work around the topic of African American and Caribbean solidarity creates a cultural and existential reservoir for students and teachers alike. Such a reservoir is vital in the struggle to create nonimperial openings in debates over such aspects of academic life as curriculum standards, minority recruitment and retention, funding models for interdisciplinary programs in African American and Caribbean studies, support for minority student groups, confronting hate speech, and more. Beyond the immediate sphere of academic institutional life, such pedagogy may also reveal a wider range of relational decolonizing strategies useful in parenting, dating, law enforcement, voting rights and immigration law advocacy, church ministry and missionary work, corporate philanthropy and government assistance (both domestic and international), labor organizing, public cultural programming, and club sports. These are just some of the arenas in which we interact socially and in which—as people who have in some sense gotten ready through exposure to the convergence of African American and Caribbean cultural history—we now have the opportunity to concretize that convergence by making decolonization a way of life.

I want to end with a commentary on the 2005 feature documentary *Dave Chappelle's Block Party*, and a scene that captures Wyclef Jean's interaction with the marching band from historically black Central State University (CSU) in Ohio. This recorded moment makes a fitting coda to the present study for several reasons. First, the clip provides a counterpoint to the teaching anecdote about Douglass's impact on a Caribbean student. Here, in Wyclef's presence, we can see the impact of Caribbean culture on African American students whom comedian Chappelle had brought to Brooklyn as participants in his inclusive, subversive, dionysian event. Second, the clip is a cultural document that invites formalist analysis, yet it preserves a real-life pedagogical moment that challenges the potential self-containment of cultural critique. As such, it typifies the focus of this conclusion on breaking through the ahistorical tendency of formalism in order to resituate cultural criticism in a broader social context. Third, the scene of Wyclef teaching his song "President" to the uniformed marching band musicians—and then proselytizing them with a racial uplift message—combines cultural performance and pedagogical intervention. As such, it speaks to the concerns of the conclusion and the impact of one love logic in the classroom. Finally, and perhaps most significant, the moment

encapsulates the long history of Caribbean and African American collaboration. Wyclef's interaction with the CSU band captures the utopian promise of this solidarity and at the same time is evidence that decolonizing efforts are unfinished and fraught with contradictions.

If there is one figure on the contemporary cultural scene who embodies and extends the musical dialogue between Bob Marley and Curtis Mayfield that served as the point of departure for this study, that figure is Wyclef Jean. Wyclef explicitly models himself on Marley through a long list of gestures ranging from his well-known cover version of Marley's "No Woman, No Cry" (on the Fugees 1996 release *The Score*), to his conspicuous use of the Gibson Les Paul guitar that is a key aspect of Marley iconography, to a yodeling technique that echoes Marley's distinctive vocal style. As a Haitian immigrant and a major shaping influence on the evolution of hip hop during the last two decades, Wyclef is also a living exponent of hip hop's transnational roots that grow directly from the convergence of Caribbean and African American musical styles beginning in mid-1970s New York. Thus Wyclef registers not only the Ethiopianist legacy that undergirds the Mayfield-Marley dialogue, he embodies the continued growth of that tradition up to the present day.

Initially, the exchange between Wyclef and the CSU students is interactive and dialogic as he queries the students about what they would do if they were president, and then performs "President," his hit from the 2004 release *Welcome to Haiti: Creole 101*, with Wyclef on B-3 organ and the students on chorus vocals. These scenes body forth many of the liberating dynamics discussed throughout this study, including a call-and-response musical performance centerpiece; a vernacular give and take that is explicitly empowering and politicizing; moments of critical reflection about individuals, institutions, and policy options; and a freeing up of time and space that exemplifies not only the broad utopian thrust of decolonizing contact zones but also the specific looseness of the block party happening that provides the occasion for this encounter.

After the music concludes, though, Wyclef begins to preach. Here is my transcript of the sermon:

> It's good to see all these black people in college you know what I'm sayin? And listen man, I'mma tell you like this: don't blame the white man for NUTTIN. Get yours. You understand? I came to this country, I ain't know how to speak English, I made something of myself. I went to the library. English is like my third language. I just learned how to speak English. So the thing about all a that "Yo, the white man responsible for that"? White man ain't responsible for SHIT. They got libraries in the hood, and if they don't got libraries, tell ya mayor, ya governor, whoever in the county, put some

muhfuckin libraries in the hood. I know what the camera sayin—I shouldn't be cursing ta you kids, but this shit is all over the Internet anyway. [Exits to applause and cheering.]

There are numerous potential points of engagement with this statement by Wyclef. One important issue is the shift from dialogue to monologue. Despite the fact that Wyclef is in a crowded rehearsal room only inches away from the CSU students, much of his speech is delivered turning away from the students (unlike the dialogue and music that preceded it). Why does he not inspire or solicit the kind of feedback that only moments earlier was the foundation for his musical exchange with the students? As he pounds on the Hammond B-3 speaker cabinet for emphasis, like a sermonizing preacher, one wonders how to read that pounding: is it jarring? necessary? self-righteous? Why does Wyclef think this audience needs to hear a sermon from him about Caribbean-style uplift? As students at a historically black college, they are the inheritors of the Talented Tenth project and represent the next generation of black intellectuals in formation. These are people who know about libraries in the hood and elsewhere. More than likely their relatives are among the people who founded and maintained the libraries where Wyclef boasts of having attained his own knowledge of English and life in the United States. As for his "white man ain't responsible for SHIT" message, one wonders what his viewpoint is on French reparations to Haiti.

Yet there are no questions, no comments, no interventions from the students who had been vocal interlocutors only a few minutes earlier. In the context of the present study, this meeting between Wyclef and the CSU students points up how the same aporias and contradictions that limited Caribbean and African American solidarity a century ago are still operative today despite decades of progress in convergence. Behind the admonition to visit the library and the forceful exculpation of white responsibility for black suffering are assumptions that strongly echo the student claims cited above that for Caribbeans, African Americans are "people without culture" who wrongly continue to protest "things that were over with long ago." It's not even the rightness or wrongness of these assumptions that is at stake, so much as the epistemic and political breach they hint at. In the absence of verbal dialogue, viewers of *Dave Chappelle's Block Party* might scrutinize facial expressions and other body language to discern the African American audience's take on Wyclef's Caribbean-style uplift message. While their reticence suggests a communication breakdown, and solidarity interrupted by perhaps-unintended arrogance on Wyclef's part, in the end their silence is dispersed by applause and cheering as Wyclef leaves the rehearsal room. Arguably, this joyful noise is a sign that Caribbean and African American

cultural styles will continue to converge. While regional differences exist, it is the articulation of decolonizing contact zones that represents a more enduring historical legacy and paradigm for liberating cross-cultural encounter.

APPENDIX

An Interview with Jayne Cortez

Recorded by telephone February 12, 2001, 6:05–6:35 P.M.
Revised through correspondence in 2003 and 2006.

KM: I guess the first question I have is how you came to write this group of poems.
JC: Maybe I should talk about each person because I did not write these poems as a group.

KM: Could you start with Damas?
JC: In the fall of 1969 Damas participated in a conference in Canada. On his way back to France he stopped in New York City. He stayed with a friend who was a professor at New York University. I met him, gave him my book of poetry, took him to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Later, I introduced him to the sculptor Melvin Edwards, and together we took Damas all over New York City. He decided to extend his visit and moved into the Great Northern Hotel. Damas introduced us to Wilfred Cartey. With Damas we had many conversations about Negritude, Africa, art, poetry, politics, and French Guiana. We became close and were his extended family in the United States. Later, his lovely wife, Marietta, came from Brazil to join him in Washington, D.C., where he accepted teaching positions at Federal City College and Howard University. We stayed in contact by telephone and frequent visits. He was like an older brother, a mentor and adviser. He passed in 1978, and I read his poems at the funeral. We did New York things while in New York, went to hear a lot of music, that kind of thing. We took him to jazz clubs, to places like Slugs' on the Lower East Side of New York City.

KM: What was his reaction to those places?
JC: Oh, wonderful, you know. He'd push his hat to one side and groove to the music of Sun Ra. We had a great time [laughter]. Damas introduced us to some very good French wine. Damas was very sharp, he was a sharp thinker, a real critical thinker, and he could put his finger on the pulse right away. He was a sharp, intense, humorous, confrontational brother all in one slice.

KM: Do you have an anecdote about that quality?
JC: He did not like being used or manipulated. That attitude is projected in his poetry. In all of our conversations when he commented on something or somebody, he sort of was able to go straight to the core of it and do it in two or three words, just like his poetry—rhythmic—and just like that with that curious gleam in his eye. He was very poetic, ironic, and precise.

KM: Did you collaborate with him at all on creative projects?
JC: We did not have time to collaborate on any projects. He was instrumental in my receiving a grant to go to Africa in 1970. It was my second trip to Africa. It was just a friendship, very close, brother-sister friendship. And you know we just went back and forth. He was preoccupied with his responsibilities as director of the Institute for African Studies at Howard University, but he would call me with whatever he was thinking. We were people, and we just went back and forth like that.

KM: Any other comments about Marietta?
JC: Yeah, Marietta Campos Damas was from Brazil, she was from Rio de Janeiro. She worked in a bank there. Her father was a writer, and she was introduced to Damas by artist-politician Abdias Nascimento. In fact, after his death, and after she left Washington, D.C., and went back to Brazil, we went there and visited her on a couple of occasions and made long distance calls back and forth until her passing. She was like him, different but like him. I could see why they were really together because they complemented each other. She was a cultural activist and a warm, wise person. She was his driver, she was his chauffeur [laughter], and he was a good cook, a very good cook. Damas cooked a mean French Guiana fish stew.

KM: Did it have red pepper in it?
JC: It had red pepper in it—lots of red pepper. I call the poem I wrote for Damas "The Red Pepper Poet" because he was very hot and very intense and direct. It was through Damas that I met Leopold Senghor in the early '70s. He was here in New York for something with the PEN American Center, and to

read his poetry at the 92nd Street Y. Mel and I also went with Damas to a conference honoring Senghor in Vermont, and I had a chance to sit down and be in their company while they were together privately. It was very good, but you know being in that situation at that time, I wasn't really thinking that this was "*important,*" I just thought I was there. Just listening, just tuning in. I like the works of Senghor, I like the works of Damas and Césaire.

KM: Did Senghor read at all during this time?
JC: Yes, Senghor read at the 92nd Street Y. And I remember that reading very well because I think he played some kora music in the background, and I remember sitting there listening to him read, and sitting next to Robert Hayden, and Raymond Patterson too.

KM: Was that before you used kora music in your recordings?
JC: Oh, yeah, way before I'd used kora, way before. But I had used other combinations of African and Western instruments.

KM: Did you get any inspiration from him, or was it just a natural evolution on your part?
JC: I think I was inspired by that whole Negritude movement. By the fact of their revolutionary intentions at the moment, I think I was very influenced by that, and many people—well not many people, but poets in the 1960s—would have taken a look at that movement, and a look at Fanon coming as a part of it too. They were against colonialism and imperialism. They were asserting their blackness at a time when it was not the popular thing to do. Damas and Césaire had revolutionary intentions.

KM: Does Negritude go beyond the thematic issues and the focus on revolutionary intention? Do the Negritude writers also represent a kind of artistic practice, or a model of how to be an artist?
JC: They're definitely a model of how to be an artist, that would be the first thing to me because once those particular poets chose that way in order to express themselves, I think how they were going to do it was very important. They were students of literature, students of history. They were interested in African liberation, in black freedom. They explored the conditions and possibilities in their poems. Damas used rhythms, Césaire used surrealism, and Senghor was like a pro-African romantic. Negritude encompasses everything. It has variety, it's a way of life.

KM: How were they different?
JC: They were different because they were three different people. One was from Senegal, one from Martinique, one from French Guiana. And it was different because they were from different families, and because they had different concepts. But they had a lot in common because when they came together as students in Paris then they were certainly interested in clearing up some misinformation. They all dealt with Western art and culture as if it had already been strongly influenced by African culture. They had gone a long way together. They were artists and they were brotherly.

KM: What about Aimé Césaire?
JC: I met Aimé Césaire in 1979. I had already read his *Return to My Native Land*, I think in the late '60s. I was impressed with the way he wrote that, his returning home to find himself, to purge himself of his years in France, to try to find a new direction, to carve out a new path for himself through the use of the subconscious as a way of liberating himself. I thought that was really explosive. I thought the way he put words together and his use of surrealism was fantastically dynamic.

KM: Is *Return to My Native Land* the main work for you in your processing of Aimé Césaire?
JC: Well that was what I first read. Later I read his other poetry, plays, and essays on colonialism. He's one of the great poets of the twentieth century. A profound person in literature and philosophy.

KM: Why hasn't he gotten a Nobel Prize?
JC: Well, I don't think he's sitting by the door waiting. He is a great poet. And so if they were giving it based on the fact that you did something with the language and based on that you are a great poet, then they would have given it to him, but obviously that's not the reason that you get the vote for a Nobel Prize. The Nobel committee is not of noble intent. Nobel is a prize backed by dynamite. Negritude is too explosive.

KM: I wanted to ask you about Nicolás Guillén as well, who is from the same generation but coming from a different place in the Caribbean.
JC: When I discovered the poetry of Damas and Césaire, I also discovered the poems of Nicolás Guillén. All those pieces were translated by Langston Hughes, you know in that anthology, *Poetry of the Negro*. Somebody gave me

that in about 1963, and I don't know why but I really was attracted to those particular poets, and so I became aware of the Negritude movement, Negrismo, Haiti, the Negro Renaissance, and their connection to the civil rights movement, the Black Arts Movement.

KM: There's a continuum.
JC: Yes, a continuum. And so, with Guillén, I discovered his work, and then I had a chance to go to Cuba, but the first time I went to Cuba was in 1981 and I didn't find Nicolás Guillén. When I went back in 1985, I was leading a delegation of African American women writers and I met Nicolás Guillén. He was at UNEAC [Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba]. He was there listening to some young school kids who recited and sang his poetry. The poet Nancy Morejón introduced us. It was a really wonderful moment, and Nicolás Guillén enjoyed meeting all the women.

KM: What about Ana Mendieta, another Cuban connection?
JC: I went to Cuba with Ana in 1981. We were Ana's New York family. She was my next-door neighbor. We were very close: we ate together, joked together, went to hear music together, went to Cuba together, shared secrets together. She was a short, tough lady, a very talented artist, just a forceful, fantastic person.

KM: And your husband has a sculpture, *Justice for Tropic Ana*, based on her work?
JC: It's not based on her work, but it is dedicated to her. We think of Ana always, especially when we go to Cuba and things like that.

