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'Stories of What If': Brown Girl in the Ring and Literary Fantasy as Theory [1]

Abstract:

"'Stories of What If': *Brown Girl in the Ring* and Literary Fantasy as Theory" interprets literary fantasy as a theoretical tool that can intervene in how readers make sense of extra-literary worlds. Applying this perspective to Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1998), the essay highlights "imaginable truths" that complicate ideas of national belonging.

Keywords: Literary fantasy, extraliterary worlds, national belonging

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You got to make your own worlds; you got to write yourself in.
Octavia Butler [2]

I

In the above epigraph, science fiction/fantasy writer Octavia Butler asserts that the seemingly fantastical that is, the creation of worlds and deliberate placing oneself in them is as "real" as writing. Thus speculative fiction—an umbrella term for fictions that present "a changed, distorted, or alternated reality"—can be understood as a critical vehicle for imaginable truths to form and re-form perceptions of extra-literary realities. [3]

In describing her short story collection, *At the Bottom of the River* (*ABR*), Jamaica Kincaid attributes the work's fantastical elements to the people and place from which she comes; yet contrary to her perspective on these writerly contexts—Antiguan histories, people, cultural beliefs and practices—critics have described *ABR* as magical realist. The writer concedes that parts of her collection are "magic" and "real," but asserts that it is not a work of magical realism. Challenging the terms usefulness in describing *ABR*, Kincaid counters that her Antigua is unreal and "goes off into fantasy all the time," making her not an imaginative writer, but one who writs out of a "fantastic" background. [4] Rather than merely rendering magical elements realistically, Kincaid's work conveys fantastical truths of her social and experiential milieus. In saying this, I do not claim that Kincaid replaces the "real" with the "unreal"; instead, I see her as dismantling boundaries between the two, advancing the notion that "reality" is plural and centering her Antigua as a creative rubric. The style of Kincaid's short story collection may titillate, but the form her narrative takes has revolutionary potential.

Toni Morrison, in her interpretation of early United States literature, offers a compelling model for using genre critically. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* is said to examine "the American literary imagination and [find] it obsessed with the white/black polarity." [5] Intrigued by this perspective, I find it significant that Morrison uses the gothic romance as a tool that makes sense of the North American landscape and identity. [6] To begin, she observes that early North American literature was strikingly pessimistic in its tone:

> it is difficult to read the literature of young America without being struck by how antithetical it is to our modern rendition of the American Dream. How pronounced in it is the absence of that term's elusive mixture of hope, realism, materialism, and promise. For a people who made much of their "newness" their potential, freedom, and innocence it is striking how *dour, how troubled, how frightened and haunted* our early and founding literature truly is. (35)

She continues by stating that the gothic romance—its characteristic medieval settings, horrifyingly gloomy atmospheres, irrationality, and mysterious and violent occurrences—perfectly captures the terror, uncertainty, and perversity that characterized experiences of North America's early settlers and context of its nascent writers (48). [7] In addition to making use of this literary form to negotiate the fearful tumult of this new land, "Americans" conjured and invoked what Morrison describes as a recurrent Africanist presence (see 33). This figure—characterized by a stereotyped blackness, often imposed on extra-literary black people—was a necessary though secreted aspect of early North American literature and identity. Morrison argues that this eerily present Africanist persona allowed these writers to conjure an "American identity" that was new, fearless, white, and male because it was not black, not enslaved, and not wretched (45). Significantly, this newly minted identity breeched boundaries between the literary and the extra-literary, since "knowledge … plays about in linguistic images and forms cultural practice." Additionally, "responding to culture—clarifying, explicating, valorizing, translating, transforming, criticizing—is what artists everywhere do, especially writers involved in the founding of a new nation" (49).

Through her attention to early North American literature's tone, form, and recurring Africanist trope, Morrison recalls—and foregrounds—anxieties that haunted early discourses of American-ness. *Playing in the Dark* is persuasive, particularly in its invitation to read literary form complexly: rather than merely a style of writing, the gothic romance acts as a critical lens through which we see how a country and a citizen were made. Toni Morrison convincingly remarks on how America and Americanness evolved out of a vexed—novel, unknown, fearful—relationship to both land as well as black and brown peoples.

Morrison's critique manifests the intimate connection between literary form, identity, time, and place, offering an example of how the gothic romance centers the experiences of "Americas" peoples and places while critically defamilarizing oppressive Western perspectives. [8] Similarly Walter Mosley interprets "science fiction and its relatives (fantasy, horror, speculative fiction, etc.) [as main arteries] for recasting our imagination." [9] Particularly for black peoples "cut off from their African ancestry by the scythe of slavery and from an American heritage by being excluded from history," he argues that "science fiction offers an alternative where that which deviates from the norm is the norm" (Mosley 32). Poet/activist Walidah Imarisha's definition is equally relevant: "Science fiction is the only genre that not only allows you to disregard everything that we're taught is realistic and practical, but actually demands that you do. So it allows us to move ... into the realm of the imagination." [10] Importantly, speculative fiction demands that something be done with its portentous imaginings because "we make up, then make real" (Mosley 32); therefore, this fiction's imaginable truths—when productively rendered—encourage writers and readers to think and to behave differently.

Yet despite the form's imaginative potential, Octavia Butler observed that early science fiction defaulted to old conquest tropes:

> in earlier science fiction there tended to be a lot of conquest: you land on another planet and you set up a colony and the natives have their quarters some place and they come in and work for you. There was a lot of that … let's do Europe and Africa and South America all over again. [11]

Deviating from this trend by manifesting Mosley's and Imarisha's vision of science fiction, and evincing a critique of place and identity comparable to that in Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, Nalo Hopkinson proffers *Brown Girl in the Ring* as an African diasporic, pan-Caribbean, and immigrants' experience of a future Toronto. [12] The novel presents a Canadianness that is open to a Yoruba-derived, diasporic African spirituality imbued with Trinidad and Jamaica, and one that challenges familiar "us versus them" narratives of national belonging. Theorizing through Hopkinson's fantastical form unveils imaginable truths that depict an autochthonous [13] Canadian identity that is unproblematically "grounded" in diasporic African/Caribbean milieus.

II

Brown Girl is set in a near-future Toronto decimated by "rich flight" and government neglect. Those who remain in "the Burn" (metropolitan Toronto in common parlance) are barricaded within and left to fend for themselves. Farming, bartering, and—for some—criminality have become new modes of survival. Ti-Jeanne is a new mother learning to cope with her unnamed baby boy; her drug-addicted ex-boyfriend, Tony; her severe and emotionally distant grandmother, Gros-Jeanne Hunter (aka Mami); and her absent-then-present mother, Mi-Jeanne (aka Crazy Betty). Connected to these characters are Catherine Uttley, Ontario's incumbent premier and a woman in need of a heart transplant, and posse don Rudy Sheldon who manipulates pan-African/pan-Caribbean spiritual practices to control the Burn. And Hopkinson complicates these relationships: Rudy is Mami's ex-husband; the don forces Tony to "secure" a heart for Premier Uttley; Tony asks Ti-Jeanne and Gros-Jeanne to entreat the gods to help him avoid this odious task and escape Rudy's wrath; the young addict "discovers" that Mami is an ideal match for Premier Uttley; Rudy attempts to use Ti-Jeanne's soul to continue his oppressive dominance; and the protagonist ultimately fulfills her spiritual inheritance by serving the gods her grandmother serves.

The novel's national exploration is necessarily complex: though exclusively set in a future and post-apocalyptic Toronto, *Brown Girl's* form considers and affirms the formation of Canadian identity as "both/and" rather than as "either/or." [14] For example, literary fantasy effortlessly renders protagonist Ti-Jeanne's self as grounded in the Torontonian landscape, enlivened by her Trinidadian and Jamaican inheritances, and enabled by her migrations across godly and

human realms. That the protagonist embodies this Canadianness way exemplifies the imaginable possibility of how one can belong to a nation.

Ti-Jeanne best represents this fantastical Canadianness, though other characters imagine belonging to the nation in instructive ways. After Toronto collapses, Trinidadian-born Gros-Jeanne moves into a structure that represents an idealized Canada, one that predates the large-scale immigration of people from non-European countries. [15] Riverdale Farm, the author writes:

> had been a city-owned recreation space, a working farm constructed to resemble one that had been on those lands in the nineteenth century. Torontonians used to be able to come and watch the "farmers" milk the cows and collect eggs from the chickens. The Simpson House wasn't a real house at all, just a façade that the Parks Department had built to resemble the original farmhouse. (*Brown Girl* 34)

The farm and its buildings pay homage to the way things were supposed to have been in the North American country (clearly erasing First Nations people), and indoctrinate pre-Riot citizen-visitors into this homogenized identity. Mami converts a space designed for a specific—and mythologized—national performance into living/dining; medical examination; and sleeping rooms, transforming it from a static veneer into a place of living and healing. Gros-Jeanne also introduces her black, female, Trinidadian, and spiritual selves into a national/physical space from which they were excluded. Yet because she "Caribbeanizes" this Canada—*and* "Canadianizes" her Caribbean—she does much more than insert formerly excluded selves into an imagined idyll. During and after Mami, Riverdale Farm is both/and—Canadian and Caribbean (among other influences)—and no longer either one or the other. Neither is it incidental that Hopkinson reimages the estate as Gros-Jeanne's "balm-yard," a Jamaican phrase for "a place where healing rituals are practiced." [16] Conceived of as a white Canadian space, Mami's claim on Riverdale Farm/Simpson House imagines healing rifts between their conception and her lived reality, a healing that challenges the idea that immigrant's must sever connection to pre-migration realities to belong to the North American space. [17]

Though spectacular, the novel does not represent the possibilities of Ti-Jeanne's identity or Mami's spatial occupation simplistically: not all fully appreciate either character nor consider either woman as wholly positive. Susie, a street kid who needs her broken leg set, must be convinced that Mami is not a witch who eats children (*Brown Girl* 63). Gros-Jeanne/Mami ultimately soothes Susie and her crew, sharing with them a self who is committed to healing. So while readers experience Mami's Canadianness as one "hyphenated" by myriad influences, they cannot ignore characters (like Susie) and situations (like being segregated in the Burn) that challenge its viability.

Other scenes in the novel replicate Mami's reinvention of Riverdale Farm and result in cooperative interactions across borders. Early in the novel, Ti-Jeanne returns from doing errands for her grandmother. The young mother hires a pedicab runner to take her to a location on the edge of the Burn, "Sherbourne Street [on the] corner of Carlton" (9). Arriving at her destination:

> the runner moved off quickly, not even looking around for more customers. *Coward*, Ti-Jeanne thought to herself. It was safe enough in this part of the Burn. The three pastors of the Korean, United, and Catholic churches that flanked the corner had joined forces, taken over most of the buildings from here westward to Ontario Street. They ministered to street people with a firm hand, defending their flock and their turf with baseball bats when necessary. (10)

Guided by a shared desire to "[minister] to street people with a firm hand," the leaders of these three churches obviously come together because of their shared mission. Though theirs may be a situational cooperation, it is one that serves sacred (each church's flock) and secular (the safety of characters like Ti-Jeanne) ends. Political and social realities may have forced this particular union, but it nevertheless exists as a productive, cooperative relationship. The significance of this depiction cannot be underestimated: though imagined, it stands as an example of "what if": what if real world divisiveness could become the background to a shared vision?

In much the same way, *Brown Girl* questions rigid gender categories through the married couple, Paula and Pavel. After the apocalyptic riots, the former university instructors work as butchers/farmers who

> defended their territory fiercely. Both brawny people, they each had a large, blood-smeared butcher knife tucked into one boot: warning and advertisement. Nobody gave them much trouble any more, though. It wasn't worth the personal damages to try to steal from the well-muscled pair. Rumour had it that those who crossed Paula and Pavel ended up in the cookpot. Besides, vegetables and fresh meat were scarce, so people tried to stay on [their] good side. (13)

The Burn's new reality dictates how clergy unify their section of the Burn, much the same way as it standardizes Pavel's and Paula's selves and rules. Nonetheless, Hopkinson's depiction of intricate gender identifications is remarkable in that it exists along side human/god transformations as well as spatial occupations like Mami's. Paula's muscularity and skill at her trades do not oppose her femaleness: "hugely pregnant, Paula was arguing the price of two scrawny squirrels with two gaunt young women who had their arms wrapped possessively around each other" (14). The truth of Paula's muscular, pregnant female self is not mitigated by the Burn's current mores.

Ti-Jeanne makes and remakes herself from myriad "tools" available in the Burn; in other words, who she is can be understood as autochthonous, formed out of the place in which she

finds herself. Being in the Burn is real for Ti-Jeanne in that she knows herself as of the place and its community (though she initially rejects the spiritual aspect of her being). When Gros-Jeanne learns that her granddaughter has visions of death, that Ti-Jeanne is the "daughter" of Eshu/Prince of Cemetery/Legbara who "does watch over death … but … control life, too," the older woman wants to instruct the younger one on how honor this relationship and serve the spirits (95). At first, fear and ignorance cause Ti-Jeanne to reject her clairvoyance as well as her grandmother's guidance; later, her desire to help Tony forces her to come to terms with her father-god and with Gros-Jeanne's belief, both uniquely forged in the North American space.

Framed by the protagonist's obsessive relationship with Baby's father, Ti-Jeanne's connection to her father-god demonstrates how the character viably crosses boundaries, of the human/godly sort as well as the national and identity kinds. The ceremony where Gros-Jeanne seeks spiritual intervention for Tony begins when "she looked at the cement head" and asks: "Eshu, we ask you to open the doors for we, let down the gates. Let the spirits come and talk to we." She continues: "Eshu, we ask you to bring down the doors so the spirits could be here with we tonight. Spirits, please don't do no harm while you here; is we, your sons and daughters" (*Brown Girl* 91). Eshu, Legbara, and Prince of Cemetery: each name represents a single loa and indicates its stops in migrations between West Africa and the Americas. This multiplicity also suggests the features of Eshu's nature: trickster, guardian of crossroads between gods/humans, and guardian of movements between the worlds of the living and the dead. When describing itself, Prince of Cemetery says: "Woman, man, child? Is all one when them come to me in the end" (118). Finally, as the One in the Black Cape, "Him is the one you call when somebody work a obeah 'pon you and you want revenge" (129). Ti-Jeanne, as *Brown Girl's* protagonist and the character intimately tied to this god, embodies Eshu's complexities, a truth made manifest whenever Prince of Cemetery "rides" her.

Early in the novel it is revealed that "Ti-Jeanne could see with more than sight" (9), but the fullness of her relationship to Prince of Cemetery appears in Gros-Jeanne's ceremony for Tony:

> Ti-Jeanne giggled, a manic, breathy sound that made Tony's scalp prickle. She rose smoothly to her feet and began to dance with an eerie, stalking motion that made her legs seem longer than they were, thin and bony. Shadows clung to the hollows of her eyes and cheekbones, turning her face into a cruel mask. [...] Her voice was deep, too deep for her woman's body. Her lips skinned back from her teeth in a death's-head grin. (94)

Literary fantasy allows readers to "see" Ti-Jeanne's physical transformation into Legbara, rather than regard it as performance, thereby rendering imaginable the full range of possibilities that the protagonist/god represents.

Like the migrations that bring pan-African and -Caribbean spiritual traditions to *Brown Girl's* Ontario, the novel's spectacular imaginings solidify Ti-Jeanne's embodied Canadianness in its depiction of the channeling a pantheon of Yoruba-based gods through Toronto's very real CN Tower. [18] Linking diasporic African and pan-Caribbean gods, as well as Jamaican and Trinidadian traces, to a structure designed to represent "the strength of Canadian industry [and] a tower [once] taller than any other in the world," [19] the novel marks the physical, spiritual, and psychic movements through the Americas, literally grounding them in the post-apocalyptic Torontonian landscape.

Rudy's maleficent use of the oldest ancestors' powers thwarts Mami and Ti-Jeanne's attempt to aid Tony, but the granddaughter's fight against her grandfather sets the stage for the repurposing of the CN Tower and the perspective it traditionally represents. Fear of violence keeps businesses, government, and the upper classes out of the Burn, creating a vacuum that Rudy fills with his own vengeful authority. The don's occupation of the tower instigates an *authoritative* change, but not a *revolutionary* one: Rudy merely replaces of the "strength of Canadian industry" and the Canadianness that the tower symbolically represents with his self and ambitions. Though he uses different means, Rudy avails himself of the methods of Toronto's formerly dominant culture, significantly represented by the CN Tower itself. When approached to locate a "voluntary" heart donor for Premier Uttley, the don claims no political affiliation: "and what that have to do with we? Posse ain't business with politics. Is we a-rule things her now." The narrator continues: "It was true. Government had abandoned the city core of Metropolitan Toronto, and that was fine with Rudy" (*Brown Girl* 3). His selfish, abusive relationships with both family and adopted country are the novel's main antagonisms, and they stand in stark contrast to that of characters and institutions I have thus far explored; still, considered as a whole, Hopkinson's characterizations exemplify an intricate Canadianness and the communities that drive the novel to its conclusion. The form of *Brown Girl* allows the novel to stand as an example of different ways of being in Canada, finally exemplified by Ti-Jeanne's use of the CN Tower.

Rudy attempts to coerce his granddaughter's spirit into serving him—rather than the gods—but before fulfilling that choice Ti-Jeanne recalls the previously mentioned ceremony:

> She remembered her grandmother's words: The centre pole *is the bridge between the worlds*. Why had those words come to her right then?
>
> Ti-Jeanne thought of the centre pole of the *palais*, reaching up into the air and down toward the ground. She thought of the building she was in. The CN Tower. And she understood what it was: 1,815 feet of the tallest centre pole in the world. Her duppy body almost laughed a silent *kya-kya*, a jokey Jab-Jab laugh. For like the spirit tree that the centre pole symbolized, the CN Tower dug roots deep into the ground where the dead lived and pushed high into the heavens where the oldest ancestors lived. The tower was their ladder into this world. A Jab-Jab type of joke, oui. (*Brown Girl* 221)

Legbara, incarnated here as the Trinidadian carnival figure of the Jab-Jab, cavorts through Ti-Jeanne's musings, highlighting the jest and revolutionary aspect in the above quotation. [20] Ti-Jeanne repurposes the tower as center pole, underscoring imaginable possibilities of diasporic black peoples claiming the iconic symbol of Canadianness. Here, the protagonist simultaneously young woman; black; mother; pan-Caribbean; diasporic African, and servant of the spirits is, fantastically, Canadian.

The novel characterizes Metropolitan Toronto as a space of ungovernable immigrants and poor, alienated people while its outer boroughs are affluent and governable. When Ti-Jeanne calls the gods from the heavens and the recently dead from below the earth, her summoning imagines a border crossing between states of being, and suggests a permeable boundary between them all. "Ogun," Ti-Jeanne calls, "'Osain!' […] 'Shakpana, Emanjah! Oshun, Oya! And Papa Legbara, my Eshu! Come Down, come down and help your daughter!" Instinctively understanding that "the call to the heavens should be mirrored by a call to the earth," the protagonist invites "every one Rudy kill to feed he duppy bowl [to] come and let we stop he from making another one!" (221). Her recognition that ostensibly different godly and human realms are nonetheless intimately connected bodes well for ways inhabitants in diverse parts of Toronto can belong.

Interpretive possibilities spectacularly performed in the CN Tower/center pole scene allow us to "think" Canadian national identity differently. When considering the divisive relationships between Toronto's suburbanites and those they consider "rats" (240), attention to *Brown Girl's* form and themes can unlock imaginable possibilities in extra-literary worlds. The extra-literary, interpretive prospects for Hopkinson's creative intervention are profound, particularly since fantasy literature uses accessible language and provocative storylines to engage a mass audience. [21] If, as Walter Mosley argues, "anything conceivable … is possible. From the creation of life itself … to freedom" (Mosley 32), then innovatively exposing a large readership to novel perspectives can stimulate behaviors ignited by the imaginable. Experiencing characters who live inclusive and—at the same time—racially, spiritually, and culturally complex identities can trigger re-considerations of alleged differences between recent and more established immigrants. *Brown Girl*'s fantastically different Canadianness realizes truths that challenge seemingly insurmountable divisions between people and, armed with an imaginably real example of complex subjectivities, readers might act according to these novel perspectives and take steps to change how national identities circulate in the public imaginary. Specifically in *Brown Girl in the Ring*, Nalo Hopkinson "refunctions" [22] the Canadian nation-state by re-imagining who can belong and what this subject can look like. The novel's Toronto, Ontario, Canada—fantastically symbolized by the CN Tower/centre pole—is enabled by Ti-Jeanne's pan-Caribbean/diasporic African spiritual additions. This imaginable truth dialogues with extra-literary discourses of national belonging, offering an example of a "what if" that can help us rethink limiting us-versus-them binaries.

Endnotes

[1] I borrow "Stories of What if" from Philip Sander's interview with Nalo Hopkinson, Tobias Buckell, Karen Lord, and RSA Garcia. See Caribbean Beat, Issue 138 (March/April 2016).

[2] Official Octavia Butler Facebook Page, maintained and updated by Open Road Media. 20 July 2016, 12:56PM. [Accessed 27 May 2016, https://www.facebook.com/OctaviaButlerAuthor/].

[3] Science fiction, fantasy, supernatural, mystery, and utopian/dystopian fictions fall under the umbrella of "speculative fiction." See "speculative fiction," Handbook of African American Literature, edited by Hazel Arnett Ervin (Gainesville: University Press of Florida) 2004 http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.bc.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:ref:R04432821:0&rft.accountid=9673, accessed 27 May 2017. See also Jinqui Ling, "Speculative Fiction (Part III: Genre, Form, and the Paraliterary," Routledge Companion of Asian American and Pacific Islander Literature, edited by Rachel C. Lee (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.bc.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:ref:R05343240:0&rft.accountid=9673, accessed 27 May 2017.

[4] Allan Vorda, "An Interview with Jamaica Kincaid," Mississippi Review Volume 20 Number 1/2 (1991), pp. 13.

[5] Editorial Review, http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/playing-in-the-dark-toni-morrison/1111177711, accessed 28 May 2017.

[6] Toni Morrison, Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992).

[7] Generally understood as European in origin and spanning the 18th and 19th centuries, the gothic romance has had numerous revivals. Some 20th century US writers, for example, embraced the genre as a vehicle suited to expressing a uniquely Southern reality. The works of Horace Walpole, Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, and Carson McCullers fall into the gothic tradition. See "Gothic Novel," Oder, Norman. "Merriam-Webster, EB combine for lit encyclopedia." Publishers Weekly 6 Feb. 1995: 28. Literature Resource Center. Web. 28 May 2017.

[8] Speculative fiction—or "science fiction," used interchangeably by some—includes "science fiction, fantasy, utopian and dystopian fiction, supernatural, fabulation." See Hazel Arnett Ervin (editor), "Speculative Fiction," Handbook of African American Literature (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004); http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:bsc:&rft_dat=xri:bsc:ft:reference:AAL0399, accessed 28 May 2017.

[9] Walter Mosley, "Black to the Future," New York Times Magazine 11/1/98, Section 6.

[10] "Demanding the Impossible: Walidah Imarisha Talks About Science Fiction and Social Change," books post by Kristian Williams on April 13, 2015, 2:23pm http://bitchmagazine.org/post/demanding-the-impossible-walidah-imarisha-talks-about-science-fiction-and-social-change, accessed 28 May 2017. Imarisha is a "poet, journalist, documentary filmmaker, anti-prison activist, and college instructor" and co-editor, with adrienne maree brown, of Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements AK Press, 2015.

[11] Randall Kenan, "An Interview with Octavia E. Butler," Callaloo 14.2 (1991): 498.

[12] Nalo Hopkinson, Brown Girl in the Ring (NY: Aspect/Warner Books, 1998).

[13] That is, one "formed … in the place where found." See "Autochthonous," http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autochthonous, accessed 28 May 2017.

[14] Wonderful work has been done on Hopkinson's 1998 novel (see Works Cited for full bibliographic reference), but three pieces usefully engage my argument: Derek Newman-Stille's "Speculating Diversity: Nalo Hopkinson's Brown Girl in the Ring and the Use of Speculative Fiction to Disrupt Singular Interpretations

of Place," Michelle Reid's "Crossing the Boundaries of the 'Burn': Canadian Multiculturalism and Caribbean Hybridity in Nalo Hopkinson's Brown Girl in the Ring," and Sarah Wood's "'Serving the Spirits': Emergent Identities in Nalo Hopkinson's Brown Girl in the Ring." Newman-Stille's argues that "[s]peculative fiction can propose an alternative reading to the landscape and allow a space for diversity" and Hopkinson uses her novel "as a space for the assertion of the idea of home for people in diaspora" (Newman-Stille 157). Persuasively, Newman-Stille's writes: Hopkinson "uses the text of Brown Girl in the Ring to suggest an alternative reading of the Toronto environment, injecting it with … Caribbean myth to illustrate the Canadian myths of single nationhood that are imprinted on the city" (149). Reid interprets the Burn (composed of recently arrived and multi-ethnic peoples) as "a positive model for a new interdependent form of Canadian multiculturalism based on local involvement and participation [and] the reintroduction of centralised government support" (Reid 312). Finally Wood reads Brown Girl as a syncretic science fiction "that … attempts to offer a localized resistance to imperialist assumptions that can be found in sf" (Wood 316). Unlike these critics, interpret literary fantasy as a theoretical tool and argue that, as such, it intervenes in how readers make sense of so-called real world experiences. Applying this perspective to Hopkinson's novel, I believe, highlights imaginable truths that complicate and challenge how we have come to understand and perhaps live ideas of belonging to a Canadian nation. Where the above-mentioned articles emphasize Caribbeanness-in-Canada or suggest a hyphenated Canadianness, or put the novel's form in conversation with dominant/oppressive ideologies, I read Brown Girl as offering a fantastic opportunity to imagine Canadian belonging autochthonously.

[15] The century the structure evokes predates the large-scale immigration of non-European peoples as well as the time when the country failed to recognize indigenous populations. See "Immigration: The Postwar Era and the Removal of Racial and Ethnic Barriers," http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/immigration, accessed 28 May 2017: "At war's end in 1945, Canadian immigration regulations remained unchanged from the restrictive prewar years. But change was not long in coming. Driven by a postwar economic b m, growing job market and a resulting demand for labour, Canada gradually re-opened its doors to European immigration, first to immigrants Canada traditionally preferred—those from the United Kingdom and Western Europe—but eventually to the rest of Europe as well" and "The last vestiges of racial discrimination in immigration were gone from Canadian immigration legislation and regulations by the late 1960s. This opened Canada's doors to many of those who would previously have been rejected as undesirable. In 1971, for the first time in Canadian history, the majority of those immigrating into Canada were of non-European ancestry. This has been the case every year since. As a result, today Canada is not just a multicultural society, it is also a multiracial society to a degree unimaginable to earlier generations of Canadians."

[16] "Balm-yard," Dictionary of Jamaican English 2nd Edition, edited by FG Cassidy and RB LePage, University of the West Indies Press, 2002, pp. 22.

[17] The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, designed "for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada," "recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society." See Minister of Justice, "Canadian Multiculturalism Act," (R.S.C., 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.), current to May 27, 2014/last amended 1 April 2014 (http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-18.7/, accessed 28 May 2017. These intentions are acknowledged in the Act's Preamble while its body specifies how "all Canadians, whether by birth or by choice, [can] enjoy equal status, [and avail themselves of] the same rights, powers and privileges [while being] subject to the same obligations, duties and liabilities" (1). Yet despite these stated intentions, actualizing the Act's mandate—at least in the public imagination—appears to have been difficult.

[18] "The CN Tower was built in 1976 by Canadian National who wanted to demonstrate the strength of Canadian industry by building a tower taller than any other in the world" ("La Tour CN Tower," http://www.cntower.ca/en-CA/About-Us/History/Astounding.html, accessed 28 May 2017). "The name CN stands for Canadian National, the construction company for the tower. The Canadian Railway Company, which constructed the tower, transferred its ownership rights to the Canada Lands Company in the year 1995. However, due to the wish of the local residents, the name was retained with a slight modification and the tower is known as Canada's National Tower" (Markus MacIntyre, "Building of the CN Tower" (http://www.tccn.ca/articles/Detailed/Canadian_Construction_History/Building_of_the_CN_Tower_145.html, accessed 28 May 2017).

[19] "La Tour CN Tower," accessed 28 May 2017.

[20] “The jab jab — [French] patois for ‘double devil’ […] costume makes him look like a medieval European jester [an entertainer known for witticisms, jokes, pranks]—two-coloured shirt with points at the waist, decorated with bells, mirrors, and rhinestones; a cape; a hood, sometimes with horns; stockings on his legs — but this clownish getup disguises a fierce warrior who carries a thick whip, ready to use in battle against any other jab jabs he may encounter. In the old days, the jab jab would usually wear an iron pot under his hood to protect him in battle from his opponent’s whip. He showed off his battle-readiness with chants about his ferocity and his resistance to civil society.” See Dylan Kerrigan, “Creatures of the Mas: A Guide to Traditional Characters in Trinidad Carnival,” Caribbean Beat Magazine, Issue 71 (January/February 2005): http://caribbean-beat.com/issue-71/creatures-mas#ixzz4Fpx2FrTo, accessed 28 May 2017.

[21] See “popular literature,” https://www.britannica.com/art/popular-literature, accessed 28 May 2017.

[22] Alondra Nelson, Thuy Linh N. Tu, with Alicia Headlam Hines (editors), Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life, NYU Press, 2001, pp. 8.

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fiar.

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Videogracia y las Recomposiciones de la Religiosidad Contemporánea en Latinoamérica

Resumen:

El tema central es los impactos de la mediatización de la imagen religiosa en la recomposición de la religiosidad contemporánea en Latinoamérica. Retomando la propuesta de Debray sobre el régimen de videocracia que desplaza los discursos por la imagen en la esfera política, se plantea atender el efecto de la videogracia en la esfera religiosa. En este ensayo se exploran tres mediaciones que nos permiten entender los efectos de la videogracia en tres modalidades de expresión religiosa vigentes en América Latina: a) la religión iconográfica de catolicismo popular y los replicantes el catolicismo ultrabarroco; b) El neopentecostalismo: Megachurchs: teologías del éxito, consumo y tele-evangelizadores; y c) El New Age y la neoesoteria como producto de las industrias culturales.

Palabras claves: Religiosidad contemporánea, Latinoamérica, videogracia, neopentecostalismo

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Introducción.

La cultura contemporánea sufre alteraciones no solo de forma, sino también de fondo, debido a las intensas mediaciones de la tecnología de la información y de los medios de comunicación que modulan la manera en que los seres humanos se relacionan con los otros, y las formas actuales en que se transmite y genera el conocimiento. Uno de los rasgos característicos de las nuevas maneras de comunicar y de genera conocimiento ha sido la prevalencia de la imagen como soporte del lenguaje que va restándole importancia al lenguaje oral (propio de la transmisión cultural de las sociedades tradicionales) y al lenguaje escrito (que permitió el desarrollo de la modernidad y la creación de comunidades imaginadas como la nación). Regis Debray denominó esta nueva situación como la "mediatización de la videosfera" que consiste en que las imágenes han reemplazado los discursos que se usaban como soporte de dogmas y teología, estableciendo un régimen visual que denominó como "videocracia".

Aunque la cultura religiosa ha sido considerada como uno de los depósitos de saber más renuente al cambio cultural, en la actualidad, mediado por las industrias culturales, los medios de comunicación y las redes sociales, está experimentando cambios profundos en la recomposición del campo religioso, que el sociólogo Pierre Bourdieu definió como la gestión de los secretos de salvación, regulados por el monopolio de saberes a cargo de un cuerpo de especialistas (sacerdotes, pastores, obispos, etcétera). Volviendo a Debray, el poder de la imagen está desplazando los valores universales y los ideales de la salvación extramundana, supliéndolos por sentimientos agradables y por un proyecto para obtener éxito monetario en este mundo .

¿Cómo estos nuevos soportes mass-mediáticos de la comunicación y la información están impactando en la transformación de la naturaleza de la religiosidad contemporánea en América Latina? ¿Hacia dónde apuntan esos cambios? De manera similar a la manera en que la imagen está impactando en el campo político (al cual se le llamó videocracia), en el campo religioso la imagen está impactando en la producción de una novedosa "videogracia" que impone el régimen de la imagen sustituyendo los símbolos y contenidos de trascendencia, y que está desregulando las formas institucionales de gestión religiosa que operaban en los modelos de iglesia convencionales. La hipótesis es que la videogracia está afectando a la desregulación de las instituciones especializadas en regular y gestionar los secretos de salvación del campo religioso en Latinoamérica, y al mismo tiempo contribuye a revitalizar el sentido práctico, emocional y simbólico de la religiosidad popular.

Las nuevas religiosidades mass-mediadas

Los medios de comunicación, las industrias culturales (productoras de entretenimiento, diversión, información, e incluso promotoras de turismo) el internet y las redes sociales

(especialmente el *facebook*) en el presente han sido retomados por casi todas las iglesias como canales de difusión donde las religiones buscan ampliar su obra misionera, o como medios de divulgación de sus actividades religiosas entre los miembros de la comunidad. Por ejemplo, El Papa Francisco es un personaje mediático de la religión actual. No solo tiene una cuenta de *twitter*, que es de las más vistas en el mundo, sino que además ha salido en las portadas de las principales revistas, como son: *El New York Times* y la revista *Rolling Stones.* Pero lo más sorprendente, es que han difundido su imagen de Súper Papa, como una marca del Papa, retomando el lenguaje de los comics: volando en la misma posición que Superman, con su capa blanca al viento, con el brazo derecho estirado, y un maletín negro que dice "valores" sostenido en la mano.

Cada vez más, los medios representan soportes de creación y consumo de nuevas creencias y prácticas religiosas contemporáneas, que han ido supliendo al templo para convertir nuevos escenarios de la experiencia religiosa, como son la relación entre foros y pantallas, o comunidades virtuales y monitores, donde en el presente se está experimentando la relación con lo sagrado y con la comunidad de creyentes, muchas veces virtual o imaginada. Se ha vuelto cada vez más común que los medios brinden un canal para los rituales o liturgias „virtuales": se transmiten misas televisadas, se hacen cadenas de oración en las redes sociales, se pagan "favores recibidos" a los santos con sistema *paypal.* En conjunto, están transformando los modos tradicionales e institucionales de acceso a la gracia, los milagros, las bendiciones, la purificación, las trascendencias, la protección control del mal de ojo y el contacto con el mundo de los espíritus. En este proceso, las enseñanzas, las imágenes, y los rituales religiosos se están hibridando con el entretenimiento, el consumo, las mercancías, e incluso no siempre guarda una línea que distingue la creencia religiosa de los impactos de la ciencia ficción. Los accesos restringidos que antes estaban regulados por las iglesias y sus jerarquías, hoy dependen de formas de consumo. Y por último los contenidos mismos de lo trascendente han ido cambiando hacia programas de salvación relacionados que ofertan soluciones para el aquí y ahora (como lo es la nueva teología del éxito promovida por diferentes Iglesias cristianas o neopentecostales, pero también la oferta del milagro y la magia, todos ellos promoviendo la adquisición del éxito).

El ciberespacio se ha convertido recientemente en un lugar donde se desarrollan nuevas formas religiosas, que han sido categorizadas como la religión en línea. Es cada vez más común que las liturgias, rituales, limpias, cargas de energía (y demás) se transmitan en estos medios generando situaciones de gracia y bendiciones. Ello está transformando las formas tradicionales de adherirse a la gracia, al milagro, de bendiciones, a la purificación, a la trascendencia, a la protección contra el mal de ojo, de entrar en contacto con el mundo espiritual, de establecer contacto con entidades, de posesionarse de espíritus, lo cual modifica profundamente la concepción de lo trascendental e incluso los medios para interactuar con lo divino (Cowan

y Hadden). Este fenómeno ha sido denominado como „religión en línea“, referida a aquellas religiones que han privilegiado los sitios web no solo como fuentes de información de las iglesias y movimientos religiosos, sino como espacios y medios donde ocurre la experimentación de lo religioso (Helland).

Para atender estas tendencias se presentarán cuatro casos de *massmediación* y oferta religiosa: a) El catolicismo: la religión iconográfica de catolicismo popular y los replicantes el catolicismo ultrabarroco; b) El neopentecostalismo: Megachurchs: teologías del éxito, consumo y tele-evangelizadores; y c) El New Age y la neoesoteria como producto de las industrias culturales

a) la religión iconográfica de catolicismo popular y los replicantes el catolicismo ultrabarroco

En América Latina, la religiosidad popular ligada preferencialmente al catolicismo iconográfico se basa en el culto a imágenes de santos, vírgenes y cristos, practicando una religiosidad popular mediante la cual se han resistido cultos ancestrales: las poblaciones africanas ocultaron a sus orishas en los santos (véase la santería, el candomblé y la umbanda), los indígenas han mantenido el culto a sus antiguas deidades en bajo formas de sincretismo católico. Por ejemplo, en México la Virgen de Guadalupe representa a la diosa Tonatzin (Nuestra Madre que representa el culto a la Madre Tierra), los mayas de Guatemala eligieron a Maximón como figura ambivalente de los indígenas, y en la frontera entre Perú y Bolivia se practica el culto a Ekeko, para pedir por la abundancia. El sentido práctico de la religiosidad popular sincrética en torno a imágenes de santos, cristos y vírgenes escapa de los controles institucionales y de la herejía, gracias a que se practicaron bajo la fórmula de lo que Gruzinsky denominó como “simulacro del barroco”: un laboratorio de la modernidad y de la posmodernidad donde se clonan imágenes que funcionan de manera similar a los “replicantes” de la película Blade Runner, descritos de la siguiente manera: “replicantes culturales, gigantesco “depósito de residuos” en que se amontonan las imágenes y las memorias mutiladas de tres continentes Europa, África, América--, donde se adhieren proyectos y ficciones más auténticos que la historia, la América Latina encierra en su pasado algo con lo cual afrontar mejor el mundo posmoderno en el que nosotros nos estamos hundiendo” (Gruzinzky 215).

En la actualidad estos mismos símbolos religiosos, representados en imágenes, no sólo remiten a la memoria de un pasado negado, sino que están siendo reformulados, resignificadas y resimbolizados, debido a la mediación de la videogracia que descentra los controles de gestión de la imagen, y por ende del símbolo religioso.

El caso del símbolo de la Virgen de Guadalupe puede ser representativo de apropiaciones latinoamericanas de los iconos católicos que están experimentado distintas apropiaciones estilísticas, con las cuales distintos sectores sociales les imprimen diferentes significados

ajustados a demandas contemporáneas. La comunicóloga Margarita Zires, en distintos trabajos ha documentado y analizado algunas de estas intervenciones. La insurgencia indígena de los indios chiapanecos del Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), surgido en 1994, en el estado de Chiapas la apropio como emblema de su movimiento cubriéndole su boca con un pasamontañas (imagen distintiva del EZLN). Un grupo de artistas vinculados con la Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca, APPO en 2006 intervinieron estéticamente a la Guadalupe para convertirla en La Virgen de las Barricadas para que les brindara protección de la represión estatal que ha sufrido el movimiento político. Guadalupe ha sido también transformada en "Lupita" por la intervención estética del arte chicano, movimiento político cultural de los pobladores mexicanos en Estados Unidos, especialmente por las artistas feministas que han rediseñado una iconografía con formas propias de la mujer contemporánea para apropiarse de la imagen religiosa como un emblema político para representar narrativas en contra de la desigualdad de género y del racismo (en este colectivo artístico se encuentran las obras de Yolanda López, Laura E. Pérez, Alma López y Esther Hernández. (Zires 65). De esta manera la intervención estética ha generado un Nuevo símbolo que permite romper dicotomías prevalecientes inherentes a los discursos de género, nación, clase social y raza (Román-Odio 283).

La relocalización de la imagen guadalupana ha contribuido también a generar nuevas apropiaciones de sentido, incorporándola en movimientos de espiritualidad Nueva Era donde se le imprime un sentido de representante del espíritu de la Madre Tierra, o como Tonatzin para los seguidores del movimiento de la mexicanidad, o como arquetipo de diosa femenina en círculos femeninos del neo-paganismo, o como talismán cargado de energías poderosas que se vende en tiendas esotéricas, botánicas y yerberías en un mercado global latino. Esto puede extenderse también a la apropiación popular de otros santos, como es San Judas Tadeo (protector de negocios ilegales), o Santa Marta (los dominicanos), pero también con la proliferación de santos populares o seculares que han sido elegidos por sectores pauperizados como santos protectores de negocios peligrosos, ilegales, o ambiguos, que la mayoría de las veces no tienen cabida en los templos y que son censuradas por las instituciones de gobierno. Los migrantes y fronterizos de Tijuana seleccionaron a Juan Soldado porque sufrió un martirio a causa de la injusticia judicial (Valenzuela). Los argentinos veneran la imagen de Gauchito Gil a quien le confían la protección milagrosa en las carreteras (Frigerio). Los narcotraficantes mexicanos han erigido al forajido Jesús Malverde como su milagroso protector (Gudrún). Los fieles a La Santa Muerte en México y a San la Muerte en Argentina, les rezan a estas imágenes huesudas porque dicen representan la equidad y la justicia, argumentando que la muerte es lo único que todos los vivos comparten de manera equitativa.

Si el barroco se logró mediante la clonación de imágenes canónicas pero manteniendo sentidos ocultos al usar materiales con que se fabricaban los antiguos ídolos indígenas (Gruzinsky),

el neobarroco contemporáneo se logra gracias a la reproducción en serie de imágenes religiosas (algunas hasta fueron hechas en China), que son adquiridas en los mercados, pero que después son llevadas a bendecir en los templos, para posteriormente ser puestas en altares domésticos, donde la religiosidad popular se practica de manera festiva fuera de los recintos eclesiales. En los márgenes de los alcances de la herejía instrumentada por la ortodoxia eclesial, las imágenes se tornan en iconos sagrados al ser ritualizadas por el saber-hacer devocional de la religiosidad popular.[1] Esta actividad permite la subversión simbólica desde los márgenes del catolicismo popular (Bhabha), mediante el simple acto de la confección de vestuarios *ad hoc*, con los cuales el vestir santos se trasforma en una manera de apropiación simbólica con la que se reescriben las cuidadas hagiografías de los santos canonizados por la Iglesia católica.

La intervención estética también genera fenómenos de porosidad entre el consumo y la fe. Uno de los fenómenos que más muestran la mediación mercantil y las transformaciones de la videogracia es la comercialización de los productos "Virgencita Plis" diseñados por (…) y puestos en venta por *Distroller*, una exitosa franquicia, con 30 tiendas en México, Estados Unidos y Europa. Virgencita Plis es una representación caricaturizada y estilizada con formas y colores vivos y contemporáneos de la Virgen de Guadalupe. Retoma la tradición de los retablos para pedir y agradecer favores milagrosos, pero traducidos a las formas cotidianas con que hablan los jóvenes, plagado de Spanglish, y con contenidos de peticiones para resolver pequeños problemas del día a día: cómo conseguir novios, pasar un examen, perder peso, o no ser regañados por sus padres y maestros. Existen más 2,500 productos diferentes que van desde objetos de decoración, útiles escolares, ropa, joyería, tarjetas de regalos, hasta empaques de rosca de reyes y galletas. La Iglesia Católica decidió incorporar los productos de *Virgencita Plis* para competir con Barbies y superhéroes, y reposicionar y renovar su devoción entre poblaciones juveniles. Actualmente, las medallas de *Virgencita Plis* son un regalo popular en los bautizos y primeras comuniones, que constituyen ritos de iniciación en el catolicismo (De la Torre 2016). Este caso revela cómo el consumismo contribuye a comercializar la religión, la cual a su vez incorpora el consumo como una estrategia misionera para incrementar fidelidad de nuevas generaciones. La videogracia impacta en la porosidad de la separación y distinción de fusiones entre la religión y el consumo, generando una nueva complementariedad y a la vez una nueva dinámica de tensión que afecta el control institucional de la vida religiosa. (De la Torre and Gutiérrez Zúñiga 2005).

b) Megachurchs: teologías del éxito, consumo y tele evangelizadores

El consumo además de propiciar una mercantilización de lo religioso que continuamente acude a la publicidad y la propaganda para sus actividades misioneras; también compite con las religiones sacralizando mercancías variadas mediante las cuales se experimentan y renuevan las formas de experimentar lo sagrado. La mediación entre consumo y religiosidad ya no funciona en

el presente como una división arbitraria, sino como un frente de tensión (De la Torre y Gutiérrez Zúñiga 2005), que frecuentemente impacta el control de la gestión religiosa, propia del campo especializado de la religión (Bourdieu).

La mercantilización de bienes y servicios cristianos pone en circulación objetos sacros reconvertidos en mercancías; y mercancías que suplen los símbolos consagrados por las religiones y sus especialistas. Esta mediación también tiene impacto en los modos y contenidos de las prácticas religiosas, incluso en tradiciones iconoclastas como lo había sido el evangelismo protestante que se ha ideo reformando primero hacia una forma emotiva de pentecostalismo y en la actualidad a un modelo hedonístico de neopentecostalismo (Mariano). Ejemplo de ello es que los cultos religiosos adoptan el formato de los *reality shows* televisivos, y los contenidos de las trascendencias mundanas de las teologías de la prosperidad. Como lo muestra Semán, las teologías de la prosperidad y los productos de autoayuda que ofrecen superación personal (Semán).

Otros ejemplos del impacto de esta mediación sobre las prácticas y los modos de producir lo religioso, que han sido afectadas por las imágenes proyectadas los *massmedia* y la industria del entretenimiento, es el hecho de la reconversión de las iglesias pentecostales (que originalmente se desarrollaban entre estratos sociales marginales, y que promovían un ascetismo mundano para mantenerse ajenos a los valores de la modernización capitalista y del consumo) en movimientos neopentecostales que: "utilizan la técnica, el lenguaje y los códigos de los medios de comunicación, adoptan una estructura empresarial, participan en política, construyen redes transnacionales, demonizan a los grupos afro-brasileños y practican una liturgia basada en las curaciones, el exorcismo y la prosperidad" (Algranti 78). Estas iglesias promueven el fenómeno denominado Megaiglesias (*Megachurchs*):

> A fines de los años ochenta, estos grupos habían comenzado a escenificar y difundir un elaborado espectáculo religioso en la radio y la televisión. Tales iglesias ofrecieron catarsis espiritual a millares en un entorno atractivo con altos costos de producción. Brindaban un gran drama en forma de exorcismo, poderosos encuentros personales con exorcismos, poderosos encuentros personales con la trascendencia y la promesa de bendición material. (Smith 15)

Ejemplos de esta tendencia son: la Iglesia Interdenominacional de la Gracia de Dios, Renacer en Cristo y la Iglesia Sara Nuestra Tierra, y principalmente la iglesia Universal del Reino de Dios (Siqueira 88), de origen brasileño pero con una expansión internacional impresionante en gran parte conquistada gracias a adoptar la religión como una mercancía, y al creyente como un consumidor (Fonseca). Sus pastores han adoptado el modelo de conductores de programas de televisión al estilo concursos y han incorporado el *reality show* como modalidad para difundir

y dramatizar el testimonio de conversión. Sus cultos están mediados por una producción para ser difundida en pantallas, copiando al máximo los códigos de producción propios de la industria del entretenimiento. Han cambiado los templos por viejos cinemas, por auditorios y grandes teatros. La utilización de los medios de comunicación incluye literatura, sermones y ceremonias videograbadas y el uso intensivo de la televisión y las redes sociales han desplazado el encuentro con lo numinoso y lo sagrado por experiencias mediatizadas por bienes de consumo que se pueden experimentar fuera de los templos y de manera individual. Provocando que: “A medida que el sistema para comercializar nuevas espiritualidades y espacios simbólicos mass-mediados se vuelven ampliamente disponibles, las iglesias tradicionales están perdiendo su monopolio histórico sobre dispensar sacramentos.” (Smith 16).

También se han modificado los contenidos de la trascendencia supliendo la oferta de salvación después de la muerte, por la oferta de conseguir la gracia para alcanzar las imágenes del éxito proyectadas por los valores del consumo capitalista, promovidas por la publicidad (el buen cristiano es aquel cuya gracia de Dios se muestra en objetos de ostentación, como son un carro nuevo, una casa en fraccionamiento cerrado, ropa y relojes con marcas de prestigio que aseguran la ostentación y el respeto). A estos contenidos Meyer ha denominado como teología de la prosperidad “Una guía confiable para practicar la globalización” (28). Por su parte, Algranti ha estudiado la efectividad y la ampliación de alcances que gracias a la instrumentación de la cultura de masas y la producción del espectáculo evangélico ha brindado a ciertas Megaiglesias (como por ejemplo al movimiento neopentecostal Rey de Reyes en Buenos Aires) para acercarse al mundo de los jóvenes.

c) El New age y la neoesoteria como producto de las industrias culturales

El New Age nació como un movimiento de espiritualidad alternativa, que promovía un nuevo modelo de consumo (natural, saludable, auténtico, espiritual, armónico con la naturaleza, de producción artesanal) diferente al consumo materialista del capitalismo, pero hace aproximadamente un par de décadas fue retomado por las agencias publicitarias para promocionar productos masivos en un mercado New Age. Hasta la empresa Coca Cola promovió su popular bebida como “un refresco con karma” y “Buena vibra líquida”. Las creencias Nueva Era, han sido incorporadas a un modelo de consumo con predilección en productos *lights*, saludables, ecológicos, naturistas, relajantes, armonizadores.

Por su parte los significantes, bienes simbólicos y significados que conforman la espiritualidad New Age han sido también incorporadas a las programaciones de los medios masivos de comunicación (literatura, radio, televisión e internet) mediante los cuales se promueve una oferta de productos alternativos basados en el cuidado del cuerpo, en la salud holística, en la belleza, en una nueva alimentación natural equilibrada, técnicas de relajación y en la búsqueda

de las superación personal (Carozzi). La televisión ha incorporado consejos de espiritualidad en sus programas de revista con consejos para el hogar (comida sana, técnicas corporales como yoga, consejos para armonizar las energías del hogar, lectura de horóscopos, *Feng Shui* para la decoración del hogar, sanación holística, etc.).

Existe una empresa latinoamericana que promovió las ideas Nueva Era en el Canal Infinito, mismo que organizaba ferias de productos afines a esta espiritualidad por las principales ciudades de América Latina. Por su parte, la industria editorial ha explotado al máximo el potencial mercantil de esta sensibilidad en los libros de autoayuda. La expansión de las creencias y de estilos de vida New Age se ha extendido como una cultura y una sensibilidad espiritual global en gran medida por el fenómeno transmedia (Scolari). En el presente algunas creencias New Age (como son las creencias en la reencarnación, el karma, la unidad con el cosmos, las cargas y alineaciones de energía, pero sobre todo de las terapias holísticas) son parte del repertorio de creencias de una espiritualidad universal, transversal a las religiones de pertenencia. La transmediatización New Age ha fomentado nuevos hibridismos entre las espiritualidades indígenas, afroamericanas y paganas de algunos pueblos latinoamericanos que han sido resignificados a la luz de valores y contenidos provenientes de filosofías orientales, teorías esotéricas, nociones de la física cuántica, concepciones holísticas del funcionamiento de los seres vivos) que orientan a un consumo espiritual ecléctico y cada vez más individualizado y desinstitucionalizado. La mercantilización y transmediatización ha transformado el sentido original contracultural propio del movimiento New Age, dando pie a una moda de consumo que promueve un estilo de vida costoso y reconocido como cosmopolita (De la Torre 2012).

Uno de los mejores ejemplos de la mediatización de creencias New Age fue la creación y difusión global de la creencia en la Apocalipsis Maya en diciembre de 2012. Esta creencia que anunciaba un cambio de época (retomando la creencia New Age que anuncia estar próximos a un cambio profundo marcado por el cambio de Era de Piscis a Acuario), fue generada transmediaticamente en los contenidos de programas, reportajes, musicales y cine de ciencia ficción en diferentes medios y por la apropiación de sus narrativas y símbolos en industrias culturales del entretenimiento, diversión y turismo temático. Además, la creencia en un fin del mundo próximo reactivó páginas webs, *google groups*, chats y redes sociales en Facebook creadas para circular información para enfrentar la posible debacle. Campechano denominó esta creencia como postmoderna, porque es resultado de la producción transmediática, es virtual, efímera, instantánea. Es global, se difunde mediante la mercantilización y se experimenta mediante el consumo. Está hecha de retazos de imágenes, generando un producto hibrido.

La Apocalipsis Maya 2012 logró convertirse en menos de un año en una creencia masiva y global, sobre todo debido a la sinergia de diferentes industrias culturales, donde destacaron los reportajes difundidos por los canales *Discovery Channel y History Chanel*, que alcanzaron

una audiencia de más de 80 millones de televidentes en todo el mundo. Al acercarse la fecha apocalíptica, la creencia en el 2012 maya constituyó un credo global muy presente en las redes sociales. Según datos arrojados por la encuesta *Ipsos Global Public Affairs* y *Reuters News* (2012), realizada en 24 países, 10 % de los encuestados creían que el calendario maya efectivamente anunciaba el fin del mundo. Nueve días antes del 13 de diciembre, la fecha señalada para el cambio de Era o el fin del mundo, Elizabeth Campechano contabilizó 889 mil sitios web (en español) y 3'360,000 (en inglés) donde se abordaba este tema, el cual se multiplicó ese mismo año, adquiriendo un carácter viral [2], pero también fugaz, pues un año después de la fecha marcada, la creencia quedó en desuso y los sitios web disminuyeron casi a la mitad.

Esta creencia no sólo circuló en espacios on-line, sino que también tuvo efectos of-line. Incrementó el turismo místico espiritual en la zona maya de México y Guatemala (Campechano), y exotizó "lo maya" destacando el rasgo esotérico de esta civilización antigua, basado en la idea que describe a los sacerdotes mayas como "sabios galácticos" y que sostiene la creencia en que tuvieron contacto con extraterrestres, razón por la cual siglo atrás pudieron predecir el cambio de época que experimentamos en el Siglo XXI. Su exotización y esoterización provocó un auge turístico en la región maya y "lo Maya" contribuyó a resimbolizar y convertir en espectáculo muchas tradiciones locales (como ejemplo véanse los espectáculos de Xcaret y Xel-Ha en Cancún).

El interés por el saber mágico y el esoterismo es hoy en día una práctica religiosa vigente, pero a la vez es un producto mercantil bien colocado en el mercado global. Ha estado mediatizado por librerías especializadas, una exitosa industria editorial de circulación iberoamericana, y más recientemente por programas radiofónicos y televisivos que han logrado establecer un formato mediático, que consiste en: 1) Los programas de radio y televisión se producen con un formato abierto a llamadas en vivo. Los programas retoman los formatos del *Reality Show* y de las compras en línea. Son a su vez ventanas de mercantilización de productos y servicios, pero también el *reality show* permite la dramatización actuada del padecimiento, y el diagnóstico a los pacientes que llaman para curar un mal específico, aunque no es en directo, porque la relación especialista-cliente no se da con contacto cara a cara, sino mediáticamente, usando técnicas que llaman "puentes telepáticos"; 2) la solución que brinda el especialista-vendedor es un trabajo de alta magia, para lo cual se le da una cita al paciente-consumidor para asistir a un centro esotérico (yerberías y botánicas) donde será atendido por parapsicólogos, videntes, curanderos, chamanes y sanadores; 3) el remedio a sus males se interpreta como resultado de un "trabajo paranormal" (que por lo general es la causa de las crisis de salud, trabajo, dinero y amor) y que podrá ser superado mediante la adquisición de mercancías cargadas con poderes sobrenaturales que serán ritualizados por un especialista esotérico. En México la neoesoteria se hibridó con los curanderos y brujos tradicionales generando un mercado de productos mágico

esotéricos de raigambre indígena. En el caso brasileño, el circuito neoestorérico contempló una red de wok shops (talleres y vivencias exotéricas y neochamánicas) institutos y asociaciones esotéricas en la ciudad de Sao Paulo, que provocaron una fusión con la creación del chamanismo urbano (Magnani). En suma, el circuito neoesotérico genera hibridismo entre las escuelas y sociedades esotéricas (como son Teosofía, Rosacruz, espiritualista, Antroposofía), los saberes del curanderismo y la magia popular, religiones de procedencia oriental (budismo, Soka Gakkai, Gran Fraternidad Universal, o Hare Krishna) religiones de raigambre afroamericana (vudú, santería, umbanda), religiones indígenas (chamanismos, danzas concheras, camino rojo, Santo Daime, ayahuasqueros y peyoteros).

La industria neoesotérica ha provocado una intensa mercantilización de la magia popular, la curandería y la hechicería, que en el presente son recicladas como saberes y poderes esotéricos (llamados como parapsicología, teosofía, espiritismo y alta magia). Esta industria comprende tiendas esotéricas vinculadas con programas de consulta radial y televisiva, y la organización de ferias donde se promueven talleres de especialistas y productos variado, haciendo de la antigua esoteria un lugar vacío del misterio de lo oculto, y sacando las prácticas de curanderismo y brujería del velo de clandestinidad en que operaban. La neoestoeria acorta la brecha entre la cultura popular y la cultura de masas, profesionalizando a los brujos tradicionales (De la Torre, *Religiosidades Nómadas*), pero también chamanizando a los nuevos aprendices de brujos (Magnani).

Reflexiones finales

Los soportes mediáticos e informáticos son hoy en día un lugar donde se experimentan transformaciones en los modos de producir, gestionar y experimentar el hecho religioso. Pero también son una nueva lógica que media y está modificando el campo religioso. Lejos de incidir en el debilitamiento de lo religioso, está incidiendo en la reconfiguración del campo religioso, en donde se hace necesario atender los impactos de las mediaciones en las siguiente intermediaciones: a) las transformaciones en las mediaciones de los formatos rituales y litúrgicos que están transformando las formas tradicionales e institucionales con que funcionó las religiones, es decir su impacto en los nuevos modos de regulación del campo religioso (Bourdieu); b) el papel de las industrias cultuales en la generación de nuevas creencias posmodernas; c) la mediación y su impacto en la modificación de las fronteras entre religiones y empresas de la religión; liturgias y *reality shows*, creencias y consumos de bienes y mercancías, prácticas religiosas y leyes de mercado; la competencia entre teologías inframundanas e intramundanas, la articulación de los formatos de programas de televisión y las estrategias misioneras; d) el impacto de las *mass-mediaciones* en la magicalización y exoterización de lo religioso; e) el nuevo

papel de los productos *mass-mediáticos* en los procesos de autorización, legitimación y prestigio de las religiones; y f) el impacto de los productos religiosos mediatizados en la generación de novedosos híbridos y mestizajes culturales.

Notas/Endnotes

[1] Sobre algunas trasformaciones de sentido en diferentes sistemas de culto popular latinoamericano, véase la Exposición fotográfica colectiva “A vestir Santos”, que se puede consultar en línea en: www.rifrem.mx/Galeria.

[2] Por viral me refiero al contenido que se propaga de manera veloz en redes amplias, más allá de comunidades específicas. Esto funciona así cuando los receptores de un mensaje lo comunican a otros miembros de su red y estos a su vez lo amplían a sus propias redes.

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Straddling the Crystal Frontier: Reworkings of the U.S.-Mexican Border in the Lyrics of Calexico

Abstract:

The U.S.-Mexican border has been a contested space throughout the political and cultural history of the American South-West. Traditionally negotiated in regional genres such as the Western, which embraces a distinctly Anglo-American perspective, the borderlands have come to be increasingly recognized by cultural theorists as a space of cultural hybridity. The region's creative potential is deeply rooted in the conflictive history and present-day state of border politics. This article focuses on the Tucson-based band Calexico in order to demonstrate how borderlands politics influence musicians in the region. Since their early days, the band's song lyrics have had a politically conscious and highly critical perspective on various issues related to the border. Three of Calexico's songs, released between 2001 and 2006, serve as a "road map" for this article, leading from the violent border towns in northern Mexico across the border towards the south of the United States. As my analysis shows, the lyrics of Calexico cannot be fully appreciated without a thorough understanding of how deeply their work is intertwined with the various socio-political, environmental and cultural issues surrounding the U.S.-Mexican borderlands.

Keywords: Borderlands, Calexico, US-Mexican border, cultural hybridity

1. Introduction

The border as a contested space has long been a common trope throughout American cultural history. In addition to its administrative function, the border has come to be understood as a specific, human-made condition shaping the region sur-rounding it and the people living in this region (Martínez 53). Traditionally negotiated in Anglophone regional genres such as the Western, the border has gained renewed attention especially with the growing recognition of Mexican-American and Chican@ minorities towards the end of the 20th century, leading to a stronger focus in literary studies on cross-cultural or even transcultural reworkings of the border in the cultural production of the South-West. On the other hand, actual political tensions at the border have anything but disappeared. Tendencies of a positive awareness and inclusion of Mexican cultural practices as a part of U.S. culture have their negative counterpart in increasingly racialized discourses on illegal immigration and cross-border trafficking from Mexico into the United States. It is this tension which characterizes what Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa calls the "border culture", which "[is] physically present wherever two of more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (Anzaldúa vii).

A perfect example of how border culture can evolve over time can be found in the broad range of musical traditions present in the U.S.-Mexican borderlands. What is today perceived as "Tex-Mex", *ranchera* or *tejano* music has been heavily influenced by German and Czech immigrants who brought their accordions and polkas with them (San Miguel 10). Mexican influences, in turn, have found their way up north through *mariachi* sounds, Spanish rock music and the like. Last but not least, the entire genre of known as *narcocorrido* would never have existed without the existence of a border which unintentionally called into existence a particular type of music praising smugglers as heroic figures (Wald 12ff.). That being said, it should be obvious that Mexican and Mexican American musicians are not the only ones mixing influences and creating new, hybrid forms and traditions.

The Tucson-based band Calexico, named after a small border town in rural California, is a group of musicians that experiment with hybridity on a number of levels. A loosely knit collective of musicians rather than a permanent band, Calexico incorporate a great variety of musical styles, such as mainstream indie rock, Portuguese fado, Cajun jazz and Southern folk ballads. They utilize blasting *mariachi* trumpets, *cumbia* waltzes and other Latin American musical forms (Roddy, Schacht). More importantly, however, a great number of Calexico's lyrics, which often contain passages sung in Spanish, take a social and environmental activist standpoint critical of U.S. foreign and social policies. The thematic range of their lyrics – most of which are written by lead singer Joey Burns – spans the disastrous impact of hurricane Katrina on the Mexican Gulf

Coast, the assassination of social activist and *nueva canción* singer Victor Jara by CIA agents in Chile, human trafficking, or "the seemingly inevitable demise of the Tarahumara, a native Indian tribe of the Sierra Madre's Occidental range in Mexico who are losing their unique culture – and often their lives – to exploitative drug traffickers" (Schacht).

This paper explores the presence of political, environmental and cultural issues surrounding the U.S.-Mexican border in the lyrics of Calexico. More specifically, the analysis focuses on three songs: "Crystal Frontier" (from the album *Aerocalexico*, 2001), "Across the Wire" (*Feast of Wire*, 2003), and "Roka" (*Garden Ruin*, 2006). They take us on a journey from the Mexican side of the border via the actual frontier, the deserted space between the two countries, to the south of Arizona. Most importantly, all three songs deal with different border-related issues. "Crystal Frontier" describes everyday life, i.e. violence, drug and human trafficking, and exploitation in the *maquiladoras* (factories) in northern Sonora. "Across the Wire" touches upon illegal migration but, above all, focuses on environmental issues, a topic that has become more and more salient in the border region over the past few decades. Finally, "Roka" has a more culturally oriented approach towards hybridity (*mestizaje*) – with lyrics in both English and Spanish – and towards border folklore.

2. Illegal Immigration, Maquiladoras and Narcotráfico at the "Crystal Frontier"

Mexican immigration to the United States dates back to the late 19th century, when railroad construction peaked in the border region. When labor became a scarce resource north of the border around the mid-20th century, the Bracero Program provided Mexicans with short-term work contracts in the United States. It was the end of this program in 1964 which "marked the beginning of large-scale [illegal] immigration from Mexico" (Hanson 9). Since 1990, 34% of all immigrants to the United States have been of Mexican origin, 56% of which arrived without official documents (Hanson 1). These figures are in stark contrast with the assumption that the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), put into effect in 1994, would reduce economic push-pull effects contributing to south-north migration by creating economic wealth in Mexico itself. In fact, NAFTA was most profitable for U.S. companies that shifted their production centers to the infamous *maquiladoras:* large factories located just south of the border, where underpaid workers assemble commodity goods produced for the U.S. market.

As a consequence of economic deprivation and related problems such as organized crime, drug and human trafficking, and intense violence, migration is often seen as the last straw by many Mexicans living in the border region. Ironically, one of the major U.S. border-protection measures – Operation Gatekeeper in California – was enacted the same year that saw the beginning of NAFTA. Yet even the National Bureau of Economic Research is no longer denying the reverse

effects of increased border protection: “Over the last two decades, the United States has greatly increased the resources devoted to controlling illegal immigration... The net effect of changes in enforcement policy... has been increasing levels of immigration” (Hanson 42).

The ever-present border between the United States and Mexico thus became problematic in a new and more destructive way in the mid-1990s, which is also reflected in a number of literary works of that period. While not all of them are directly linked to current events of the time (for instance, Cormac McCarthy’s *The Crossing* [1994], the second instalment of his well-known *Border Trilogy*, is set before and during the Second World War), the border seems to have been a prominent point of reference for many authors. One just has to look at titles such as T. C. Boyle’s *The Tortilla Curtain* (1995) or Carlos Fuentes’s *The Crystal Frontier* (*La frontera de cristal*, 1995) in order to find evidence of this tendency (cf. Sadowski-Smith 188). As distinct and varied as they may be, all of these novels have in common that they describe the difficulties of life in and around the borderlands, particularly for Mexicans who migrate to the United States. It is thus hardly surprising that Calexico’s songwriting mastermind, Joey Burns, took up the famous title by Fuentes and borrowed it for his eponymous song.