KM: Can you say something about Gilberto de la Nuez?
JC: Gilberto was an artist, a painter in Havana. Gilberto died oh I guess it must have been maybe five years now since his death, but was a wonderful painter, a self-taught painter of historical Cuban themes. We used to go and visit Gilberto and his family. We own some of his paintings.

KM: Can you describe them at all?
JC: I guess they would be—what would they be considered—folkloric, maybe. He painted scenes of Cuban life, and would paint the celebrations in the plaza. Like if there were musicians in a park or dancing in a park, he would draw and paint those figures. But it's more than that, it just had a real freedom and free

flow about it, and I would have to show you that for you to see it. He painted the struggles of people. He painted the revolt against slavery. He painted leaders of the labor movement. He painted life in the streets of Havana.

KM: We've talked about the Francophone and Creole-speaking and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, but not the English speaking Caribbean yet.
JC: Well, Mel and I met Wilfred Cartey at a party in Manhattan in the winter of 1969. That party was for Léon Damas, so we went and we took Damas to the party which was full of people from the Caribbean and Africa, and we met Wilfred there and became acquainted of course with his *Whispers* and became friends. Over the years we organized together a series of dialogues called Focus on Southern Africa which we presented at the Countee Cullen Library in Harlem from about 1975 to 1981. You know Wilfred was a *professor* [laughter] of African Caribbean literature, he was a writer, a poet, but he had—all of these people seemed to have—a good sense of humor. He was very serious person too! Mel and I spent many evenings at Wilfred's apartment meeting his family and friends and organizing cultural and political events.

KM: Where was he from again?
JC: Trinidad.

KM: In the list that I made, there is a poem for another Trinidadian, John La Rose.
JC: John La Rose ok, well, let's see—

KM: "Lord Political Activator"—
JC: —yes [laughter]. Through a person named William Tanifeani in Paris, I met Darcus Howe and his wife, Leila. I don't know if you Darcus Howe—

KM: Sure, the name and the work, not personally—
JC: —I met Darcus in Paris in 1984. They came to the hotel and talked about the Black Third World and Radical Book Fair in London. They asked me if I ever wanted to come. I said, "Sure." And then I received an invitation from John La Rose to read there in 1985, which is when I met John and his wife, Sara, and his son, Michael, and other writers and activists in London including Linton Kwesi Johnson, David Abdullah, Jean Binta Breeze, and Lorna Goodison. Later, I met C. L. R. James who lived in a building where Race Today had its offices and David Abdullah. I attended the book fair until it ended—I can't remember

the exact date that it ended in the 1990s—but I'm still in touch with John and Linton. We still talk on the telephone, and I when I visit London I visit John and his wife in their bookstore.

KM: New Beacon?
JC: Yep.

KM: Which is still open?
JC: Still open. You know they created a meeting place upstairs in the same building as New Beacon, it's called the George Padmore Center. They have people coming in to give talks, and to have conversations and so on there.

KM: You have a poem for Mikey Smith as well.
JC: Mikey Smith, yes. Yes, yes, yes. I met Michael Smith in 1982. In 1982 we were both reading with about fifteen other poets from the world at UNESCO in Paris. The event was called "Guerre à la Guerre," which is "War against War," and we became close friends right then and there. We traveled together all through Paris, and then we traveled together to Milan, Italy, to read. And I remember one night, reading in this cold, cold church in Milan, and my work wasn't translated into Italian [laughter], and neither were any of the other works. I mean, the poets were from different places—Russia, you know. I think the only person really translated was Lawrence Ferlinghetti—oh yeah, and Allen Ginsburg, they both had stuff in Italian. But I did not have my translations and so I read in English, and it was a pretty interesting reading, I thought. Anyhow, some guy jumped up and said, "Oh! Read in Italian, da-*da*-da-da-*da*-da," and Michael jumped and told the guy he was gonna kick his be*hind* [heavy laughter]. So it was like that, you know. It was an experience knowing Michael, and Michael, to me, when I heard him read, he was such a brilliant dub poet. He had his message to give, and I guess it was that message that got him in trouble. He was very pure. Actually, it was Linton who called me in 1983 to tell me about Michael's death. I was really stunned.

KM: When you travel overseas, do you ever read in languages other than English?
JC: No, but my work has been translated into twenty-eight languages, so usually I read in English and somebody else will read in French or whatever.

KM: How about the musicians, Bob Marley and Peter Tosh?
JC: Well, everybody *knew of* Bob Marley, I never met Bob Marley. He was a brilliant composer/songwriter and interpreter of his music. He gave us a new

moment in music which was an extension and a musical innovation that produced reggae. I did have the opportunity to tour with Peter Tosh. I was contacted by Peter Tosh's manager, Herbie Miller, who had heard my recording "Celebrations and Solitudes" with bass player Richard Davis. Herbie loved jazz and liked what we did on the recording, and so Richard and I had a chance to travel and be on the same bill with Peter Tosh's group in Chicago and in Madison, Wisconsin. I was very impressed with Peter and in having a chance to ride on the bus with them, with the group. Listening to their conversations and seeing what kind of books they read, I was really *really* impressed because they had a lot of books on the black experience, black history, black political thought, which I thought was *good*. It was a wonderful experience and a significant opportunity to exchange ideas with a major poetic voice in contemporary Jamaican music.

KM: What year was that?
JC: That had to be, 1979, '78–'79, somewhere in there.

KM: When you think about the music that you use in your recordings, do you think about the influence of Caribbean music at all?
JC: [Thoughtful pause.] It depends on what I'm trying to do. Certainly, when I thought about Nicolás Guillén and working on that piece with musicians, we thought about Cuba and Cuban music, and the influence of Cuban music. I thought about Cuba and Africa. The musicians respond to the poems—to the images, pitch, direction, and word sounds like "I See Chano Pozo," or "Adupe." It would be the same about music from other places in the Caribbean. I think the poem "Gypsy Cabman" has a nice island bounce to it.

KM: If you think about the Caribbean-based poems as a group, do they have any significance to you as a group?
JC: I just don't—I can't—think about them as a group, except that these are a group of people—I mean, I *knew* the people. There was some relationship there. I'd have to sit down and look at all those pieces as a group. They are a part of my Pan-African life as a writer.

KM: Do you think that your connections with the Caribbean are like that, too, that they just flow from the anecdotes and the relationships in your life?
JC: I think they flow from relationships. There's just a back-and-forth movement that we've all had. And you know living in New York City, with so many people from the Caribbean right here, who are *friends*, it's just a back and forth, kind of give-and-take response to each other. You know, we're in the same struggle,

you see, and we share the same ancestors, we have the same—you know, we're talking about the transatlantic slave trade and it's consequences. We are *there*, we're together. We organize together. In 1997, I helped organize the conference "Yari Yari: Black Women Writers and the Future" at NYU, and this included several women from the Caribbean, as well as women from Africa. And then in 1999, when I proposed and organized a conference called "Slaves Routes: A Long Memory" at NYU, it included a *lot* of Caribbean scholars. Maryse Condé also helped by organizing two panels at Columbia. So we all came together to talk about the transatlantic slave trade and its consequences, where we are now and how do we get beyond it.

KM: So the Caribbean/African American dialogue, part of it is that it fits into a larger picture, which is a Pan-African picture?
JC: It's a Pan-African picture, and it always was. The dialogue and the friendships, and the sister-brotherly family, it will continue.

KM: Can you say something about the reception of your work in Caribbean settings?
JC: I've read in Cuba, in Guadeloupe, in Trinidad, in Martinique, and in French Guiana. The reception, or the comments, were always very interesting, a lot of questions about the work, the images, and about the struggle in the United States, about what we're doing here, and about music. I think the response to my work was wonderful.

KM: Let me ask you about one line in particular. I think the name of the poem is "Rum," and I love this two-line bit that goes, "Caliban for literature/Rum for reality."
JC: [laughter]. I don't know what I was thinking! When I was writing it and thinking about rum, and about all the rum I'd *had*, and all of the people I'd had rum with, then you know somehow that made me think about how much Caliban is used in literature. And how it should just stay *there*, because it has nothing to do with the life outside, really, but *rum* is closer to it. Yes it's just that: Caliban for literature and rum for the people.

KM: So that's a happy kind of statement in some way?
JC: Yes.

KM: There's one question I had that's not specific to your Caribbean poems. I was dying to hear something about the book with Ted Joans.
JC: Ted has a new book out.

KM: *Teducation*.
JC: Yeah, you have that?

KM: Um-hmm, yes.
JC: I published his book, *The Flying Piranha* with Joyce Mansour. That had to be in the '80s. I just got a letter from Ted telling me he was going to be here in February, this February, but he hasn't shown up yet. I used to see Ted in Paris a lot, but Ted now lives in Canada, in Vancouver, and for past three years or four years he lived in Seattle, Washington. But he still spends a lot of time in Africa, so our paths always cross, and we always stay in touch and write each other back and forth throughout the year.

KM: How did you get in touch with him in the first place?
JC: In the first place, I met Ted Joans when I first came to New York—no I came to New York in '67 and I met Ted Joans '68. I think it was '68 because I was at a party that Nikki Giovanni was having, among other people, and Ted Joans was there. And I met this very talkative man [laughter], who was talking so much about the Sahara Desert, and all this stuff about crossing the desert, and all these places. It was very good for me, because I had just been, I had just come from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, I had come from there into New York in 1967. Then later I got a phone call from him, saying, "You wrote *Pissstained Stairs and the Monkeyman's Wares*?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I wanna *meet* you, this is Ted Joans." And I think I was reading at The East, we met and went to The East with friends that night. The East was a cultural center on Claver Place in Brooklyn that presented musicians and poets. I used to read there on the same bill with singer Betty Carter or Sun Ra and his Arkestra. But that's how I met Ted, and we've been *really* good friends ever since. Ted Joans is my brother, one of my favorite poets and a surrealist comrade.

Notes

Introduction

1. For "zone of relational community," see Glissant (142); for *donner-avec* as "giving-on-and-with," see Glissant (142, 203), and see Betsy Wing's translator's preface to Glissant (ix). For understanding as "grasping knowledge," see Glissant (ix, 192).
2. Early in his public career, King explained the goal of the Montgomery bus boycott as "the creation of the beloved community," and went on to define an expanding concept of human solidarity based on "a vision of total interrelatedness" and "an inescapable network of mutuality" (quoted in Smith and Zepp 363). In considering African American and Caribbean solidarity, I am concerned less with transforming adversarial relationships, as would be the case in Montgomery and other civil rights battlegrounds, and more on enhancing a freedom struggle alliance.
3. The standard view of the sequence is that Mayfield wrote and recorded "People Get Ready" in 1964 with the Impressions, while "One Love/People Get Ready" was recorded in 1976 and released the following year on *Exodus*. However, the Peter Tosh compilation *Scrolls of the Prophet* and the standard Bob Marley compilation *Songs of Freedom* both include a ska version of "One Love/People Get Ready." *Scrolls of the Master* credits a recording date in 1964, while *Songs of Freedom* dates the recording to 1965. Either of these dates would put "One Love" in circulation *before* the release date of "People Get Ready." A Mayfield discography compiled by Peter Burns lists the recording date for Mayfield's "People Get Ready" as October 26, 1964, which would definitively establish Mayfield as issuing the call and Marley the response. In his biography of Mayfield, Burns quotes Peter Tosh as follows: "We used to practice off Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, even tried to look like 'em—Yeah, the Impressions was bad" (311). Burns refers to another source who describes Mayfield as "the godfather of reggae," and he concludes an extended commentary on Mayfield's influence in Jamaica with the statement that "Mayfield's songs were recorded in great numbers in the mid to late '60s, reworked and updated in the '70s, went through the dancehall revival in the '80s, and in the digital '90s were once more getting new treatments bringing Mayfield's influence into raga" (312).
4. The phrase "popular culture" has a notoriously tangled frame of reference, and invoking it requires some attempt to clarify the scope of usage here. In one strand of Marxist critique, deriving from Marx's study of commodities, superstructure, ideology, and false consciousness, popular culture signifies pop or mass culture, something that is debunked and either rejected or held with suspicion by thinkers such as Georg Lukacs,

Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Louis Althusser, and others. Against this strand are critics such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Antonio Gramsci, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, C. L. R. James, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, and Fredric Jameson, who in diverse ways embrace the ludic, utopian aspects of mass culture. For another strand of Marxist scholarship, motivated by a different set of critical questions, popular culture signifies not culture industry blandishments but people's culture, and the radical intellectual's goal is to locate, affiliate, and help sustain its growth. This strand is particularly identified with Mao Zedong and other Marxist thinkers associated with third world or non-Western struggles, and it figures prominently among African diaspora prophets of people's culture such as C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, W. E. B. DuBois, and others. John Brown Childs, in "Afro-American Intellectuals and the People's Culture," refers to African American folkways as people's culture, and he relates this conception to Cabral's view that the masses are "the repository of the culture and at the same time the only social sector who can preserve and build it up and make *history*" (89, n.54). Throughout this study, my own use of the terms "popular culture" and "people's culture" resonates most closely with this latter strand of thinking via Cabral, Childs, and other like-minded theorists.

5. To take just two examples of criticism grounded in holistic thinking, Merle Hodge, in her essay "Challenges of the Struggle for Sovereignty: Changing the World versus Telling Stories," argues that one of the classic distinctions in criticism—that between art and politics—is a false one. Instead, art (telling stories) is compatible with and complementary to activism (changing the world) (494). Martha Cobb, in *Harlem, Haiti, and Havana*, argues that a holistic cosmology is part of an African worldview disseminated throughout the Americas by the Atlantic slave trade (21–22).
6. Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come," for example, is another gospel-inflected popular recording that introduces themes of diasporic rootlessness, racial segregation, the desire for unity within the black community, and whether hope is justified in light of historical oppression. In each verse, Cooke's lyrics comment directly on these topics, as in the treatment of segregation, "I go to the movies, and I go downtown/somebody always tells me, 'Don't hang around,'" before delivering the concluding statement of faith that becomes more emphatic with each repetition: "It's been a long time comin', but I know a change is gonna come."
7. See, for example, the essays contained in the volume *Africanisms in American Culture*, edited by Joseph E. Holloway. Only one of the essays in Holloway's anthology, though, deals with connections between the Caribbean and African America.
8. For "psychological differences," see Rahming (22). For "minority psychosis," see Raphael (445). See Carr (*Black Nationalism* 14–15, 317 n.13) for a comment on the prevalence of comparative scholarship coming from the social sciences and an alternative reading list.
9. There are numerous sources commenting on the impact of North American music in Jamaica. For a sampling, see Cooper, (xi); Dawes (*Natural Mysticism* 62–66); Farred; Gilroy (*Black Atlantic* 95, 238 n.54); and Stolzoff (38–40). While most critics treat Jamaican music's North American inputs respectfully, Farred indulges in dubious cultural chauvinism with the claims that reggae "not only absorbed the politics of soul, it exceeded them," and "the growth of black cultural expression in the Caribbean engenders more militant forms of opposition" (61).
10. Listening to the four-CD compilation *Tougher than Tough: The Story of Jamaican Music*, issued by Island Records, other musical intertexts emerge. For example, "How Long," by

Pat Kelly (1970), directly echoes Sam Cooke's searing tenor vocal style in songs such as "Bring It On Home" or "A Change Is Gonna Come." Bob and Marcia do a straight-ahead cover of the song "Young, Gifted, and Black" (1970), which was written and recorded in the United States by Nina Simone and was also a hit for Aretha Franklin. A somewhat buried musical intertext is the hook melody in "Westbound Train," by Dennis Brown (1974), which borrows lyrics from Al Green's "Here I Am (Come and Take Me)" and reprises the signature guitar riff from "Love and Happiness," also by Green. Sugar Minott's "River Jordan" (1979) builds on the melody of "Ol' Man River," identified in the United States with Paul Robeson. For further commentary on Dennis Brown's musical dialogue with Al Green and another musical intertext linking Bob Marley and the soul supergroup War, see the online blog *Breath of Life: A Conversation about Black Music* (February 18 and 25, 2007).