The first auditory sensation of Calexico’s “Crystal Frontier” may be deceiving. The upbeat, lively brass hook line, supported by an energetic drum pattern, seems to provide the perfect background for what the listener would expect to develop into a generic story involving typically macho Latino heroes, any number of shady *gringos*, beautiful Latina women and an abundance of tequila. The lyrics, however, tell a rather different story. As a look at the chorus suggests, this song is more concerned with the violent nature of two cultures clashing in the infamous border towns of northern Mexico – for instance, Ciudad Juárez in the state of Chihuahua or Mexicali in Baja California – and with the way both sides are “keeping a close eye” on each other in an atmosphere of violence and mistrust. The three characters presented in the verses can be read as emblematic representations of different parts of border society.

The first verse introduces Marco, a young Mexican trying to cross the border. The proverbial “Seven Cities of Gold” – an old Spanish myth about the riches awaiting the brave north of the border – are here described as “lost”, suggesting that Marco’s desire for a better life has made him just as blind for reality as the craze for gold blurred the vision of the *conquistadores* in the New World. Stumbling forward, Marco does not pay attention to the head of a raven and the tail of a rattlesnake lining his path – macabre remains of two Mexican national symbols. For Marco, the Crystal Frontier thus seems to be nothing more than a see-through glass pane behind which he is hoping to become part of the American Dream. Little does it matter to him that NAFTA and other forms of U.S. neoliberal exploitation are, at least partly, responsible for shattering Mexico’s national economy and social structure in the first place.

Next, we learn about Amalia, a *maquiladora* worker assembling TV sets for the North American market. Amalia's child is among the many *desaparecidos,* the people who disappear without a trace in northern Mexico on an almost daily basis. This sketchy description of a young mother is all the more disturbing because it captures, in only a few lines, a number of problems with which women in the border region are confronted. Violence, most often in connection with organized crime and drug trafficking cartels, obviously affects the weakest members of society; adding the factor of exploitation on the labor market, many women are desperate enough to try and cross the border in order to find (equally underpaid) work in the United States (Slack and Whiteford). If they do remain in Mexico, many struggle to maintain their dignity while dealing with the loss of family members, the experience of violence and material deprivation. With regard to Amalia, the Crystal Frontier resembles an unbreakable shield locking her in a place from which she cannot escape. Its sheer presence dominates and shapes every moment of her life; for her, there is no way of forgetting about or even transcending this frontier.

One of the few "winners" of border society is Ramón, who is introduced in the third verse. A *coyote* – a human trafficker – by profession, he makes a living out of other people's desire to cross the frontier illegally. He is portrayed as a shady, elusive character who easily "slips through a hole in the fence" and who "can get you anything you want" as long as you are able and willing to pay. Although the lyrics remain vague here, it is not unlikely that the term Crystal Frontier for Ramón also implies his involvement in *narcotráfico,* i.e. drug trafficking, which has been growing despite the U.S. government's costly attempts to wage war on drugs such as crystal methamphetamine. A cynic by nature, Ramón's only interest is money, which will keep flowing as long as U.S. border protection policies are in place.

3. Environmentalism and the Borderlands: "Across the Wire"

The opening verse of "Across the Wire" introduces two brothers on their illegal journey across the border. Alberto is nervous and urges his brother to wake up and continue the dangerous endeavor. At this point, however, the focus shifts from the issue of migration to the actual, physical context in which the protagonists' story is embedded, capturing a snapshot-like impression of the border landscape. Before turning to the song lyrics themselves, it is worthwhile taking a brief look at how this environment has developed over time.

The field of environmental history has established the notion that humans do not only constantly and profoundly change their surroundings, but that they do so while operating within a complex network of socio-economic constraints (cf. Truett). In the U.S.-Mexican border region, the "transnational legacy of environmental and social change" dates back at least to the end of the 19th century, when Anglo-Americans began to push for resource development in southern

Arizona (Truett 161). During the heyday of early electrification, the discovery of copper around the small town of Bisbee led to the creation of railroad infrastructure on both sides of today's Arizona-Sonora border. Truett goes on to explain

> the central irony of industrial development in the region[:] Although it created and sustained new linkages between the United States and Mexico, between city and country, and between nature and society, those who entered this transformed landscape found themselves in a world deeply inscribed by boundaries. (Truett 168)

Transnational environmental history draws attention to this contradiction precisely on the grounds of the assumption that "nature itself [ignores] political boundaries" (Truett 161). To give just one example, if industrial plants on the Sonoran side of the border pollute the Rio Grande, this will naturally affect both banks of the river – a truth simple enough to be generally overlooked in national environmental policy-making both in Mexico and the United States.

Like "Crystal Frontier", "Across the Wire" was written by Joey Burns in a phase of intense and critical interest in illegal migration and environmental issues. In fact, the song title itself is borrowed directly from environmental critic Luis Alberto Urrea's 1993 eponymous book (Schacht, Urrea, *Across the Wire*), and further intertextual references can be found in the lyrics. The third verse is particularly interesting because it creates a scenic atmosphere of the borderlands by weaving together ancient Aztec mythology, as featured in the first chapter of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, with references to Urrea's general concerns regarding the environmental future of the Sonoran desert. The eagle "spotted... in the middle of a lake, / resting on a cactus and feasting on snakes" has its complement in the first chapter of *Borderlands*: "The eagle symbolizes the spirit (as the sun, the father); the serpent symbolizes the soul (as the earth, the mother). Together, they symbolize the struggle between the spiritual/celestial/male and the underworld/ earth/ feminine" (Anzaldúa 5). The serpent being eaten by the eagle symbolizes the victory of a male, patriarchal order over the pre-Columbian concept of matriarchy. In "Across the Wire", Burns's lyrics add another layer to this viewpoint by continuing, "but the waters recede as the dump closes in", thus criticizing the ongoing growth of settlements and industrial facilities into the Sonoran desert. Neither snake nor eagle will – metaphorically speaking – survive this level of human interference with their natural habitat.

The dump itself, which "reveal[s] a whole lake of sleeping children", once more refers to a book by Urrea (*By the Lake of Sleeping Children*). There, the author portrays a social microcosm of Mexican poor living in, around, and off dumps outside urban spaces in the border region. In "Across the Wire", social-environmentalist concerns are most overtly voiced in the fourth verse, which criticizes the pollution of the Rio Grande river. The second half of this verse points out that, no matter how rigidly the border is being protected by U.S. law, environmental problems do not

stop at legal borders and cannot be made to go away by mere economic wealth on one side. Therefore, when stating that "the future looks bleak, with no sign of change", the speaker addresses not only the two brothers' immediate situation – on the content level of the narrative –, but also the oblivious attitude of policy-makers and corporations towards nature. Economic interdependence, resulting in the asymmetrical exploitation of people and environmental resources, is thus shown to be an issue on both sides. Patrolling the border at best contains one symptom of the general, literally unhealthy relationship between the United States and Mexico.

Only in the sixth stanza does the lyrical focus shift back to the fate of Alberto and his *hermano*, who are trying to avoid an encounter with the U.S. border patrol while having to lay all their hopes on the *coyote* leading them across the border. The song ends on a rather pessimistic note, suggesting that the two men will most likely exchange their poverty in Mexico for a new kind of dependency and deprivation in the United States, because "those in control, holding so much" are unwilling to share their wealth with illegal immigrants. Exploitation is anything but over for the two brothers, even if they do manage to enter the country without being apprehended.

4. Mestizaje and Migrant Melancholia: "Roka"

In "The Anthropology of Borderlands", Robert Alvarez traces the resonance of the border problematic in the field of cultural anthropology, stating that this trope "has lately come to represent a juncture between the literal and conceptual" (Alvarez 449). The "literal" points to the so-called "policy problem approach" (Heyman 43), that is, the administrative function of the border and its practical implications for the study of transnational flows of economic and human capital. The "conceptual" notion of the border is most relevant in the context because it takes up the work of early borderlands theorists such as Americo Paredes and Gloria Anzaldúa, both of whom "broke down the boundaries of the geopolitical border and illustrated the multidimensional character of life on the borderlands, nurtured in a history of conflict through the Spanish, Mexican, American, and, throughout, native stages" (Alvarez 461).

Along similar lines, cultural theorist Renato Rosaldo formulates his broader notion of "hybridity", which "can be understood as the ongoing condition of all human cultures, which contain no zones of purity because they undergo continuous processes of transculturation (two-way borrowing and lending between cultures)" (Rosaldo xv). In the face of an "incongruity of cultural and political spaces" (Kearney 58), the border as a dividing line between two fundamentally different cultures is a myth; cultures in the borderlands have always been intimately intertwined to a degree that it may be more useful to speak of something like a "border culture": a heterogeneous phenomenon which should not be understood as a monolithic entity, but rather as an ongoing process shaped by the particular conditions under which it exists.

On the other hand, the concept of "border culture" should not be understood as a justification for disregarding the differences and diversity of the cultures co-existing in the borderlands. The co-existence of different cultures in one and the same space – or even within one and the same individual – does not merely dissolve into a happy synthesis, but in fact adds "a third element which is greater than the sum of its severed parts" (Anzaldúa 79f.). Cultural hybridity, or *mestizaje*, always contains an affirmative element of resistance against attempts by outside forces to establish fixed categories of self-identification. This resistance is not, however, an exclusively negative reaction to external pressure, but it can result in "continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (Anzaldúa 80).

Grounded in the idea of cultural hybridity, "border culture" can thus be understood as a cultural phenomenon intricately shaped not only by the geographical space it inhabits, nor by the ethno-political and economic struggles alone which result from different groups claiming this space for themselves, but also by a great potential for cultural production. Embracing conflict as a creative force, as a culture in its own right, is one of the merits of recent cultural-anthropological perspectives on the borderlands. The lyrics of Calexico's song "Roka" can be read as an example of *mestizaje* in that they speak to the tension between what is gained and what is lost in the process of transculturation.

Of the three songs examined here, "Roka" is the least narrative in character. The pensive mood expressed by the music is equally present in the lyrics, which begin with an English verse and switch to Spanish in the chorus. The first verse of "Roka" opens with a seemingly picturesque landscape description: "Sleeping in the valley … / Waking cross the river … / Full moon lures the waves...". The second half of each line, however, re-contextualizes the harmless scenery: the (Rio Grande) valley, a symbol of fertility and growth, is also a "valley of misfortune"; the river itself is depicted as a "river of delusion"; and the waves are in fact "waves of desperation". The morbid atmosphere created in those first three lines provides an appropriate setting for the actual topic of the song, i.e. the hardships of migrant life north of the border. The "empty hearts and mouths wither[ing] away" point to the difficulty of crossing the border alive and to the deprivation which most often awaits those who do reach the United States.

The feelings to which the lyrics allude, embedded in a subdued soundscape, strongly resonate with what Alicia Schmidt Camacho calls "migrant melancholia". She claims that "narratives of loss and wounding have always coexisted in tension with the legitimating discourses of international cooperation, development, and economic opportunity that depict the sojourn in the United States as a matter of elective choice" (Schmidt Camacho 832). Her claim is that migrant melancholia does not only concern those migrants who are unable to get proper documents in the United States, but in fact all those who suffer from a lack of belonging, who have left behind their homes and cannot build a similar connection to the new place they find themselves in (Schmidt

Camacho 838f.). The “fantasy of reunion” the author refers to (Schmidt Camacho 840) has its lyrical complement in “Roka”: the addressee is asked to cup a “parched and broken heart” in their hands, which could be understood as an act of re-connecting with something – someone – long gone and left behind.

Unlike the two other songs, “Roka” does not introduce any concrete characters; instead, the lyric persona speaks to an undefined addressee in the pre-chorus, echoed by the Spanish chorus. The (presumably Mexican) addressee is implored to be persistent in their search for a new home north of the border, despite all the obstacles they may have to overcome, despite feelings of homesickness and hopelessness. However, the appeal to keep up hope is accompanied by the lingering presence of death – the “parched and broken heart” may therefore also be read as a reminiscence of deceased loved ones, of the destroyed desert landscape, or even of the symbolic homeland, Aztlán.

Repeated references to the “*danza de la muerte*” (“dance of death”) evoke another aspect of death originating in Mexican culture, i.e. the *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebrations traditionally held on November 1st and 2nd every year. Originally a Catholic holiday introduced by the Spaniards, *Día de los Muertos* combines Christian elements with native Mexican folklore. On this occasion, families gather to mourn their loved ones who have passed away. This holiday, itself an example of cultural hybridity, is described by ethnographer Stanley Brandes as “a key symbol of national identity” (Brandes 11). With the growing influx of Mexican migrants to the United States, and most notably in the course of a rising awareness of Chican@ culture in the past few decades, it “has been reinvented many times, by church and state, as well as in the press and through mass communications systems” (Brandes 11) and is now celebrated by Hispanic communities in most parts of the United States as well. According to Regina Marchi, one of the results is that “expressions of Latinidad (Latinness) not only affect individuals of Latin American heritage, but also are reshaping mainstream U.S. culture” (Marchi 4).

Fig. 1: Calexico performing at the *Día de los Muertos* Festivities in Tucson, Arizona (image taken from the 2012 documentary film *Flor de Muertos*, dir. Danny Vinik)

North of the border, *Día de los Muertos* has taken on an additional meaning: "Each year, immigrant rights activists across the U.S. observe Day of the Dead with processions and altars critical of U.S. border patrol policies" (Marchi 75). The state of Arizona hosts some of the largest processions and demonstrations criticizing policies such as Operation Gatekeeper and Operation Hold the Line. As a local band, Calexico have made a habit of performing at those events, as is illustrated in native Tucsonan Danny Vinik's 2012 documentary film *Flor de Muertos* (see Fig. 1 and 2). The reference in "Roka" to the dance of death, one traditional feature of *Día de los Muertos* processions involving dancers dressed up as skeletons, can therefore be read as a sign of Calexico's strong involvement in this politicized component of *Día de los Muertos*, because it draws attention to the countless migrants who lose their lives at the border year after year.

Fig. 2: Calexico and other artists performing at the *Día de los Muertos* festivities in Tucson, Arizona (image taken from the 2012 documentary film *Flor de Muertos*, dir. Danny Vinik)

5. Conclusion

Drawing on theoretical and empirical approaches from environmental history, social sciences as well as cultural anthropology, I have examined the lyrics of three songs by the Arizona-based band Calexico with regard to the ways in which current and salient border issues are translated into those lyrics, i.e. how the border is present as an integral part of Calexico's songwriting. I hope to have shown that the issues discussed in the lyrics span both sides of the border, dealing with problems such as violence and the exploitation of workers in the *maquiladoras* south of the border; the catastrophic exploitation and violation of the environment in the border region; the omnipresent and ongoing topic of illegal migration from Mexico to the United States; as well as the aspects of migrant melancholia and the ways in which the traditional *Día de los Muertos* has been reframed in the context of killings at the border. Although Calexico are not directly connected with the contemporary cultural movements originating from minority groups in the border region, their socio-political agenda certainly places them within the broad context of border culture.

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Independence Movements in the Americas during the Age of Revolution

Abstract

This essay gives an overview of the four independence movements or revolutions that took place in the Americas during the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the next one (that is, *c.* 1775-1825): the independence of the Thirteen Colonies, the emancipatory and independence process of Haiti, the Spanish American revolutions, and the political process that ended up in the independence of Brazil. Contrary to what some Atlantic and global historians have suggested in the past few years, the peculiarities of each one of these processes impedes, or at least notably complicates, any effort of homogenizing them or of finding patterns or sequences among them. In this regard, chronological proximity may be misleading; proximity does not imply causality. Contacts and connections were present throughout the hemisphere during those fifty years, no doubt, but as always with academic trends (that may also be academic vogues), these contacts and connections should be taken with caution and discernment.

Keywords: Independence movements, the Americas, Age of Revolution

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I. Introductory remarks and methodological issues

The independence movements in the Americas belong to what historians call the "Age of Revolution". This is a historiographic category that, as any other, has received varying periodizations. However, if our main concern is the independence movements in the American continent, then it would be safe to choose the half century that goes from 1775 to 1825 as the best chronological option. Of course, events and processes that took place before should be studied in order to fully understand the four movements that are the object of analysis in this essay and that will be dealt with in section II. As mentioned in the abstract, these are (in chronological order): the independence process of the Thirteen Colonies (1776-1783); the emancipation movement and eventual independence of Haiti (1791-1804); the *revoluciones hispánicas*, (that is, not only the Spanish American revolutions, but also the political revolution that took place in metropolitan Spain between 1808 and 1814); and, finally, the political transformations that Brazil experienced from 1808 until it declared its independence in 1822.

The Spanish American independence processes ended, in principle, with the battle of Ayacucho (December 9th, 1824). This battle meant the independence of what was the geographical heart of the Viceroyalty of Peru, the last continental territory of the Spanish Empire in America that was still under the control of the Spanish Crown. However, several historical events that took place afterwards can also be chosen as closing dates for the Spanish American independence movements: there were still some skirmishes in the Viceroyalty of Peru during 1825; several important Spanish American ports remained under control of royalist troops until 1826; Bolivia was created that same year; Uruguay became a new country in 1828; and, finally, what historians call "Gran Colombia" disintegrated into three different new countries (Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador) in 1830, the same year that Simón Bolívar died. These few examples are mentioned just to show the ever-open possibility of changing the closing date of the emancipatory-independence processes that took place in Spanish America during the first three decades of the 19th century, depending on the field of specialization of the historian and the hypothesis and objectives of the research in question. Of course, the same applies not only to the closing date of any other historic process, but also to its date of origin.

This calendrical openness is even more evident in the case of the Spanish American independence movements when compared with the other processes considered in this essay because these took place in the geographical vastness of what we call today "Latin America". By the beginning of the 19th century, the Spanish Empire in America was divided in four viceroyalties and three general captaincies. This means that the independence movement(s) in Spanish America was not a single event, but in fact included at least seven different revolutions, with different social backgrounds, different economies and, therefore, different urgencies and different

tempos. Just to give an idea, Venezuela declared its independence in 1811, Paraguay became effectively independent in 1813, the United Provinces of the River Plate (Argentina) declared their independence in 1816 (though it could be said that they were autonomous since 1807) and Chile did the same in 1818. The insurgents of New Spain (Mexico) declared independence in 1813, but it was not until 1821 that this independence materialized (by Agustín de Iturbide, who for almost a decade was one of the most decided enemies of the insurgents in the Viceroyalty of New Spain). Peru declared its independence for the first time in 1821, but it was not until 1824 that it was able to sever ties with the metropole (this achievement, on the other hand, would have been impossible without the active participation of Spanish American troops from other territories; in fact, the vast majority of the Peruvian elite and the Peruvian people did not wish to separate from Spain). The Brazilian case is different in so many aspects *vis-à-vis* the Spanish American movements, that it will receive a specific treatment at the end of section II. In fact, the protagonists of the Brazilian process never had the intention to become independent, until the political situation in Portugal made that decision inevitable. Besides, this process was not only much less violent than the Spanish American movements, but had slavery as a common thread that determined events in a way that cannot be compared with the movements in question. Finally, coming back to the parts in which this essay is divided, in section III the concept of "revolution" and the "connectivity" of the independence processes will be discussed.

As it will become evident below, there were some political and ideological aspects that were common to all the Spanish American territories (to the extent that they were part of a single empire during almost three centuries), but some of the most distinctive features of their respective emancipation movements are linked more than anything else to geopolitical motives, with certain individuals that played extraordinary roles at specific junctures and, finally, with social aspects that did not depend and were not necessarily altered by the political and ideological commonalities just mentioned. The vast majority of the main political leaders of the emancipation movements of Spanish America had studied in one of the several universities that existed in the region, so they shared a similar intellectual background. However, some of them at one time or another had had contact with books that were not part of the curricula of the Spanish American universities or that were forbidden by the Inquisition. As some recent scholarship has demonstrated (Torres Puga 2010), the possibilities to read literature of this kind varied a lot depending on several aspects, but it was always there for those really interested in doing so and that had the means to materialize this interest. In this regard, the Enlightenment and some of its main notions were considered for a very long time as the breeding ground for the revolutionary movements that ignited Spanish America from 1810 onwards. However, the intellectual history that has developed in Western academia during the last decades is much more skeptical about the links that were established for very long between the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolution. Simplifying this issue, it can

be said that the main reason behind this change is that ideas are viewed nowadays as much more situated, complex and ambiguous than they once were, and the Enlightenment is now perceived as a more nuanced, variegated and international movement, not as an almost exclusively French *coterie* of revolutionary intellectuals. If the links between the French Enlightenment and the French Revolution have been played down by well-known historians in the last years (see, for example, Chartier), similar conclusions can be arrived at when we analyze in more detail, for example, the purported "influence" of Rousseau on the Spanish American independence movements. Paradoxical as it may sound, the presence of Rousseau in Spanish America during the Age of Revolution appears to have been much less revolutionary than once thought.

Although it took place in the western part of a small island of the Caribbean, the plurality of situations, or regionalization, was also a characteristic of the Haitian emancipation process. The small size of Saint Domingue (that part of the island originally called *La Española* that roughly corresponds to modern Haiti) notwithstanding, three very distinctive processes took place there between 1791 and 1804, when Haiti obtained its independence. The peculiar character of each region depended more than anything else on its geographic location, on the traditional relation that each region had established with the mother country (France), and on the social composition and social leadership that guided the insurrection against the white planters in each part of the island throughout those thirteen years. Another element that also played an important role in the Haitian Revolution was the active involvement of the two other European powers of the time, England and Spain.

As already mentioned, the process that resulted in Brazilian independence will be dealt with at the end of section II. What happened in Brazil between 1808 and 1822 was not an independence movement as such, mainly because, as will be explained later in this essay, the relocation of the Portuguese king, his government and his court in Rio de Janeiro in 1808 modified the whole political Brazilian situation in a radical way and made the search for "independence", if not an impossibility, at least a far-fetched scenario for the majority of Brazilian landowners, the powerful social group that, with the Portuguese king living in Brazil, did not consider the possibility of any revolutionary movement (be it linked or not with independence). With the thousands and thousands of slaves living and toiling in Brazil, the landowners, the king, and the Brazilian authorities in general knew very well that notions like "revolution" or "independence" were to be kept at bay. Estimations vary rather drastically, but it would be safe to say that at around 1820 there were almost two million slaves in Brazil and by 1850 this figure had risen to close to three million. To give an idea of the magnitude of Brazilian slavery, it would suffice to mention that from the beginning of the 17th century until the end of slavery in the United States in 1865, almost ten times more African slaves were sent to Brazil than to the US. Historically speaking, in the Americas slavery was eminently a Brazilian affair (the traffic of slaves towards Brazil was started by the Portuguese since the middle

of the 16th century). It may be added that the study of slavery in Brazil has grown exponentially in the last twenty-five years (Reis and Klein).

There are other aspects that should be mentioned before proceeding. First, there are some important academic issues that are relevant for the hemispheric approach like the one intended here. Leaving aside the study of the independence processes in the United States, the other two, the Haitian Revolution and Spanish American independence movements, were in general terms neglected by Western academia until fairly recently. The former until the 1990s and the latter until the 1980s. Among the most important contributions to the history of the Haitian Revolution since the 1990s are those made by Carolyn Fick, David Geggus, Laurent Dubois, and Jeremy Popkin, but many other authors have contributed to this flourishing bibliography that now includes a highly useful encyclopedia, edited by François Roc, that covers every aspect of the process. In the case of Spanish America in particular, and the *revoluciones hispánicas* in general, the main figure is the Franco-Spanish historian François-Xavier Guerra (*Modernidad e independencias* and *Figuras de la modernidad*), but other authors like Brian Hamnett, Jaime Rodríguez, Antonio Annino, José María Portillo and Javier Fernández Sebastián, not to mention several Latin American historians devoted to their respective national history, have contributed to make them one of the most vibrant fields of study during the whole Age of Revolution. In any case, the bibliographic difference between the independence of the Thirteen Colonies and other revolutionary processes that the Americas witnessed during that age is still considerable. This fact clearly impacts the amount of available scholarly material that exist at present to study the Haitian, Spanish American, and Brazilian cases. In other words, the extant bibliography on the Independence of the Thirteen Colonies is vastly superior to the others. However, it is important to insist that this trend is currently changing at a remarkable pace.

As always with drastic changes in academic orientation and areas of study that become of interest, we have to trace their origin to contemporary political and social issues. In the case of Spanish America, it was in the beginning of the 1980s that several Latin American countries started to become democracies, after more or less prolonged periods of military rule. This means that in Latin America the end of the Cold War accentuated a trend that already existed. The final result is that in the second decade of the 21st century, and without ignoring the enormous challenges regarding central aspects like the rule of law, poverty and social inequality, all of the Latin American countries, except Cuba and arguably Venezuela, can be considered “liberal democracies”. In the case of Haiti, the rise and development of multiculturalism and a growing awareness in Western academia against any kind of Eurocentrism or even “Western-centrism” fostered academic agendas centered in topics that until then had been neglected, among them the Haitian Revolution. This does not mean that important books were not written on the subject before the 1990s (to mention just one seminal title, C.L.R. James’ *The Black Jacobins* dates

back to 1938), but that the bibliography on the Haitian Revolution has developed exponentially since then. In this regard, it should be added that the 1990s development of social and cultural history that Western historiography has evinced during the last half century (a topic to which we will return later regarding Latin American academia) also played a role in the increasing academic production and sophistication regarding the Haitian, Spanish American and Brazilian independence movements.

Another academic aspect that explains the attention that these movements have received during the last decades is Atlantic History or, more specifically, the Atlantic approach to the Age of Revolution. The four Atlantic Revolutions *par excellence* are the independent movements that will be reviewed in this essay (excluding the Brazilian emancipation) plus the French Revolution. Nowadays, the Atlantic Revolutions cannot be studied without dealing in the first place with the independence of the Thirteen Colonies, but also with what happened in Saint Domingue between 1791 and 1804 and with what transpired in Spanish America between 1808 and 1824 (Klooster). Atlantic History, as well as global history, have therefore changed dramatically the scope and the contents of the Age of Revolution. At present, the emancipation process of the Thirteen Colonies has to be viewed and considered along with two other movements that took place several years later, both of which involved very different societies and had peculiar causes and consequences, but that are also a part of a period of Western history that radically transformed politics and, along with it, social and cultural principles and values. In fact, if there was an era where political modernity was born, it was during the Age of Revolution. Of course, there was still a very long way to go once this Age ended (be it 1825, or 1830, or 1848). In fact, political modernity is, by definition, a never-ending process; however, as an Atlantic historian writes, with those revolutions "the basis for modern systems had been laid" (Ordahl Kupperman 121).

Atlantic History has made fundamental contributions in topics like commercial exchanges, migrations and slavery, among others, but in the field of political history and especially of political history in revolutionary times, it seems that its most significant contributions are still to be made. This in part has to do with the inherent tendency of Atlantic historiography to insist upon and underline continuities, coincidences, and sequences. This is a methodological *caveat* that has been noted by some of the most distinguished cultivators of Atlantic History. For example, Bernard Bailyn has warned about the tendency of the Atlantic approach to "exaggerat[e] similarities and parallels unrealistically" (Bailyn, *Atlantic History* 62). This is a point that Atlantic historians should heed to, for, as Lester D. Langley writes in the introduction to his book *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850*: "A study oblivious to the nuances of the particular and to the parallel complexities that an awareness of place can inspire…can be sadly lacking in explanatory power." (Langley 7)

II. Emancipations, independences, and political transformations

Our historic itinerary starts with the war that changed the course of Western history like perhaps no other during the 18th century, that is the Seven Years War (1756-1763), and ends in 1830, the year when Simón Bolívar died. Bolívar was, no doubt, the most important military and political leader of the Spanish American independence movements, but at the same time, he was the most perspicuous analyst of what was at stake in those movements and the most acute analyst of what took place in the region between 1810 and 1830. The hundreds of documents, official and private, that he wrote or dictated during his lifetime dealt with the most important political, social and cultural aspects behind a conflict against the metropole that ended up in ways that he not only profoundly disapproved of, but in several aspects were the confirmation of his worst nightmares. In a certain sense, his death is the most appropriate epitaph to the Spanish American revolutions.

Historians tend to concur that no other conflict influenced the revolutions that occurred in the Americas between 1775 and 1825 as much as the Seven Years War, known in North America as "The French and Indian War". England came out triumphant and from that moment on it was clear that France would not be able to stop the military, naval, and commercial development of her eternal rival. In the Americas, at the end of the war the French could only keep some insular possessions. The French Crown lost an enormous continental territory of what today is Eastern Canada. Spain entered late into the conflict on the French side, but the capture of Manila and especially of the port of Havana by the British in 1762 was a terrible blow to the Spaniards. In fact, if a single event had to be chosen as the main motive behind the economic, military, and administrative overhauling of the Spanish Empire during the last decades of the 18th century (known as the "Bourbon Reforms"), this would be the temporary loss of Havana, the main Spanish port in the Caribbean. This sea, relatively small in geographic terms, was in a sense the fulcrum of the Atlantic world, due to its geopolitical, military, and commercial importance. Legal and illegal trade in the Caribbean can be considered the economic axis of the Atlantic World.

The king of England at that time, George III, as well as his advisors, thought that one of the means through which the Crown could recuperate the large amount of money spent during the Seven Years War would be taxing the North American colonies. Just one year after the war ended, these intentions were put into practice with the Sugar Act of 1764. Once started and notwithstanding the negative reactions of the colonists, the efforts to increase the revenues of the king continued with the Stamp Act (1765), the Townshend Acts (1767) and the Tea Act (1773). The violent reaction of the colonists to measures of this kind led to the Boston "Massacre" (in fact, the number of civilian casualties was relatively small: five) and then to the Coercive Acts of 1774. These actions led twelve of the thirteen colonies (Georgia did not participate) to elect

representatives and send them to the First Continental Congress, that gathered in Philadelphia that same year in order to decide the measures that would be taken to counter the intentions of the British Crown.

The situation kept deteriorating and the first direct confrontations between the British army and the armed colonists took place in Lexington and Concord in April of 1775. The Second Continental Congress gathered just one month after these engagements and two of its main decisions were to create a Continental Army and to put George Washington at the head of it. From that moment on, open war with the British was almost inevitable. The Declaration of Independence was a bit more than a year away: on July 4th, 1776, the Constitutional Convention that had gathered in Philadelphia since the month of May of that same year decided to declare to the world the birth of the United States of America. Seven long years of war against the most powerful empire of the time and the best navy in the world were ahead for the colonists.

After overcoming adverse conditions of every kind, among them an army that lacked not only material things but also basic training, Washington's strategy to avoid a major confrontation with the British army revealed its efficacy. In 1777 he obtained a very important victory in Saratoga and four years later, in Yorktown, he sealed the victory for the patriots. In 1783, the British Crown recognized in the Treaty of Paris the independence of the United States of America. That the King, George III, could have continued the war against the "rebels" is out of question, but his advisors realized that the cost would have been enormous, not only in economic terms. The victory of the patriots, on the other hand, would have been impossible without the support they received from three European nations: France, Spain and the Netherlands (especially the French Crown, that spent a considerable amount of money in order to avenge its defeat in the Seven Years War; the debt in which it incurred was one of the most important motives of the French Revolution). In any case, with victory came the titanic task of supplying the new country with the political institutions that would enable the birth and continuity of the biggest republic of the modern world.

The Articles of the Confederation, drafted in 1777 by representatives from the thirteen colonies and ratified until 1781, very soon showed its limitations. The main problem was the weakness of the federal government. To solve this and other shortcomings, a new Constitution had to be drafted. This document, elaborated by the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, was ratified the next year. Its longevity, reaching our days, is the most telling argument regarding the political deftness, institutional *finesse* and historical vision of its authors (among them, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Gouvernor Morris, and John Dickinson). Its greatest weakness from a social perspective was, no doubt, the fact that it maintained slavery, an institution that was evidently at odds with the lofty principles of the Declaration of Independence. In the words of a contemporary historian regarding slavery, the 1787 Constitution was "a bitter mockery" (Countryman 228). However, it was during the revolutionary period that the

bases upon which slavery rested were profoundly put into question by certain individuals and by some religious groups. In this regard, an everlasting historiographic issue emerges, the capacity or incapacity of certain persons to altogether transcend their historic contexts. In the opinion of one of the best American historians of this period, very often this attitude can be considered an example of historiographic ingenuity (Bailyn, “Central Themes”).

The defeat of the British against the North-American colonists made some people think that the British supremacy was faltering. However, the United Kingdom was able to overcome this defeat and this territorial loss in North America with notable speed, regained its supremacy and very quickly imposed itself as the arbiter not only of diplomacy in Europe, but also in several other parts of the world. The speed and magnitude of this recovery, unintelligible without the Industrial Revolution that was reshaping England at that very moment, gives an idea of the economic, naval and political advantage that Britain had gained over its erstwhile contenders.