11. Many other critics have explored the idea that African American literary traditions lag behind music and oral tradition more broadly in terms of originality, the number and impact of great artists, and criteria of excellence. Houston Baker's *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, Amiri Baraka's *Blues People*, Gayl Jones's *Liberating Voices*, and Kimberly Benston's *Performing Blackness* are among the most important critical works that delve into the relation between African American music and writing. Bernard Bell's *The Folk Roots of Contemporary Afro-American Poetry*, Marcellus Blount's "The Preacherly Text" and Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *The Signifying Monkey* take up the issue of literature, oral tradition, and orality more broadly in terms of vernacular speech genres. Here I have concentrated on Salaam and Wideman because of their comprehensiveness and their explicit use of colonization and decolonization theories in addressing questions of cultural development and critical evaluation.
12. See John Carpenter's essay "Fulfilling the Book: Shakespeare, Music, Identity, and Kwame Dawes' 'Requiem'" for a summary of Dawes's argument and a reflection on the multimedia performance of Dawes's poems; visual art from Tom Feelings's series "Middle Passage: White Ships, Black Cargo"; and musical compositions by Carpenter.
13. "Contact zone" is a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* (6–7). Later in this chapter, I develop in more detail the idea of a decolonizing contact zone. For a less hopeful view of the Jamaican music scene, see Andrew Ross, "Mr. Reggae DJ, Meet the International Monetary Fund," which hammers away at the commodified and compromised status of reggae culture within a global political economy. Writing in a similar vein to Ross, Silvio Torres-Saillant outlines a sharp critique of how Caribbean musical forms are regularly held up as evidence of liberation and organizing success by scholars, academic programmers, and student leaders alike. Torres-Saillant contrasts the optimistic perspective generated by what he calls "the musical turn" in Caribbean studies with the actual inability of music and performers to influence regressive social trends during recent decades, arguing that observers "cannot take lightly this apparent incongruity between the power that most writers and cultural critics ascribe to Caribbean music and the power that the rhythms and their performers have actually exhibited in the modern history of the region" (*Intellectual History of the Caribbean* 33). My argument here is that, particularly when read/heard in historical context, the Marley-Mayfield dialogue is immersed in and emerges from long-standing struggles that are political and economic as well as cultural. As such, that dialogue invites its audience to study, critique, and engage questions of political economy that Torres-Saillant would say are minimized in favor of unjustified (but satisfying) claims about the liberatory potential of Caribbean music. The "incongruity" between musical jouissance and political-economic regression that

Torres-Saillant rightly identifies is raised explicitly by the Marley-Mayfield intertext, and by the long history that produced it. While Ross and Torres-Saillant both decry the commodifying impact of multinational capital on Caribbean music, my claim is that the contact zone articulated by Marley, Mayfield, and their listeners draws critical consciousness from centuries of Ethiopianist struggle, and projects a resistant force that exceeds the efforts of global capital to codify and commodify.

14. Campbell writes: "The history of the Baptists in Jamaica is replete with the struggle to convince the slaves while maintaining some sense of dignity in being African. Black preachers who were literate began to gain influence at the end of the 18th century, because they could read and write, and in this way they could interpret the great debates which were raging in England between those who wanted the slave trade abolished and those who spoke for the local assembly and called for even more brutalities" (26).
15. Chevannes cites this passage from a secondary source: Robert Stewart, "Religion and Society in Jamaica, 1831–1800: Conflict, Compromise, and the Christian Churches in a Post-Slave Society."
16. See Moses, "Poetics of Ethiopianism" and *Wings of Ethiopia*.
17. Chevannes complicates the idea of North American/Caribbean solidarity, though, for he builds his analysis in ways that minimize Liele's impact in Jamaica while at the same time playing up the agency of Caribbean worshippers. For Chevannes, the class-leader system meant Jamaicans, rather than North Americans, were responsible for spreading the gospel of black liberation beyond the initial congregation at the Windward Road Church. More important, Chevannes argues, the black Baptist Church functioned as an institutional camouflage for the propagation of Myal, a non-Christian religion born, like vodou and Santeria, among the enslaved. As Liele's churches spread across the island, Chevannes writes, "in reality . . . it was Myal that was growing" (18). The way Chevannes presents the case of Liele in Jamaica, Liele appears as a loyalist refugee from the Revolutionary War in North America who seeks—unsuccessfully—to impose a pacifying, master-class Christian orthodoxy on enslaved Jamaicans. Thomas Little, who writes about Liele in the journal *Slavery and Abolition*, presents convincing evidence to counter some of Chevanne's analysis. According to Little, Liele left North America because he was being threatened with reenslavement by the children of a former owner who had earlier manumitted Liele and then died fighting for the British army at the battle of Savannah (192). Little claims that there were at least two other black North American evangelists who worked with Liele in Jamaica: Moses Baker, a New York native, and George Gibb, who, according to Baptist church archives, had "come to Jamaica in 1783 from one of the Southern States of North America" (quoted in Little 199). Little's account of Liele's ministry also suggests that something like the Myal-Baptist syncretism that emerged in Jamaica was occurring in the black congregations formed by Liele in North America. When Little and Chevannes are counterposed, several conclusions are arguably in order. First, there was a greater black North American presence in Jamaica than Chevannes allows. Second, the North American and Jamaican black Baptists were collaborating with each other on the basis of a shared approach to religious beliefs and practices; they were not working at cross-purposes, as Chevannes implies. On a similar note, while Kwame Dawes has also emphasized differences in the spiritual culture of Jamaicans and black North Americans—Rastafari draws on "a mysticism that did not gel well with the fairly orthodox evangelical Christian cosmology that grounded African American music," according to Dawes—Little's analysis suggests this difference was not

as extreme as Dawes maintains (*Bob Marley* 161). The fundamental point I am trying to make with this extended commentary is not to reassert North American agency within a Caribbean scenario, which would be an imperial gesture, but rather to highlight an important moment of convergence and argue for the legitimacy and urgency of interpreting African American and Caribbean cultural contact as grounded in a history of solidarity and decolonizing struggle.

18. For more on the impact of Haiti in nineteenth-century African America, see Sundquist (31–36) and Nwankwo (*Black Cosmopolitanism* 129–152). For a mention of Prince Saunders, see Quarles (130).
19. See Killens (xi, xv, 13).
20. See, for example, the letter excerpted by Brenda Gayle Plummer, which provides an illuminating account of gun-toting politicians in the Haitian parliament. Holly's letter, which characterizes the legislators' use of firearms as a case of militant democracy, is a powerful antidote to the tendency among North American commentators to see Haiti in terms of reversion to savagery (Plummer 20).
21. Originally published in the *Nation* in four installments between August 28 and September 25, 1920, Johnson's reportage dignifies the urban poor and peasants in Haiti, comparing both groups favorably to their U.S. and European counterparts. In Johnson's view, Port-au-Prince slums "are no less picturesque and no more primitive, no humbler, yet cleaner, than similar quarters in Naples, in Lisbon, in Marseilles, and more justifiable than the great slums of civilization's centers—London and New York, which are totally without aesthetic redemption" ("Self-Determining Haiti" 212). Johnson sounds a similar note when describing a typical scene in the countryside. Peasant dwellings, he writes, "rarely consist of only one room, the humblest having two or three, with a little shed front and back, a front and rear entrance, and plenty of windows. An aesthetic touch is never lacking—a flowering hedge or an arbor with trained vines bearing gorgeous colored blossoms. There is no comparison between the neat plastered-wall, thatched roof cabin of the Haitian peasant and the traditional log hut of the South or the shanty of the more wretched American suburbs. The most notable feature about the Haitian cabin is its invariable cleanliness" (ibid. 213).
22. See Brock and Fuertes; Lazo.
23. For example, Ralph Matthews wrote in the *Baltimore Afro-American*: "Not one [Confederate] traitor was strung up and the whole nation has been made a laughing stock because the descendants of these scalawags have never laid down their arms, observed the rules of the country, admitted defeat or ceased to prosecute the rebellion at any time. . . . What a price we have paid for this folly! A divided nation, a breeding ground for men like Faubus, Almond, Eastland and their ilk who make a shamble of constitutional law and a mockery of democracy. A few good tombstones distributed on a states rights basis would have spared us all this" (quoted in Gosse 271).
24. See Timothy B. Tyson's *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* for an in-depth account of Williams's Cuban sojourn. While Williams retained the support of Castro and Che Guevara, he faced increasing opposition from ruling elites in the Soviet Union and the Communist Party USA (CPUSA). Stalinist leaders urged Williams—without success—to tone down his militant calls for black self-determination and self-defense and instead to subordinate black issues to the workers' struggle. Williams and his family eventually left Cuba in 1965, living in Vietnam and China before returning to the United States in the 1970s (Tyson 292–294).

25. See, for example, "Elegy for Emmett Till," by Guillén (*Man-Making Words* 87–91), and "An Apple Tree in Oakland," by Morejón (*Looking Within* 178–179).
26. See, for example, *Black Man in Red Cuba*, by John Clytus [Munongo Furioso], and *Castro, the Blacks, and Africa*, by Carlos Moore. For critiques of Moore, see Sarduy; Brock and Cunningham.
27. For an account of Shange's engagement with Casa de las Americas, and an insightful reading of her poetry within a theoretical framework derived from Martí and the "Dialectics of Our America," see Saldívar (17–19).

Chapter 1. Theorizing African American and Caribbean Contact

1. For example, James Weldon Johnson includes an extended reading of the nineteenth-century black Cuban poet Plácido in his forward to *The Book of American Negro Poetry*. Johnson offers the provocative judgment that "the colored poet of Latin America can voice the national spirit without any reservations" (39–40), along with a new translation of Plácido's most famous poem (293–294), but elaborating a larger comparative framework is clearly not his intent.
2. Provocative essays that call for comparative work either explicitly or by example include Melvin Dixon, "Toward a World Black Literature and Community"; Hazel Carby, "Revolutionary or Proletarian Literature: C. L. R. James and the Politics of the Trinidad Renaissance"; Edward Kamau Brathwaite, "Jazz and the West Indian Novel"; and Houston Baker, "Caliban's Triple Play." Baker also edited a 1976 anthology of essays, *Reading Black: Essays in the Criticism of African, Caribbean, and Black American Literatures*, which contains an early version of Brathwaite's *History of the Voice*. Baker's introduction to the volume comes closer than anything else to proposing a general comparative method based on a Fanonian theory of anticolonial resistance through violent catharsis. While it is a pleasure to celebrate individually the essays in Baker's collection, as a group they are theoretically eclectic and, like the pieces cited above, tentative and hesitant about embarking on comparative analysis.
3. I am thinking here in particular of Martha Cobb's excellent monograph, *Harlem, Haiti, and Havana*, which traces the interlocking careers of Langston Hughes, Jacques Roumain, and Nicolás Guillén, all three of whom translated the others' works in addition to producing unique and massive literary monuments. Cobb makes her own monumental contribution to any attempt to define a comparative method for the study of African American and Caribbean encounters, but in the end *Harlem, Haiti, and Havana* focuses on its major authors as individuals treated within their own generational horizon. More recently, Stelamaris Coser's *Bridging the Americas* and Heather Hathaway's *Caribbean Waves* also pose comparative frameworks but focus primarily on the individual careers of Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, and Gayl Jones (Coser), as well as on Claude McKay and Marshall (Hathaway).
4. Gilroy does mention the Marley-Mayfield connection in *The Black Atlantic*, but does not delve into this connection very deeply. Gilroy participated as narrator in the production of *The Darker Side of Black*, a video documentary that traces connections between Caribbean dance hall and North American hip hop music. Directed by Isaac Julien for BBC Television, *The Darker Side of Black* moves in a promising direction, but the film's analytic focus is arguably diminished by a sensationalistic framing of the topic

and the use of histrionic lighting and dutch tilt camera angles during interviews. I still find Gilroy's definition of "African diasporan social space" in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* to be extremely relevant for defining the cultural logic of decolonizing contact zones. See Chrisman's *Postcolonial Contraventions* (73–106) for her strong critique of Gilroy and what she refers to as "the critical era of black Atlanticism" (89).

5. Anna Brickhouse, in *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere*, traces a convergence of African American and Caribbean literary culture in the reception of Phillis Wheatley's poetry by Martinican editor Cyrille Bissette, an instance that results in a "poetics of anticolonialism" (100–113). In *Postslavery Literatures in the Americas*, George B. Handley offers "postnational" readings of family as a point of entry into literature of the Americas. Handley incorporates African American novelists Charles Chesnutt, Frances E. W. Harper, and Toni Morrison in a comparative framework that includes Caribbean and white North American authors. Robert Carr's *Black Nationalism in the New World* charts the literary inscription of nationalist desires and dynamics among African American and West Indian writers from Martin Delany through to the Sistren Collective, but Carr's emphasis—"we first have to understand the nature of our differences, differences that have everything to do with the locations of power—worlded, gendered, sexed, classed, and so on"—is more on the things that separate African American and Caribbean experience, rather than on moments when these traditions converge (15).
6. Information on the UN Charter and reports tracking progress on self-determination for non-self-governing territories can be found at http://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/decolonization/docs.htm.
7. Cabral writes: "both in colonialism and in neocolonialism, the essential characteristic of imperialist domination remains the same—denial of the historical process of the dominated people, by means of violent usurpation of the freedom of the process of development of the national productive forces" (130).
8. In Said's view, "although [nineteenth-century imperialism] clearly had an identity all its own, the meaning of the imperial past is not totally contained within it, but has entered the reality of hundreds of millions of people, where its existence as shared memory and as a highly conflictual texture of culture, ideology, and policy still exercises tremendous force" (12).
9. See Ikenberry for a survey of recent political science scholarship on the new "American Empire." Jonathan Schell, writing in the *Nation*, offers an analysis of what he terms "imperialism without empire," along with a guide to other left-oriented critiques of U.S. foreign policy (http://www.thenation.com/docprem.mhtml?i=20040913&s=schell). Whether celebrating or denouncing actions by the U.S. government, the terminology of empire once again occupies a central place in public debates. Among the important social theorists who analyze this reemergence of empire rhetoric are Arrighi, Hardt and Negri, and Harvey. See also Balakrishnan and Aronowitz.
10. Macaulay's infamous "Minute on Indian Education" is indicative of the underlying cultural logic in colonialism's attempt to "form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions who we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (729).
11. Frequently, local "traditions" represent anything but safe or liberated places for nominally decolonized women. As Ketu Katrak argues, "the traditions most oppressive for women are specifically located within the arena of female sexuality: fertility/infertility,

motherhood, the sexual division of labor. The key issue of the control of female sexuality is legitimized, even effectively mystified, under the name of 'tradition'" (168).