The French Revolution can be considered the most disruptive event in the modern history of Europe. During the ten years it lasted (1789-1799) the whole continent suffered dire consequences, among them a political explosion of new principles, values, and ideas that radically changed not only the European political landscape, but also the political and ideological arsenal in the entire Western world. What followed, that is, Napoleon Bonaparte’s rise to power and empire, would be even more disruptive in military and social terms for the continent. After his demise in 1815, Europe and America were wholly transformed or were in the process of being transformed, albeit for different motives and with different intensities. As part of the turmoil provoked by the French Revolution, the colony of Saint Domingue, by far the most productive of all the European colonies in the Americas, was the stage for what could be considered the only *social* revolution that took place in the Americas during the Age of Revolution. This is not to say that either the independence of the United States or the Spanish American emancipation movements did not have revolutionary aspects or consequences. Of course they did. However, these aspects were much more political than social. In the case of the Haitian Revolution, what took place was the most radical social change that had ever taken place in the history of Western civilization: all of the slave owners that were in control of the island in political, social, and economic terms were either killed or forced to leave Saint Domingue.

When Haiti declared independence on the first day of the year 1804, at the forefront of its revolution stood Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a former slave. The expression “the world turned upside down” has been used mostly to refer to the English Revolution of the mid-17th century. However, it may be said that it is more aptly applied to what happened in the Saint Domingue between 1791 and 1804. Not only because it was the first successful rebellion led by slaves in the history of the Western world, but also because its final result was the creation of a radically free, non-slavery country.

The emancipation movement of Saint Domingue is one of the most complex revolutionary processes that has ever taken place in the course of modern history. To begin, until 1802, it was not an independence movement but an internal conflict among the whites, the free colored and the black slaves, with volatile allegiances *vis-à-vis* the French King, the French Republic and its envoys (who, on the other hand, were not always on the same side). To complicate things even more, as already mentioned, the war was not only a war by the slaves against the French, but also an international war in which Spain and Great Britain actively participated. Finally, the emancipation process that swept the western part of the island of *La Española* can be divided in at least three identifiable regions: the province of the North, the province of the West, and the province of the South. It was only the movement in the northern province that was led by black slaves, but not even there can we talk of a fight for independence before 1802. It was the decision that Napoleon took that same year to restore slavery that finally united the different factions against the French. With the invaluable help of mosquitoes and yellow fever, the Napoleonic army was defeated and independence was finally declared in 1804. Unity, however, would also be ephemeral: a few years later Haiti would divide itself into two different regimes: a kingdom with a black king in the North and a republic, led by a mulatto, in the South. Unification would not come until 1820. If political beginnings were complicated, exactly the same can be said of the economic aspects that characterized the first years and even decades after independence. In this sense, two elements would suffice to give an idea of the level of adversity the new nation had to face: the opposition and diplomatic non-recognition by the United States (this recognition had to wait until 1862) and the indemnity that the French government demanded from the Haitian government in 1825 in order to recognize its independence. This evident abuse on the part of the French government created a debt that directly hindered the development of Haiti until it finally was able to fully pay it in 1893.

The Haitian emancipation process started in August 1791 as a well-coordinated revolt throughout the northern plain of Saint Domingue. At that time, the French Colony was inhabited by around 500,000 slaves, 32,000 whites and 28,000 free colored residents. In the first part of the "Haitian Revolution" it was this last group that fought for a series of rights *vis-à-vis* the white population while still maintaining slavery. At first, the French government in Paris, that, it should be remembered, was still a monarchy, decided to send troops to crush the insurrection. One of its leaders stood out since the beginning: his name was Toussaint Bréda, but a couple of years into the insurrection he changed his name to Toussaint Louverture.

In September 1792, France became a republic and the Civil Commissioners originally sent by the former king (Léger Félicité Sonthonax and Étienne Polverel) were now representatives of a republican government beleaguered by several European armies. In Saint Domingue, the Spanish army, that controlled the eastern side of *La Española*, supported the rebels against the

French. In September of 1793 the British invaded the island and took control of some parts of the western and southern provinces. Feeling menaced not only by the black rebels, but also by the new governor sent from France (Thomas François Galbaud), his allies (the white planters), and the Spanish and the British, Sonthonax decided to declare the end of slavery in the northern province on August 24th, 1793. Polverel did the same soon after in the western and southern provinces. On February 4th of the following year the National Convention in Paris ratified the Commissioners' decision. The reaction of the planters to the new situation was to call the British to their support. This decision would have lasting consequences: the British would stay in the island until 1798.

Meanwhile, Louverture had become an official in the Spanish Army that was supporting the rebels in their fight against France. His political and military ability gave him increasing reputation and power. He left the Spanish in 1794 and once the abolition of slavery was confirmed, joined the French army led by Sonthonax. However, their relationship soon began to deteriorate. By 1797, Louverture managed to force Sonthonax to return to the metropolis. He proved an able negotiator both with the British and the Americans. By the end of the decade he had control of almost all of Saint Domingue; the only exception being the southern province, that was under the control of André Rigaud, a mulatto (a social group that Louverture always disliked). In the middle of 1799, the best and most violent of his lieutenants, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, invaded the southern peninsula. After a year of war, Louverture was finally able to wrest control of the whole of Saint Domingue. In 1802, he even defeated the Spanish and took control of the eastern part of the island. Quite remarkably, within a decade of violence, civil war, open conflict against the French authorities (either monarchic or republican), international war, internecine conflicts, defections of every kind, international treaties and other examples of a notable political ability, Toussaint Louverture gained control not only of the whole of Saint Domingue, but also of the entire island of *La Española*.

The next step that Louverture took was not military, but political: to draft a Constitution. This document did not proclaim independence and although it did confirm the abolition of slavery, it also contained several dispositions forcing former salves to go back to the plantations. Toussaint's reputation among his countrymen dropped heavily, but he saw no other way to maintain Saint Domingue's economy. This political decision taken by Louverture was the step that more than any other decided his future and ultimately his fate: in less than a year after the Constitution was promulgated, a French army of more than 20,000 men, under the command of Charles-Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, Napoleon's brother-in-law, landed in Saint Domingue. Some of Louverture's generals surrendered without firing a shot, but others put up a strong resistance; among them, Dessalines. However, by the spring of 1802, the French army was able to control almost the whole of Saint Domingue. In the end, Louverture had to surrender and all of his generals went

over to the French side. Furthermore, several of them helped Leclerc's army fight against the guerrillas that had decided to continue the war. In June of 1802, the French deceived Louverture and put him in prison. He was sent to France and was locked in a fort located in the Jura mountains. Toussaint Louverture died on April 7th, 1803. Until the very end of his life, Louverture kept writing to Bonaparte in amical terms, mainly showing surprise at his imprisonment (he never received an answer) and until the end he kept thinking that Saint Domingue could be part of France – presupposing, of course, that the abolition of slavery would be maintained by Napoleon (Louverture, 2014). This was not the case, however, for the First Consul had given the secret order to Leclerc to reinstall slavery in Saint Domingue as soon as he could.

When the slaves and former slaves realized the true motive behind Leclerc's expedition and when they heard similar news coming from Paris, the final war against the French army proved inevitable. For the first time since the turmoil and violence had started in Saint Domingue (that is, since August 1791), all the different races, groups, and factions gathered against the common enemy. Incredible as it may seem considering the hideous violence that took place during the first stages of the insurrection, the bloodiest part of the Haitian Revolution was still to come. During 1802 and 1803, unspeakable atrocities were committed by both sides. As mentioned, yellow fever took its toll among the French; Leclerc himself was in fact one of its victims. At the same time, the self-proclaimed "armée indigène" fought fiercely against what remained of the original Napoleonic army. Not even the divisions among several insurgent generals helped prevent a French defeat. Consequently, a large part of the French army abandoned Port-au-Prince in October. The final battle took place in Vertières on November 18th, 1803, following which General Rochambeau, Leclerc's successor, finally surrendered.

What definitely tipped the balance in favor of the indigenous army was the renewal of the war between France and England. By the spring of 1803 the Napoleonic dream of recuperating the French economic fountainhead in the Caribbean had crushed. The emperor-to-be immediately realized that without Saint Domingue and with the renewal of the war with the British, its remaining continental territories in America were now meaningless. At the end of the month of April, a treaty was signed between Napoleon and President Jefferson through which Louisiana became part of the United States. From one day to the next and for only 15 million dollars, the United States had more than doubled its territory (in approximately 828,000 square miles). Paradoxically, the Louisiana Purchase, that was a consequence of the triumph of anti-slavery in Saint Domingue, would turn into an enormous territory where slavery would develop for more than sixty years after the signing of a deal that made President Jefferson tremendously popular.

In the end, after more than a decade of warfare, around 40,000 French and allied troops (mainly Polish) had lost their lives in Saint Domingue. In November 1803 Dessalines and some of his generals drafted an initial proclamation of independence, but it was the document issued

by Dessalines himself on January 1st, 1804 that became the official declaration of independence of the new country, Haiti (Geggus, "Declaración de Independencia"). Sixteen months after that, Dessalines publicized a written Constitution that abolished slavery and that declared that all citizens, of all races, had equal rights. At the same time, he declared himself emperor. Less than a year and half afterwards, the greatest hero of the war against the French, the person who decided that Saint Domingue had to be independent and the father of the Haitian nation was ambushed and killed by conspirators paid by some of Dessalines' generals. This happened in October of 1806. By that time, his ambition, excesses and cruelty had already made him a hated figure.

Of the four Atlantic revolutions that took place in the Americas between 1775 and 1825 (including Brazil), it can be argued that the Haitian Revolution was the most revolutionary of them all. The reason is simple: none other ended slavery, that millenary institution that was the antithesis not only of natural rights, but also of some of the core values of the Enlightenment and some of the main political and social notions of modernity that the Age of Revolution had engendered. The crucial role of the Haitian Revolution in the history of Western civilization, however, has resulted in idealizations of a movement that, considering the political institutions put in place by Haiti's "Founding Fathers", cannot be considered one of the forerunners of political modernity. In the words of a contemporary expert on the Haitian Revolution: "Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henry Christophe [king of the northern part of Haiti between 1807 and 1811], the main leaders who rose from slavery, were unashamedly dictatorial in their politics, as each of their constitutions make clear." (Geggus, "Haitian Revolution" 547). Other historians are increasingly aware of the obstacles to turn the Haitian Revolution into a sort of symbol or pinnacle of modernity in the Atlantic Revolutions in general. The victory of the Saint Domingue slaves and the creation of Haiti are historic events of the utmost significance for Western history, but the metamorphosis of the Haitian Revolution into a model of political modernity with the power to exert great influence on the whole Western world during the Age of Revolution is a conclusion that should be avoided (Covo).

The links between the Haitian Revolution and other emancipation movements in Spanish America are hard to establish, even in the regions where there was a considerable presence of slaves. As Marixa Lasso writes regarding the region of New Granada: "It is difficult to assess the influence the French and Haitian Revolutions had on local *pardos* and slaves in the region of Cartagena… [I]n spite of Spanish fears, the Haitian example did not result in a major slave revolt." (Lasso 33). What is more, during the Spanish American emancipation movements, the Haitian Revolution served as a counter-example that had to be avoided at all costs. The main reason is simple: an upheaval of such might would radically modify social hierarchies and this was the last thing that the *criollos* (the white elites born in the continent) wanted.

Regardless of the vast historiography that up to this day keeps insisting in the animosity

that the Bourbon reforms of the second half of the 18th century had supposedly created between *criollos* and peninsulars, the truth is that the closeness of different kinds between these two groups provided the social understanding and the cement that held the Spanish Empire together in a relatively smooth way for almost three centuries. Frictions between *criollos* and peninsulars existed since the 16th century, no doubt, but recent historiography has shown that these frictions were blown out of proposition by Latin American nationalist historiographies. In the words of Mark A. Burkholder "Despite repeated allegations to the contrary, the number of elite creoles genuinely hostile toward peninsulars was rarely large prior to 1808-1810." (2013, xiv-xv)

It is true that starting in 1765 uprisings of different kinds and different intensity began to take place in several parts of the Spanish Empire in America (interestingly, the year coincides with the first serious social unrest in the Thirteen Colonies). The most important among these uprisings, after the one that occurred in Quito in 1765, was one led by Tupac Amaru in the Viceroyalty of Peru in 1780-1781. Nonetheless, if we consider the geographic expanse of the Spanish territories in America and the scant presence of royal troops throughout the region during the most part of the colonial period (Spanish troops were not noticeable in the Viceroyalty of New Spain until the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767), it is difficult not to conclude that the Spanish Crown and its inseparable ally, the Catholic Church, were tremendously effective regarding the cooptation and control that they were able to exercise over the vast majority of the Spanish American population.

This control started to crumble in 1808. The reason behind this shift was an invasion that took place on European soil: the invasion of Spanish territory by French troops in the autumn of 1808. This entry, that supposedly was just the crossing of the Napoleonic army on the way to Lisbon and that was contemplated in the Treaty of Fontainebleau formerly signed between Napoleon and the Spanish Crown, very soon became a full-fledged invasion of Spain. The final consequence was the crowning of Joseph I, older brother of Napoleon Bonaparte, as king of Spain and the Indies. In a matter of months, the Spanish Crown had passed from Charles IV to Ferdinand VII, then back to Charles IV, then to Napoleon and finally to his brother Joseph I. While the latter sat on the throne of the largest empire of the time, Ferdinand VII, the legitimate king of Spain, was kept by Napoleon in the French city of Bayonne were he would stay as a guest-prisoner of the French emperor until 1814.

Meanwhile, the news started to spread in America that their new king was Napoleon's brother. During the whole emancipatory process of a territory as big and variegated as Spanish America, few things were unanimous, but this was one of them: Spanish Americans of all social and economic walks outright rejected the new monarch, whom they viewed as an heir to the sacrilegious French Revolution. Consequently, the table was set for what would be a protracted emancipatory, autonomic or independence process depending on the period under study and on the region in question. In any case, by the end of this process, the continental Spanish Empire

in America would be a creature of the past, replaced by several new sovereign countries. The diplomatic recognition and standing of these new nation-states, however, would vary from one country to another and in some instances would take a long time, depending, more than anything else, on the non-recognition of the Spanish Crown and on the pressures that Ferdinand VII exercised on some of the most important European governments.

The crumbling down of the Spanish Empire in America was detonated by an external event, but the quasi permanent situation of warfare in the Old Continent, at times in the American continent and almost permanently in the Caribbean (either open or undercover) had created a context that could, by the end of the first decade of the 19th century, find a detonator with relative ease. To this international situation should be added the social unrest in some parts of Spanish America and the tensions that existed in certain regions between *criollos* and peninsulars. Both these issues were directly linked to the Bourbon reforms; however, it is important to insist that none of them had created a revolutionary or even a pre-revolutionary situation in Spanish America. In fact, as several of the protagonists of the Spanish liberal revolution of 1808-1814 and of what eventually became the independences of Spanish America would explicitly recognize, if the political convulsion of 1808 provoked by the Napoleonic invasion of the Spanish Peninsula had not taken place, the Spanish Empire in America would still have had a long way ahead of it.

In any case, once the cards started to fall, there was no way of stopping them; this was due, among other reasons, to the fact that between 1808 and 1814 the Spanish troops were fighting against the best army of their time: Napoleon's. Since the first signs of social and political unrest manifested in the creation of some *juntas* in the "Alto Perú" in the year 1809, until the disintegration of what historians call "Gran Colombia" in 1830, turmoil, violence and political instability characterized almost all of the Spanish American territories. In ideological and constitutional terms, certain regions (such as Venezuela and New Granada) evinced the influence of some documents of the Revolution of the Thirteen Colonies. However, this influence was much less evident in other territories. In the case of New Spain and despite the geographic proximity, during the first years of the independence process, the political leaders of the Viceroyalty knew little about U.S. political institutions. If we can talk of "influence" coming from the north in the case of this viceroyalty, we would have to wait until the Mexican constitutional congress of 1823.

It is safe to maintain that all the Spanish American territories mixed Spanish political and constitutional thought with other elements, mainly French. However, it should be noted that for the Spaniards and Spanish Americans the enemy was Napoleon; therefore, French authors and French ideas often had to be disguised in one way or another. In this regard, it has been some time since the experts on the political and intellectual history of the *mundo hispánico* during this period have abandoned the false dichotomy "Suárez or Rousseau" (Suárez is the famous neo-scholastic Spanish philosopher). The reason is twofold: first, that the said dilemma never existed

in the minds of the vast majority of the political leaders and public intellectuals that wrote about and tried to explain what was going on in Spanish America during the first two decades of the 19th century, and, second, because intellectual history of the past few decades has shown that such dichotomies have no real sense. Ideas are not neat packages to be delivered in receptacles (be it a person, a group of politicians or an entire society) and their transmission always entails twists and distortions of every kind, dictated mostly by the pressing political needs of the moment and the practical dilemmas that have to be solved one way or another at various historical junctures.

The first political dilemma in the case of the *revoluciones hispánicas* had to do with the absence of the legitimate king, Ferdinand VII. His sovereignty had to be kept in deposit until he was able to regain his throne. However, many possibilities appeared on the horizon: a single person (preferably closely related to the deposed king), a sort of privy council, a gathering of representatives of certain cities, a gathering of representatives from many territories, etc. However, in what capacity would these "deputies" represent the inhabitants of the cities or territories in question? This and many other questions had to be solved as soon as possible if the Spanish patriots wanted to avoid the literal disappearance of the Spanish government while the king was in France. The same can be said of the Spanish Americans once they decided not to accept the kind of representation that the metropole tried to impose on them (firstly a series of *juntas* that claimed ascendancy in Spanish America, then a Regency and finally the Cadiz Cortes). Representation was the crux of the revolutions in the *mundo hispánico*, but the same can be said of the other Atlantic Revolutions. Referring to the independence movement in the Thirteen Colonies, Gordon S. Wood writes: "Of all the conceptions of political theory underlying the momentous developments of the American revolutionary era, none was more important than that of representation." (*Representation* 1). The fact that the expression "No taxation without representation" has become the historical motto of the emancipatory process of the Thirteen Colonies is revealing regarding its political and historical relevance. Coming back to the *revoluciones hispánicas*, there was an issue that ended up preceding all others: if the Peninsular or Spanish American inhabitants had the prerogative to elect a representative, it was because they embodied what would become one of the protagonists and at the same time one of the most elusive entities of the political modernity during the Age of Revolution: the nation.

The apparent solution given to this issue in the case of the *mundo hispánico* and more specifically of the effort by the Spanish liberals to maintain the unity of Peninsular Spain and Spanish America was the first article of the Cadiz Constitution or the Constitution of 1812: "The Spanish Nation is the reunion of all Spaniards of both hemispheres." It was in that Spanish port where around 200 delegates from the Peninsula and some 60 from Spanish American territories gathered from 1810 to 1812 to draft the first Constitution in the modern history of Spain and of Spanish America. This long document (384 articles) was the result, more than anything else, of

the effort, political ability and political foresight of a group of men who identified themselves as *liberales*. This was the first time in history that a group of politicians called themselves so. From here, the term would rapidly expand to other parts of Europe and then to the rest of the world.

Of course, this first instance of Spanish liberalism had limits and ambiguities (as any other historic liberalism), but the political, social and cultural transformation that the Cadiz Constitution implied for Spain and its American empire *vis-à-vis* the Old Regime was of gigantic proportions (Mirow). "By abolishing many of the institutions of the old regime —press censorship, the Inquisition, privileges of the nobility, feudal dues, the *fueros*, Indian tribute, draft labor— these constitution makers uttered a cry of ultraliberalism that reverberated throughout Spanish America for more than a decade." (Graham 69). It should be added, however, that article 12 of the Cadiz Constitution explicitly rejected the exercise of any other religion than Catholicism; besides, the *fueros* of the clergy and the military were maintained. More importantly for Spanish Americans is the fact that the Constitution did not grant them several of their main requests regarding political and commercial autonomy. These denials on the part of the peninsular deputies at the Cortes of Cadiz are essential to explain the opposition that the document met in several territories in America and to understand why many Spanish Americans did not see the 1812 Constitution as a solution to the political crisis that revolutionized the whole of the *mundo hispánico* from 1808 onwards (Breña, *El primer liberalismo*).

However, the effort made by the Spanish and Spanish American *liberales* and the radical transformation that this effort entailed in many aspects, including national sovereignty, individual rights and unprecedented institutional arrangements (division of powers, electoral system, modern political representation, etc.) would be a fruitless one: in 1814 Ferdinand VII returned to the throne of Spain, dissolved the Cadiz Cortes and reinstalled absolutism. National sovereignty, individual liberties, division of powers, elections and the liberal government that the Cadiz Constitution had guaranteed were overthrown from one day to the next. It is true that liberals and liberalism would be back again in power in Spain between 1820 and 1823. However, once again, this time with support from the French army of the Holy Alliance, Ferdinand VII would be reinstalled in the Spanish throne and absolutism would come to an end in Spain until his death in 1833.

But what about the emancipation movements in Spanish America? The Cadiz Constitution, promulgated in March 1812, was followed in some territories in America (among them, the two most important viceroyalties: New Spain and Peru), but several others refused to follow it. In every case, however, the influence of the metropolitan political events and ideas on the Spanish American emancipation or independence movements is undeniable (Breña 2016). By 1812, the emancipation processes had gone a long way in regions like Venezuela and New Granada, and others were either very near to declaring independence (Paraguay) or had advanced a lot in their sense of being capable of taking care of themselves in political terms (the best example is

the port of Buenos Aires). As mentioned, each territory in Spanish America followed particular political *tempos* once the *crisis hispánica* started. The reactions depended on variables of very different nature, starting with the geographic "closeness" or distance of each territory from the metropole. Other important factors were the racial characteristics of each society (no wonder that the two most populated by the indigenous populations, i.e., New Spain and Peru, were the most reluctant to accept any profound political or social change), the relationship between the capital of each territory and its neighboring cities (Montevideo regarding Buenos Aires, for example) or the rapport between certain regions with the capital city (Paraguay *vis-à-vis* Buenos Aires or Lima).

In the case of Central America, an author that has devoted many years to analyze its transition from the colonial period to the independent era, concludes that the region experienced "an independence of paradoxes" (Dym 2006, xviii): with a very important indigenous population, there was no indigenous revolt; the region was not in favor of independence, nor was it royalist; it participated enthusiastically in the two experiments of constitutional monarchy coming from the metropole (1812-1814 and 1820-1821), but it then established a federal republic with the same enthusiasm. Finally, with very little external interference during the independence period and with the advantage of not having suffered a major turmoil or internal strife, the Kingdom of Guatemala became the Central American Federation. This experiment not only was short-lived (1824-1839), but it went through the same political instability that characterized the rest of Latin America and finally disintegrated into five new countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua y Costa Rica). The only exception to the aforementioned instability during the first decades of the 19th century was Paraguay. This was mainly due to the decision of its founding father and dictator, Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, to isolate the country from the rest of the world. To sum up the last two paragraphs, Spanish American independence movements were a series of peculiar and distinct political processes. Nevertheless, the outcomes proved to be rather similar. As it will be addressed in the remainder of this essay, the international context, in its financial, economic and commercial aspects, would play a role of utmost importance in this respect.

As with any other revolutionary process, the other element that cannot be ignored when trying to explain what happened in Spanish America during the Age of Revolution was the role that powerful individuals played. The first name that comes to mind is of course Simón Bolívar, but José de San Martín, Miguel Hidalgo, Bernardo O'Higgins, Bernardo de Monteagudo, Antonio José de Sucre, José Artigas, José María Morelos, Mariano Moreno or Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia also played key roles at certain moments and to a great extent determined the course and result of events at certain junctures. However, none of them were able to give any of the new countries the political stability necessary for a political, economic or social "take-off".

In this respect, the contrast with the "Founding Fathers" of the United States is striking. As is well known, at least the first four presidents of the United States were Founding Fathers of

the first order (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison). This fact, by itself, says a lot about the continuity and stability that these men, along with many others, were able to create between the revolutionary period and the first decades of independent life. What happened in Spanish America was radically different (Breña, *El imperio de las circunstancias*). However, it should not be forgotten that by the time the Thirteen Colonies started their war against England, they already had an experience of around a century and a half concerning representative institutions. That was not the case with the Spanish Empire in America. It is true that certain representative institutions existed (in the traditional sense of the word), but they did not resemble the ones that had worked for a rather long in British America. This lack of "modern" political experience would prove crucial once the Spanish American nations started their trajectories as republics, a system of government that presupposes a series of values, attitudes, and practices that Spanish Americans had to improvise. It is also crucial to note that the leadership of the Founding Fathers of the United States was a feat of political ability, but as Gordon S. Wood asserts, the democratic world of progress and equality among individuals that they contributed to create gave birth to a society in which extraordinary individuals like them would not have much space to develop. In fact, by the time de Tocqueville arrived in the United States (in 1831), men like them had almost completely disappeared from the political scene (Wood 2006).

Another element that cannot be ignored in this regard is that the protracted wars of the Spanish Americans among themselves and against the royalist troops created a military caste that, once the wars were over, would not stand still. In fact, this caste decided to play a political role that would have nefarious consequences for the political development of the region. As an example, the first civil president of Peru took office in 1872, that is, half a century after the independence of the country. Once again, the contrast with the United States could not be starker; in the words of the author of one of the very few hemispheric histories of the Americas, "The independence wars were, in short, the making of the United States and the ruin of much of the rest of the Americas" (Fernández-Armesto 126).

There is one more factor that cannot be ignored when trying to explain the enormous difficulties that besieged the Spanish American countries after independence: the international economic situation and, more specifically, the commercial conditions under which they were born. "The economies of the Spanish colonies were ruined by the wars, which had caused long and total cessations of foreign trade, whereas the states of the northern Union, enjoying the benefits of protection from the French and Spanish navies, actually gained new trading partners and multiplied their shipping in the course of the war" (Fernández-Armesto 122-3).

Besides, at the time of independence British bankers were the only ones capable of giving the new countries the liquidity they required to get their economies going. The interest rates that some of these bankers imposed to Spanish American governments were so onerous that soon

they were unable to pay back. The long-term consequences of the British bankers' decision not to lend more money to any Spanish American government fall into the domain of counterfactual history, but it would hardly be exaggeration to say that this was one of the main reasons behind these young governments' lack of political stability. To a certain extent, international commerce was doomed and therefore the land became the main the source of wealth, power and social prestige. In other words, the years that should have meant the political and economic take-off of several Spanish American countries were, in several respects, the worst of times for many of them (Démelas and Saint-Geours).

The issues mentioned above have to do with some of the outcomes of the revolutionary processes that occurred in Spanish America during the second and third decades of the 19th century. The variety of these movements and the differences among them have already been stressed, but it is important to add that, with the exception of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate (where the Spanish Crown was never able to send troops during the whole revolutionary period), in the rest of Spanish America the outcome was indecisive for many years. In fact, at around 1815, it seemed as if the Spanish king would be able to regain the majority of his continental territories in America. However, from 1816 onwards, the tide turned around again in the northern part of South America. The main factor responsible for this "reversal of fortune" for the Spanish Crown was in fact a single individual: Simón Bolívar. Only three years later, he founded Colombia (or "Gran Colombia" as historians call it), the most important but not the most ambitious of his political projects (which was the creation of a Pan-American political and diplomatic entity, symbolized by the Congress of Panama in 1826. This project ended up in complete failure).

Bolívar is more well-known and sometimes exclusively known as a military figure and a politician. However, as already mentioned, he was also a man of intellect. Nobody else in the whole of Spanish America was able to analyze with such shrewdness the *enjeux* that were behind and present during the wars of independence against the mother country. The brief document known as the "Letter of Jamaica", written in 1815, is no doubt the most famous of his texts, but his intellectual perspicuity and political acumen are evident in many other documents as well (Bolívar 2008). He was well versed in the classics and in ancient history, and he had also read Machiavelli and several authors of the European Enlightenment. In any case, his value and importance as a thinker is evident in the light he shed upon the political, social, and cultural ambiguities of the Age of Revolution in Spanish America, identifying what was at stake for Spanish Americans.

In the northern part of Spanish America, that is, in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, that was by far the most populated and richest of all the Spanish American territories, things took place in a very different way (Breña, "The Emancipation Process"). In fact, as Richard Graham has noted, the beginning of the emancipation movement in New Spain "was more akin to the 1780 rebellion of Tupac Amaru in Peru than to the other struggles for independence in Spanish America" (Graham

94). The insurrection started by the priest Miguel Hidalgo on September 16th, 1810, turned out to be a popular movement with no parallels with what happened only a few months before in South America: first in Caracas (April), then in Buenos Aires (May), then in Bogotá (July) and only a couple of days after the start of Hidalgo's movement in Santiago de Chile. In all of these cities, the movements were led by creole elites. That, however, was not the case in New Spain. Not because Hidalgo and the other leaders of the insurrection (Allende, Aldama, Abasolo and Jiménez) were not creoles, for all of them in fact were. The reason was that matters quickly got out of control and, in a matter of days, Hidalgo was heading an "army" of thousands of indigenous people, mestizos, peasants, and laborers of all kinds and social strata. During four months, Hidalgo "revolutionized" the Viceroyalty, but more from a social than a political perspective. In fact, his political objectives were not clear and historians still discuss if he was fighting for independence (Herrejón) or for other motives (Olveda). What was clear was his intention to keep Catholicism intact, his unbreakable decision to fight against the French and their influence in New Spain, as well as his plan to put an end to a series of taxes, duties and levies that, in his view, were bleeding New Spaniards for the sole benefit of the Spanish Crown, the Spanish authorities of the Viceroyalty and the peninsulars that lived in it.

Hidalgo was finally defeated in January 1811, captured in March and executed in July of that same year. Following that, another priest, José María Morelos continued the fight during four more years, until he too was captured and executed in December 1815. From that moment on, the Viceroyalty entered into a relative calm in comparison with what went on between 1810 and 1815. However, the insurgents were never wholly defeated and were able to be more than a nuisance for the Spanish authorities in some parts of the Viceroyalty. The end of the emancipation process in New Spain did not come until 1821 in a paradoxical way: Agustín de Iturbide, a royalist lieutenant that had quite successfully fought against the insurgents during ten years (1810-1820) learned about the political changes that were taking place in Spain (i.e., the return of the liberals to power) and decided that New Spain had to stop depending on the political vicissitudes of the metropole, much more so if the liberals were once again at the helm of the Spanish monarchy.

After secret meetings with several political leaders, some members of the Catholic establishment and the most important insurgent leader still fighting against the royalists (Vicente Guerrero), Iturbide was able to materialize the independence of New Spain in September 1821 in a relatively non-violent way; Mexico was thus born. Iturbide's social standing (a wealthy *criollo*), his career (a military man), his political views (mainly conservative) and his lack of concern regarding the vast majority of the inhabitants of New Spain put the consummation of the emancipation process of New Spain in evident contrast with the movement that Hidalgo had begun eleven years before and that Morelos continued. It also was a peculiar process when compared with some of the movements that took place in South America, not only because in none of them

did priests play the steering role that Hidalgo and Morelos played in New Spain (this aspect helps explain their enormous magnetism with the popular classes, as well as the connotation of religious war the movement had since the beginning), but also because in some of those territories independence had to be fought violently almost until the very end. In any case, by the end of 1821, the only territory in the American continent where the Spanish Crown still had a degree of control was part of the Viceroyalty of Peru. It is true that the Spanish troops were able to regain control of Lima after José de San Martín's declaration of independence in 1821. However, three years later, under the command of Sucre, the troops of Bolívar defeated the Spanish army in the famous battle of Ayacucho, already mentioned. The new country was then officially called Republic of Peru. The continental Spanish possessions in America did not exist anymore (with the exception of some ports that were very difficult to be taken by Spanish American armies that lacked what could be properly called a navy).

As a reaction to a neglect of almost two centuries, for some years there has been a tendency in Western historiography to study the Brazilian emancipatory process as part of the Spanish American revolutionary movements. It is true that in territories like the border region between Brazil and the Viceroyalty of the River Plate, there is no way to study its history during the independence period without considering the Portuguese Empire as a central actor, and it is also true that the study of the Brazilian emancipation period without references to Spanish America has important disadvantages (Pimenta, *Brasil y las independencias de Hispanoamérica*). Nonetheless, the inclusion of the Brazilian case within the Spanish American independence movements is still an open question. The main reason is that, despite certain similarities, there are a number of significate differences too. In the words of Jeremy Adelman, "When Brazil seceded from Portugal, the process was less contested; the incision between revolution and counterrevolution was much less bloody —indeed difficult to locate at all." (*Sovereignty and Revolution* 309). In fact, as the section that Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson devote to the aftermath of independence in their book on colonial Latin America clearly demonstrates, significant contrasts between Spanish America and Brazil persisted after independence in political, social and economic terms (Burkholder and Johnson 343-53). These contrasts stem from a starting point that was dramatically different: "Brazil, having served as the capital of the Portuguese Empire from 1808 to 1821 and then gaining independence under the leadership of the prince-regent in 1822, avoided most of the economic and social dislocations that proved so costly to its neighbors" (Burkholder and Johnson 344). A separate treatment has therefore several arguments in its favor; this is the option taken here.