12. See John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (102–104), for background on black freemasonry, mutual aid societies, and AME origins. For a sense of separate nationhood within the emerging North American nation, see a 1777 petition to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in which black signatories seeking immediate emancipation refer to themselves as "Blackes detained in a State of slavery *in the Bowels of a free and Christian country*," and also as "*A people* Not Insensible of the Secrets of Rational Being Nor without spirit to Resent the unjust endeavors of others to Reduce them to a state of Bondage and Subjection" (quoted in Franklin 78, emphasis added).
13. On the national convention movement, see Vincent P. Franklin, *Black Self-Determination* (90–95); *Minutes of the Proceedings of the National Negro Conventions, 1830–1864*, a volume of primary documents edited by Howard H. Bell; and Bell's own analysis in the monograph *A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1830–1861*.
14. See, in particular, James T. Holly, one of the principal agents for black emigration to Haiti in the 1850s, who refers to "this negro nationality of the New World" and "this black nationality of the New World" in *A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race* (quoted *Black Separatism and the Caribbean* 64). See also Chris Dixon, *African Americans and Haiti*, for a recent in-depth analysis of Holly's life and writings.
15. For a commentary situating the latter two historical societies as grassroots-oriented organizations, see Moses ("From Booker T. to Malcolm X," 210).
16. For an insightful commentary on this period in left theorizing of black history and politics, see Robinson (*Black Movements in America* 119 ff.) and Kelley ("The World the Diaspora Made" 106–108, 124 n.12). See also Kelley's more impressionistic but no less insightful account of how the American Left impacts and is perceived by black people across the political spectrum (*Freedom Dreams* 36–59). For an important statement from the 1930s—doubly interesting since it comes from someone often regarded as a chief architect of integration politics—see DuBois's "A Negro Nation within the Nation." There DuBois argues that "Negroes can develop in the United States an economic nation within a nation, able to work through inner cooperation, to found its own institutions, to educate its genius, and at the same time, without mob violence or extremes of race hatred, to keep in helpful touch and cooperate with the mass of the nation" (*DuBois Speaks* 2:84).
17. To get a sense of the range of uses contemporary cultural critics have found for the "internal colony" concept, see R. Allen; Blauner (13–53); Churchill; Hind (13–14); Marable (135 ff.); Meehan and Mustapha (254–255); Jones [Baraka] (321–322); Hord (1–30); Peterson (12); and Singh (193–202).
18. On North American racialization, see also Fields. On Latin American and Hispanic Caribbean racialization, see below chapter 1, n.45; chapter 2, n.5, n.7, and n.19; and chapter 4, n.17.
19. "Racialization" is a term popularized by Antonia Darder and Rodolfo D. Torres, who present it as more dynamic and less reified than "race" as a means of understanding and intervening in "exclusionary practices that give rise to structural inequalities" (315). See also Oboler and Dzidzienyo's summary and application of racialization in "Flows and Counterflows," their introduction to *Neither Enemies nor Friend* (3, 29 n.4). Torres-Saillant summarizes the idea that at least since the 1960s in the United States, racialization functions as a pentagonal structure including white, black, Asian, Native American, and Hispanic groupings ("Inventing the Race" 3).

20. See also Casimir ("'Tout moun gran moun'" 58–60) for more discussion of the counter-plantation.
21. Works that help articulate the African American counter-plantation in roughly chronological order from the early twentieth century include Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (1935); W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction* (1938); B. A. Botkin, *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery* (1945); George P. Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* (1973); Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (1974); Gladys-Marie Fry, *Nightriders in Black Folk History* (1975); Carol B. Stack, *All Our Kin* (1975); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (1977); John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (1979); John Gwaltney, *Drylongso: A Self-Portrait of Black America* (1980); Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (1986); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Thought and the Foundations of Black America* (1987); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (1990) and *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class* (1996); Carla Peterson, *"Doers of the Word": African American Women Speakers and Writers in the North, 1830–1880* (1995); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (1998); Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Stephen F. Miller, eds., *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (2000).
22. Inevitably, an overview commentary like this simplifies and reifies the work of monumental figures such as Sarmiento and Rodó. Though I am saddling them with the label of "colonized mentality," more nuances are called for. Rodó, writing after both the Mexican-American War and Spanish-American War, hated the United States for its militarism, expansionism, and greed, and saw his work as an ongoing effort to expose and oppose Yankee domination in the Southern Hemisphere. His celebrations of Latin America as the preserver of Euro-Hellenic civilization should be seen in this light. Sarmiento, meanwhile, whose major work was published before either imperialist war, was deeply enamored of U.S. culture and politics. Even so, while his enthusiasm for U.S.-style industrialism, Protestantism, and so on suggests that he had internalized the cultural norms projected by an expansionist U.S. state, he should be seen above all as someone inspired by an antityrannical verve. For more background on these two key Latin American intellectual figures, see (on Sarmiento) Acree, Goodrich, Katra, Patton, and (on Rodó) Constábile de Amorrín, *Homenaje a José Enrique Rodó*, and San Román.
23. See Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism* (1845); José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (1900); José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1927); Joseph-Anténor Firmin, *The Equality of the Human Races* (1885) and *Lettres de St. Thomas* (1910); John Jacob Thomas, *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar* (1869) and *Froudacity: West Indian Fables by James Anthony Froude* (1889); and Mark Twain, *King Leopold's Soliloquy* (1904). For recent reevaluations of Firmin and Thomas, see Edmondson, who places Thomas in a wider Pan-Africanist framework (35–37), and Dash, who finds in Firmin's writings "a modern order of irrepressible plurality" that presages the rise of Glissant's poetics of relation and the Creolité school ("Nineteenth Century Haiti" 49). In a North American context, Mark Twain comes to

mind as one prominent early-twentieth-century voice writing against the depredations of colonialism in Africa. Twain was vice president of the Anti-Imperialist League, and his opposition to the U.S. war of conquest in the Philippines led to wider anticolonial research and polemics. *King Leopold's Soliloquy* is Twain's brilliant 1904 polemic denouncing Belgian atrocities in the Congo.

24. "Los pueblos que no se reconocen han de darse prisa para conocerse, como quienes van a pelear juntos. . . . Los arboles se han de poner en fila, para que no pase el gigante de las siete leguas! Es la hora del recuento, y de la marcha unida, y hemos de andar en cuadro apretado, como la plata en las raíces de los Andes" (*Política de Nuestra América* 37).
25. The original phrase is "ha de salvarse con sus indios" (*Política de Nuestra América* 38). Esther Allen renders the entire passage concerning "the natural man" as follows: "The natural man, strong and indignant, comes and overthrows the authority that is accumulated from books because it is not administered in keeping with the manifest needs of the country" (Martí, *José Martí* 291). And in the original: "Viene el hombre natural, indignado y fuerte, y derriba la justicia acumulada de los libros, porque no se la administra en acuerdo con las necesidades patentes del país" (*Política de Nuestra América* 39–40). Regarding workers, the original phrase, "En pie, con los ojos alegres de los trabajadores, se saludan, de un pueblo a otro, los hombres nuevos americanos" (ibid. 42), Allen translates as "Standing tall, the workmen's eyes are full of joy, the new men of America are saluting each other from one country to another" (294). Finally, in describing the emerging body politic of Latin America, Martí's "cuerpo pinto" can also mean spotted or speckled, in addition to Allen's rendering of "motley."
26. "La abundancia que la Naturaleza puso para todos en el pueblo" (*Política de Nuestra América* 38–39); "El pueblo natural, con el empuje del instinto, arrollaba, ciego del triunfo, los bastones de oro" (ibid. 42).
27. See Weatherford (126).
28. A cognitive map of Martí's relationship to subsequent theorists might sketch out one line of descent from Martí to José Vasconcelos, Gloria Anzaldúa, and José David Saldívar, concentrating on the idea of *mestizaje*, while another line of descent would run from Martí to Fernando Ortíz and Angel Rama, developing the concept of transculturation as a key trope for Caribbeanists and Latin Americanists.
29. "Eramos una visión, con el pecho de atleta, los manos de petimetre y la frente de niño. Eramos una máscara, con los calzones de Inglaterra, el chaleco parisiense, el chaquetón de Norteamerica y la montera de España. El indio, mudo, no daba vueltas alrededor, y se iba al monte, a la cumbre del monte, a bautizar sus hijos. El negro, oteado, cantaba en la noche la música de su corazón, solo y desconcido, entre las olas y las fieras. El campesino, el creador, se revolvia, ciego de indignación, contra la ciudad desdeñosa, contra su criatura. Gramos charreteras y togas, en palses que venian al mundo con la alpargata en los pies y la vincha en la cabeza" (*Política de Nuestra América* 41).
30. "Con los pies en el rosario, la cabeza blanca y el cuerpo pinto de indio y criollo, venimos, denodados, al mundo de las naciones" (*Política de Nuestra América* 40).
31. "Ni se han de esconder los datos patentes del problema que puede resolverse, para la paz de los siglos, con el estudio oportuno y la unión tácita y urgente del alma continental" (*Política de Nuestra América* 44).
32. "La universidad europea ha de ceder a la universidad americanal" (*Política de Nuestra América* 44).

33. "La masa inculta es perezosa, y timida en las coses de la inteligencia, y quiere que la gobierna bien" (*Política de Nuestra América* 39).
34. "La generación actual lleva a cuestas, por el camino abonado por los padres sublimes, la América trabajadora" (*Política de Nuestra América* 44).
35. "¡Porque ya suena el himno unanime; la generación actual lleva a cuestas, por el camino abonado por los padres sublimes, la América trabajadora; del Bravo a Magallanes, sentado en el lomo del cóndor, regó el Gran Semí por las naciones románticas del continente y por las islas dolorosas del mar, la semilla de la América nueva!" (*Política de Nuestra América* 44).
36. The Spanish verb "regar" (conjugated as "regó" in the sentence) means to sprinkle in the sense of irrigate. It also means to scatter in the sense of sowing seed, and further resonates as ejaculation, conveying the idea that Cemi is personally spilling his seed on the new America, inseminating the lands over which he flies majestically. Insemination inevitably comes into play with the reference to an agricultural deity and the layers of meaning associated with fertility rites, and it is important to see how this engenders Martí's revolutionary transformation as heterosexual and male. The question of sexual politics within discourses of decolonization will return as a major theme in the chapters that follow. I am grateful to Wilfredo Sauri Garcia for filling me in on the attributes of El Gran Semí and for productive conversations concerning the resonance of Martí's archetypal image.
37. The most recent comparative articulation of Martí and DuBois comes in Gayatri Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*, in which she recovers from both writers "stirrings of postcolonialism before the letter" (96).
38. "Les [a los esclavos fugitivos] aderezaba para vivir su casa y su iglesia: y le oían como Mesías, y le obedecían como a Moisés" (*Obras completas* 13:235).
39. "Los padres de estos petimetres y maravillosas, de estos mozos que se dan con el sombrero en la cintura para saludar y de estas beldades de labios gruesos, de cara negra, de pelo lanudo, eran los que hace veinticinco años, con la cotonada tinta en sangre y la piel cebreada por los latigazos, sembraban a la vez en la tierra el arroz y las lágrimas, y llenaban temblando los cestos de algodón. Miles de negros prósperos viven en los alrededores de la Sexta Avenida. Aman sin miedo; levantan familias y fortunas; debaten y publican; cambia su tipo fisico con el cambio del alma: da gusto ver cómo saludan a sus viejos, cómo llevan los viejos de barba y la levita, con qué extremos de cortesía se despiden en las esquinas las enamoradas y los galanes: comentan al sermón de su pastor, los sucesos de la logia, las ganancias de sus abogados, el triunfo del estudiante negro, a quien acaba de dar primer premio la Escuela de Medicina: todos los sombreros se levantan a la vez, al aparacer un coche rico, para saludar a uno de sus médicos que pasa" (*Obras completas* 12: 205).
40. "No hay día sin choque de armas" (*Obras completas* 12:355).
41. "No en balde se nota en el lenguaje de los negros cultos un dejo de desolación que mueve a echarles los brazos" (*Obras completas* 11:238).
42. "Adonde no nos quemen los hombres" (*Otras crónicas* 186).
43. While Martí is not generally hostile toward poor or uneducated African Americans, his article on the Texarkana lynching contains a third section describing a cakewalk competition in Madison Square Garden. Martí denounces the competitors as "ignoble Judases" (judas sin honor) and "criminal couples" (parejas criminales) who "for a bottle of sour wine and a few dollars, will spin and strut around a cake, and will by their own base-

ness promote disdain for their own race" [por una botella de vino agrio y unos cuantos pesos, se vestirán de etiqueta rígida, convidarán al público al gran circo, darán vueltas pavoneándose al pastel, fomentarán con su vileza el desprecio de su propria raza!] (*José Martí: Selected Writings* 310, 311; *Otras crónicas* 85). While the contest continues inside the Garden, a group of middle-class blacks protest against it outside, and Martí records the voice of one protester who laments "that the hearts of honorable black men bleed at the ignominy of these vile Negroes, and that in our homes Tchaikovsky is played on the piano and Draper and Littré are on the bookshelves" [que los negros honrados sangramos en el corazón de la ignominia de estos negros viles,—que en nuestras casas el piano toca a Tchaikowsky y en la librería está Draper y está Littre] (*José Martí: Selected Writings* 311; *Otras crónicas* 85). In his identification with this elite perspective and in his antipathy toward the cakewalk as an expression of popular culture, Martí shows himself to be in synch with the principal currents of racial uplift at the precise moment when that ideology was in formation. Even though this preference for elite culture and elite spokespersons contradicts the populism Martí typically expresses in regard to Latin American social change, this affinity for racial uplift thinking is another important point of contact with DuBois.