Before making reference to the Spanish and Ibero-American crisis of 1808 that the Napoleonic invasion provoked in the whole "mundo hispánico", it is important to mention that the contrasts between the Portuguese Empire and the Spanish Empire in America go back to

the colonial period. An expert in this field, Bartolomé Bennassar, identifies four main differences: 1) Brazil evinced a very slow process of peopling; 2) demographically speaking, the indigenous population was relatively small and from the 17th century onwards the black population became by far the most considerable; 3) the economic evolution of Brazil followed a series of clearly differentiated cycles (wood, sugar, gold and plantations) and, finally, 4) the political structure was more fragile and less effective than its Spanish American counterparts (269-71). If we add the omnipresence and the crucial role that slavery played in Brazilian society and economy throughout the 18th century, we have a scenario that could be considered remarkably different from the Spanish American one.

There is a single historic fact that by itself could justify a separate treatment of the Brazilian emancipatory process: in 1808, just before the Napoleonic troops arrived in Lisbon to take possession of the city, the prince-regent João VI, the whole royal family and the court were able to escape by sea, protected by the British navy, and moved the capital of the Portuguese Empire from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro. João would become king in 1816, while he was still in Brazil, and would stay there until 1822. This means that in the case of the Portuguese Empire, during fourteen crucial years, the Age of Revolution was viewed mainly from America, not from the metropole. During this difficult period for the whole Atlantic world, the Portuguese Crown was able to maintain a legitimate government in Brazil thanks to the presence of the king in its territory (compare this with Ferdinand VII's captivity in Bayonne). This also meant that the whole Portuguese Empire in America remained united throughout the whole Spanish American independence process. During all those years, there was no intention on the part of Brazilians to become independent. In fact, the word "independence" should have sounded odd to many of them considering that their king was in American soil throughout all those years. Moreover, when João became king in 1816, his title was king of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarve; that is, right in the middle of the independence wars of Spanish America, the Brazilian ex-colony acquired a political status that Brazilians had never dreamed of. In 1822, the revolutionary situation in Portugal forced João VI to return to the metropole. This was the event that precipitated Brazilian independence. The king's eldest son, Pedro, decided to stay in Brazil and very soon realized that considering the political situation in Portugal (with the liberals trying to restore metropolitan power in the ex-colony), independence was the only option to avoid a violent rupture. He thus declared independence in September 1822; three months later, he became Pedro I, Emperor of Brazil. As Stefan Rinke has remarked, the origin of the new Brazilian monarchy could be interpreted as a reaction to the liberal revolution that was taking place in Portugal. (319)

When independence came, it was not because Brazilians wanted it, although certain groups feared that the departure of King João could create political unrest while the possibility of independence was not discarded by some. However, if independence came about in 1822, it was

mainly due to the political situation in Portugal, the return of the court to Lisbon and the decisions taken in the metropole towards Brazil. When Pedro realized that the Brazilian elites would never go back to the previous situation, he opted for independence. “Once decided upon, Brazilian independence was relatively quick and peacefully established, in contrast to Spanish America where the struggle for independence was for the most part long drawn out and violent” (Bethell 195).

The situation outlined above and the fact that the master-mind behind the independence process was the well-known conservative politician José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, explain the following conclusion by the same author: “The transition from colony to independent empire was characterized by an extraordinary degree of political, economic and social continuity.” (ibid. 196). In fact and as could be expected, the shift that Brazilian historiography has gone through in the last decades from political to social and cultural history has had as one of its consequences the reinforcement of the so-called continuity thesis (Schwartz). The same can be said regarding not only contemporary Latin American historiography on the period (Adelman, “Independence in Latin America”), but also considering the entire independent history of the region (Van Young).

When we turn to the social conditions in Brazil, the foremost aspect is slavery. The institution was not only maintained after independence but it continued to exist until 1888. The number of slaves in Brazil at the beginning of the 19th century may vary a lot, but they were no less than a million and a half. Slavery not only persisted after Brazil obtained its independence in 1822, but kept increasing steadily until 1850 when, as noticed, it reached a figure close to three million slaves (even if Pedro I ordered the abolition of the slave trade in 1831). By itself, the continuation of slavery meant the persistence of the traditional corporate society of colonial times. Another aspect that contributed to this persistence was an aspect already mentioned: the Brazilian process was much less violent (with very few exceptions) than its equivalents in Spanish America. One of the most important consequences of this aspect of Brazilian independence was that the military did not play the political role they played in Spanish America for decades (if not centuries). The relative political stability of the Brazilian Empire has here one of its main causes. The other two aspects that contributed to the continuities that can be identified between colonial Brazil and independent Brazil have to do with low literacy rates and the scarcity of what could be considered a Brazilian “public opinion” (there was not a single printing press in Brazil before 1808 and not one university). It is true that the printing press arrived with the king in 1808 and, of course, this changed the situation radically in terms of the documents that were published, discussed and disseminated; however, the contrast in both aspects with Spanish America is, once again, noteworthy (just to give an idea: only in the Viceroyalty of New Spain there were at least ten printing presses at the beginning of the 19th century).

The physical presence of João VI in Brazil and the fact that he was able to reach agreements

with the vast majority of Brazilian creole landowners created a situation that contrasts with the instability that characterized almost all of the Spanish American territories from 1810 onwards. In Brazil, the old colonial structures were kept in place after independence and economic development was guaranteed by a slave force that, as mentioned, kept increasing until the middle of the 19th century. As mentioned, this factor is essential to explain the relative social stability that characterizes Brazil when compared with the unrest that defined Spanish American societies during their first decades of independent life. However, there were a couple of revolutionary or republican movements in Brazil even before independence, more specifically in 1789 and 1798. The most important one that took place once the monarchy was installed in Rio de Janeiro occurred in Pernambuco in 1817; however, as with the previous uprisings, it failed without putting the monarchy in real trouble. In fact, extreme liberalism and republicanism were defeated again and again in Brazil between 1821 and 1823 and, finally, in 1824, when Pedro I issued his own constitution (and not the one a constituent congress had drafted). One of the lessons that can be learned from the repeated victories of the conservatives during this period of Brazilian history, and as Pedro himself was to learn very soon, is that in Brazil it was impossible to go against the creole planters who constituted the landowning class. When he abdicated in 1831, Pedro I left his five-year old son Pedro as the Emperor of Brazil. From that moment on, the history of Brazil was thoroughly Brazilian, in the sense that Pedro I was a Portuguese king who during his reign mostly had Portuguese as military officials, advisors and bureaucrats. In any case, the tutor of Pedro II was none other than De Andrada e Silva. Pedro II was to become emperor in 1840, enjoying a long rule until 1889, when Brazil became a republic.

The fact that a territory as immense as Brazil remained intact during the Age of Revolution is a remarkable fact regarding the legitimacy of the Brazilian monarchy and the control that landowners were able to exert in general during the transition from colonial times to independence and its aftermath. This control, barbarous on a daily basis and brutal when it was challenged, was essential not only to keep the Brazilian economy working, but, more than that, it ensured the continuity of Brazilian colonial society and the stability of Brazilian politics when compared with Spanish America. These elements considered altogether help explain why Brazil reached the middle of the 19th century with a standing or prestige that Spanish American countries could not rival. In the words of the Argentinian historian Tulio Halperin Donghi and without ignoring the aforementioned omnipresence of slavery, by that time Brazil was “the most successful political example” in Ibero-America. (Halperin Donghi 334)

III. Independences and revolutions in the Americas during the Age of Revolution: the limits of causation, connectivity, and convergence

The complexity of the history of the Age of Revolution in the Americas has only been glimpsed at in the preceding pages. The origins, motives, development, *dénouements*, and consequences of the independence of the Thirteen Colonies, the revolution of Saint Domingue, the emancipation processes in the several territories that constituted the Spanish Empire in America and, finally, the Brazilian transition from colony to empire, were contrasting in so many aspects that it makes difficult at times to find evidence or overarching criteria to explain all of them, notwithstanding the historic commonalities that stem from the long-standing commercial and military rivalries of European empires, the Enlightenment progeny of certain ideas and the sharing of very general political principles. Depending on the field of expertise and the perspective each historian adopts, the word "revolution" may seem questionable when applied to all of them. As Crane Brinton wrote almost eighty years ago in the first sentence of his classic book *The Anatomy of Revolution*: "Revolution is one of the looser words." (3)

More recently, but still a long way from the present, Hannah Arendt analyzed the meaning of the word "revolution" in the first chapter of her book *On Revolution*. She made her analysis based on two processes: that of the Thirteen Colonies and the French Revolution. As illuminating as her analysis is in several aspects, it is Arendt herself who puts us on guard regarding a definition of "revolution" that could satisfactorily encompass even the two cases that she studies. For example, what she calls "the social question" was a central aspect of the French Revolution, but, in her words, "played hardly any role in the course of the American Revolution" (Arendt 17). Following Arendt's analysis, the Spanish American revolutions did not share with their predecessors several of the elements that characterize the term "revolution" (in its modern sense of course): the sense that something completely new was beginning, the sense of a new origin, the *pathos* of novelty, the awareness that a completely different form of government is being created and, finally, the feeling that the actors have of inaugurating a new era for humankind. Partly for chronological reasons, all these elements could not be present in the Spanish American independence movements (that took place *after* the two revolutions studied by Arendt); at least, not with the connotations that these elements had in the American and French revolutions. Regarding the three movements studied by Lester D. Langley in his book *The Americas in the Age of Revolution* (the revolution of the Thirteen Colonies, the Haitian Revolution, and the Spanish American Revolutions), his conclusion is unequivocal: "None of the three revolutions I have surveyed conforms sufficiently to any of the prevailing theories of revolution identified in history or in the social sciences so as to explain why they occurred or followed a particular course." (285)

If any effort to define the concept of "revolution" is doomed to fail, it still is not an idle

exercise to try to identify some aspects of the political, military, and social upheavals that took place in the Americas during the Age of Revolution that help explain in what sense they can be considered "revolutionary". All these movements had as their first and most evident consequence the acquisition of political independence. The United States, Haiti and eight new countries in Ibero-America saw the light between 1783 and 1826. This independence was revolutionary in itself, no doubt, but it was eminently political in character. As Arendt pointed out regarding the American Revolution and as many Latin American historians have remarked regarding the political independence of Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Central America and Mexico (if we consider 1826 as the closing date), this political revolution did not have a social equivalent. In the case of the United States, the persistence of slavery is the most flagrant example of the social conservatism that, somewhat paradoxically and with different emphases, characterized the Age of Revolution in the Americas. In the case of Spanish America, independence implied the abolition of slavery in only two countries (Chile and Mexico), those with the lowest percentage of slaves. In the rest of Spanish America, slavery continued to exist until the middle of the century. In the United States, it would cost the country one of the bloodiest wars of the 19th century and the murder of one of its presidents (Abraham Lincoln) to abolish it in 1865. No need to add here much more about the Brazilian Empire in this regard, for it has already been mentioned that slavery was abolished there until 1888.

The political revolution that transformed the Americas during the Age of Revolution turned around a series of principles that almost all the revolutionary movements shared: individual rights and liberties, national sovereignty, division of powers, elections, and constitutionalism (to name the most important). However, it is not only the oft-repeated and ahistorical notion that many social groups were excluded from these principles that comes to mind (if the period 1775-1825 is the chronological axis of this essay, it could not have been otherwise), but also the much more interesting idea that these principles had different connotations and emphases depending on the political needs and social configuration of each society. These are inevitable when we consider the ever-changing contexts of debate, that may vary even within the same revolutionary process. For this reason, the discourse of influences, that was so common until fairly recently, is gradually disappearing from the vocabulary of intellectual historians.

Some political ideas may seem eternal and some political terms may not vary too much across decades, but historians nowadays are much more careful regarding the purported influence of one author on another, or of one revolution on the next, and even more careful when an author or a book or a series of ideas supposedly influenced certain political events or political practices. Establishing connections among revolutions is more challenging than what some authors who inscribe themselves within Atlantic or Global History purport. Connections are evident and traceable in certain social, economic and cultural domains, but once we get into a revolutionary process it

is very important to give proper weight to the specific circumstances that led to the revolutionary moment and to be skeptic when direct lines are established between different revolutions. Not only because the immediate circumstances and the socio-political contexts are often decisive in heuristic terms, but also because the purported ideological influences tend to respond to a way of looking at intellectual history that tends to simplify authors, books and ideas, as well as the peculiarities of the specific revolutionary process under study.

The American Revolution has often been viewed as an example that was followed by some French revolutionaries and its chronological proximity and political daring attracted revolutionaries from other latitudes. Of course the Haitian Revolution is unthinkable without the French Revolution, but, as this essay has tried to show, the former was not an independence movement in a proper sense and, besides, the influence of the French revolutionary process over it is quite ambiguous at times, when not in open contradiction with some of the principles of the Revolution of 1789. On the connections between the Haitian Revolution and the Spanish American independence movements and for reasons that are evident from a social perspective, almost all of the Spanish American revolutionaries considered the Haitian insurrection as an evil that had to be avoided at all costs. In this regard, the social revolution that took place in Saint Domingue played a role similar to the one the Tupac Amaru rebellion of 1780-81 seems to have had for the creole Peruvian elites: it reinforced their conservatism. Regarding this issue, it should also be added that historians of the Spanish American independence movements tend to agree that if there was a social group that not only did not get palpable advantages, but came out of these processes in worse shape, it was the indigenous population. A similar conclusion can be made about the North American natives: “Whoever won the American Revolution, historians agree that native American nations were the biggest losers.” (Bernstein 23)

At one point or another, the debate about the independence processes in Spanish America inevitably falls into the never-ending debate over the revolutions that failed: “There has been, to be sure, a strong sense among many that independence was a failed moment in which nations struggled but failed to cohere, and more recently in which political liberties never had the leveling social effects that many, especially more radical, historians inscribed into the very meaning of the term ‘revolution’.” (Adelman, “Independence in Latin America” 175-6). From the vantage point of the 21st century, this line of reasoning seems unassailable. Beyond doubt, some of the most unequal countries in the world are in Latin America. Furthermore, it is even more striking that countries with economies as big as that of Brazil or Mexico are even more unequal than the rest. In fact, they are two of the emergent countries with some of the highest social inequalities in the world. Regarding Haiti, its glaring poverty and inequalities are well-known.

That the Age of Revolution in the Americas was revolutionary in many respects is undeniable. But when continuities seem to have been so many and so intense, it is no wonder

that historians still debate about its revolutionary or non-revolutionary character. This is further due to the social continuity that the North and South American cases evince as well as the fact that the revolutions of the 20th century have given the term "revolution" a much stronger connotation. The question here for all the independence movements that took place in the Americas during the "Age of Revolution" was posed several years ago by Eric Van Young: "Was there an Age of Revolution in Spanish America?" (Van Young). Strange as it may sound for an essay titled "Independence movements in the Americas during the Age of Revolution", one of the conclusions that can be arrived at after a cursory review of these movements is that in several respects they were less revolutionary than what is still assumed by some historians and by a large part of the general public. However, this "conclusion" should not ignore that in aspects as important as political legitimacy, political culture, and political obligation, independence meant a radical transformation. A transformation that was evident in certain institutions, beliefs and attitudes that were unknown for the societies of the *ancien* régime. Needless to add, many political, economic, and social practices took a lot of time to go from constitutions and secondary laws to the "real" world of everyday life.

Transfers and entanglements of different kinds took place throughout the Americas during the Age of Revolution; however, geographic expanse, limitations in transportation, and linguistic barriers should put us on guard when trying to give these transfers and entanglements an intensity that they could not have had. The historiography of the last decades in Western academia has shown us that the levels of hemispheric communication were much higher than what we used to think in the past. Nonetheless, the limitations and barriers were also considerable, often unsurmountable, for the vast majority of the inhabitants of the Americas of the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. The result is an "Age of Revolution" that gains in its Atlantic and global dimension, no doubt, but that at the same time ends up diluting the singularities of each process under study and that establishes an interconnectedness that should not be accepted uncritically.

Without some level of generalization, historiography is an impossibility. Nonetheless, it may also be argued that revolutionary periods and the exceptional political situations they generate are particularly resilient to the kind of generalizations that constitute the substance and precondition of certain historiographic approaches that have a lot of academic resonance nowadays. Once again, it should be stressed that some of the most important developments that intellectual history has witnessed in the last decades are skeptical regarding some of the sequential hypothesis, assumptions and causalities that some of these approaches establish or suggest.

In his hemispheric history called *The Americas*, Felipe Fernández-Armesto states that the revolutions that have been reviewed in this essay can be seen as the last great common American experience and that the chaotic politics that characterized Latin America for many decades was

the product, in particular, of the circumstances in which independence was won (117 and 127). As this essay has tried to show, the commonality in question is open to debate. Besides, Fernández-Armesto argues that from that historical moment on, divergence became one of the essential factors to explain the history of the hemisphere. At the very end of his book, he talks about the possibility of a re-convergence of the continent based on a proper handling of the environmental challenge. At present, this possibility seems far-fetched, among other reasons due to one aspect that can indeed be considered a commonality among the four revolutionary processes considered here: the lack of profound socio-economic leveling effects that these processes had on their respective societies (with differences of course, but in general the argument stands).

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La dengue: état des lieux à l'échelle mondiale, et enjeux aux Antilles et à la Martinique

Résumé :

La dengue représente un risque épidémiologique à l'échelle de la planète. Des zones géographiques y sont particulièrement exposées, notamment les régions tropicales et subtropicales, comme l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes, le Moyen-Orient, l'Asie du Sud-Est et le Pacifique. La Martinique, avec son climat tropical chaud et humide, est bien évidemment exposée. Il apparaît cependant une inégale répartition du nombre de cas, variant très fortement en fonction des zones géographiques. Cette variabilité semble corrélée aux secteurs où les conditions sanitaires s'amenuisent ; la situation économique et sociale est donc un paramètre à prendre en compte. Il est à noter que les zones urbaines représentent de vrais laboratoires d'étude. Les services de l'Etat tentent désormais d'impulser une prise de conscience tendant vers un aménagement durable, c'est-à-dire un aménagement jugulant toutes les externalités négatives précédemment énoncées.

Mots clés: Dengue, risques sanitaires, épidémiologie, Caraïbes, environnement, moustiques, aménagement urbain, politiques publiques

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Introduction

40 % de la population mondiale est exposée à la dengue, soit 2,5 milliards de personnes. Selon l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, (OMS, 2012), le nombre de cas augmente chaque année de 50 millions. A la Martinique, nous observons une progression de cette maladie vectorielle depuis quelques années. De ce fait, les moyens mis en œuvre devraient être de plus en plus efficaces.

La dengue est une infection virale, aussi, les virus ont été définis comme des agents infectieux responsables de maladies transmissibles (Huraux). En effet, cette maladie virale est transmise par le moustique *Aèdes Aegypti*, les symptômes classiques sont : maux de tête, douleurs musculaires et articulaires, fatigue, nausées et éruptions cutanées. Malheureusement, il n'existe ni vaccin, ni médicament, ni chimioprophylaxie contre la dengue. (Philippon, 2003). En conséquence, le seul moyen de lutter contre cette maladie vectorielle, est de combattre le moustique responsable de cette arbovirose [1]. Ainsi, la prévention limite la prolifération du moustique, seul remède contre l'épidémie de dengue.

A l'échelle mondiale, l'environnement du virus est primordial pour sa propagation. Des zones géographiques sont donc très menacées. En effet, le Moyen-Orient, l'Asie du sud-est, le Pacifique, l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes sont particulièrement touchés. Avant 1970, seuls neuf pays avaient connu des épidémies de dengue sévères. Désormais, la maladie est endémique dans plus de 100 pays d'Afrique, d'Amériques, de Méditerranée orientale, d'Asie du Sud-Est et du Pacifique occidental; ces deux dernières régions étant les plus touchées.

Le nombre de cas dans les Amériques, en Asie du Sud-Est et dans le Pacifique occidental a dépassé 1,2 million en 2008, et 2,3 millions en 2010 (sur la base des données officielles transmises par les États Membres de l'OMS).

Récemment, le nombre des cas notifiés a progressé. En 2013, la région des Amériques a signalé à elle seule 2,35 millions de cas, dont 37 687 cas de dengue sévère.

Non seulement le nombre de cas augmente à mesure que la maladie se propage à de nouvelles zones, mais on assiste également à des pics brutaux. En 2010, la menace d'une hausse considérable des cas de dengue existait en Europe et une transmission locale fut rapportée pour la première fois en France et en Croatie.

En 2012, une flambée sur l'archipel de Madère (Portugal) a permis de recenser plus de 2000 cas, et des cas importés ont été détectés dans 10 autres pays européens, en dehors du Portugal continental. En 2013, des cas ont été identifiés en Floride (États-Unis) et dans la province du Yunnan (Chine). La dengue a aussi continué de sévir dans plusieurs pays d'Amérique latine, notamment au Honduras, au Costa Rica et au Mexique. En Asie, Singapour a déclaré une augmentation du nombre des cas, après une importante phase de calme et des flambées

ont également été signalées au Laos. En 2014, les tendances indiquent une augmentation du nombre de cas dans les îles Cook, en Malaisie, aux Fidji et au Vanuatu, le virus du type 3 (DEN 3) touchant les pays insulaires du Pacifique après une absence d'une dizaine d'années. On estime que, chaque année, 500 000 personnes atteintes de dengue sévère, dont une très forte proportion d'enfants, nécessitent une hospitalisation. Environ 2,5% en meurent. De nombreuses maladies infectieuses sont importées en France (Brugère-Picoux). Le rôle du climat avec la période des pluies est loin d'être le seul facteur, et les activités humaines (aménagement du milieu), ainsi que les perspectives et comportements, notamment en matière de gestion de l'environnement, sont aussi à l'origine du développement des maladies vectorielles (Gruénais). Notre espace insulaire, la Martinique, est donc directement concernée par ce problème sociétal.

I) Enjeux aux Antilles et à la Martinique

I-Un impact socio-économique

La Martinique dispose d'un climat chaud et humide accentué par son insularité; en effet, le milieu physique favorise l'expansion du virus. Cette maladie a de surcroît d'importantes conséquences socio-économiques; à titre d'exemple, lors d'une épidémie à Porto Rico, le taux d'absentéisme dans les entreprises et les écoles a augmenté de 30 à 95 % par rapport à la normale, et le coût direct et indirect de cette situation a été estimé à 10 millions de dollars (Corriveau 2004).

Dans la Caraïbe, la dengue est une maladie vectorielle qui est observé avec les premiers symptômes depuis maintenant plus de 200 ans. En effet, cette infection virale perdure aux Antilles.

Aussi, la Martinique a connu en 2010 une épidémie de dengue alarmante. Pour appréhender le lien environnement santé dans toute sa complexité, il est indispensable de prendre en compte au moins quatre catégories de facteurs: l'utilisation de l'espace (agriculture, implantations humaines, caractéristiques de l'habitat, environnement naturel et physiques (Vernazza-Licht).

Le changement de température, d'humidité, et de régime pluvial a une incidence sur les zones géographiques où sévit le vecteur de la dengue. En 2014, Malgré toutes les mesures préventives, l'île était encore dans la même problématique qui ne cessait d'inquiéter les autorités, les indicateurs épidémiologiques confirmant la poursuite de l'épidémie en Martinique qui fut placée en phase 3a du Psage [2] depuis le 24 janvier 2014.

L'épidémie est aujourd'hui en phase d'accélération et de généralisation géographique. Selon l'Agence régionale de santé (ARS Martinique), depuis décembre 2013, le nombre de cas cliniquement évocateurs vus par les médecins généralistes est estimé à 11 400. En 2014, le nombre de nouveaux cas est estimé à 2 050 pour la 13ème semaine de cette année: en augmentation de 15% par rapport à la semaine précédente. Cette tendance à la hausse est confirmée par

les données de SOS Médecin. La généralisation de l'épidémie déjà signalée se confirme et de fortes incidences sont observées à Trinité, au Marin, à Saint-Pierre et au Vauclin. Dans le même temps, il apparaît que la conurbation de Fort-de-France, le Lamentin, et Schœlcher, très touchée en début d'épidémie, connait une reprise d'activité. Il n'est pas noté à ce stade d'augmentation notable des consultations aux urgences.

II- La ville : un environnement sensible aux moustiques

Dès l'antiquité, les sages recommandaient de construire les villes et les villages loin des marécages. La proximité des habitats aux abords des marais et autres environnements lacustres, entraînent chez les hommes une méfiance de plus en plus aigüe envers les moustiques (Darriet). Selon le rapport sur le développement dans le monde, la gestion de l'eau est primordiale pour réduire le risque notamment par le drainage en milieu urbain, afin d'améliorer l'assainissement qui regroupe l'ensemble des techniques visant à traiter les eaux usées, ce qui sous-tend des dépenses publiques. En effet les maladies hydriques, provoquées par de l'eau contaminée par des déchets humains, animaux ou chimiques, sont encore trop présentes dans les habitats locaux.

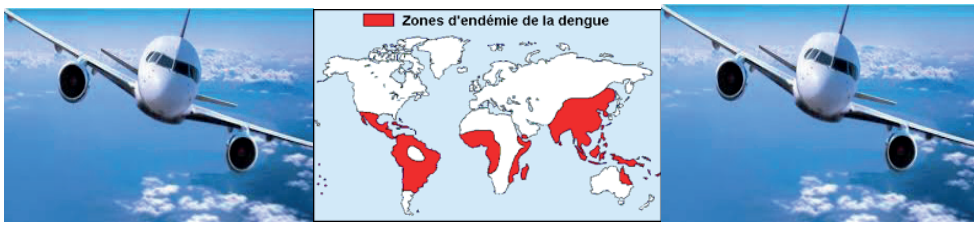
Dans nôtre écosystème, le biotope (l'eau, le sol, l'air, la lumière, et la température) détermine l'évolution des échanges nécessaires au développement de la vie du virus de la dengue.

Cette maladie est causée par un agent parasité, véhiculé et inoculé par un vecteur vivant. L'espèce vivante qui véhicule le virus de la dengue est le moustique *Aèdes Aegypti* qui figure parmi les 3 000 espèces de moustiques présentes dans le monde. Durant leur vie, les moustiques passent par 4 stades: le stade d'œuf, de larve, de nymphe, puis le stade adulte. Les premiers stades (œufs, larves et nymphes) sont aquatiques.

Il n'y a que les moustiques femelles qui présentent un intérêt en santé publique. Elles se nourrissent de sang qui peut être prélevé sur les hommes et/ou les animaux (Brunet). Par conséquent, ce sont ces espèces qui transportent la maladie car seules elles piquent l'homme.

D'après l'OMS (2010), les voyages internationaux présentent des risques pour la santé, mais cela est fonction des caractéristiques du voyageur et du type de voyage (Figure 1), notamment dans le transport des personnes et des marchandises. Ce qui favorise la propagation des virus transmis par les moustiques. En fonction des origines et destinations géographiques, les populations sont plus ou moins vulnérables aux infections de nature vectorielle. Aussi, la faculté de surveillance et de prévention du pays d'accueil des voyageurs, risque d'avoir une incidence sur la recrudescence de ces infections virales.

Figure 1 Les voyages autour des zones géographiques à risque



Source: www.esculape.com

En effet, des éléments sont à prendre en compte lors du voyage, notamment le mode de transport, la ou les destinations, la durée du séjour et la saison, les conditions d'hébergement, l'hygiène alimentaire, le comportement du voyageur, et l'état de santé du voyageur. Ainsi, le changement soudain, d'altitude, d'hygrométrie, de température, et de milieu microbien a une incidence (Unais).

III-L 'épidémie de dengue de 2010 : une incidence non négligeable à Fort-de-France

La Martinique a connu une épidémie de dengue en 2010 sur l'ensemble de son territoire (Tableau 1), avec une répartition géographique du nombre de cas qui diffère de façon significative d'une commune à l'autre. En effet, certaines communes ont comptabilisé un nombre considérable de cas (Figure 2), notamment à Fort-de-France. En outre, Il a été observé une incidence relativement importante dans le centre de l'île (Figure 3). La répartition géographique d'une maladie coïncide en réalité, en fonction de l'état de pandémie atteint. L'intervalle temporel entre les épisodes successifs d'invasion est globalement dépendant de la distance géographique entre les zones et des barrières physiques qui entravent ou pas la dispersion naturelle des parasites (montagnes, cours d'eau). Néanmoins, l'accroissement des échanges commerciaux et plus globalement des voyages entraînent une compression de la dimension spatiale de l'émergence (Barnouin).

Légende Tableaux 1 Figure 2

6 160 de cas de dengue en 2010 soit 43% Commune littorale, zone d'activité économique	Fort-de-France : Zone urbaine littorale ayant une grande activité économique avec une incidence vectorielle importante
2 848 de cas de dengue en 2010 soit 20 % Zone d'activité économique importante	Lamentin : Zone géographique ayant une grande activité économique avec une incidence vectorielle non négligeable
2 759 cas de dengue en 2010 soit 19 % Commune littorale	Sainte-Luce : Commune littorale du sud avec une incidence vectorielle supérieur à la moyenne
2 486 cas de dengue en 2010 soit 18 % Commune littorale	Schœlcher : Commune littorale du centre avec une incidence vectorielle supérieur à la moyenne

Nombre de cas évocateurs de dengue par commune en 2010

Tableau 1

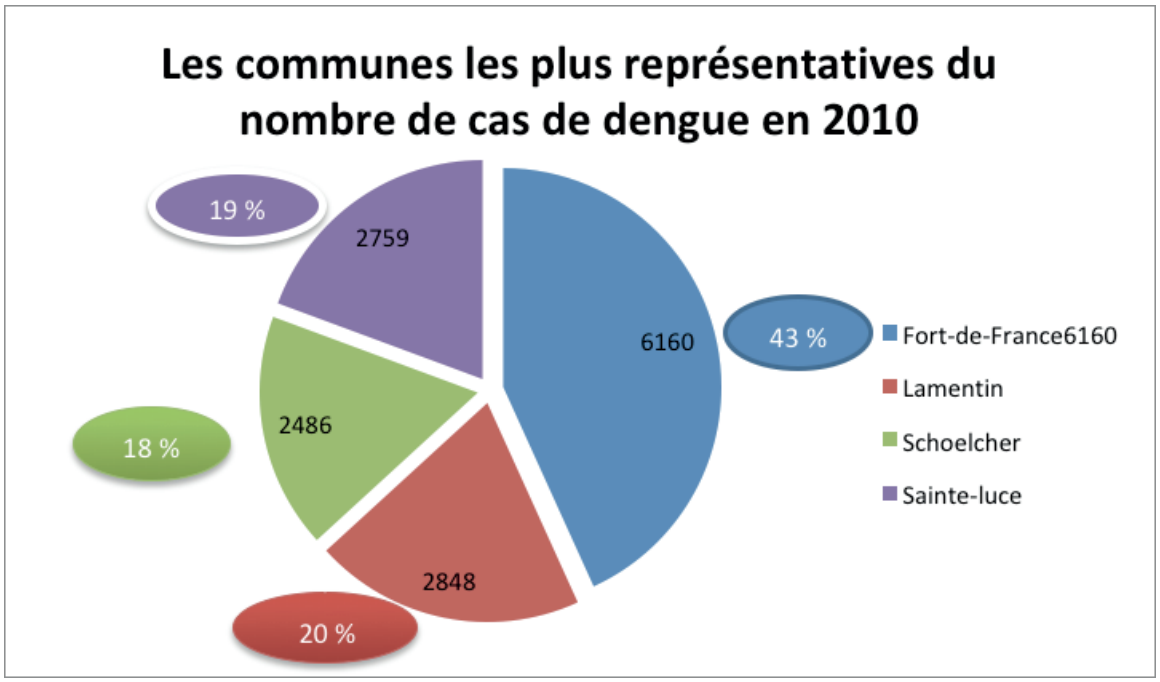
COMMUNE	NOMBRE DE CAS DE DENGUE
Ajoupa-Bouillon	
Anse-d'Arlet	138
Basse-Pointe	736
Bellefontaine	
Carbet	1 081
Case-Pilote	495
Diamant	2 622
Ducos	1 056
Fonds-Saint-Denis	
Fort-de-France	6 160
François	582
Grand-Rivière	
Gros-Morne	550
Lamentin	2 848
Lorrain	360
Macouba	
Marigot	129
Marin	2162
Morne-Rouge	368
Morne-Vert	
Précheur	157
Rivière-Pilote	452
Rivière-Salée	840
Robert	1537
Saint-Esprit	246
Saint-Joseph	631
Sainit-Pierre	559
Saint-Anne	1922
Sainte-Luce	2 759
Sainte-Marie	1028
Schœlcher	2 486
Trinité	1563
Trois-Ilets	437
Vauclin	234
TOTAL	34138

Source : ARS Martinique, 2010

Traitement des données / Réalisation : Sylvère SERAPHIN

En Martinique la commune de Fort-de-France a comptabilisé 6160 cas évocateurs de dengue en 2010

Figure 1

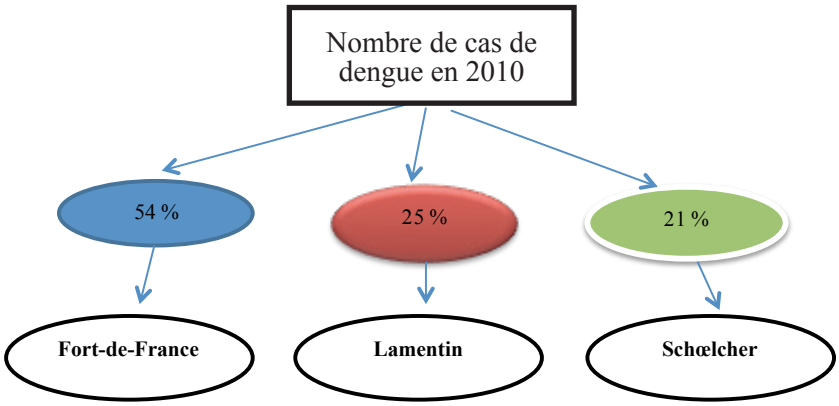


Source : ARS Martinique

Traitement des données / Réalisation : Sylvère SERAPHIN

Une incidence marquée dans le centre de l'île

Figure 2



Source : ARS Martinique, 2010

Traitement des données / Réalisation : Sylvère SERAPHIN

II) La dengue en milieu urbain : l'Etat en première ligne

I) Un aménagement constamment révisé par les pouvoirs publics

La transmission de la dengue est considérable en milieu urbain, en effet la commune de Fort-de-France est l'une des zones géographiques où le nombre de cas évocateurs de dengue interpelle les pouvoirs publics.

Dans les départements d'outre-mer, une loi relative à l'habitat insalubre a été votée à l'unanimité par l'Assemblée Nationale. De surcroît, les services de l'Etat s'intéressent particulièrement à l'aménagement de certains quartiers précaires de Fort-de-France: (Pointe de la Vierge, Haut Texaco, Marigot Bellevue, Sandot Gouacide, Cour Campêche, Morne Abelard, Ermitage Berges de Briand, Bas Maternité Cité Bon-Air, Renéville, Crozanville, Berge Rivière Monsieur, Morissot De Briant), afin de prévenir contre la desserte de ces quartiers en réseaux d'eau potable, d'assainissement (dans la mesure du possible, individuel ou collectif), et en desserte d'électricité. Compte tenu de leur position géographique qui se trouve dans des zones agglomérées centrales, des quartiers ruraux, ou encore en zone isolée.

Ces habitats se trouvent généralement en : Bordure littorale: ouverture ou proximité immédiate du littoral, Bordure de rivière/ravine, Plaine Pied de falaise/morne, Crête de falaise/morne, Bordure de plan d'eau, Flanc de morne.

II) Une prévention des maladies vectorielles avec des solutions adaptées

L'intérêt pour une protection antivectorielle est grandissant sur le plan individuel (Duvallet). La gestion de ce risque sanitaire auprès des populations passe inéluctablement par un comportement spécifique que doit adopter chaque administré (Dreux). Ainsi, ceux-ci doivent régulièrement surveiller la présence d'eau stagnante à proximité de leur habitation, car la présence d'eau favorise le cycle de reproduction et de croissance du moustique.

En Martinique, en matière d'assainissement seule la moitié de la population est raccordée à un réseau collectif. Par conséquent, le reste de la population (qui n'est pas raccordée) utilise un système autonome qui rejette directement les eaux usées dans le milieu naturel sans aucun traitement. Il est observé une disparité selon les types d'habitats et de constructions, compte tenu du mode de réseau d'assainissement utilisé, qui peut être collectif ou non collectif. De plus, la construction d'habitat sur des terrains inadaptés à l'évacuation des eaux usées entraîne une recrudescence des risques sanitaires.

En outre, en matière de gestion des déchets ménagers (réfrigérateurs, pneus, voitures, réserves d'eau…), les pouvoirs publics mettent tout en œuvre pour améliorer le suivi et l'efficacité du traitement, afin de minimiser le développement des maladies vectorielles.

Les services de l'Etat cherchent à minimiser ce problème sanitaire récurrent. En effet,

chaque habitation, dispose d'un système d'assainissement qui diffère selon le zonage. Ainsi, un habitat qui est à proximité d'eau usée n'échappe pas au risque de développer un grand nombre de maladies vectorielles. En conséquence, afin de pondérer cette situation, il est nécessaire d'adapter certains types assainissements à l'environnement. A titre d'exemple, la gestion des eaux pluviales diffère selon la zone géographique. En matière de collecte d'eau, il serait souhaitable que les organismes chargés de la gestion, du traitement et de l'approvisionnement de l'eau (SME, ODYSSI, CACEM (SICSM), SCNA, SCCCNO), agissent en synergie. Par exemple : des collecteurs d'eaux hermétiques avec un système de filtration et d'assainissement (revêtement, charbon actif) qui limite la présence d'insectes en remplacement des réservoirs non conformes que l'on trouve souvent en milieux ruraux.

La recherche valide aujourd'hui un lien de causalité directe entre la présence du virus et l'augmentation de la présence d'eau sur le sol. Cependant, redoubler la prévention par les sessions de formation dans les écoles est nécessaire en période pluvieuse. Reloger les populations dans des habitations moins précaires, comme les HLM par exemple s'avère nécessaire. Il faut rappeler qu'en 2010, 59% des foyers martiniquais, recevaient des allocations de la CAF (Caisse d'allocations familiales). Beaucoup de Martiniquais vivent donc dans une grande précarité.

III) La pauvreté, un vecteur de risques sanitaires

D'après des études menées par l'INSEE, la pauvreté augmente en Martinique, ce qui sous-tend des problèmes sanitaires. Par conséquent, l'éducation sanitaire et la prévention sont primordiales dans le traitement de ce problème sociétal, notamment en pratiquant des contrôles réguliers auprès des populations concernées. Les habitats indignes [3], sont considérés comme insalubres, compte tenu de la qualité du bâti.

Au niveau des terrains, sont considérés comme insalubres ceux qui disposent d'eau stagnantes, d'une végétation impénétrable ou encore ceux qui sont encombrés de déchets (gravats de chantier, épaves).

L'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) distingue trois types de préventions notamment à travers le programme «Santé publique - Prévention». Aussi, d'après le Projet de loi relatif à la politique de santé publique en France (2003-2004), il est préconisé les grandes lignes de la prévention.

- la prévention primaire (PI) vise à prévenir la survenance de la maladie en agissant sur les causes et les déterminants endogènes ou exogènes; elle recouvre notamment l'éducation pour la santé, les actions d'informations à destination du Public en général ou de certains groupes ciblés;

- la prévention secondaire (PII) vise à détecter les maladies, ou les lésions qui les précèdent, à un stade où l'on peut intervenir utilement; elle recouvre notamment le dépistage;

- la prévention tertiaire (PIII), plus tardive, vise à diminuer les récidives et les incapacités

et à aider les personnes malades ou handicapées à vivre au mieux de leurs possibilités.

Dans l'évaluation de ce problème de santé publique, des éléments d'ordre physique, biologique, et sociaux devraient être pris en compte. Il est difficile en effet, d'améliorer le niveau de santé de la population martiniquaise, sans prendre en compte le concept d'habitat indigne.

La démographie, l'habitat, la vie professionnelle (l'emploi, l'insertion, la formation), les transports, les déplacements, les dynamiques économiques, l'agriculture, la gestion et la valorisation forestière, la pêche et l'aquaculture, le tourisme, les ressources en eau et assainissement, les paysages, la biodiversité et les espaces naturels et enfin la gestion des déchets s'inscrivent dans le concept des maladies vectorielles.

Selon la définition du dictionnaire Larousse, 2016 «l'aménagement d'un territoire est la transformation volontaire d'un espace géographique au bénéfice de la société qui l'occupe».

L'amélioration des aménagements territoriaux, passe donc inéluctablement par l'appréciation des politiques publiques selon plusieurs axes observatoires : une population qui ne cesse d'augmenter, un nombre non négligeable d'administrés qui se rapprochent vers leur lieu de travail, une population qui vieillit, de nouvelles stratégies en matière d'aide sociale. Les collectivités territoriales de la Martinique ont une mission décisive notamment en matière de construction durable. Dans la réalisation et le suivi des procédures liés à l'amélioration de l'habitat, un traitement sélectif des besoins s'impose dans un ordre de priorité. En outre, notre territoire est doté d'un nombre considérable de logements insalubres. Ce que l'on pourrait expliquer par la pauvreté dont souffre une partie de la population. En effet, afin de faire face à ce problème sociétal martiniquais, la population se doit de se manifester auprès des autorités compétentes. Ainsi, les aides régionales à la rénovation de l'habitat, sont nécessaires pour les propriétaires, ou éventuellement les locataires. Aussi, la validation des projets d'aménagement et de construction sera une autre piste de réflexion, dans le traitement de ces problématiques sanitaires. Selon une analyse générale du concept, des critères juridiques doivent être appliqués et respectés, selon une législation bien Précise. En outre, l'environnement du projet doit pouvoir être propice à une utilisation précise du projet de construction. Ce qui nous amène à l'objet du développement durable dans le long terme. Il n'est pas inutile de rappeler que le développement durable selon la définition du dictionnaire Larousse, 2016 «c'est utiliser un mode de développement afin que les populations accèdent à la satisfaction de leur besoin sans pour autant considérer que leur patrimoine écologique (air, eau, matières premières) comme un stock de ressource dont les prélèvements ne devraient pas excéder leurs capacités de renouvellement naturel». L'environnement écologique est pris en compte dans les aménagements.

Les sites insalubres (dont les réseaux d'assainissements), les systèmes défaillants, induisent inéluctablement à travers les canalisations non recouvertes la présence d'insectes (mouches, moustiques, rats, cafards), par conséquent, un risque avéré de maladies vectorielles.

D'où l'importance capitale de participer à un réaménagement de ces espaces géographiques. La situation sociale des Martiniquais à une incidence sur le bâti, en conséquence, porter une amélioration à ce problème sociétal passe par un état des lieux selon un répertoire des habitants les plus précaires sur leur condition de vie, notamment par les besoins principaux comme par exemple l'accès à l'eau potable et l'électricité. Ainsi, de nombreuses politiques sociales ont déjà été mise en place pour palier à ce problème et pourtant il perdure d'où la nécessité de réévaluer les besoins des populations les plus sensibles. En effet, compte tenu du nombre considérable de logements insalubres dans la ville de Fort-de-France, il est indispensable de traiter le problème selon des indices de priorité. Par exemple, les habitants qui souffrent d'odeur nauséabonde auprès de leur habitation, en conséquence, de la présence d'insectes dans les canalisations.

On peut expliquer la recrudescence des risques sanitaires en partie, par l'augmentation des populations pauvres dans le département. A titre d'exemple, d'après, l'INSEE, (2011), en Martinique, en 2030, la population de 20 ans ou plus comptera huit actifs (en emploi ou au chômage) pour dix inactifs. Le marché de l'emploi martiniquais est au ralenti. Les jeunes subissent de plein fouet les effets de la crise. La réussite du renouvellement des générations en emploi devient une priorité.

Il est observé des changements sur le plan économique et social. Parallèlement, les populations bénéficient d'un aménagement qui ne cesse d'évoluer.

Conclusion

La Martinique est un espace insulaire qui se situe dans une zone géographique à risque, notamment en matière de recrudescence des maladies vectorielles, compte tenu de son climat chaud et humide. L'observatoire sur la dengue valide un lien de causalité direct entre l'aménagement et l'incidence de la maladie. Cependant, une bonne gestion des risques sanitaires passe par le contrôle de l'assainissement individuel et collectif, l'urbanisation plus généralement et l'anthropisation. Il serait souhaitable de proposer différents organismes publics ou privés, qui s'occupent de la gestion et de l'approvisionnement des eaux afin de créer une véritable synergie. Globalement l'aménagement du territoire influe sur les problématiques de santé publiques.

Endnotes

[1] Arbovirose : Ce sont des affections d'origine virale causées par des arbovirus (virus transmis par des moustiques, des tiques ou autres suceurs de sang).

[2] Psage : Programme de surveillance, d'alerte et de gestion des épidémies de dengue

[3] Habitat indigne « Constituent un habitat indigne les locaux utilisés aux fins d'habitation et impropres par nature à cet usage, ainsi que les logements dont l'état, ou celui du bâtiment dans lequel ils sont situés, expose les occupants à des risques manifestes pouvant porter atteinte à leur sécurité physique ou à leur santé.» (*www.herault.gouv.fr/...habitat-indigne/Définitions)*

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The Caribbean Islands Are Tapping Their Geothermal Potential

Abstract:

The Caribbean region is made up of 38 islands, eleven of which, Saba, St Eustatius, St Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Guadeloupe, Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada, are volcanic islands. They were formed from the interaction between two tectonic plates, the North American plate sinks beneath the Caribbean plate in a process called subduction. As a result, these islands have geothermal potential. Surface manifestations include fumaroles, hot springs, mud pots, solfataras and steam vents. Globally, the Caribbean region enjoys a tropical climate and has only two seasons, the dry and wet seasons. It is important to point out that hurricane season runs from June to the end of November. During these months the islands are more vulnerable to cyclonic phenomenon, which may sometimes be devastating. Other natural hazards can affect the islands, such as the earthquakes that struck Haiti in 2010, volcanic eruptions on the island of Montserrat in 1995 and tsunami threats. Thus, we can conclude that the Caribbean region is not immune to natural disasters. However, another phenomenon has been affecting the islands for a number of years, resulting in sea level rise, heat waves, droughts, heavy precipitations, hurricanes that are more devastating and many others; this climatic event is known as global warming.

Keywords: Caribbean islands, fuel importation, energy transition, geothermal potential, under-exploited

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Introduction

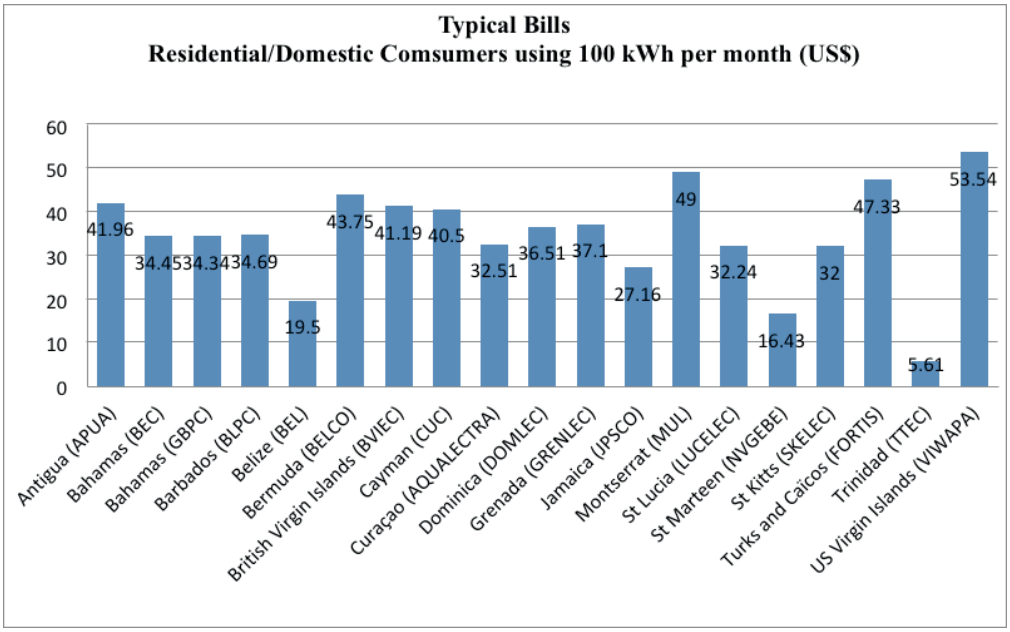
Worldwide, global warming has become a major issue for humanity. The increased use of fossil fuel linked to human activities contributes to the emission of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Many governments have decided to turn to cleaner energy sources, commonly known as renewable energy. These energies come from natural sources, which are available, sustainable and great alternatives to fossil energy. As a result, different types of renewable energy have been aggressively developed and used. Despite this keen interest in renewable energy, only a small percentage of the world's total energy production is generated from renewable sources compared to fossil fuels. By opting for renewable energy, government leaders have embarked on the path of energy transition, with the prospect of integrating the goal of sustainable development for environmental protection. While some countries have a head start regarding energy transition, others, such as the Caribbean region, are struggling to replace diesel or fuel oil with renewable energy, which include geothermal power. Many years ago, the volcanic islands were the subject of numerous geological studies to assess their geothermal potential. Although the results obtained showed great potential, the development of geothermal energy has been a slow process, prolonging the continued use of imported fossil fuel. Firstly, we will analyze hindrances to this transition. Secondly, we will draw attention to different geothermal projects in the region.

Fossil Fuel Importation

The cost of electricity in the Caribbean region is estimated to be among the highest in the world (Graphic 1), and this can be linked to the geographical location. A similar situation exists in the Pacific Ocean where the volcanic island of Hawaii also depends heavily on the import of fossil fuel [1]. Compare to other states in the USA. [2] For example, in 2014 the electricity rate was "33.43 cents per kWh" in Hawaii, whereas the electricity rate in the state of California was "15.15 cents per kWh" (EIA: US Energy Information Administration). In fact, none of the Hawaiian Islands are interconnected for, either natural gas, or by a submarine cable for electricity and it is necessary to use expensive generator systems.

Graphic 1

Electricity Tariff Survey 2014



Grafic 1 Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation (CARILEC)

Electricity Tariff Survey End of Year (December) 2014

Another reason that can be put forward is the size of their market – the smaller the market, the higher the unit cost of fuel. It is worth stressing, that on June 29th 2005, an oil alliance was launched between the Caribbean islands and Venezuela, excluding Guadeloupe and Martinique, which purchase their oil from other nations. However, as the *Caribbean Community Energy Policy - Approved 01 March 2013* points outs "The PetroCaribe Agreements provide for the importing countries to be supplied with a stipulated amount of crude and refined oil products from Venezuela at intervals through its state owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela S. A. (PDVSA). Based on the Agreements, a percentage of the payments for oil purchases are converted into a low interest long term loan with sliding rates of interest and repayment periods depending on the price of oil" (Energy Programme 13). In other words, the fuel oil would be sold at a preferential price, meaning at a cheaper price. However, focusing their energy development on one single source of energy presents a tremendous risk for these islands. Actually, the price of oil on the international market is falling, affecting oil-producing countries, like Venezuela, from whom most of the Caribbean islands are importing, weakening the established agreement. In one report published by the American Security Project (ASP) dealing with the energy security in the Caribbean, it was said concerning Venezuela that: "Declining oil prices over the last year have significantly harmed the Venezuelan economy. A significant portion of these revenue streams come from the country's involvement in the PetroCaribe program. Venezuela's declining influence

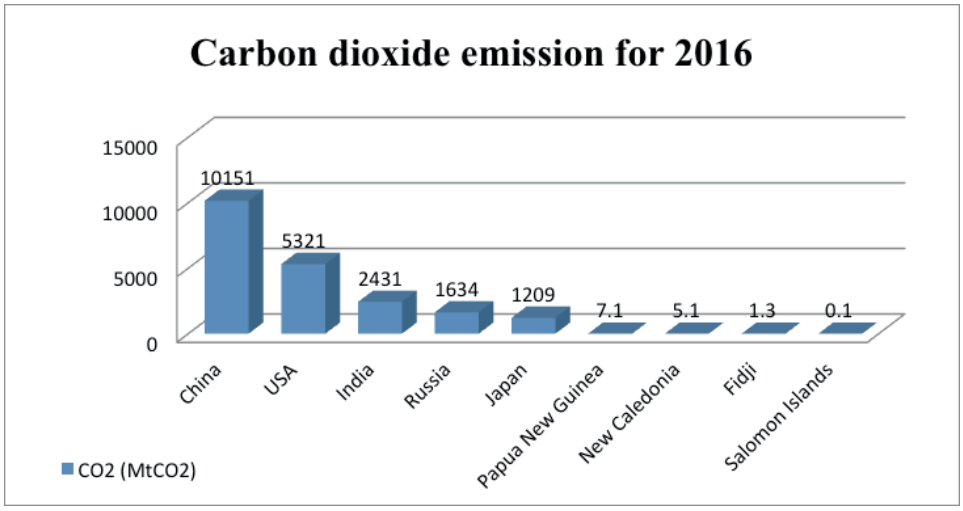
in the region, presents potential problems for Caribbean energy security; it also creates a unique set of circumstances for the US to take the lead" (George 5). If the oil price decline continues, it will have an impact not only on the cost of importation, but also on the cost of production, as well as on the sale price of electricity. As a result, the economic situation of the Caribbean islands has been plagued by external and internal issues, hindering their economic and social development, undermining regional integration and competitiveness, creating difficulties in attracting foreign capital and creating a constraint for the citizens.

Furthermore, the Caribbean is undergoing societal changes. As the world's population increases, the demand in electricity will continue growing. This will lead to more fuel imports and financial difficulties. Therefore, the Caribbean islands must control their energy dependence on fuel import and oil products. According to the World Bank press release issued July 25, 2012 in Washington D.C, entitled *Central America/Caribbean Can Reduce Their Oil Dependency*: "Central American and Caribbean countries can reduce their oil dependency and shield themselves from high oil prices through a combination of renewable energy, energy efficiency programs and regional energy integration." Adding to these statements, Ede Ijjasz-Vasquez, World Bank Director for Sustainable Development in the Latin America and Caribbean region said "we estimate that the implementation of a strategy that combines a more diversified power system, better energy efficiency in electricity production and use, and regional integration can significantly reduce Central America and the Caribbean's vulnerability to high and volatile oil price" (cited in World Bank). In effect, the Caribbean region has a great opportunity to counteract their dependence on diesel and heavy fuel oil by turning to renewable energy. The question to ask is: what are the impediments to this energy transition?

A Slow Energy Transition

Some analysts point out that oil reserves are dwindling, yet still a complete independence from fossil fuels is not possible for now, despite the desire for cleaner energy. During the different international conferences on the climate, emphasis was put on the fight against global warming, goals to be achieved were avowed - developed countries committed themselves to limit the rise of the earth's temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius, to reduce the emission of CO2 and to help developing countries turn to renewable energy. In this regard, now is the time to act against climate change, because the small islands, whether in the Pacific or in the Caribbean region, are the first to be concerned by rising sea levels, just one of the numerous effects of climate change, yet they are the countries emitting the fewest greenhouse gases (graphic 2).

Graphic 2



Graphic 2. Global Carbon Atlas. *Territorial Chart (MtCO2).* CO2 Emissions, 2017. Web.

Thus, aware of their vulnerability, some islands have been engaged in energy transition, while others are in a slow process of energy transition:

Guadeloupe is a French territory, and also part of the European Union and the Eurozone. It is located north of the Commonwealth of Dominica, and enjoys a tropical climate. Guadeloupe is made up of two islands, Grande Terre which is flat and limestone, and Basse-Terre which is mountainous and volcanic. Basse-Terre is dominated by La Soufrière, also called “the Old Lady,” an active volcano located in the National Park in the town of Saint-Claude. These two islands are connected by bridges and viewed as a single island. Guadeloupe, just as the other Caribbean islands, is electrically isolated and remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels. The electric unity Electricité de France (EDF), the electric utility, transmits and distributes electricity on the island and operates a diesel power plant of 220 MW (edf.gp). Faced with climate change, France is committed to the process of energy transition and promoting an energy mix. To this end, EDF has made the development of renewable energy a priority (Table 1), with the aim of gradually reducing their dependence on fossil fuel.

Table 1

Distribution of energy production

Guadeloupe Energy Mix	
Energy Type	**Contribution (%)**
Bagasse	3.2%
Coal	23.1%
Geothermal	4.7%
Hydroelectric	1.2%
Petroleum	59.1%
Solar	5.8%
Wind	3.0%

Table 1. Electricité de Fránce. *Mix énergétique 2015 en Guadeloupe*. Nos Energies, 2015. Web.

Guadeloupe is the first and only island that currently possesses a geothermal power plant, located in the town of Bouillante in the west of Basse-Terre. The first power plant was put into operation in 1986 and a second unit in 2005, bringing the capacity of the plant to 15 MW and representing 4, 7% of Guadeloupe's electricity generation. Moreover, a project to expand the plant is under consideration. The Bouillante geothermal power plant was operated by EDF and the Bureau de Recherché Géologiques et Minières (BRGM), a French governmental geological survey company. However, due to financial difficulties, 85% of the company shares were acquired by Ormat Technologies Inc. (Ormat), a world leader in the geothermal sector engaged in many geothermal projects worldwide. The inflow of foreign capital will help to renovate the plant in order to increase its capacity. Ormat's aim is to attain a total of 45 MW by 2021, which would represent 15% of the electricity needs of Guadeloupe. Compared to the rest of the Caribbean islands, the energy transition is underway in Guadeloupe, although there is much to do in order to transition away from fossil fuel. Nevertheless, Guadeloupe is not the only island engaged in this energy transition. Others are following this path as well.

Dominica is a former British colony located between Guadeloupe to the north and Martinique to the south. The island is crossed from north to south by a chain of mountains, many of which are volcanic. The Boiling Lake, the second largest lake of its kind in the world after Frying Pan Lake in New Zealand, is situated in Morne Trois Pitons National Park. There is also a three-peak volcano, bearing the same name as the park, and the Valley of Desolation, an area of "steaming vents, geysers, hot water, rivers and cascades, boiling grey mud and a crust of sulphur-stained rock" and other natural attractions (Crask 114). Studies were conducted in the Roseau Valley in order to confirm the geothermal potential of this part of Dominica, and it appears to far exceed the island's own energy demands offering the potential to export a valuable product in the form of electricity. Dominica Electricity Services (DOMLEC) mainly uses two types of energy, hydropower

and diesel. Other forms of energy are used, but are underdeveloped (Table 2).

Table 2

Distribution of energy production

Dominica Energy Mix	
Energy type	**Contribution %**
Wind	1%
Solar	0.25%
Hydro	27.4%
Diesel	71.4%

Table 2. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

"Energy Snapshot – Dominica." Energy Transition Initiative: Islands, March 2015. Web.

Decades ago, hydropower was widely used in Dominica. As a matter of fact "the first two hydro-turbines were introduced in 1952 to generate electricity in Roseau. These two generators, located at Trafalgar, have a capacity of 320 kW each…in 1967 the second hydropower station was commissioned at Padu on the Roseau River downstream from Trafalgar" (The Caribbean Conservation Association 111). However, with the growth of the population and an increased demand of electricity, Domlec (Dominica Electricity Services) has relied on diesel fuel in order to satisfy the electricity needs of its customers. As a result, since 1984 the quantity of fuel used yearly has tripled. In "1978 almost 90% of total demand was met through hydro" (The Caribbean Conservation Association 116). Today, though diesel fuel is the primary source for electricity generation, hydropower is still being used, accounting for approximately 30% of the total electricity generated.

Recently, exploratory drilling has been carried out to confirm the quantity and quality of the geothermal resource with an aim to build a small power plant that will generate 10-15 MW and to ensure energy independence in Dominica. A large power plant of 100 MW, for electricity export to Guadeloupe and Martinique via submarine cable, forms part of the long-term plans. Following the passage of Tropical Storm Erika, the project had to be suspended due to damage to the road infrastructure, among other reasons. While Dominica was still recovering from the devastation of Tropical Storm Erika, two years after hurricane Maria, a category 5 hurricane severely damaged the island and seemingly jeopardized the geothermal project's progress. However, the government is determined to complete the project, Dr. Collin McIntyre highlights that "the project is moving forward … it's not at a standstill" and added that "the project is on. We will continue to sensitize as we move on so let's embrace it because it is for us, and it's clean energy and the world is headed towards clean energy. We do not produce fossil fuels in Dominica" (thinkgeoenergy.com)

Therefore, we will hopefully see the construction of a 7 MW geothermal plant in Laudat, as a production well, and probably a reinjection well in Wotten waven and other selected sites by 2019.

Realization of the project will make possible an interconnection between three islands, a first in the Caribbean region. As stated in the report *Caribbean Regional Electricity Supply Options: Toward Greater Security, Renewable and Resilience for the Region*, "Electricity interconnections can also unlock the potential of various large-scale renewable energy resources in the Caribbean. Through interconnections with other islands..., there is the possibility of gaining access to the needed markets in order to transform these investments into viable option" (Gerner and Hansen xi). Indeed, interconnection offers numerous opportunities to the Caribbean islands.

For instance, the island of Leyte located in the Philippines archipelago is known for its geothermal power plants. Owing to its geothermal potential, two interconnection projects were implemented in Leyte. The first project was a submarine interconnection between the islands of Leyte and Cebu. The second project connected Leyte and Luzon. The aim of these two projects is "to meet the rapidly increasing demand for electricity in Cebu and Luzon" (Dolor 7). Other interconnection projects have been implemented in other parts of the world. For example, in Europe, there are electricity transmission connections linking Finland with Estonia via submarine cable. The objectives of these interconnections are to "improving power system security and enabling power market integration in the Baltic region" (Pidlisna 39). Europe's target is to increase electricity interconnection for unification of the European electricity market establishing a common electricity price zone. Thus, a similar interconnection can help Dominica to increase its market size, strengthen existing interregional links, to supply the needs for electricity, decrease its dependence on fossil fuel, lessening the effect of fluctuations in the price of oil, to better develop the inter-island energy trade, and improve or strengthen intraregional cooperation.

Saint Kitts and Nevis, like Dominica, was colonized by the British Empire. They are two separate volcanic islands, forming a federal state. Saint Kitts and Nevis is located northwest of Guadeloupe, and enjoys a hot and humid tropical climate. Both islands are characterized by a volcanic mountain chain located at their centers. Saint Kitts and Nevis is heavily dependent on fossil fuels for electricity generation and is confronted with the fluctuations in the price of oil faced by the rest of the Caribbean islands. As highlighted in (Table 3), diesel fuel holds the first place in energy production there, whereas wind and solar energy are relatively under-developed. Similar to Guadeloupe and Dominica, these two islands have geothermal potential. Exploratory wells on Nevis have verified the presence of a geothermal resource.

Table 3

Distribution of energy production

Saint Kitts and Nevis Energy Mix	
Energy type	**Contribution %**
Wind	4%
Solar	1.77%
Diesel	94.33%

Table 3. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

"Energy Snapshot – St. Kitts and Nevis." Energy Transition Initiative: Islands, March 2015. Web.

In this regard, Nevis was among the first islands showing a keen interest in geothermal energy. A license was granted to West Indies Power Company to explore the geothermal resource on the islands. This same company was given a license for exploration works in Dominica and Saba, but they did not complete any exploration. The goal of the project was to ensure energy independence for Nevis, and export electricity by a submarine cable to the island of Saint Kitts. However, the company failed to honor its commitments because of financial difficulties. Therefore, the Nevisian geothermal project was suspended until the license was awarded to another contractor. Despite the hurdles that have hindered the progress of the project, in 2015 the geothermal project in Nevis was revived with the arrival of a new purchaser, Nevis Renewable Energy International (NREI), an associate of Texas-based Thermal Energy Partners LLC. (TEP) (Caribbean Now!). Since then, the project has made a significant move. In December 2017 the exploratory drilling process was underway with plans for the production well drilling early in 2018. Their aim is not only to build a power plant that will produce 9-10 MW of electricity for the local market, and commercialize power to others islands, like Saint Kitts. It is also to make Nevis, as indicated by Nevis Deputy Premier Mark Brantley, a "clean, green fossil fuel free island" (Washington).

At the same time, the island of Saint Kitts, which is also interested in geothermal energy, has signed an exploration agreement with Teranov, a French engineering and services company for new and renewable energy established in Guadeloupe ("Feasibility study"). From all this, it shows that both Saint Kitts and Nevis have the same goal, to generate clean energy , lower the cost of electricity, supply the needs of their population, and depend less on diesel fuel. Nevis, like Dominica, has the capacity of exporting electricity to other islands due to the quantity of resource it possess. These three islands we just examined are well advanced in their respective projects, and plan to build their power plant in the near future. However, French geothermal developer Teranov has received the exploratory license by the Executive Councils of the islands of Saba and of St Eustatius, in order to assess their geothermal potential (Richter).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a former British colony located between Saint Lucia to the north and Grenada to the south. Like the aforementioned islands, Saint Vincent is a volcanic island and is highly dependent on fossil fuels. VINLEC (St Vincent Electricity Services Ltd) is the only licensed utility company to produce, transmit, and distribute electricity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including some dependencies. The other small islands are supplied by privately owned electricity systems. Two methods are used to produce electricity, fossil fuel and hydropower (Table 4). The high percentage of petroleum used highlights their dependence on fossil fuel.