44. A crucial debate about African American versus Latin American and Latino/a racialization patterns has been transacted in the journal *Latino Studies*, beginning with the first issue in March 2003. The tradition of scholars including Tannenbaum, Elkins, Williams, and Rubin is referenced in Oboler and Dzidzienyo (30, n.11). Kanellos reinforces the idea that Latin American tripartite racial codes produce a more liberal social reality. According to Kanellos, "while 'race' distinctions and prejudice exist in Spanish America, they do not, nor ever have they, taken the form of institutionalized discrimination as in the United States" (quoted in Torres-Saillant, "Inventing the Race" 16). See also chapter 2, n.5, n.7, and n.19; and chapter 4, n.16, and n.17.
45. "Y en las mansiones solariegas del sur todo es minué y bujías, y coro de negros cuando viene el coche del señor, y cop de plata para el buen" (*Obras completas* 6:135).
46. "Un millión de hombres emancipados . . . que antes de un siglo echa en tierra las andas de una sacudia" (*Obras completas* 6:135–136).
47. "Reaparecen, acentuados por la guerra, los factores que constituyeron la nación; y junto al cadáver del caballero, muerto sobre sus esclavos, luchan por el predominio en la república, y en el universo, el peregrino que no consentía señor sobre él, ni criado bajo él, ni más conquistas que la que hace el grano en la tierra y el amor en los corazones,—y el aventurero sagaz y rapante, hecho a adquirir y adelantar en la selva, sin más ley que su deseo, ni más límite que el de su brazo, compañero solitario y terrible del leopardo y el águila" (*Obras completas* 6:136).
48. Commenting on the unprecedented nature of the color-blind stance taken by Martí, Torres-Saillant argues: "suffice it to mention that prior to the arrival of José Martí and Antonio Maceo on the political scene, the ideologues of Cuban nationalism invariably articulated their burning desire to extirpate the black element from the body of the nation" ("Inventing the Race" 143–144). See also chapter 2, n.6.
49. "El alma emana, igual y eterna, de los cuerpos diversos en forma y en color. Peca contra la humanidad el que fomente y propague la oposición y el odio de las razas" (*Obras completas* 6:22).
50. "La ventura pública, y la individual, que estan en el mayor acercamiento de los factores que han de vivir en común" (*Política de Nuestra América* 248).

51. "En los campos de batalla, muriendo por Cuba, han subido juntas por los aires las almas de los blancos y de los negros" (*Política de Nuestra América* 249)
52. "De racistas serían igualmente culpable: el racist blanco y el racist negro" (*Política de Nuestra América* 250).

Chapter 2. Vested in the Anonymous Thousands

1. In Cruse's polemic, black West Indian migrants in New York such as Marcus Garvey, Richard B. Moore, Cyril Briggs, Otto Huiswood, and W. A. Domingo embodied a distinct "West Indian Nationalist psychology" and were, culturally and politically, "essentially conservatives fashioned in the British mold" (119, 128). The result, according to Cruse, was that such "Afro-Britisher" activists—capitalist, socialist, and Communist alike—repeatedly unveiled mindsets and policies fundamentally at odds with African American experiences and interests (115–146). Winston James's appendix to *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* is a must-read reply that matches Cruse's *Crisis* in polemical intensity. There James argues convincingly that solidarity (rather than opportunism) characterized the work of Caribbean militants active in the U.S. black freedom struggle from 1910 through the 1930s. "Contrary to Cruse's pronouncements on the subject," James writes, "one of the most remarkable features of the 1920s was the degree to which black radicals of the left co-operated with one another" (272).
2. For more of the cultural and political history covering the last three decades of Schomburg's career, see Hathaway; W. James; Kelley, "'But a Local Phase of a World Problem'"; Naison; O. Patterson; and Smethurst.
3. There is a pattern in the scholarly reception of Schomburg's work of seeing him as somehow "less than" his peers. Alain Locke, whom Schomburg's biographer Elinor Des Verney Sinnette describes as a "staunch friend," nevertheless found Schomburg's writing "impossible" (Sinnette 13). Sinnette herself, who is certainly a sympathetic commentator, describes Schomburg's analytic capabilities in the following terms: "First, his written expression in English was filled with errors of grammar, syntax, and spelling. Of greater significance was a fundamental incapacity to undertake a rigorous analysis of societal phenomena and to synthesize seemingly disparate events into an historical unity. This ability can elude even the formally educated; for Schomburg, who had not been exposed to the academic research disciplines, it was a major handicap" (196). More recently, Winston James has situated Schomburg as less socialist—and in James's polemic, less Puerto Rican—than his compatriot Jesús Colón. Only in his organizing—as collector, documenter, librarian—in other words, only as a source of raw material, is Schomburg's competence uniformly recognized as first rate. Against this backdrop, part of my own argument would be that Schomburg does in fact formulate—in his Latinate run-on sentences—important conceptual unities, particularly by synthesizing Pan-Africanism and Pan-Americanism. In his Latinate run-on sentences (among other things), he is as fully Puerto Rican and working-class oriented as any of his more socialist compatriots, though he is more embracing of African American culture than many of them. And in his anticipation of and contributions to the course of decolonizing struggles in the Americas, he is ahead of most of his peers and, in this regard, first rate.
4. *Tabaqueros*, or cigar makers, were traditionally among the most well read and politically active groups in Puerto Rico and Cuba as well as their émigré outposts in North

America. Many historians have written about the practice of having *lectores*, or readers, recite newspapers, political speeches, literature, and more from a raised platform in rolling rooms. Ivette Romero-Cesareo has explored the impact of factory readers on the political formation of Puerto Rican women (see especially her discussion of Luisa Capetillo, 776–781), and Nancy A. Hewitt has written about the political life of Afro-Cuban women tobacco workers in Tampa, Florida (318–320, 326 n.14 and n.16). Schomburg's compatriot Bernardo Vega, who was himself a cigar maker and socialist leader in the United States, claims that as a youth Schomburg hung around *tabaqueros* in San Juan and learned to read from them (Vega, *Memoirs* 195; Sinnette 9). This connection is important not only for Schomburg's introduction into nationalist politics on the mainland but also suggests that his formative milieu is working class in contrast to many of the middle-class black intellectuals with whom he would circulate in later life.

5. On the argument over whether the Iberian slave regime was "milder" than its northern European and North American counterparts, see Tannenbaum and the subsequent "Tannenbaum debate." For an earlier comment on the state of this debate, see Sio. For a more recent dispatch, see Neuner. See also an argument by nineteenth-century Trinidadian scholar J. J. Thomas that Spanish and French colonial regimes were politically more liberal than the British in the postslavery era. According to Thomas: "By Spain and France, every loyal and law-abiding subject of the Mother Country has been a citizen deemed worthy all the rights, immunities, and privileges flowing from good and credible citizenship" (quoted in Edmondson 36).
6. For an informative profile and photograph of Urrutia, see Cook.
7. Amplifying the points made in the previous chapter about Martí's color-blind politics, Tomás Fernández Robaina and Ada Ferrer have both offered lucid accounts explaining why Martí worked to suppress race, and specifically militant black racial consciousness, in order to allay white Cuban fears and consolidate a cross-racial alliance in 1890s Cuba. The enduring legacy of Martí's view that Cuban nationalism trumps race is undeniable, though it is also undeniable that racial subordination and violence continued after his death. In Fernandez's words, "Objectively, black Cubans were [in the 1920s and 1930s] still very far from achieving the satisfaction of their material, spiritual, social, and political needs. In fact, it was difficult to ignore the indisputable fact that the Cuban homeland of that epoch was not the nation that Martí would have wanted. . . . Because the majority of educated blacks accepted the philosophies of Martí and Maceo, fences were inexorably erected, fences that blocked a more realistic assessment of the racial question" (126). These comments underscore the importance, epistemologically and politically, of a point I make at the end of this chapter, which is the fact that Schomburg offers a view of "Nuestra América" as a Pan-American totality while retaining racial terminology and consciousness.
8. Frank Martinus Arion makes a revealing point about Martí's disdain for Papiamentu and the general vibe in Curaçao. According to Arion, "Martí did not like our women because they were potbellied; he did not like our men because they cursed, shouted and threatened killing each other continuously. He did not like our little ferryboats, our *ponchis*, because they did not possess the poetry of Italian *gondolas*. He did not like our houses because the majority of them were yellow. He did not like the Spanish people of Curaçao spoke, and he did not like Papiamentu out of which he could not make sense at all. He was a poet, and if I am not mistaken, also played the piano, but his prejudices against Curaçao made his ears deaf to our language" (450). Arion quotes Martí as

follows: "Las gentes de Curazoa hablan un español horrible y un dialecto mezquino, sin fuerza ni gracia, el *papiamento*—que es el español con terminaciones holandesas: así, de *sufrimiento* hacen *sufrimentol*, de *católicos*, *catolikanan*" (450).

9. There are many references to this pivotal relationship that altered the course of Latin American history, but see Edwidge Danticat's description of the Bolívar statue in Jacmel, Haiti, in *After the Ball* (46–49). For an English translation of correspondence between Petion and Bolívar, see "Latin American Correspondence."
10. For a somewhat ironic view of Talented Tenth–sponsored Pan-African advocacy, consider Walter Rodney's 1974 interview with the *Black Scholar*, where he characterizes early Pan-African congresses as having "very modest objectives" (41). Rodney goes on to offer the following analysis:

    > When DuBois spoke to Blaise Diagne in France in 1920, Blaise Diagne then being a deputy from Senegal, DuBois asked him if it would be possible to have a Congress in Paris. Blaise Diagne replied, saying he would check with Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, and when he did check he said: "You can have a Pan-African Congress, Clemenceau says it's alright." So that, in fact, it was imperialism that was giving us permission to hold a Pan-African Congress. Under those circumstances, the gains could only be limited; they could only reflect some attempt to influence the liberal section of the imperialist world unless, by chance, one could play off some of the contradictions between the imperialists themselves such as the contradictions between the British and the French and the Germans at the end of World War I. (41)

11. Joan Dayan explores the connections between slavery and Enlightenment in "Codes of Law and Bodies of Color" and expands on the topic in *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (201–242).
12. See William H. Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research*, for an overview of so-called scientific racism. Tucker traces the institutional origins of racist social science, its intellectual ties to Darwin and Spencer, and its starkly political intention to provide a "neutral" scientific basis for violent and discriminatory white power politics. Tucker covers the period of Schomburg's young adulthood in detail, but his analysis extends forward to the late twentieth century to critique the resurgence of scientific racism in post–civil rights U.S. society. On scientific racism and its sequels, see also Pascoe (46 n.7).
13. For accounts of the Nadir, see Logan; Woodward.
14. For more on Pura Belpré, see Sánchez-González (71–101).
15. The only nation-building institution Schomburg did not maintain a prominent affiliation with is the black church. As a child, he grew up Episcopal in a Roman Catholic society, which may have meant fewer opportunities to worship and develop churchgoing as a habit early in life. Schomburg did attend a Baptist service in New Orleans shortly after his arrival in the United States and wrote movingly of his response to the "beautiful spirituals, joyous and sad, sung by black people" (quoted in Sinnette 22).
16. The third and fourth levels refer, respectively, to the anti-U.S. cultural activists of the early twentieth century, displaced landed aristocrats who projected a falsely unified vision of Puerto Rican society prior to the 1898 invasion, and finally to the bureaucratic elite of the later twentieth century formed to administer the neocolonial state apparatus. For an assessment of González's "four-storey" thesis, see Juan Flores, "The Puerto Rico That José Luis González Built" in *Divided Borders* (61–69). For an excellent analysis

relating the "four-storey" thesis to Schomburg specifically, see Lisa Sánchez González's chapter on Schomburg in *Boricua Literature*. As I demonstrate in this chapter, José Luis González's concept of "plebianism" is another useful theoretical lens through which we can view Schomburg's life and work.

17. In Spanish, we find both González and Ortega using the word *plebeianismo*. González's translator, who is generally superb, renders the key term as "plebeyism," which seems clunkier than the English version of Ortega's essay on Goya, where the same word is translated as "plebeianism." I have opted to use the latter translation.
18. Most recently, I have in mind Winston James's chapter in *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*. To explain why Schomburg did not embrace socialism in the same manner as his compatriots, while embracing African American racial community—also in a manner unlike his compatriots—James places extreme emphasis on the influence of Schomburg's Virgin Islander mother and her family, with whom Schomburg lived for periods before his arrival in New York. The effect, as I heard it expressed in one exchange among colleagues, is to "de-Latinize" Schomburg and spin him into an Anglophone Caribbean orbit. Another recent treatment of Schomburg that deftly emphasizes his Puerto Ricanness is "Schomburg, Colón, Vega, and Labarthe: Puerto Ricans Writing in the Unites States, The Early Years," an unpublished dissertation by José Irizarry Rodríguez. Placing Schomburg in the context of foundational writings by Puerto Rican migrants to the mainland, Irizarry identifies Schomburg as a "modernizer" who undergoes the experience of migratory transculturation and submits traditional Puerto Ricanness to "experimentation and innovation" (180). Irizarry separates Schomburg from the other three writers regarding the use of *cuentos*, or stories. *Cuentos*, according to Irizarry, are an important element in the "storytelling *testimonios* of success" (173) by Colón, Vega, and Labarthe. Schomburg, though, rarely uses the *cuento* and instead bases his historical writing on another Latin American narrative form, the *crónica*, which was, as we have seen, put to such effective use by Martí in his writings on North America. Hopefully, the argument for viewing Schomburg through the lens of plebeianism will add another rationale for recognizing his abiding Puerto Ricanness. Recognition of the Caribbean and Puerto Rican aspects in Schomburg's life and work is essential to evaluating his contributions in all their cross-cultural specificity.
19. The question of whether to abandon or preserve racial vocabulary continues to resonate. In a recent dialogue, Jorge Klor de Alva and Cornel West reanimated the divergent positions of Martí and Schomburg regarding racial terminology. Klor de Alva, with a logic that recalls that of Martí, tries to convince West that it is an error, philosophically and politically, for West to refer to himself as "a black man" (West had defended using this label in the course of explaining to his Ethiopian wife the meaning of the word "nigger" upon her arrival in the United States). West, in response, remains committed to the idea of defining himself as "black" and defends the value of racial terms for maintaining a clear historical consciousness:

    Klor de Alva: But having been blocked from the public sector, I am concerned that Latinos turning to the private one will buy deeply into U.S. concepts of race and will be even less willing than Anglos to employ blacks. So for me, any new social or public policy must begin with dismantling the language of race.
    West: It's important not to conflate overcoming racial barriers with dismantling racial

language. I'm all for the former; I'm not so sure about the latter, because it ignores or minimizes the history of racism. ("On Black-Brown Relations" 509)

This exchange suggests that the aporia that resulted from trying to compare DuBois and Martí is still an active blockage to communication and collaboration. By illuminating this aporia, and showing that it is possible to resolve an antinomy, Schomburg offers a method for advancing the black-brown dialogue stalled in the exchange above. Writing about race and Latino/a ethnicity in a different vein, Silvio Torres-Saillant argues for fusing the language of race and ethnicity (rather than accepting the "death sentence that the academy has pronounced on the concept of race") in order to fashion "a Latino ethnoracial identity space devoid of white supremacist assumptions" ("Inventing the Race" 25). Torres-Saillant is closer to Schomburg here, because he does retain racializing language, but Torres-Saillant includes Asian and Amerindian contributions that are typically marginalized in Schomburg's own delineations of *latinidad*.