Table 4

Distribution of energy production

Saint Vincent and Grenadines Energy Mix 2011	
Energy type	**Contribution %**
Petroleum	78%
Hydroelectric	22%

Table 3. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

"Energy Snapshot – Saint Vincent and The Grenadines." Energy Transition Initiative: Islands, August 2015. Web.

Like many of the other volcanic islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has embarked on the development of geothermal energy. To successfully carry out its project, the government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has formed a partnership with the Icelandic firm Reykjavik Geothermal Ltd, which is experienced in geothermal development, Emera, a Scotia company, and assistance from the international community (Chance). With the St Vincent Geothermal Project on track to start-up in 2018, Peter Williams said "the aim of the project is to bring stable pricing and a lower cost to energy consumers" ("St. Vincent Geothermal project"). If the project is a success, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will have a geothermal power plant with a capacity of 10-15MW to supply the local market.

The four islands that were examined are pursuing the same objective, taking full advantage of their natural resources, particularly geothermal energy so as to promote clean energy and, at the same time, be on the path to energy independency. However, the road leading to this process requires profound changes in the energy system. This means giving more emphasis to renewable energy. It involves social, economic, and behavioral changes both individually and collectively, as well as adopting the concept of sustainable development. The energy transition is a slow and lengthy process that must accommodate countries and territories. Although the Caribbean politicians acknowledge that the price of electricity is very high, the development of geothermal energy in the region can help to reduce not only the electricity rate, but also their dependence on

fossil fuel. The question to ask is “what are the impediments to rapid energy transition, from oil to geothermal?”

The Caribbean region is composed of 38 islands, each with a different status. Some are independent and, others are not independent. Nevertheless, they all share the same colonial past, which has left many footprints. In addition, when we closely observe the Caribbean, there are infrastructural disparities and a disproportionate distribution of natural resources. Indeed, among the four islands that were analyzed, Dominica appears to have the largest geothermal resource. However, in the energy mix Guadeloupe has a long lead over the islands, which makes it a model in the energy field to the other islands. Due to its dependent political status on the state of France, Guadeloupe is engaged in the energy transition in developing projects based on renewable energy.

However, for others the road to energy transition will be a slow and a lengthy process that should accommodate the countries. Energy transition requires profound changes in the energy system, which means giving more emphasis to renewable energy. Therefore, the implementation of projects related to the environment is mostly financed with European funds by European governments. With this aid, Guadeloupe was able to develop its energy mix.

Others do not have these opportunities. Such is the case for Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These are all independent islands. In contrast to the Guadeloupe, these islands are poorly developed, and in addition do not have the financial means to develop large-scale projects despite their potential in geothermal energy. Several reasons explain why geothermal energy is undeveloped. For instance, the islands face challenges: in particular the high upfront cost for exploration and uncertainty of finding a geothermal resource. Indeed, the development of geothermal can be a risky investment because proving the existence of the geothermal resource requires high upfront capital expenditure. Furthermore, the demand in electricity for Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are low compared to other markets, which, proportionally increases the drilling costs and makes it more important to be successful with early drilling. Also the total project costs become higher on a per megawatt basis than a larger project. The poor financial standing of some of the governments makes it harder to invest, or investors want a higher return on the investment, by switching to geothermal as a base load you take generation away from the utility, which means that they are less financially viable as a business. It is important to keep the utility viable as they are invested in by national insurance scheme, city councils and other local parties. These islands have a small size market, unlike Guadeloupe whose market is bigger and can generate more electricity for a larger proportion per person.

Nevertheless, on November 20, 2017 at a meeting held in New York in the presence of the President of Caribbean Development Bank, Dr. Warren Smith, European Commissioner

for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica announced a European financial contribution to geothermal energy development in Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia and Grenada. He said that “this funding will add momentum to our ongoing efforts to transform the energy sector in the region, and support our borrowing member countries in harnessing their renewable energy resources” (“The European Union”). This financial supposition represents a real boost to their desire, and not only to embrace energetic transition.

It is worth noting that to carry out energy transition, it is important to have environmental laws in order to know the principles and uses of geothermal energy. Guadeloupe has been under French governance and applies environmental laws enacted by France and Europe. The English speaking islands with geothermal resources have implemented geothermal regulation, which is necessary as the geothermal project develops. Therefore, the renewable energy sector and particularly that of geothermal energy is something new for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, are all heavily dependent on fossil fuel to generate electricity to satisfy the needs of their citizens. However, the use of fossil fuel contributes to the emission of CO2 in the atmosphere causing greater impacts on global warming and the environment. After hearing the call of different scientists, who point out the need to act against the effects of climatic changes, political leaders have decided to turn to clean and renewable energy and to enter into the phase of energy transition. Though this transition is important for the planet and the human race, it is difficult to put in place in certain parts of the world, especially in the Caribbean. Indeed, in the Caribbean region, there is inequality that hampers the economic development and growth of the islands. The main reasons to explain the slow pace of the process to energy transition include lack of financial means, the risk of not successfully locating the geothermal resource, and attracting investment capital. However, for some years geothermal development projects have been underway in the Caribbean, improving the awareness of the politicians and their desire to take full advantage of that resource in the hope of reducing electricity rates and producing green energy so as to fight against global warming. Furthermore, the fluctuation of the oil prices presents a big issue for the Caribbean islands. We can say that the energetic transition in Caribbean region is on the way, but the process will be long and much remains to be done in order to attain the objectives set during the COP 21. Yet, the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement could have serious environmental consequences. In addition, signatory countries may find it difficult to maintain their commitments made at COP21 and honor their financial support for developing

countries, hindering energy transition to renewable energy sources. As a matter of fact, we are hoping that despite the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement that efforts will be made to continue promoting geothermal energy, and help countries engaged in this path.

Endnotes

[1] Deriving nearly 90% of its primary energy resources from oil (Arent Doug et al 1).

[2] With 83% of electrical production based on fuel oil, the price of electricity in Hawaii is also more than twice the U.S. average (Arent Doug et al 1).

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Narratives of Mobility: The (Living) Dead as Transcultural Migrants in Bolaño's 2666

Keywords: Transcultural mobility, Roberto Bolaño, 2666, global narrative

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0. Introduction

In Roberto Bolaño's novel 2666, published in 2004, transcultural mobility primarily manifests itself in the form of long-winded geographical itineraries that lead the protagonists through a wide variety of places spread all over the world; these itineraries end up in the fictitious Mexican city of Santa Teresa, the incarnation of the real Ciudad Juárez, which marks both the contact zone for migration processes taking place between Mexico and the United States and the narrative intersection point where all spatial movements appear to converge.

The novel consists of five parts, each of which maps out an entire world of its own; thus, the "Parte de los críticos" describes the encounter of four specialists in German literary studies from Paris, London, Barcelona and Turin who are engaging in research on the German writer Hans Reiter, whose pseudonym is Benno von Archimboldi. This part is followed by further sections whose protagonists in part meet by chance in Santa Teresa, culminating in the fifth section, the "Parte de Archimboldi", which presents a biography of Hans Reiter, following traces that his movements left all over the globe. All narrative lines of action, in which representations of violence recur ostentatiously, are organized around a series of more than a hundred femicides committed in Santa Teresa, which are narrated in the fourth and longest part of the novel, the "Parte de los crímenes". The descriptions included in this section refer to the series of real murders that have been occurring in Ciudad Juárez since the 1990s, comprising between 370 and 600 victims, a majority of which could not be solved and therefore provoked harsh criticism from numerous human rights organizations directed against the work of the investigative authorities. [1]

This brief survey of the novel's narrative structure already indicates that Bolaño's "maximalist novel" (Ercolino) [2] assumes the form of a global narrative which relies largely on the exploration of geophysical and geocultural space carried out within the movements of the protagonists, which form the central narrative focus of the entire novel. These movements document a certain "worldliness" of the narration [3] that contributes to defining the specific 'geopolitical' dimension of the literary text [4], which characterizes numerous narrative forms in the current phase of globalization, and generally adopts two forms: On the one hand, during the last few decades, literary (and scientific) discourses have developed a semantic framework that describes the world as the site of emergence of a 'world community', a global village (formulated in terms used by Marshall McLuhan), [5] which, being brought about and sustained by the progressive efficiency of technological networks, negates social and cultural differences and constitutes a consensual form of human community that in its modes of cultural interaction is able to overcome both spatial and temporal boundaries. This description of globalization presents an essentially utopian vision of the 'deterritorialized' world [6], which is marked by the suspension of both physical and social space and generates an all-encompassing homogeneous and universal culture. To this

utopian world vision is opposed a geopolitical description which conceives of the world as a 'reterritorialized' spatial order based on socio-cultural practices of inclusion and exclusion which create asymmetrical power relations and rely on territorial borders (such as the frontier separating Mexico and the United States) that guarantee and regulate the interaction between global centers and varying local peripheries.

It is evident that Bolaño's novel belongs to the second type of global narrative: In 2666, the spatial movements carried out by the protagonists do not serve primarily as a vehicle to express the euphoric perception of the unlimited geocultural extensions of the global world. On the contrary, these movements are set in close relation to phenomena such as disappearance, diaspora and forced migration, which utterly suspend the narrated space-time continuum and frequently appear to be connected with experiences related to significant affective ruptures and traumas marking the protagonists' lives. [7] Yet in Bolaño's novel, the suspension of such continuity also shows on another level, as in the narrative text the topographical movements carried out by the protagonists often combine with topological forms of mobility that come to be closely linked with the appearance of revenants, vampires, zombies and other 'unreal' figures that possess the property of transgressing the physical boundaries of time and space as well as the demarcation lines separating the living from the dead. Starting out from the novel's allusions to varying 'undead' or 'spectral' figures (such as vampires or zombies), the following analysis will, first, briefly reconstruct the general characteristics of the representation of zombies and other revenants as they occur in particular in film narratives that appeared between the 1960s and the first decade of the 21st century. Second, a cursory reading of the novel will focus on the literary construction and cultural significance inherent in different forms of mobility which appear to be intimately linked to the emergence of spectral figures whose intermittent appearance throughout the textual universe contributes to constituting an all-encompassing network of transcultural exchange and communication.

1) The Living and the Dead: Sites of Encounters [8]

In 2666 references to the existence of dead persons, vampires, zombies and other 'revenants' who challenge the boundaries of time and space inherent in the geophysical world are omnipresent. The allusions to varying (un-)dead figures whose individual existences appear to be closely related to phenomena of mobility and migration come to display a broad range of political significations which turn the (living) dead into ambivalent liminal figures [9] representing the specific nature and functioning of the cultural order itself. If, on the one hand, they resist being integrated into the order of human community and serve to irritate considerably the classifications underlying its functioning, on the other, they appear to be not entirely excluded from this order, and

thus prove capable of incorporating the very boundaries from which each culture gains a further understanding of its own practices and regulations. Furthermore, in Bolaño's novel, references to the (un-)dead are frequently tied to the cultural history of the zombies, and combined with the description of changing forms of agency symptomatic of modern globalization processes. In the second part of the novel, the professor of philosophy, Óscar Amalfitano, suddenly finds among his own books an unknown book written by the Galician poet Rafael Dieste; in his search for the reasons which may account for the strange appearance of the book, he compares himself to a zombie, [10] who, in the episode, appears to represent a being who is deprived of the power to exercise his free will or self-control and who, in a "momento de sumisión absoluta" (243), [11] has yielded his own will to the foreign and inscrutable power of the book, which now seems to take on human agency and authority. The cultural-historical implications underlying the bond that exists between human beings and figures of the living dead are explained more explicitly in the programmatic conference entitled "Literatura + enfermedad = enfermedad", published in 2003, which presents the outlines of Bolaño's conception of modern literature. Referring to the famous verse taken from Baudelaire's poem Voyage, "Un oasis de horror en medio del desierto de aburrimiento", [11] which also serves as the motto preceding the novel 2666, and starting out from the self-description formulated by the lyrical speaker in Baudelaire's poem as well as from various forms of 19th-century travel poetry, Bolaño here traces out a comprehensive 'psychogram' of modern society that proves to be deeply rooted in a melancholic disposition of the individual, which turns human beings into zombies: "Para salir del aburrimiento, para escapar del punto muerto, lo único que tenemos a mano, y no tan a mano, también en esto hay que esforzarse, es el horror, es decir el mal. O vivimos como zombis, como esclavos alimentados con soma, o nos convertimos en esclavizadores, en seres malignos" (151). If the programmmatic essay associates the particular mode of being represented by zombies with the mental disposition of the modern individual ("aburrimiento"), it is important to note, however, that this mode of being is integrated at the same time into an utterly Manichean politicial vision of modernity that views zombies as modern slaves, as victims of a social formation, against whom are contrasted, on the opposite end of the cultural field, the slaveowners and merchants who embody threatening social forces of 'evil'. [12] Bolaño's diagnostic account of modern literature and society thus refers implicitly back to the colonial history of the zombies whose origins, according to recent research, reach back to religious notions related to the living dead in West Africa, which, during the period of transatlantic slavery, were first transferred to the Carribean before being taken, at a later stage in the history of slavery, to the United States and Europe. [13] Thus the description of modern society which divides the community into victims and offenders and associates this division with a metaphorical identification of zombies and slaves not only delineates a contemporary biopoetics of horror but also traces the outlines of a comprehensive genealogy of modernity, establishing a

close link between its historic emergence and the rise of colonial migration movements that form an integral part of the cultural history of the zombies.

In the novel itself the living dead occasionally feature as real protagonists or human beings, such as the woman mentioned in the third part with whom the African-American journalist Fate leads a telephone conversation, and who appears to him as a person who, having just escaped from a cemetery, "conoce de primera mano el planeta de los muertos" (347). These beings generally represent modes of existence defined by their intermediary or liminal status, which marks the transition from what is human to what is felt to be non-human – as becomes most evident in the final part of the novel ("La parte de Archimboldi"), where the figure of the vampire forms the topic of a conversation that takes place in Count Dracula's castle during World War II. In the conversation, which focuses on the origin and identity of Dracula himself, on the one hand, the figure of the undead comes to blur the boundary separating human beings from monstrous appearances, as the Count appears both as a possible Romanian patriot engaged in violent resistance against the Turks and as a sheer "monstruo" longing for blood. [14] The figure of the vampire thus bears a close affinity to the artistic creations produced by the Italian Early Baroque painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo, whose name recurs in 2666 in Hans Reiter's pseudonym Benno von Archimboldi, and whose well-known portraits consisting of fruits, flowers and vegetables equally represent 'monstrous' or liminal hybrid structures that are composed of human and non-human elements. They serve to explore the boundaries of the order of nature as, according to current 16th-century classification schemes derived from Scholastic natural philosophy, they are situated in 'extra-natural' areas that are opposed both to the realm of the natural and to its counterpart, the supernatural. [15] On the other hand, the conversation mentions a Romanian mathematician whose existence in an asylum is associated with an "estar enterrado en vida", (859) a state which integrates death in life and therefore represents a vampire-like mode of existence that complements the integration of life in death as realized by the zombies, and also appears to interlace two heterogeneous regimes of temporality. Finally, the third part of the novel contains a short commentary on director Robert Rodriguez and his famous vampire movie From Dusk Till Dawn (Del crepúsculo al amanecer), a mixture between a road movie and a splatter movie; here, the Mexican bar in which the transformation of native female dancers and US-American truckers into bloodthirsty vampires takes place turns out to be the top of a Pre-Columbian cult site, an Aztec pyramid hidden in the sand, and thereby reveals a convergence of the contemporary US-American culture with the pre-colonial Mexican world, which expresses the inextricable entanglement of differing cultural spaces and temporalities.

These hints at revenants, zombies or vampires already allude to particular forms of intracultural or transcultural liminality and mobility which are also characteristic of contemporary filmic representations of the undead. Thus, in zombie movies like George Romero's Night of the

Living Dead (1968), Dawn of the Dead (1977) and Day of the Dead (1985) or in Robin Campillo's Les revenants (2003), despite their mass appearance and their mutilated bodies, the figures of the (un-)dead display properties and attitudes belonging to the living and represent 'spectral' figures (in the terms used by Jacques Derrida) [16] who cause sensible irritations and disturbances in the everyday life of the social community. Coinciding with Christian images of bodily revenants dating from previous centuries [17] and with traditional Caribbean notions of zombies conceived as corps cadavres, [22] they are marked by the physical materiality of their bodies, which allows them to develop their own habitual attitudes and routines, corresponding to the specific practices and modes of existence exhibited by the living and serving to satisfy their basic physical needs (like eating and drinking) and to regulate their everyday lives. Even if visible differences between the living and the dead persist throughout the majority of filmic representations, it is important to note, however, that due to the materiality of their bodies the dead no longer appear to represent the instance of the 'other' defined as the inversion or the exact reverse copy of the living, but gradually come to separate themselves from their counterparts. In fact, as in filmic representations dating from the last decade, the undead progressively cease to define their own mode of existence as a function of the living, yet paradoxically start to 'live' their own being-dead and therefore obtain a 'life' of their own. [19]

Furthermore, as the figure of the zombie functions as a social agent whose primary role consists in articulating and framing the relations between the community of the living and the community of the dead, its appearance displays an intracultural dynamic which, at least in nuce, also gains a transcultural impact. As a general rule, the presence of zombies indicates the emergence of a social crisis which frequently appears to be closely linked with particular forms of mobility expressed through their bodily movements. From this perspective, the slow, uncoordinated and almost mechanical movements of their bodies come to symbolize either a temporary suspension or the total dissolution of the social order defining communal life, [20] as they transform urban space into an apocalyptic scenery or a ghost town whose topographic physiognomy seems to announce the edge of doom. This is also confirmed by more recent movies that have been produced since the beginning of the 21st century: Even if in Campillo's film, as has been foregrounded by recent criticism, [21] the appearance of the revenants resembles a traffic jam, which serves to indicate the momentary breakdown of human transport or circulation, but which by no means corresponds to the breakdown of the entire social life of the community, their bodily movements create a sensible distance between the living and the dead which, in turn, illustrates a fundamental heterogeneity and asynchronicity of temporalities. Ultimately, these can be seen to define diverging rhythms which serve to articulate differing forms of communal life and modes of social mobility which, in their complex interplay, oscillate between modern realizations of the disciplinary society and the specific conditions of existence implemented by modern societies

of control. While the former are based on the efficiency of specific 'milieus of inclusion' (such as schools, hospitals or prisons), [22] societies of control tend to replace the techniques and dispositives of social surveillance pertaining to these milieus by open and pervasive environments (such as transit zones or virtual space environments to which individuals gain access by using passwords) and by more moderate control processes which modulate flexible mechanisms of adaptation to the changing conditions of existence. [23]

If the emergence of the figures of the living dead is viewed from this perspective, it can be noted that, on the one hand, the zombies represent a disquieting menace of the social, cultural and political ordering of human society, which is the reason why the latter seeks to survey and to exclude them from the community of the living by establishing a strict and stable separation between the respective spheres of life. For although the dead and the living move in the same places, such as shopping malls, streets and residential buildings, there exists an invisible border that at times comes to be materialized and rendered visible and that serves to implement a spatial dissociation separating the two groups. Thus the encounters with the undead demonstrate the validity of the mechanisms of disciplinary societies which seek to confine the 'other' to the closed areas or 'milieus of inclusion' – as is suggested in the movies by the use of the camera perspective which frequently views the zombies either from a bird's eye view (s. fig. 1) or confronts them frontally as a compact, hostile horde and consequently functions as a particular filmic device of performing social surveillance and control. However, more recent zombie movies from the last ten years reveal considerable transformations regarding both the representation of bodily movements and the forms of spatial and social mobility exposed by the figures of the zombies. Despite their 'multitudinal' appearance, which distinguishes them from individual human beings, their presence not only serves to explore, negotiate and articulate the general principles and practices structuring human community (as is the case in the current series The Walking Dead), but they also prove capable of being increasingly integrated into life routines as these routines, in turn, gradually seem to approach conventional zombie attitudes and practices. [24] As is suggested by the occasional acceleration of bodily movements performed by the dead which indicate a notable reduction or suspension of the distance separating the living and the dead, [25] the disciplinary strategy of confining the zombies to a potentially controllable milieu of inclusion by attributing to them a sphere of their own, as a general rule, comes to be gradually replaced by more flexible circulation movements which follow the less rigid regulation mechanisms used in societies of control. This progressive convergence of attitudes and gestures exhibited by the living and the dead [26] also shows in the change of the camera perspective which in more recent movies no longer focuses on zombies from a panoramic bird's eye view but, frequently, tends to accompany their movements alongside them, presenting the undead as members of the community of the living who enjoy the same rights as the latter (s. fig. 2). Thus, it can be

concluded that the movements of the revenants serve to document specific forms of mobility which are mainly derived from the physical materiality of their bodies and whose central function consists in articulating and negotiating intracultural tensions inherent in the social community of the living.

2) Mobility and Globality: The Dead as Transcultural Migrants in 2666

In the novel 2666, the multitude of revenants or (living) dead persons that appear throughout the five sections of the text also illustrate differing forms of intra- and transcultural mobility which become most palpable within the extensive narration dedicated to the series of femicides in the fourth part of the novel. Viewed from a narratological perspective, it is significant, first of all, that the narration deliberately takes recourse to documentary texts such as Sergio González Rodríguez's investigation Huesos en el desierto, [27] whose integration into the text confers to Bolaño's novel a liminal status regarding the particular mode of narration employed, which is marked by a persistent oscillation between fact and fiction. [28] At the same time, the novel quite ostentatiously approaches the film genre of the so-called snuff movie, a genre which first appeared in Argentina, and pretends to show real violations and assassinations of women generating a particular effet de réel closely linked with excesses of violence directed against women. [29]

Furthermore, the novel takes recourse to a specific mode of narration derived from the tradition of the novela policíaca, whose main genre characteristics are evoked ex negativo by the literary critics in the first part of the novel: "Hay que hacer investigación, crítica literaria, ensayos de interpretación, panfletos divulgativos si así la occasion lo requiriera, pero no este híbrido entre fantaciencia y novela negra inconclusa, dijo Espinosa, y Pelletier estuvo en todo de acuerdo con su amigo" (82). If the mention of the genres of the "fantaciencia" and "the novela negra inconclusa" primarily refers to Latin-American realizations of the detective novel which frequently use elements taken from the fantastic tradition, [30] the narrative structure of the "Parte de los crímenes", the longest part of the novel, reveals itself to be more complex as it combines elements of the classical policial, the 'novel of enigma' as initiated by Edgar Allan Poe, and the serie negra. The representation of more than a hundred feminine corpses at first follows the narrative scheme of the novel of enigma which is marked by a double plot structure, the dissociation of the line of action into a crime story, which narrates what has happened, and the ensuing investigation story which describes the gathering of information about the crime and the efforts undertaken by the detective to solve the enigma. [31] In 2666, the description of the first three dead bodies already illustrates the general narrative scheme which also underlies the following case representations: the first detailed description of a human corpse which formally resembles a forensic report

is marked by the complete absence of a crime story informing the reader about the criminal act, as the story begins abruptly with a precise description of the clothing, the place and the circumstances under which the dead body was found. [32] It does contain, however, the nucleus of an investigation story which is deployed within a conversation taking place between the police officer and two anonymous women and which displays the inversion of narrative causality typical for the genre, for within the text's chronological ordering the presentation of the effect (death, the dead body) precedes the narration of the cause (the crime, its story). Similar narrative schemes are also to be found in the following two descriptions, each of which combines the crime story with a particular investigation story. The description of the second case contains some rudimentary elements of the crime story as it discloses the incidents preceding the crime – a love triangle centered on the violent encounter between the victim's lover and his business partner – which provides at least a minimal psychological motivation for the crime. [33] In addition, the story of the crime is here combined with a brief description of the police investigation which does indeed lead to the capture of the murderer but closes upon the police officers' insight that the murderer cannot be identical with the one who committed the first crime. [34] The description of the third case, which deploys a 'narration within the narration' presented from the perspective of an eyewitness, gives information about a radio announcer who is shot in the street after having had dinner with her sound engineer; [35] it is followed by a short investigation story offering rival theories concerning the circumstances of the crime and the origin of the assassin. In short, it can be concluded that the detailed narrative account of the femicides takes recourse to central elements and structures belonging to the classic genre of detective fiction which, despite the introduction of numerous stylistic innovations, continues to provide an important narrative model within the Latin-American novela policíaca. However, in 2666, the ensuing story of the 'penitent', a male person who desecrates churches, takes on a different form in that it adopts the main narrative elements pertaining to the genre of the hard-boiled novel or the serie negra, which not only subordinates the solution-seeking scheme to a pattern of discovery focusing on the corruption and violence of society but also assigns a new role to the figure of the detective, who gradually reveals himself to be intricately involved in the crime. [36] In Bolaño's novel, the hard-boiled model is taken up in an utterly ironic manner as it provides a presentation both of the investigator's personality and of his private life, culminating in a love affair with the director of an asylum recounted in such detail that its narrative description, which complements the narration of the crime, temporarily confers to the novela policíaca traits of a romance. [37]

What is decisive in the narrative account of the crime scenes is the fact that despite the obstinate recurrence of structural elements belonging to the genre of detective fiction in Bolaño's novel, its specific narratological function appears to be entirely suspended. If the function of the novela policíaca consists in employing various strategies seeking to confer a specific significance

or meaning to death, it is noteworthy that narrative techniques such as these are completely absent from Bolaño's text. In the novel, quite to the contrary, the series of murders manifests itself as the articulation of a logic of serial enumeration, a purely chronological accumulation and a formal combination of recurring thematic elements which eventually come to erase all individual differences between the victims. In its overt departure from conventional representation techniques, the narrative fails to reach a solution for the mystery or enigma underlying the series of crimes and proves utterly incapable of conferring a hermeneutic scheme of signification to the murderous incidents. What remains, then, is the sheer physical presence of feminine corpses in their material immanence, expressing the emergence of the 'real' (in the Lacanian sense of the term) which resists any process of imaginary or cultural-symbolic signification and marks a traumatic gap in the symbolic order. [38] The text thus traces the outlines of a modern esthetics of horror grounded in the purely physical being-in-the-world of the feminine corpses which – due to their mere material presence resisting any interpretive structure of cultural signification – appear to be 'spectral' figures, feminine zombies obtaining a somewhat autonomous existence or a paradoxical narrative 'life' of their own which, however, just like their masculine counterparts, they are forced to live under the conditions of death.

What seems yet more significant than the physical mode of existence which sets the feminine corpses in close affinity to traditional masculine figures of the living dead is the fact that the presence of the female bodies comes to document a transcultural and global dynamic of mobility which once more appears to be intimately related to the colonial history of the zombies. It is due to the specific mode of narration and the repeated appearance of the spectral figures throughout the entire novel that these reveal themselves to be true revenants whose movements come to articulate a spatial mobility of almost infinite extension. This is evident, first of all, in the third part of the novel, the "Parte de Fate", which contains a conversation taking place between the African-American journalist and an older man, a resident of Santa Teresa, who formulates some general observations concerning serial homicides that occurred in European and US-American history, and begins his observations with a commentary on the verbal recording of crimes:

> En el siglo XIX, a mediados o a finales del siglo XIX, dijo el tipo canoso, la sociedad acostumbraba a colar la muerte por el filtro de las palabras. Si uno lee las crónicas de esa época se diría que casi no había hechos delictivos o que un asesinato era capaz de conmocionar a todo un país. No queríamos tener a la muerte en casa, en nuestros sueños y fantasías, sin embargo es un hecho que se cometían crímenes terribles, descuartizamientos, violaciones de todo tipo, e incluso asesinatos en serie. [...] Durante la Comuna de 1871 murieron asesinados miles de personas y nadie derramó una lágrima por ellas. Por esa misma fecha un afilador de cuchillos mató a una mujer y a su anciana madre (no la madre de la mujer, sino su propia madre, querido amigo) y luego fue abatido por la policía. La noticia no sólo recorrió los periódicos de Francia sino que

> también fue reseñada en otros periódicos de Europa e incluso apareció una nota en el Examiner de Nueva York. Respuesta: los muertos de la comuna no pertenecían a la sociedad, la gente de color muerta en el barco no pertenecía a la sociedad, mientras que la mujer muerta en una capital de provincia francesa y el asesino a caballo de Virginia sí pertenecían, es decir, lo que a ellos les sucediera era escribible, era legible. (339)

If this commentary refers to historic mass murders committed during the 17th and 19th century in the context of transatlantic slavery and the Paris Commune, the following parts of the novel contain numerous explicit references to the femicides perpetrated in Santa Teresa which do not remain confined to the "Parte de los crímenes", but significantly recur in further sections of the text. This is already confirmed by the first part, the "Parte de los críticos", in which the literary critic Morini, shortly before travelling to Mexico, reads the "horrible" newspaper notice on serial murders written by an Italian journalist and compares the Italian crimes with their Mexican counterparts; he concludes that the particular horror of the latter largely derives from their number, which defines a quality of sheer excess: "La noticia le pareció horrible. En Italia también había asesinos en serie, pero rara vez superaban la cifra de diez víctimas, mientras que en Sonora las cifras sobrepasaban con largueza las cien" (64). In the third part, the "Parte de Fate", the serial femicides recur again: Here, they are the topic of a TV reportage watched by the American journalist who, for the first time, gains knowledge about the real crimes committed in Santa Teresa; [39] these incidents broadcasted on TV are not only loosely associated with violent events referring to World War I in Europe but also with criminal offences carried out against African-Americans during the North American history of slave trade; thus, they point once more to the colonial origins of the cultural history of the zombies which also forms the basis for the identification of the modern melancholic subject with the figure of the zombie as formulated in Bolaño's programmatic lecture on the functions of modern literature.

Taking into account the striking intratextual 'mobility' of the feminine corpses, it is no surprise that the dead bodies also recur in further texts written by the author: In particular, they are anticipated in the short novel Estrella distante (1996) in which the figure of the fascist poet Carlos Wieder, a military pilot supporting the Pinochet regime, hangs photographs on the walls of his room that show mutilated women whom he himself has previously tortured and murdered (92-102). According to recent criticism, Carlos Wieder represents an art conception which is marked by a profound ambivalence: on the one hand, both his first creative act, which consists in practicing a poesía aérea by writing verse in the sky, and the ensuing exhibition of the photographs deliberately take recourse to Chilean (Neo)avant-garde whose representatives, such as Raúl Zurita, who represents the immediate model for Wieder's 'air poetry', critically confront the violence and totalitarianism performed by the military dictatorship. [40] Yet, the series of photographs displaying mutilated dead bodies, at the same time, represents an 'infamous' or 'abject' art and,

consequently, can be conceived as an immediate prefiguration of the horror realized in the detailed 'forensic' descriptions and serial listing of the dead bodies of mutilated, tortured and killed women presented in the "Parte de los crímenes" and programmatically described in the lecture "Literatura + enfermedad = enfermedad".

These few examples reveal that the obstinate appearance of the feminine corpses throughout Bolaño's oeuvre combines with the transgression of both spatial and temporal borders and, being closely linked to heterogeneous historic events and periods such as the Roman Empire, the French Commune, US-American slave trade and Pinochet's regime, marks a sensible rupture with notions of the globalized world based on the realization of homogeneous spatial-temporal exchange and communication processes which, here, ostentatiously come to be replaced with the experience of the discontinuous arisal of multiple traumata, horrors and acts of violence. The obsessive presence of the feminine dead bodies thus not only confers to these the status of material revenants who, like the figures of the zombies, gradually obtain a physical-corporeal life of their own but also turns them – due to the persistent transgression of spatial-temporal confinements – into true global migrants whose appearance ultimately serves to create a dense network of transcultural entanglements extending far beyond the concrete geopolitical borders that separate national political communities. While zombies, especially those appearing in horror films dating from the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, by means of their bodily movements and the specific attitudes that mark their social behavior come to set in motion a dynamic of mobility which primarily aims at expressing intracultural tensions inherent in the community of the living, the particular mode of narration underlying Bolaño's novel serves to generate corporeal revenants whose appearance in different places of the textual universe, in turn, denotes a form of transcultural migration which takes into account the spatial and temporal interferences and cultural-political entanglements that mark the globalized world. These interferences find their correlates in the narrative structure of the novel itself, which not only recounts a story but also creates a vast network of interrelated narrations which, as each particular story is able to form nodes with other stories or lines of action on every level of the narration, is marked by the absence of a hierarchical ordering and by the interference of heterogeneous spatialities and temporalities.