Chapter 3. Decolonizing Ethnography

1. For some sense of Hurston as a forerunner of contemporary African American anthropology, see Drake. See also essays by Gwendolyn Mikell—"The Anthropological Imagination of Zora Neale Hurston" and "When Horses Talk: Reflections on Zora Neale Hurston's Anthropology"—and especially her entry "Zora Neale Hurston" in *Women Anthropologists: Selected Biographies*.
2. The current mediation of feminism and the critique of colonial discourse with anthropological writing begins with *Feminism and the Critique of Colonial Discourse*, the special issue of *Inscriptions* edited by Deborah Gordon in 1989. Kamela Visweswaran's contribution to this volume, "Defining Feminist Ethnography," includes references to Hurston's work but focuses on anthropological aspects of *Their Eyes* rather than Hurston's anthropological writing per se. Other critics who reassess *Tell My Horse* in light of feminist and postcolonial scholarship include Bartkowski, Gordon, and Hernandez. While Bartkowski, Gordon, and Hernandez begin the process of reclaiming Hurston's anthropology (as opposed to anthropological horizons in her fiction) for mainstream theory, none of the three delves deeply enough into the narrative and institutional politics enacted by Hurston's text. For more recent takes on Hurston's Caribbean ethnography, see Duck; Emery; Harrison; Henninger; Konzett; Ladd; Nwankwo, "Inside and Outsider"; Rowe; Sorensen; Stein; Trefzer; and Warnes.
3. Given the central role that Haiti came to occupy in Hurston's Caribbean fieldwork, it is quite interesting to find out that she contemplated not traveling there at all. In Carla Kaplan's edited volume of Hurston's correspondence, there is a letter to Guggenheim director Henry Allen Moe in which Hurston explains she has received a letter from Herskovits "urging me strongly to leave Jamaica and proceed at once to the Bahamas" (*Zora Neale Hurston* 375). In light of Hurston's subsequent wry comments about an earlier overnight stay by Herskovits with the Accompong Maroons, as well as her passing remark that the Maroon leader, Colonel Rowe, tells her "how someone else [Katherine Dunham?] had spent three weeks to study their dances and how much money they had spent in doing this" (Hurston, *Folklore* 294), readers can be forgiven for wanting to know more about the academic politics and turf issues adumbrated in this effort on Herskovits's part to steer Hurston away from Jamaica and Haiti.

4. For more on Hurston's ethnography in light of the cultural and political history of the U.S. occupation, see Ladd (110–112, 117–118, 124–130).
5. To these negative assessments can now be added June E. Roberts's extended critique of *Tell My Horse*. Following the work of Dash, Hazel Carby (who equates Hurston's supposed "colonial or imperial vision" with an alleged tendency on Hurston's part to utter "distasteful political opinions" (quoted in Roberts 44), and others, Roberts reiterates the idea that *Tell My Horse* is a political, methodological, and political "conundrum" (44–45). In the body of this chapter, I elaborate more fully on why it is a mistake to view Hurston in these terms, but it is worth pointing out here that Roberts, Carby, Dash, and others who take Hurston to task for her seeming imperialism concentrate on a small portion of *Tell My Horse*—the chapters when she is interacting with Haitian elites in the capital—and fail to engage the book in its entirety. Perhaps because of this tunnel vision, they miss the liberatory arc of both form and content in *Tell My Horse*.
6. Lynn Bolles, an African American anthropologist whose own research follows Hurston's by analyzing the organizing and agency of working-class Caribbean women, offers this incisive critique of anthropology as a discipline: "Established in the nineteenth century, during the height of social Darwinism, anthropology has been used to serve the colonization efforts of the British, to document the U.S. government's maintenance of Native American reservations, and to romanticize the exotica of black America" (65–66). At the same time, Bolles argues for the progressive potential of anthropology as a form of knowledge that is "at once holistic, comparative, particularistic, and general." Thus Bolles also claims: "Despite its less than constructive history, however, anthropology has the ability to serve as a positive social force for advancing equality among people" (66). My contention in this chapter is that Hurston manifests both the liberating and oppressive tendencies in anthropological research and writing, though ultimately she places more emphasis on decolonizing strategies and techniques in *Tell My Horse*.
7. See Johnson, "Haiti."
8. Historian Thomas Fierher decries the extent to which this incident has continually been swept under the carpet by journalists and scholars since it occurred in 1937. Between 10,000 and 20,000 Haitian workers died at the border when Dominican troops killed Haitians en masse under orders from then-secretary of the interior Joaquín Balaguer (until recently, president of the Dominican Republic). The massacre came at a moment when jobs—even for Dominicans who normally shunned the cane fields—were scarce due to economic depression. Fiehrer summarizes the situation: "In short, the Haitians became an eyesore—driving down Dominican wages, depleting rural resources (especially timber, their preferred fuel) and insulting the Euro-caucasian image of most Dominicans" (10). Hurston lambastes Haitian leaders, particularly Sténio Vincent, for failing to deploy the Garde d'Haiti that had been created as a surrogate police force by the U.S. Marines: "Does President Vincent think it is better to allow the Dominicans to kill a few thousand Haitian peasants than to arm the peasants and risk being killed himself? . . . Are his own people more to be feared than Trujillo? Does he reason that after all those few thousand peasants are dead and gone and he is still President in the palace?" (*Folklore* 88). The point here is that by bringing the 1937 massacre to the surface in her narrative, Hurston places herself in a line of descent from other critical African American travel writers such as Johnson, Douglass, and Hughes.
9. Moreau himself is a complicated figure in the history of Caribbean travel writing. Actually a native of the region, he was born on the French Caribbean island of

Martinique and lived and worked for many years as a jurist in Saint Domingue. Moreau was active in politics in France and achieved some notoriety as the person who distributed arms to the revolutionary militia before it stormed the Bastille on July 14, 1789. As a travel writer, Moreau also stands out as a commentator on the United States, where he lived and journeyed after fleeing France under threat of being guillotined. His *Voyage aux Etats-Unis de l'Amérique*, though unpublished in any form until the twentieth century, preceded Alexis de Toqueville's classic text by three decades. Despite his Caribbean roots, Moreau's lascivious fascination with mulatta women and his contempt for the culture of the enslaved black majority mark him as an outside, European-identified commentator.

10. Despite Candler's one-way vision of modernization, and although he clearly sympathizes with the elite families who host his travels throughout the countryside, sometimes it is possible to read *Brief Notices of Hayti* against the grain and recover a vision of small farmers improving their lot by triumphing against the old plantocratic regime. Candler's description of Fourcy, a hilltop estate near present-day Kenscoff, offers just such a possibility:

    Owing to the cheapness of good land, the labourers, who work for hire, already reduced in number by the civil wars, are now still further diminished; and a proprietor, if he wish to secure the services of those who have long laboured for him on the moiety system, must be content to allow them even greater advantages than that system affords. The few remaining labourers on Fourcy not only take their half of the 10,000 lbs of coffee which the plantation yields, but appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need only when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it lightly. (144)

11. Dash writes:

    Haiti always seems to have had the lure of the extreme case, whether it was virgin terrain, a garden of earthly delights where the black race could begin again, or the closest and most histrionic example of Africa's continental darkness. These alternating stereotypes of a void waiting to be filled or a flamboyant, inexcusable blackness constitute a binary model of difference that fixed the relationship between the United States and Haiti, between diametrically opposed poles of mind and body, culture and nature, male and female. Haiti is negative or feminine and marginalized in a symbolic order devised by the United States. From the nineteenth century what beckons or revolts Americans is Haiti's impenetrable mystery, its strangeness, its unpredictable 'Otherness.' Haitians are meant to be marveled at, studied, converted, and ultimately controlled. (*Haiti 2–3*)

12. When Hurston published *Tell My Horse* in 1938, colonial networks were still very much the order of the day, despite cracks in the system and constant resistance in the colonies. Far from criticizing close links between the production of ethnographies and the restructuring of capitalist empires, be they British, French, or Yankee, many anthropological luminaries, such as Evans-Pritchard in East Africa, were actively enlisting indigenous populations in service of European or U.S. global militarism (see Edward

Evans-Pritchard, "Operations on the Akobo and Gila Rivers, 1940–41," quoted in Geertz, 50 ff.). Moreover, while Hurston's mentor, Franz Boas, created a progressive wing for the discipline in the Anthropology Department at Columbia, Boas's doctrine of cultural relativism (one of the intellectual keys to subverting the triumphalism of European and North American writing on the Caribbean) has its ideological limits. Eric Ross critically assesses the way in which cultural relativism resituates on the terrain of "culture" the biological determinism of earlier evolutionary social theories. The result, in Ross's view, is a kind of cultural separatism that winds up reproducing, at the level of ideas, the deterministic views that Boasians initially sought to escape (see his "Introduction" in *Beyond the Myths of Culture* xx–xxi). In practice, meanwhile, Boas and his students did not always exercise the respect for ethnographized cultures that their ideology proclaimed (Groves).

13. In 1963, for instance, prior to his much-praised study on the Balinese cockfight, Clifford Geertz authored one of these CIA-funded monographs on social organizations in Indonesia (see P. D. Scott 118–122). In *Works and Lives*, Geertz conveniently places the end of what he calls "scholars in uniform" anthropology in the 1950s, before his own contribution to such practices.
14. Katherine Dunham's travels and writings constitute another extremely complex case study in African American and Caribbean solidarity. Trained by Hurston's contemporary and fellow Boasian Melville Herskovits, Dunham came to the role of participant-observer, like Hurston, as an African American woman, a creative performer (in dance), and an intellectual with advanced anthropological training. Like Hurston, Dunham visited the Accompong Maroons, publishing a personalized account in *Journey to Accompong* (1937). Dunham, like Hurston, also did extensive fieldwork in Haiti. For both women, what Dunham referred to as the "ancestral tie" (*Dances of Haiti* xxiv) played a part in mediating their encounters with informants. In Dunham's case, most Haitians—particularly the dark-skinned peasants of the countryside—welcomed her with a special intensity as if "the welfare of the entire Negro race might be improved if these unfortunates to the north could be acquainted again with the rituals of ancestor worship" (ibid.). In addition to her well-known dance productions and schools in New York City and East St. Louis, Dunham contributed numerous items to the anthropological literature on the Caribbean and Haiti in particular, focusing primarily on sacred and secular dance traditions. Stylistically, her engagements are fairly typical examples of what was then emerging as a model of ethnographic practice. Apart from an occasional foray into experimental writing, such as the "Footnote on Going Native," in *Journey to Accompong* (51–52), Dunham sticks to the stylistic straight and narrow. She consistently cites authoritative scholarly sources to contextualize and buttress her own judgments. Dunham registers the trope of dependency when she laments the inevitable passing of Maroon society in *Journey to Accompong* (161). In short, Dunham's work, in its orthodoxy, offers a clear sense of the professional expectations Hurston flouted when she produced *Tell My Horse*. While Hurston's text contains passages that are more or less orthodox, such as the chapter entitled "Voodoo and Voodoo Gods," she chooses to omit footnotes and a bibliography. When she references "authorities," they are often local figures rather than metropolitan scholars. Hurston's writing seems geared more toward successful character portraiture than legitimizing her narrative through methodological rigor. A comment in Hurston's correspondence from Jamaica suggests that her sponsors in New York advised her to "gather material with an eye to a good book, not necessarily

a scientific one" (Hurston to Henry Allen Moe, received May 2, 1936, cited in *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters* 376). Whatever the external motivations for making *Tell My Horse* less scientific, Hurston also had her own internal reasons. As Valerie Boyd notes, at this point in her life Hurston was "turning her attention more fully to building her career as an author rather than as an anthropologist" (285). After 1939, the scientific community returned the gesture and henceforth rejected Hurston, presumably for her unwillingness to conform to disciplinary standards.

15. This "failure" is especially interesting in light of Hurston's reputation as a successful folklore collector in the field. While Hurston's and Reser's inability to secure the ritual formula is part of the narrative politics that block the reader's gaze, it could also be a sign of Hurston's own foreignness in the Caribbean. Part of her success in getting informants to offer up data was due to her ability to establish rapport with singers, musicians, storytellers, rootworkers, and everyday people. For example, the songs collected by Alan Lomax and Mary Elizabeth Barnicle in 1935 for the Library of Congress were for the most part acquired thanks to Hurston's mediations (Hemenway 211–212). Displaced from her most familiar surroundings, Hurston did not enjoy this instant rapport in the Caribbean.
16. See references to Katrak, Davies, and Wright in chapter 1, and see also my own argument in "Romance and Revolution."
17. The best critique of Hurston's treatment of Erzulie—whose manifestations include the vengeful Petro *lwa* Erzulie-gé-Rouge—is given by Joan Dayan, who insists that we see the class/caste subtext in these two different Erzulies, and confront the fact that Hurston's text privileges the *bourgeoise*/mulatta Erzulie Freda. See Dayan's "Caribbean Cannibals" (65–66) and *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (54–65).
18. See Bellegarde-Smith (22–29); Murray (300); and Nicholls (121–129).
19. Hurston's description here provides a stark contrast to James Weldon Johnson's aestheticization of Haitian market women in "Self-Determining Haiti." In an essay that elsewhere is informed by a sharp critical awareness, Johnson delivers the following exotic image: "Perhaps the deepest impression on the observant visitor is made by the country women. Magnificent as they file along the country roads by scores and by hundreds on their way to the town markets, with white or colored turbaned heads, gold-looped-ringed ears, they stride along straight and lithe, almost haughtily, carrying themselves like so many Queens of Sheba" (213).
20. The short story "Sweat" and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are two important counter-texts to the representation in *Tell My Horse* of women's life as privileged in America. Nanny's harsh wisdom in *Their Eyes*, "De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see" (*Novels and Stories* 186), is a folk-inflected nugget that correlates with Hurston's grim commentary on the lot of black women in the Caribbean. The physical descriptions of Delia in "Sweat"—"her poor little body, her bare knuckly hands" (956), "her knotty, muscled limbs" (957)—and Joe Clarke's speech in which he likens Delia to thrown-away "cane-chew" (959) echo the portrait of the Jamaican rockbreaker in *Tell My Horse*. Hurston's use of sugarcane as a metaphor for dehumanization is a key comparative link with Caribbean expressive traditions. As in the Caribbean, this metaphor registers the collective memory of slavery—of a plantation economy and the struggles to resist the plantation's oppressive material and psychological order. In many Caribbean countries, and in the works of many Caribbean authors (for example, Joseph Zobel, Simone Schwarz-Bart, and others), the plantation economy endures along with its con-

ditions of enslavement and resistance, despite nominal emancipation. In "Sweat," the reference to cane-chew resonates in a similar way: it points toward the continuing threat of chattel status for black women, despite the nominal political autonomy of Eatonville's all-black citizenry and government.

21. African American texts dealing with U.S. society often employ ironic humor to articulate protest and criticism, convey painful social realities, or misdirect hostile readers. When Hurston takes the rhetoric of irony offshore to the Caribbean, other purposes emerge. In the colonial encounter, self-ironizing comments gesture toward the narrator's nationality (the ground of her relative material privilege vis-à-vis Caribbean women). Many commentators, perhaps because they focus on the assertion of U.S. national identity but miss Hurston's ironic rhetoric, have not been able to see *Tell My Horse* as an example of progressive social analysis. When she adapts the rhetoric of black humor to convey the double and triple oppressions of women in the Caribbean, it is important not to gloss over the scathing nature of Hurston's critique.
22. This work is begun in Deborah Plant's *Every Tub Must Sit on Its Own Bottom: The Philosophy and Politics of Zora Neale Hurston* and continued in Valerie Boyd's recent biography, *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*, and Tiffany Ruby Patterson's *Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life*.

Chapter 4. Red Pepper Poetry

1. Hurston's connection to New York is not as long-standing as Schomburg's or Cortez's, nor are her ties to the Caribbean defined quite so completely by relationships forged in New York. Hurston's travel to the Caribbean in the mid-1930s, though, would not have been possible, nor would it have played out the way it did, except for a network of New York connections including her Columbia University–based intellectual community and her sponsors at the Guggenheim Foundation. Another trace of Hurston's continuing presence in the circuits of decolonizing New York culture is Edwidge Danticat's testimony about the positive impact of seeing Hurston's volumes in a display case of alumnae-authored books at Columbia ("Foreword" 5).
2. Cortez's volumes include (in order of publication): *Pissstained Stairs and the Monkey Man's Wares* (1969); *Festivals and Funerals* (1971); *Scarifications* (1973); *Mouth on Paper* (1977); *Firespitter* (1982); *Merveilleux Coup de Foudre: Poetry of Jayne Cortez and Ted Joans* (1982); *Coagulations: New and Selected Poems* (1984); *Poetic Magnetic* (1991); *Fragments: Poetry of Jayne Cortez and the Sculpture of Melvin Edwards* (1994); *Somewhere in Advance of Nowhere* (1996); *Jazz Fan Looks Back* (2002); *The Beautiful Book* (2007); and *On the Imperial Highway: New and Selected Poems* (2009). Her recordings include *Celebrations and Solitudes* (1974); *Unsubmissive Blues* (1980); *There It Is* (1983); *Maintain Control* (1987); *Everywhere Drums* (1990); *Cheerful and Optimistic* (1994); *Women and (E)Motion* (1994); *Taking the Blues Back Home* (1996); *Borders of Disorderly Time* (2003); and *Find Your Own Voice* (2006).
3. See Orde Coombs, ed., *We Speak as Liberators: Young Black Poets* (1970); Arnold Adoff, ed., *The Poetry of Black America: An Anthology of the 20th Century* (1972); Abraham Chapman, ed., *New Black Voices* (1972); Lindsay Patterson, ed., *A Rock against the Wind: Black Love Poems* (1973); Quincy Troupe and Rainer Schulte, eds., *Giant Talk* (1975); Eugene B. Redmond, ed., *Drumvoices: The Mission of African American Poetry* (1976); *Hommage posthume à Léon-Gontran Damas* (1979); Erlene Stetson, ed., *Black Sister:*

Poetry by Black American Women, 1746–1980 (1981); Ann Snitnow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thomson, eds., *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (1983); Amina Baraka and Amiri Baraka, eds., *Confirmation: An Anthology of African American* (1983); Sascha Feinstein and Yusef Komunyakaa, eds., *Jazz Poetry: An Anthology* (1991); *Foundations of a Movement: A Tribute to John LaRose* (1991); Carol Hurd Green and Mary Grinley, eds., *American Women Writers* (1994); Henry Louis Gates Jr., Nellie Y. McKay, et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (1996); Patricia Liggins Hill et al., eds., *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of African American Literary Tradition* (1997); Penelope Rosemont, ed., *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology* (1998); Sarah White, Roxy Harris, and Sharmilla Beezmohun, eds., *A Meeting of the Continents: The International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books—Revisited. History, Memories, Organisation and Programmes* (2003).

4. See DeVeaux; Feinstein; and Melhem, *Heroism* (195–210) and "*MELUS* Profile and Interview."
5. See Giovanni; Lee [Madhubuti]; and Redmond. Cheryl Clarke updates this tradition in *After Mecca* (72–73, 80–82), as does Tony Bolden in "All the Birds Sing Bass" (120–141).
6. Regarding surrealism and its reception among black and third world writers, Robin D. G. Kelley comments: "As with Césaire, Richard Wright, Wifredo Lam, and others, it was surrealism that discovered Cortez rather than the other way around. Surrealism was less a revelation than a recognition of what already existed in the black tradition. For Cortez surrealism is merely a tool to help create a strong revolutionary movement and a powerful, independent poetry" (*Freedom Dreams* 187). Ron Sakolsky has also devoted considerable energy to interpreting and anthologizing Cortez from a surrealist angle. See Sakolsky's *Creating Anarchy* (79–98) and his edited anthology *Surrealist Subversions* (192–193) for more perspectives on Cortez as a surrealist.
7. See K. Brown; Nielsen, *Black Chant* and "Capillary Currents."
8. Lisa Brock offers a must-read portrait of Chano in her introduction to *Between Race and Empire* (26–29).
9. References by La Rose's colleagues to his humility and congeniality abound, but two quotes will give a sense of the general trend:

   > I have never seen you in these absolights. like sitting on a stuffy high-up horse in bronze or in some plinth or citadel. for you have been too generous to be a really "revolutionary". too generous with time for others; too humane & in the best sense humourous to count among the reeds of those we too too easily clinkle up as "radical" and certainly too full of family & full of laugh & love to be too stereo at all. (Brathwaite, in *Foundations* 22)

   > Not for him the ever too familiar practice of larger than life gurus nurturing around them a body of devotees pledged to loyalty to the master at all costs, and inevitably, at the expense of integrity and truth, and, above all at the expense of their own development. It is precisely the absence of such cultism that has enabled John La Rose to establish meaningful and lasting relations within the internationalist perspective that has characterized his life's work. (John, in *Foundations* 75)

10. Again, a couple of citations from the testimonies in *Foundation of a Movement* help to summarize a point that is made repeatedly about La Rose's method:

> He demonstrated continually in practice that the links between radical writing, radical publishing, and radical book distribution were not only natural, but that they constituted a valuable form of educational, cultural, and political activity. (Hill, in *Foundations* 70)
>
> The relationship between John's radical publishing and his central role in CAM [Caribbean Artists Movement] is a critical one. John has always sought to emphasize the paramountcy of the relationship between radical publishing and book distribution, open, free and democratic debate, and the advancement of our struggles. (Harris and John, in *Foundations* 2)

11. Nielsen's principal readings of Cortez can be found in his chapter on jazz and text (*Black Chant* 221–232). There he offers numerous models of how to evaluate the impact of jazz on African American writing and the relationship of jazz composition and performance to the spoken word. Drawing on arguments made by Nathaniel Mackey and others, Nielsen's understanding of experimental African American poetry resists any tendency to view that work in terms of a hierarchical split between writing and orality. He cautions that "the traditions of graphic reproduction and improvisation are part of an interactive continuum with orality, not a secondary or elitist and pale reflection of the spoken, and we can likewise estimate the dangers to our understanding of African-American literary history implicit in the construction of an idealized orality in opposition to a devalued writing" (ibid. 19). In an earlier chapter, Nielsen supports this view with detailed commentaries on writing and poetry by Mackey as well as Stephen Jonas, Amiri Baraka, and Harryette Mullen (ibid. 19–37).
12. In addition to comments about collaborating with musicians, Cortez traces the origins of her poetry to music. As she explained it to Melhem: "Well, as you know, I started writing poetry about my relationship to Black music, talking about the rhythms or what I liked about it, and of course, talking about the musicians who play the music. It's like praise poetry, the old African praise poetry. You write about another human being, about who the person is and what that person produces. When I started reading my poetry in public, I thought it would sound good with music. And I had a lot of musician friends at the time, and it seemed like an interesting idea" (*Heroism* 203).
13. Nielsen's claim that the "music on Cortez's recordings often serves to redouble the allusiveness of her texts" (*Black Chant* 225) also applies to her Caribbean-based poems.
14. For instance: "those fuchsia dotted lips/where sad African ballads drink"; "your mouthpiece/full of baby talk and conga beats"; "your purple velvet mute"; "your breath full of wah wahs"; "your cheeks full of staccato" (*Poetic Magnetic* 57–58).
15. Tangos and sambas are also referenced, though these push the text out of Cuban national imagery and into broader diasporan symbolism through contact with Argentina and Brazil, respectively.
16. I am counting stanzas based on the printed version in *Poetic Magnetic*. On the *Maintain Control* recording of "Chocolate," Cortez omits stanza three, changes "mambos" to "mangos" in stanza six (creating an internal rhyme with "tango"), and introduces words such as "nommo" at the end of stanza six and "lewalewalewa" in the middle of stanza seven.
17. Like Martí, Guillen engages with African American history and culture in poems that produce some interesting exceptions to his overarching Manichaean view of hemispheric politics. The conclusion to "A Negro Sings in New York City"—"Dove, I have a piece of steel,/a Blacksmith left to me;/Dove, with that steel/I plan to make a hammer

and a sickle./I'll strike with the hammer, strike!/Cut with the sickle, cut! [Tengo un pedazo de hierro,/paloma,/que un herrero me dejó;/con ese herrero, paloma,/voy hacer yo/un martillo y una hoz./¡Doy con el martillo, doy!/¡Corto y corto con la hoz!] (*Man Making Words* 66–67)—and "Angela Davis," Guillén's salute to Davis, where he writes, "You belong to/that class of dreams in which time/has always forged its statures/and written its songs" [Perteneces/a esa clase de sueños en que el tiempo/siempre ha fundido sus estatuas/y escrito sus canciones] (ibid. 188–189), are both strong counterstatements to his more familiar stance on North American blackness. Whereas Guillén rejects black racialized community as ghettoization (most famously in an early essay, "The Road to Harlem" [El camino de Harlem]) and typically depicts black people in the United States as suffering, disempowered victims, in the poems cited above Guillén moves closer to a sympathetic understanding of African American experience as a resistant, subversive rupture in the imperial flow of North American society and politics. For comments on Guillén's engagement with North American racial paradigms and black cultural expression, see R. Chrisman; Ellis, "Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes"; Fowler; Miller; Morejón, "Cuban Perspective"; J. Scott (34–38); and Spicer. Ellis in particular summarizes key statements by Guillén and provides a good roadmap to the secondary literature, though in the process of settling scores with Hughes scholars (who in his view have belittled Guillén's autonomy as creator of *son* poems and overstated Hughes's influence on Guillén), Ellis arguably defames Hughes's personal courage (147), political commitments (146), and sense of racial community (150).

18. The reception and evaluation of Negrismo poetry in Cuba, and more broadly of literary responses to a black presence across the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, are important topics deserving more development than is possible here. As a start, one might note the impact in the 1920s of two things: Fernando Ortiz's ethnographic research on Afro-Cuban culture and European and North American avant-garde enthusiasm for allegedly primitive African art and sculpture. Both influences helped inspire a comparatively short-lived practice of "black" writing by phenotypically white *criollo* poets in Cuba and Puerto Rico (Ellis, *Cuba's Nicolás Guillén* 61–62, 201–203; Kutzinski 169–170; Mullen, *Afro-Cuban Literature* 93–113; Ruffinelli 18–24). While not abandoning thematic and structural references to African-based language, music, and spiritual practices, Guillén, with some notable exceptions like "Ballad of the Two Grandfathers" (Balada de los dos abuelos), placed more emphasis on class and national thematics beginning in the 1930s, and Pedroso even more so. Only in the 1970s does race-conscious poetry make a comeback in the work of Nancy Morejón, though works like "Black Woman," "Black Man," and "I Love My Master" are part of a much larger poetic opus, and as a critic Morejón also eschews the legacy of Negrismo and Negritude writing and emphasizes class over race and the argument that "the issue of the nation is a ruling or governing concern" ("Toward a Poetics of the Caribbean" 52). In Puerto Rico, "black" writing of the 1920s was referred to as *poesía negrista* and is exemplified in the work of Luis Palés Matos. This strand of Afro-Antillean poetry is saddled more frequently and vehemently with charges of exoticism and primitivism (Mullen, *Afro-Cuban Literature* 33), though see Leslie Wilson's defense of Palés as articulating "a stance decidedly in favor of resistance and affirmation of Antillean culture and collective will" [una postura decidida en favor de la resistencia y la afirmación de la cultura y la voluntad colectiva antillana] (136–145). A neglected debate about blackness in Puerto Rico was carried out in the 1930s in the pages of the journal *Indice*, and interested readers can follow Magali Roy-Féquière's

analysis of this debate in *Women, Creole Identity, and Intellectual Life in Early Twentieth Century Puerto Rico* (83–90). Arguably, though, not until José Luis González's influential essay "Puerto Rico: The Four-Storyed Country" (discussed in chapter 2) did Puerto Rican writers begin to explore on a more profound level the African dimensions of their cultural identity. This has increased in recent years through the work of Martín Espada, Juan Flores, and others, and interested readers may track a critical discussion in sources such as *Zapata's Disciple* by Espada, *Divided Borders* and *From Bomba to Hip-Hop* by Flores, and the introduction to Jorge Luis Morales's edited anthology *Poesía afroantillana y negrista: Puerto Rico, Republica Dominicana, y Cuba*. Recognition and embrace of African-based cultural patterns have, until very recently, by-passed writers and critics in the Dominican Republic. Some exceptions that serve to confirm the rule include the following: Pedro Mir has written suggestively of the African slave revolt that rocked the colony in its early years (25–48); Manuel Rueda and the pluralist movement have been linked by critic Josephat B. Kubayanda to an "African collective" (120–121); and other contemporary Dominican writers and critics including Julia Alvarez, Juno Diaz, and Silvio Torres-Saillant have begun to broach questions of African legacies in the Dominican Republic. See in particular Candelario; Sidanius, Peña, and Sawyer; Torres-Saillant, "Dominican Americans" (111–112) and "Tribulations of Blackness"; and Torres-Saillant and Hernandez for more analysis of racial consciousness in a Dominican context. For broader commentaries on Afro-Latin American literary and cultural history, see DeCosta-Willis; R. Jackson; Kubayanda; Kutzinski; and Mullen, "Afro-Hispanic and Afro-American Literary Historiography."

19. For comments on Afro-Cuban music as an influence in U.S. popular music, see Jacques; Nielsen, "Capillary Currents"; and Salazar. See *The Human Hambone* (dir. Morgan); Nolen; and Shannon for background on the hambone beat that closely resembles the 3/2 *son* clave.
20. Other sources on Damas's work include *Hommage posthume à Léon-Gontran Damas*; *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 1.1 (Winter 1980) Special Memorial Issue for Leon-Gontran Damas, 1912–1978; Racine, *Léon-Gontran Damas, 1912–1978* and *Léon-Gontran Damas, l'homme et l'ouvre*; and Warner, *Critical Perspectives on Léon-Gontran Damas* and "Léon Damas and the Calypso."
21. According to Ojo-Ade:

    > Words and phrases are repeated for emphasis and, most significantly, in the tradition of African orature from which the damasian art springs. Repetition gives a special effect to poetry which, in essence, is a communal art. The performance before a knowledgeable audience (and that knowledge has nothing to do with literacy) necessitates a popular, traditional style, making for group-appreciation/participation. The poet of the people is aware of their presence as judges of his work and recipients of his message. They must understand him; otherwise, his work would be useless and meaningless. So, he is simple, straightforward, using subtle images to express his message. There is a build-up of ideas through modification and multiplication, culminating in a total picture of a socio-cultural cul-de-sac. (118)

22. Ojo-Ade's contribution is welcome for the sensitive account it offers of Damas's life and work, for bringing important excerpts of Damas's unjustly neglected essays and fiction to English-language readers, and for its militant anti-imperialist focus. At times, though, the polemic seems off the mark. Ojo-Ade closes his discussion of damasian poetics with

a critique of Damas's "individualism" and "egocentrism" as well as poems that express "defeat" (127–128). While suggesting that he is "more understanding about the poet's tragedy" (127) than another critic who dismissed the so-called essentially personal motives (Hurley 42) in Damas's protest, Ojo-Ade confirms this dismissal as "very forthright and very true" and supports such a view by putting forth his own "socio-psychological" account of Damas as a "marginalized man" (127–128). Against this interpretive line alleging "the poet's tragedy," which arguably embodies the sort of condescension Ojo-Ade justly rails against throughout his book, here he unfairly removes Damas's poems about depression and despair from their larger context, which is not conceding psychological defeat but purging it, Fanon-style, through an encompassing and cathartic anger (something Ojo-Ade recognizes elsewhere in his book). Similarly, there is an important larger dynamic in the "individualistic" poems like "Hiccups" and "Sell Out." They constantly expand beyond the individual ego of the speaker to signal wider social forces and groups, and the speaker of these poems rigorously rejects all signs of colonial bourgeois society and affiliates with all signs of black working-class people. To accuse Damas of not "totally overcoming the attractions and aberrations of individualism in order to coalesce with the Black community" (127) not only misreads poems where colonial bourgeois consciousness is thematized (for liquidation), but it also violates the letter and spirit of a poem like "They Came That Night," in which the individual sign—"me"—is literally fused into the group story of enslavement: "How many of me/me/me/" (Kennedy 45).

23. Damas's anticolonial views are nowhere more clearly expressed than in his much-undervalued 1938 travelogue, *Retour de Guyane*. Damas made his *retour* under the aegis of the Trocadero Museum, which had commissioned him to write an ethnographic study of "material and social organization among the Bush Negroes" (*Retour*, 26, my translation). That he dispensed with this topic in fewer than three prefatory pages amounts to a quintessential Damasian rejection of metropolitan exoticism. Instead, Damas appoints himself another mission, which is to uncover "the true face of Guyane, whose distress has been limited to clichéd reportage" (27). Damas's animus for the Guyanese petit bourgeoisie, already well known from poems such as "Hiccups" (published the previous year), is reconfirmed near the end of *Retour* when he denounces (in English) the pretensions and ultimate powerlessness of their "*Cod-fish aristocracy*," as he terms it (155). More interesting and significant by far, for Damas, is the rural population in the colony. Unlike the city-dwellers of Cayenne, the *rudes travailleurs* in the rural communities have no interest in French culture. Against the divided psychology of the petit bourgeois factions, the rural masses project a solid core of anticolonial culture. Their daily life, in both work and recreation, contains "elements of an incomparably rich folklore" including work routines and songs and dances that are derived from a "distinctly African tradition," and Damas finds them to be "natural, spontaneous, simple, and strong in their simplicity" (75). In light of the current project, *Retour de Guyane* is particularly interesting and significant for the references Damas makes to African American history and culture when analyzing his own colonial dilemmas. In discussing assimilation, he views African American people as "100% assimilated" (126) but then Damas offers a poem by Langston Hughes as evidence that the assimilationist project is impossible to carry off, since Hughes's poem evinces a "subtle mocking that is essentially African" (128). In his concluding chapter, Damas again compares French Guiana with African American society to articulate both negative and positive aspects of the colonial

crisis. The black and mulatto Guyanese elites, who are the main targets of assimilation, already exhibit an unhealthy isolation from and contempt for the black masses. The last thing French Guiana needs is to create "an artificial black intelligentsia like the 'better negroes' of Washington, D.C." (152). At the same time, when seeking to exemplify "a spirit of racial cohesion" (which, he says, the Guyanese elites desperately need to cultivate as an antidote to their own imported individualism), Damas writes more approvingly of "the 'new negroes' as they are designated by Alain Locke." For Damas, "New Negroes" are not individualists but rather "individuals comparable to those prophets that the Jewish people no longer seem able to produce" (ibid.). Damas's contact with African American culture can be situated as decolonizing in several respects. First, the comparisons with black culture and politics in the United States help Damas frame his own resistance to French imperial discourse and practices. Second, he offers a nuanced view of African American culture as empowered and as a decolonizing force in its own right. Previously, Damas had identified "social cohesion" as a core African cultural trait that imperialist agents across the hemisphere have repeatedly underestimated as a source of resistance. Thus, with reference to the prophetic vocation modeled by "New Negro" intellectuals, as well as in the "subtle mocking" of Hughes's poetics, Damas is identifying African American culture as the avatar of a decolonizing Africanity in the hemisphere and the world. For a brilliantly polemical critique of *Retour de Guyane*, see Nick Nesbitt's essay "Departmentalization and the Logic of Decolonization." In an argument that is counter-intuitive given Damas's intense anticolonial statements, Nesbitt scrutinizes the call in *Retour* to exploit Guyanese gold deposits as a way of funding local development, and concludes that Damas supports not decolonization but a "stronger, better colonialist practice" (35).

24. For more commentary by Cortez on Damas's writing style, personality, and impact on her, see "Léon Gontran Damas—Human Writes Poetry."

Chapter 5. Mass Media Contact Zones

1. For a fuller analysis of Aristide's engagement with deep-seated trends in Haitian literary and political history, see Meehan, "'Titid ak pép-la se marasa.'"
2. Historically, the liberation theology movement grew out of two important conferences of Latin American bishops, at Medellín, Colombia, in 1969, and Puebla, Mexico, in 1979, where conference attendees adopted the idea that the Roman Catholic church, in all its activities, should exercise a "preferential option for the poor" (Guitérrez 156). In the suffering and struggles of the poor, liberation theology recognizes the revelation of God's presence in history. Intellectually, liberation theology is described by one of its most important founding members, Gustavo Gutiérrez, as "a different way of doing theology," one that moves beyond the "sapiential" or intuitive wisdom of early and medieval theology, and the rationalist approach of modern theology, and claims instead that the way to do theology is to critically reflect on historical praxis (5–12). All of these ideas are inscribed in Aristide's works through historical references to Medellín and Puebla; through rhetorical gestures in support of the church expressing a preferential option for the poor (*Parish* 18); through the imprimatur of Leonardo Boff, one of the most prominent Brazilian liberation theologians, who contributes a foreword to Aristide's *Théologie et politique*; and through the general method of performing a critical reflection on the historical praxis of democratic struggle through church activities in Haiti.

3. In "Demacoutisation et réparations économiques," a six-month report issued in August 1991, the Lavalas government expressed its international relations stance in the following terms:

   > In our relations with foreign countries, we give countries from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa special consideration for the following reasons: their history, their experience of economic and technological development, and their cultural practices are the closest to ours. In addition, they have shown in various ways that they wish to collaborate with us and are counting on us" [Dans nos relations avec les pays étrangers, nous donnon aux pays de la Caribe, d'Amérique Latine, et d'Afrique une considération spéciale pour les raisons suivantes: leur Histoire, leur expérience de développement économique et technologique, leur practiques culturelles sont plus proche des nôtres. De plus, ils ont, de diverses facons, montré leur désir de collaborer avec nous et ils comptent sur nous]. (3)

4. For a critique of the testimonial and its (in)adequacy as a means of representing subaltern experiences, see Carr, "Struggles from the Periphery."
5. "*Agapé*" is another Greek word for love, which emphasizes spiritual rather than physical commitment as the source of an intimate relation. References to love as a driving force behind the social changes contemplated in liberation theology are frequent in the work of Gutierrez, Boff, and others affiliated with the movement, many of whom based their reflections on the gospel verse "God is Love" (1 John 4:8). For a specific discussion of how liberation theology reintroduces love and desire to the theological horizon, and for a reference to love in this context as *agapé*, see Bingemer (especially 476–477 and 485–486).
6. For "recklessness" and "radical and anti-American," see Walter Soderlund's empirical media analyses (*Mass Media and Foreign Policy* 27, 32). The label "mentally unstable" comes from a notorious piece of congressional testimony offered by CIA analyst Brian Latell in October 1993. Latell also framed Aristide as "murderer, psychopath" (Holmes).
7. For an update that uses similar methods to analyze the 2004 coup attempt in Haiti and Aristide's controversial departure, see Soderlund, "U.S. Networks Television News."
8. See Trouillot (15 ff.).
9. This legacy of advocacy has continued in the period since Aristide's return to Haiti in 1994. Randall Robinson has written eloquently of Aristide in his recent memoirs *Defending the Spirit* (191–221) and *Quitting America* (178–215), and covered in detail the efforts of black politicians, activists, and media figures to restore Aristide during his first term. Robinson's *Unbroken Agony* contains an important eyewitness account of Aristide's removal from Haiti in February 2004 (198–203). In "Haiti and the Impotence of Black America," a speech delivered in the wake of Aristide's second forced removal from the presidency in 2004, Cynthia McKinney issues a blistering demand to "Roll back this coup, Mr. Bush!" and offers a sobering critique of the extent to which African American political leverage has eroded in the span of time separating the two coups.
10. I would agree with Beverley that new social movements give rise to new forms of literature and culture, and I suggest that Hurston's ethnography and Aristide's testimonial represent prime examples of the new forms of writing produced by decolonization. I have some trouble designating the culture of decolonization as "new," however, unless we can agree that the implied historical perspective for "new" telescopes back to include the earliest phases of the colonial project in this hemisphere. Even then there is plenty

to dispute in naming the Americas "new" as in "New World," but at least we can see that the dynamics of oppression and resistance in this hemisphere predate—and are thus "older"—than most of the privileged European traditions of social struggle which, in new social movements theory, are only displaced by (for example) anticolonial movements after 1945.

11. Aristide's America Online (AOL) interview also raises the topic of Internet access and its relationship, materially and discursively, to cultural decolonization in the Americas. While the problem of a digital divide (Mackenzie 17–18) cautions against making unwarranted claims for the liberating impact of information technology (IT), there is no doubt that Haitians in Haiti and the diaspora have been utilizing IT from the moment that the Internet exploded in the early 1990s (as Aristide's appearance on AOL makes evident). In 1995, for example, a Haitian women's organization in Canada issued a blistering online critique of Aristide's decision to use U.S. troops as cover for his reinstatement to the presidency. The manifesto states "man is ephemeral," and continues by asking, "What would happen if Father Aristide, Brother Andre, St-Etienne or even Jesus Christ do not resurrect and take over? What will happen if after the departure of foreign troops the Knights of the Round Table, the Crusaders or Napoleon's army are not in a position to ensure the security of the ruling class? Do we not run the risk of repeating the same vicious circle?" ("Enough Is Enough" 2). Published by the Ottawa-based Union of Haitian Women for the Restoration of National Unity and Integrity, this manifesto raises additional pointed criticisms of the Lavalas regime, including charges of corruption and warlordism that continued to be leveled at the political class throughout the 1990s and into Aristide's second abortive term as president. Many key intellectual issues in Haitian studies and even important debates in Haitian national politics in the past ten years have been conducted online, and interested readers can follow these developments in *Haiti's Predatory Republic: The Unending Transition to Democracy*, by Robert Fatton. Based on fieldwork in Tampa, Florida, Angel Adams Parham has theorized more generally about the role of the Internet in enabling Haitians at home and in the diaspora to "sustain expression and networking across distance within their communities" (214).
12. For longer commentaries on recent events in Haiti, see my review of Fatton's book in the *Latin Americanist* (Fall 2004) and recent accounts of the 2004 coup by Dupuy, who is harshly critical of Aristide, and Hallward, who is more sympathetic toward Aristide.
13. For varied applications of refeudalization, see, for instance, Duvall; Magnan; and San Juan.

Epilogue

1. The phrase "decolonization as a way of life" plays on the title of diplomatic historian William Appleman Williams's provocative book, *Empire as a Way of Life*. In his subtitle, Williams promises to offer "a few thoughts about an alternative," but these thoughts are few indeed and overshadowed by the author's emphasis on demonstrating—with great success—the central role played by imperialism throughout the course of U.S. history. By focusing on the reconstructive aspect of African American and Caribbean solidarity, and pointing out the ways in which people like Schomburg, Hurston, Cortez and Aristide have made decolonization (rather than empire) a way of life, the present study hopes to complement the work of Williams and others like him.

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Index