These spatial-temporal interferences and entanglements, which are most visible in the textual references to the bodies of the dead women, suggest some conclusions regarding the geopolitical function of the global narrative as a whole. Culminating in a serial listing of phobias that embraces the most diverse medical and cultural phenomena ranging from the "sacrophobia" ascribed to the "penitent", to "claustrophobia", "hematophobia", "verbophobia", "vestiophobia", "optophobia", "astrophobia" and "phobophobia" (a type of 'metaphobia' representing the phobia of the phobias themselves) (477-479), the narration or chronicle of the femicides in the "Parte de los crímenes" first of all discloses once more the political function underlying the presence or

appearance of filmic zombies: the feminine dead bodies no longer serve to indicate a temporary crisis of the social community to be overcome in the near future but are associated with a general pathology affecting the communal order as a whole and documenting a deeply pessimistic diagnostic account of the implications and consequences linked with the rise of the global world society.

Yet the bio- and geopolitical functionalization of the murders and the recurring bodies of the dead by no means remain confined to this critical assessment of current globalization processes – as reveals the end of the previously quoted commentary on historic examples of serial murders formulated by the "tipo canoso" in his conversation with the American journalist Fate:

> –Bien – dijo el tipo canoso –. Compartiré contigo tres certezas. A: esa sociedad está fuera de la sociedad, todos, absolutamente todos son como los antiguos cristianos en el circo. B: los crímenes tienen firmas diferentes. C: esa ciudad parece pujante, parece progresar de alguna manera, pero lo mejor que podrían hacer es salir una noche al desierto y cruzar la frontera, todos sin excepción, todos, todos. (399)

Naming social modes of existence which, paradoxically, are situated both inside and outside human society, the text recurs almost literally to Giorgio Agamben's description of the homo sacer, [41] who, within the legal system governing the Roman Empire, represents an outlawed person the killing of whom remains exempt from punishment, as is also indicated by the mention of the historic persecutions of Christians. According to Agamben, the suspension of legality paradoxically entails the legal production of a 'state of exception' based on practices of violence which in Modernity coincides with the state of normality of the sovereign order and therefore represents the general nómos, the fundamental law governing modern societies; their rise proves to be the product of foundational acts of violence without which no political-social community manages to guarantee and secure its own existence and which, in Bolaño, appear to be closely related to excesses of violence and traumata characteristic of the globalized world. However, as is suggested by the esthetics represented by the fascist artist Carlos Wieder in Estrella distante, whose art of violence adopts specific representation techniques from art practices pertaining to the Chilean avant-garde tradition, the representatives of which are committed to opposite political goals, [42] according to Bolaño, in modernity, the relationship between normal society and the 'state of exception' is subject to continual displacements and inversions which ultimately come to transform the static constellation of the 'state of exception' into flexible and dynamic configurations; within these configurations, which document both the permeability and mobility of transcultural milieus of action as they are implemented by modern societies of control, exception and rule always prove to be strictly reversible. They rely on a principle of flexible interchangeability that also affects the positions of social and political agency, which can always be alternately occupied

by victims and perpetrators, by slaves and slave-owners, and for which the colonial migration history of the zombies appears to provide an indispensable historic matrix.

It can be concluded that due to the specific narrative modes of evoking the dead throughout the entire novel and as a result of their ensuing transgression of spatial-temporal borders, in Bolaño, the figures of the (living) dead carry out topographical and topological movements which serve to create complex connections and entanglements between separate spheres pertaining to the globalized political world; these movements reveal the spectral figures to be transcultural migrants acting on a global scale, figures who take on a double geopolitical meaning: On the one hand, just like the zombies, they serve to indicate moments of crisis existing within contemporary social formations whose fundamental pathologies, in Bolaño, are integrated into a narrative logic of potentially infinite accumulation; on the other, they represent emblematic foundational figures epitomizing basic forms of social communities which, at the beginning of the 21st century, are marked by a transition process which increasingly replaces the closed milieus of action constitutive of traditional disciplinary societies by the open social structures inherent in current societies of control. In the present age of globalization the latter come to represent metastable forms of community which, in overcoming the presumably secure confinements characterizing disciplinary societies, come to establish states of social balance which are marked both by their fundamental flexibility and instability. As is illustrated by the frequent references to excesses of violence alternately related to National Socialism, Latin-American dictatorships or the Roman Empire, these temporary states of balance are persistently threatened by the dissolution of the very order that governs political and social community. In Bolaño, consequently, the form of the global narrative appears as a literary construction and a reflexive diagnosis of the political, social and cultural traumata which are presented as contributing both to the foundational constitution and the destructive violation of the social order underlying the world in the present age of globalization.

Fig. 1: George Romero, Day of the Dead (USA 1985)

Fig. 2: Les revenants (Serie, Canal+, France 2012)

Endnotes

[1] For a concise account of the real femicides that occurred in Ciudad Juárez, including information about its social background, see Zimmering.

[2] On the conception and characteristics of the "maximalist novel", which, in the case of Bolaño's novel, is based on the rupture and hypertrophic enlargement of unitary plot structures realized by geographical 'transversality', see Ercolino.

[3] On the connotations and implications underlying the conception of the "worldliness", which marks in particular the literary production in the current phase of globalization, see Honold. The "worldliness" of literature can also be related to processes of "worlding", of producing the world, which, according to Djelal Kadir, are a distinctive feature of "world literature" under conditions of globalization; see Kadir.

[4] For a detailed account of the geopolitical dimension of contemporary literature, which includes the distinction between two competing models of description concerning globalization processes, see Werber.

[5] See McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*.

[6] On the spatial implications inherent in the term 'deterritorialization' see Gilles Deleuze/ Félix Guattari 1991; see also Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari 1980.

[7] According to the suggestive political reading of Bolaño's narrative oeuvre offered by Sergio Villalobos-Ruminott, the novel as a whole can be even viewed as offering a 'planetary articulation' of global war; see Villalobos-Ruminott.

[8] With respect to the following section of this article, I wish to express my gratitude to Emiliano Galarza for numerous suggestions concerning filmic representations of zombies, revenants and other living dead figures.

[9] On the notion of 'liminality' see Turner 93-111.

[10] See Bolaño 2666, 242: "Probablemente este libro llegó a mis manos en Laie, pensó, o en La Central […]. Puede, incluso, que abriera como un zombi el paquete y dejara el libro nuevo sobre la mesilla de noche y el libro de Dieste en la estantería de los libros, abrumado por algo que acabara de ver en la calle […]." – For a pertinent analysis of this comparison, which, however, situates the appearance of the book primarily within the context of the temporal logic underlying the concept of the 'readymade' as it was developed by Marcel Duchamps, see Cuntz (177-220).

[11] See Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal*, 166-172.

[12] On the significance the category of 'evil' obtains within the novel 2666, see Lainck 2014.

[13] For a concise account of the cultural history of the zombies, see Gudrun Rath, Zombies, *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 11-19; likewise, see Hans-W. Ackermann/Jeanin Gauthier (1991), 466-494.

[14] See Bolaño, 2666, 855: "[…] el hombre que frena el impulso conquistador de los turcos se transforma, gracias a un escritor inglés de segunda fila, en un monstruo, en un crápula interesado únicamente por la sangre humana […]".

[15] On the distinction between the areas of the natural, the extra-natural and the supernatural in the Early Modern Period, with respect to the ontological status of hybrid or liminal beings, see Lorraine Daston (1991) 93-124.

[16] See Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*.

[17] See Lecouteux, pp. 79f.

[18] See Rath, pp. 49-59.

[19] On the changing forms of interaction taking place between the living and the (un-)dead as exposed in the zombie movies dating from the past four decades, which form the central focus of numerous recent critics, see, among others, Schuck 2014, 73-83; Robnik 2011, 235-258; and Cuntz 2008, 191-226.

[20] On similar biopolitical interpretations focusing the forms of bodily mobility displayed by the zombies and the respective camera angle defining their filmic representation, see Cuntz 2008.

[21] See Cuntz.

[22] See Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*.

[23] See Deleuze 1990, 240-247.

[24] On this striking reciprocity of human activities and zombie attitudes, see Robnik 2011.

[25] This is most evident, for example, in the US-American action movie World War Z, produced by Marc Forster in 2013.

[26] Within present filmic representations of zombies, this convergence of attitudes and gestures forms the central focus of the French series Les revenants (2012-), in which concrete individuals who possess their own biography return as dead persons into the world of the living.

[27] Sergio González Rodriguez, Huesos en el desierto. On the impact González Rodríguez investigation had on Bolaño's novel and on the narrative description of the femicides, see the brief account in Alice Laurel Driver, 51-64.

[28] On the narratological implications underlying the convergence of fictual and factual modes of narration see Genette, Fiction et diction.

[29] The film genre of the snuff movie is explicitly discussed in the novel where it is described as a particularly repugnant "modalidad de horror" within the production of pornographic films and narrations; see Bolaño, 2666, 669 f. On partial convergences between the narrative description of the femicides as presented in 2666 and the forms of representation used in the film genre, see Anna Topczewska.

[30] On the rise, the influence and the distinctive narrative features of the Latin-American detective fiction, see among others Jorge Lafforgue and Jorge B. Rivera, Asesinos de papel. Ensayos sobre narrativa policial, 11-38, and Amelia S. Simpson, Detective Fiction from Latin America.

[31] On this narrratological distinction, see Todorov, "The Typology of Detective Fiction" [1966] 2010; also see Schulze-Witzenrath, "Die Geschichten des Detektivromans. Zur Struktur und Rezeptionsweise seiner klassischen Form."

[32] Bolaño, *2666*, 443: "La muerta apareció en un pequeño descampado en la colonia Las Flores. Vestía camiseta blanca de manga larga y falda de color amarillo hasta las rodillas, de una talla superior. Unos niños que jugaban en el descampado la encontraron y dieron aviso a sus padres."

[33] Bolaño, *2666*, 445.

[34] Bolaño, *2666*, 445: "Contra lo que pensaba la policía, llevada a error por la rapidez con la que habían conseguido la primera confesión, Romero [the offender, K.K.] era mucho más duro de lo que aparentaba y no se autoimplicó en el primer crimen."

[35] See Bolaño, *2666*, 446 f.

[36] For a pertinent account of the distinctive narrative traits that define the 'hard-boiled' genre, see Simpson, Detective Fiction from Latin America, 9-24.

[37] See Bolaño, *2666*, 475-477.
[38] See Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire*, Bd. 11: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse. In

a similar perspective, Vittoria Borsò underscores the “effects of presence” which are contingent upon the verbal intensity of the narrative descriptions and represent the immediate textual articulation or transmission of traces of physical violence; see “Zur ‘Ontologie der Literatur’: Präsenz von Lebens-Zeichen in Zeiten der technischen Reproduzierbarkeit von Gewalt.”

[39] Bolaño, *2666*, 328.

[40] For an instructive analysis of the complex relationship that is established in Estrella distante between Carlos Wieder’s art and artistic practices belonging to the European and Chilean (Neo-)avant-garde and for an inspiring interpretation of Wieder’s photographs as ambivalent realizations of an ‘abject’ or infamous poetics, see Silvana Mandolessi, “El arte según Wieder: estética y política de lo abyecto en Estrella distante”.

[41] See Giorgio Agamben, Homo sacer: *Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. For an analysis of the representation of violence in Bolaño’s *2666* formulated on the basis of Giorgio Agamben’s biopolitical theory of sovereignty, see Borsò, “Zur ‚Ontologie der Literatur”. For a complementary interpretation of the dead bodies of the murdered women as representatives of “bare life”, see Driver, “Más o menos muerto: Bare Life in Roberto Bolaño’s *2666*”.

[42] See the concise observations in Mandolessi, “El arte según Wieder”.

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Book Rewiew

"The Routledge Companion to Inter-American Studies" *Edited by: Wilfried Raussert. Routledge, 2017. Routledge Companions to Literature Series. $152.55 paper. ISBN 978-1138184671*

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The Routledge Companion to Inter-American Studies edited by Wilfried Raussert, Chair and Professor of North American Literary and Cultural Studies and Co-Director of the Inter-American Studies at Bielefeld University, Germany, is a compendium of thirty-seven brilliant essays focusing on various facets of cultural studies in the context of Inter-American dialogic. Again, keeping in view the recent trends of socio-political and cultural issues, this companion deserves special mention. Wilfried Raussert, in his cogent Introduction to this volume opines,

> In the early 21st century, the Americas are yet again in a period of transit, change, and crisis, and their cultural and political landscapes are subject to at times contradictory dynamics of change. Emerging global players from the South, Brazil in particular, are currently gaining power, whereas the geopolitical hegemony of the United States appears to be at least partially declining. At the same time, migration and transmigration create new links and tensions between Central America and North America… (1-2)

Thus, the welter of changes that rock 'America' is an immediate concern of this volume, which opens up space for myriads of new thoughts on different cultural arena, to be included in this momentous anthology. The 'dialogical model' that Raussert intends to present through the essays has perfectly been able to bring on an even keel, 'diverse approaches and… contraries' [Raussert: Introduction,11] . 'Without contraries, there is no progression', observed William Blake, while he was asked to comment on his motive behind writing *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* (1742). And that is twice proved by the essays in this collection.

This compendium has a three-tiered structure, comprising, Part I: Key Ideas, methods and developments; Part II: Theory put into practice: comparative, relational and processual case studies; Part III: Power, politics and asymmetries. As the titles of the classification suggest the variegated issues, right from the 'key tropes such as border, place, mobility, language and empire' [Raussert, Introduction, 7] through appropriate placing of theoretical paradigms into practice to the narration of 'political and ideological undercurrents of Inter-American power relations and entanglements.'[Raussert: Introduction, 9] It is really an uphill task to create a balance among all these varying themes on which the essays are written. But this anthology puts the best foot forward to make it happen.

In the first section, Part I, " Key Ideas , methods and Developments" ,there are ten essays, each of which deals with different specific aspects related to 'transnational perspectives', 'extractive imperialism and liberty', 'hemispheric partitions' and the impact of decolonizing on it, a futuristic take on American Studies in particular, deep cogitations on 'Inter-American relations to global commons' and an essay concentrating on the canonical text *Moby Dick* by Melville and its relevance to Inter-American studies. Earl. E. Fitz , in his essay, "THEN AND NOW: The Current State of Inter-American literary studies", deals with various approaches to

Inter-American literary studies, for example, Latin-Americanist, Caribbean, Canadian, so forth. In present day Inter-American literary studies, Fitz still finds the specter of mono-lingual, mono-cultural preponderance which he hopes will be coped with in the years to come. However, for the Inter-American literature, bringing 'many nations of the Americas together like never before', leaves much to be desired. Winfried Siemerling, Djelal Kadir have almost the same take on the prospect of 'European imperial expansion' and the consequential emergence of their own cultural paradigms, quite different from the settler's cultures. And again a miscegenation of cultures helps in forming a transnational identity, which is, no doubt, a crying need of the hour. And, the 'empire of liberty' in the 21st century blurs all boundaries, be it national, beyond national or transnational, through the 'digital teletechnologies'. In support of my critical observation, it is better to quote from both the writers separately:

> The beginnings and developments of black cultures join indigenous issues as primordial factors of North American and hemispheric studies. Indigenous subjects were the first to suffer enslavement at the hand of European explorers and settlers in the so-called New World, but they were soon joined by enslaved Africans….More recent United States literary debates have witnessed an intensified discussion of transnationalism. (31-3)

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> Plunder rather than governance is the endgame of what I have referred to as the 21st century's extractive empire. And securing the target perimeter long enough for that purpose is achieved most efficiently through digital teletechnologies… (56)

Mignolo in his article is more concerned with 'hemispheric studies', its significance in understanding the invention of America and the reasons for the creation of the Western Hemisphere. Hemispheric studies of America is thus no less an important area to focus upon, lately. Robert McKee Irwin emphasizes 'global turn' for the field of Inter-American Studies by opening dialogue among institutions of different continental locations like Asia Pacific regions and even Filipino not in a monolingual capacity, but democratizing it, much liberally. He, too, endorses hemispheric studies of America as an area of immediate attention of the scholars of various institutions, across the continents. Luz Angelica Kirschner introduces us to the significance of 'latinidad' in understanding/questioning a 'unified Latin American identity'. Latinidad might be immensely contributive to a 'greater cross-cultural understanding' or making good for lost opportunities, demands Kirschner.

Stephen M. Park strives to 'place' hemispheric thinking in the Americas in a fresh perspective. The writer also expresses his concern for positioning place, which might go contrapuntal to 'globalism and its attendant narratives'. However, 'place' creates a 'space for new conversations within Inter-American Studies.' Claudia Sadowski-Smith talks about 'place'

too, but she is more vocal about the boundaries between the U.S. and Canada and the U.S. and Mexico. She stretches her vision to the cross-border activity which might have a future impact on terrorism, undocumented migration, so on. George A. Yudice in his article focuses on the digital culture which he presents not just an Inter-American but a global issue as well. John Carlos Rowe takes up a canonical text, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, as a case in point and is out to consider the extent to which the 'intercultural hermeneutics' concentrating on the Western Hemisphere might impede the thoughts on East-West dimensions, with an eye on the large Pacific setting of this American novel of age-old eminence.

In the second section, Part II, there are thirteen essays, dealing with different perspectives of "Theory put into practice: Comparative, relational and processual case studies". This is, of course, a major section of this Companion, in which each writer from his/her own discipline of thinking and research strives to put the Inter-American perspectives and paradigms into practice. There is a gulf of hiatus between theory and practice, and we are basically aware of that, but each of the case studies go down to the bottom of the theory to make it feasible for putting it into real-life realpolitik. Raussert, quite cogently, in his Introduction opines:

> The chapters provide a broad spectrum of case studies of Inter-American flows and entanglements with examples from literary studies, music, arts, history and popular culture. Addressing key phenomena such as citation, transfer, entanglement, and connectedness, this section unfolds three major paradigms of how to put theory into practice: using a comparative perspective(e.g. Leen, Moreiras), a relational perspective of flow and citation(Raussert, Fox) and third, a perspective of entangled Americas to explore the knots and intersectionalities within historical and cultural processes(e.g. Anatol, de la Garza). The chapters present case studies and illustrate major general paradigms to pursue Inter-American Studies… Hence, the Companion also includes relational and processual strategies for a fine tuning of Inter-American scholarship. (8)

Yet, as a reviewer , it is my responsibility to take a peek into the contents of the essays, of course, barring a few of which Raussert already mentioned in the above quote. His editorial comment stands final and I leave those essays out of the purview of my critical views. Birgit Dawes in her essay takes an elaborate look into the transnational indigenous performance in the U.S. and Canada. She rues the neglect which indigenous traditions of performance and drama have suffered for a long period of time, being totally ignored or wrongly represented in scholarly writings across the Americas. She, quite interestingly, points out how the theatre traditions of the North American Continent have a sad history of 'colonial oppression, prohibition, cultural genocide' to share. Again, the contemporary Native North American Theatre is quite international in its appeal and she goes to a certain extent to prove that. Meagan Sylvester takes a plunge into the 'sonic evidence of elements of Trinidadian identity in the soundscapes of Calypso and

Kaiso-Jazz fusion in the works of four masters over four successive generations. Her attempt to 'attach culture to geography' is convincing. Stanka Radovic in her essay on Caribbean Literature writes about the works of Derek Walcott, V.S. Naipaul and Jamaica Kincaid in a bid to point out the postcolonial decolonization of language. Isabel Caldeira in her article draws our attention to two powerful writers of our times, Toni Morrison and Edwidge Danticat, from two extremely opposite geopolitical positions: one, from the so-called superpower, wealthy United States, and, the other from Haiti, the 'poorest country in the Western hemisphere. As they look back at the 'past' of their communities, Caldeira labels them as ' daughters of memory'. Again, she chimes in unison with Radovic in supporting postcolonial decolonization of 'colonial' language.

Josef Raab disseminates an appeal of 'looking beyond the national toward the hemispheric' to a wider audience through his essay. For him, it is somewhat a parochial approach while dealing with a research topic in either 'North American, Latin American or Caribbean Studies'. For example, he refers to the Beat writer, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road,* in which he stretches his gaze beyond the boundaries of the United States and makes a foray into Mexico City. He suggests three foci for Inter-American understanding of Toni Morrison's novel, *A Mercy:* comparisons, transfers and hemispheric interconnections. This novel explores a horde of issues transcending the narrow hemispheric intersections, according to Raab. Thus, it is an ur-American narrative. Claire F. Fox in her essay writes about the nonagenarian Peruvian artist, Fernando de Szyszlo, the "Last Modernist" , an exponent of Latin American art. His 'landscape' canvases, place-based, to be precise, take the spectator to be an actor in front of it. A cultural point of departure is noted in his writings too. Katherine E. Manthorne's article is an interesting read, in which she points out that in the early period of the 20th century, like-minded artists loomed large in the art-school scenario in Paris, Madrid, Mexico City and New York. The intercultural confluence in the heart of New York through the artwork of artists from different nations and with different identities is, no doubt, laudable. Social media, online identities, often project more than one self of a person and therein lies the crux of the question that keeps doing rounds these days, 'Are they transient or permanent?' A personal reflection from Niamh Thornton is quite timely and necessary. Creating limits into the 'private' and the 'public' selves is often difficult, though navigating makes it easy. Thornton is so hopeful with the future of Social Networking that she thinks, 'transience can obviously become permanence.'

Thus, these thirteen essays deal with varying angles of Inter-American Studies, raising queries on sundry issues and converging on compelling answers to nagging issues of contemporary times like blurring the boundaries between nations, between continents even, through literature, music, art, internet and culture.

The concluding section of the book, Part III titled "Power, Politics and Asymmetries" deals with the nitty-gritty of Political and Ideological issues that influence the Inter-American power

structure and entanglements. Raussert remarks, “The chapters explore a wide range of criteria that have shaped colonial, postcolonial and neocolonial relationships within the Americas.”[Raussert, 9] Entangled spaces that Inter-American relations stand upon are also the grist to the mill for some essays. Raussert has brilliantly grouped the essays in this Section, quite cogently, spending much thought on this specific order. Julia Roth’s essay looks into the en-gendering of the colonized places and where in most cases gender hierarchy resulted relegating the women to the ‘passive, sensual, fragile and mentally inferior’ levels. Segueing from the coloniality of gender, Roth concentrates upon ‘racial hierarchies and structural entanglements in the global economy’ thus opening up thoughts on third spaces and border thinking. Barbara Buchenau’s article focuses on indigenous agriculture , referring back to Cain who was referred to as ‘tiller of the land’ in Genesis 4. Barbara quite interestingly concentrates on the native agriculture which played a considerable role in the ‘colonization of the Americas’. It is really intriguing to learn that the Northeast of North America , a Biblical landscape, and thus incorporated into the matrix of Judeo-Christian history is a pointer to the success of the colonial endeavors. Rüdiger Kunow places Americas as a space , not just geographical, but economic, military, political , cultural as well as biological. Ecology is taken as a base by this writer on which features of socio-cultural space are considered, analyzed and discussed. Kunow goes to an extent of dealing with case studies of the diseases causing ‘hemispheric precariousness in inter-Americas’ which have their base in ecology, in a broader sense, biology.

Mary Louis Pratt and Brian Rozema focus upon the linguistic arena, the former upon the futuristic effect of language on imperialism and the latter on a particular variety of tongue spoken in the Hawai’ian Islands. In the former’s article, there is a positive note of all-inclusiveness of multiligualism, which helps the exploited class to demand redress or to plot against the continuance of imperialism. But in the latter’s article there is a critical note of seeing the language suffer less popularity though keen and concerning assay might make the situation less grim or despondent.

Gerardo Gutierrez Cham in his essay talks about annulling the status of ‘subaltern’ in the Indias through the old concept of ‘Parrhesia’, that is, cocking a snook at the confinement and oppression of slavery, some slaves would raise their voice in protest in order to realize their own rights, however modicum that might seem. Subaltern does not remain a subaltern anymore if he can speak, says Gayatri Spivak. Case studies are interestingly done by Gerardo. Sergio Costa is concerned with the issue of anti-racism in Brazil and the Americas, more widely. Imagined space of the Black Atlantic, no doubt, demands a close alliance between the U.S. and Brazil. This essay expresses concern of the shift from the real to the imagined space, to a considerable extent. Bourdieu and Wacquant’s critique are somewhat re-considered and reconstructed. The question of imperialism, the nagging issue of ‘race and inequality in Brazil’, and, finally the issue of ‘transnational anti-racist movement’ in relation to the Black Atlantic form the crux of this essay.

To quote Sergio Costa:

> The conceptual repertoire of the Black Atlantic—very much based on observations about the British Empire—must certainly be widened in order to grasp the complexity of Inter-American racism and anti-racism. … Also the connections between the Black Atlantic and the Black Pacific should be better explored. (347)

Deborah Dorotinsky in her essay, deals with the Mexico Indigena archive, the proper archival of 'photographic ethnographic collections' and lastly she deals with the challenges the non-artistic images line up to the ordered discipline of art history. This integration of 'internal others' in Mexico is quite interesting to note, though Europe has a long history of similar archiving in anthropology, art, and many such similar things. Anibal Quijano stresses upon De/Coloniality of Power in Latin America which might ensure 'an alternative social life'. He talks about 'development' in Latin America by annulling Eurocentric hegemony. And then, the essay focuses mostly on Global Coloniality of Power., its crisis and new resistance.

Alejandra Bottinelli Wolleter in her article highlights how the intellectual discourse fails to come up with the real picture of Latin American countries like Mexico and Peru, failing to do justice to the 'heterogeneities and border identities' in these countries. In fact, she deals with the role of the intellectuals in the Latin American context.

Karla Slocum in her seminal essay on the African diaspora, the Caribbean and Oklahoma, points out how black Oklahoma and Caribbean region are at once Inter-American and African in diaspora. Slocum takes Oklahoma and St. Lucia as the cases in point. And doing so, she has really thrown a gauntlet at the 'too easy and sometimes over-stated divides of space and place', by placing the Caribbean in Oklahoma and Oklahoma in the Caribbean.

Paula Prescod in her article narrates the story of the Garinagu[plural of Garifuna], who went on exile following certain chain of events and the writer positions the Garinagu-Carib experience within Weilina philosophy. The spiritual undertones of Weil's philosophy is in sync with the Garifuna endeavors to re-route to their homeland. Their re-routing of culture , too, has not been lost sight of by this researcher. Beautifully she brings rootedness and routedness on an even keel, as she says,

> To the extent that Garifuna are exiled peoples, the philosophy has all its relevance: "[Uprooting] reaches its highest degree when there is massive deportation"(Weil, Simone. *L'Enracinement: Prelude a une Declaration des Devoirs Envers l'etre Humain.* Paris: Gallimard, 1949, 2014.print. p.62). However, it would be interesting to consider whether the sense of rootedness may take on other forms and whether uprootedness is the end-all and be-all of routing. (396)

Stefan Rinke and Karina Kriegesmann in their essay, written jointly, takes us back to the days of First World War, in which Latin America as well as the United States of America had been grossly affected. The present writers even claim that the Mexican Revolution in 1910 preceded the First World War, rather it sent shockwaves to Latin America, reeling under the imminent intimidation of the global violence. They throw a barrage of queries too: "How and in what areas did the United States exert and gain influence in Latin America during the war? What were the local and regional characteristics and consequences of the outburst of global violence in the Americas?" In the successive sections, they strive hard to answer these queries though the answers are blowing in the wind!

Last but not least, Deborah Cohn's essay, the concluding one in this stupendous volume of thirty-seven essays, is a pointer to the question of considering the Latin American writers and culturists as at par, in the field, with their contemporaries in the U.S. The funds which poured in the U.S. universities, in the early nineteen-sixties for subsidizing the studies of the Cuba and Latin America, had an immediate aim: boosting up the mutual understanding among the 'Americas', thus benefitting national security. Cohn focuses on several 'serious programs' that came to stay in the 1960s, in which the Latin American authors like, Cortazar, Fuentes, Marquez and Llosa were discussed, studied, researched, 'fostering awareness of Latin America within and beyond the University curricula. She dabbles into political scenario, the leaders, their policies and the long-lasting effect of all these on the future prospects of exploring Latin America extensively. It is better to learn from the horse's mouth:

> Given the support of many Latin American writers for Cuba(at least during the 1960s), the promotion of this literature in the U.S. carried an inherent political charge. This did not go unnoticed by the State Department or U.S. philanthropies, which provided funding for a number of programs as venues for cultural outreach, although time and again they found that funding was no guarantee of a political outcome. The academics involved in these projects often walked a fine line. A number of them played to the Cold War context in their framing of their projects and their fundraising. However, some of them also took active roles in resisting Cold War policies and interventions and in ensuring that voices oppositional to U.S. policy were heard in their programs. (425)

Thus the long journey through the thirty-seven essays of this compendium is not just a thrilling experience as a reader, but, it will surely come handy for every researcher, scholar, student or teacher who would be interested to look into the entanglements between the Northern and Southern hemisphere of the Americas and the various facets of Inter-American studies. The editor compiled a stunning group of diverse essays into a coherent whole. Such a volume was much-awaited by the students and researchers of Inter-American Studies since long. Hope it caters to the need of all avid knowledge-seekers not only in the Americas but across the globe.

Kudos to all the contributors, and of course to the editor and author Raussert who has given this near-impossible task a proper shape. Let it be read and appreciated by the readers and therein lies the reward of this back-breaking endeavor, setting all constraints at naught.

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Sonny Angelo Castro Yáñez (Universidad de Guadalajara)

Book Review

"Insights in the Research of English, Nahuatl and Spanish: Languages and Cultures in Mexico" *Edited by Margarita Ramos Gódinez and Rosa Yáñez Rosales H. 2016. Universidad de Guadalajara. $220 paper. ISBN 978-607-742-704-9.*

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Insights is an accurate term to describe this first compiled book by former-students and professors of the *Maestría en Lenguas y Culturas Inglesas* (MELCI), as it is a well-developed step further into the advances of linguistic research in Latin America and specifically, Mexico. It provides a perspective of the linguistic situation in Mexico where the role and study of national languages such as Nahuatl and Spanish deals with a foreign language such as English and the linguistic and cultural relationships among these that can lead to a better understanding of the Mexican linguistic state. The book reports matters currently discussed as it is the necessity to adapt linguistic and language teaching studies and theories to local contexts, the role of English as an imperialistic force and its influence on foreign speakers and the changes in foreign countries in terms of weak language teaching areas such as pronunciation and interculturality, and finally it addresses the importance of investigating endangered indigenous languages as a tool for revitalization: "Documenting the language and studying it also contributes, in a way, to its maintenance" (Rodríguez & Yáñez 195).

The book is divided in three main sections: a) phonemes, morphemes and structures, b) attitudes, ideologies, and alternatives, c) variation through time and space. In the first section Meza studies teaching pronunciation in Mexico analyzing the different actors involved in ELT in Mexico whereas Rodríguez applies a contrastive study of compound verbs and phrasal verbs in English and Nahuatl. In the second section Mugford and Serrano focus on disagreement strategies used in Monterrey, Mexico. Lomelí elicits the attitudes towards English as a dominant language in Mexico. The third and fourth chapters of this section are dedicated to Chicano literature. Guzman's study proposes the use of Chicano literature in the English language classroom whilst Ramos and Quintero's research demonstrates the opinions, attitudes and beliefs towards interculturality through Chicano literature. The third section discusses in Rodríguez and Yañez's chapter a revisitation to linguistics studies in Nahuatl from a diachronic perspective, dialectal zones in Mexico and its linguistic differences and its role and vitality nowadays.

Concerning Nahuatl, Rodríguez & Yañez's study unfolds a detailed diachronic description of research studies made in Nahuatl since the Colonial period (17th century) to the present time. Afterwards it exposes a complete comparison from the phonetical, lexical, morphological and syntactic levels of the different dialectal zones of Nahuatl. This procedure allows the authors to discuss language variation in a diachronic and synchronic perspective and finally it demonstrates the current role and language vitality of Nahuatl in Mexico. It is in this context that Rodríguez presents a contrastive study between Nahuatl and English related to the use of directional particles in verbs in both languages. By the analysis of written data such as classical Nahuatl grammars and narrative texts in English from the 19th century, Rodríguez compared these two non-related languages. The chapter proposes new meanings to particles in Nahuatl language (speed) and establishes semantic patterns that can be classified for meanings and functions as

a technique to categorize them and for a better approach when teaching them to native and non-native speakers.

With regard to Spanish studies, Mugford and Serrano lay out how pragmatic theories might be unable to describe non-English speaking contexts such as disagreement strategies found in an oral corpus (PRESEA) of a dialectal zone of northern Mexico (Monterrey). Mugford and Serrano proved how different positive politeness discursive behaviors are used as a pragmalinguistics strategy to display disagreement, how *face* is protected by this mean and how closeness and cooperation are displayed within the same disagreement strategies.

Regarding English, Meza disserts about some specific problems of ELT in Mexico as it is the factors that affect teaching pronunciation, this is carried out through the gathering and analysis of a corpus composed by a school syllabus, grading tests and a survey of teachers and students' beliefs and attitudes towards learning and teaching pronunciation in the classroom.

Lomeli's research examines the attitudes, beliefs and experiences of Mexican speakers towards EFL by applying a questionnaire to English learners and teachers and a subsequent comparison with research in linguistic imperialism. The study suggests that cultural and linguistic imposition of English determines speakers' linguistic and cultural identity, and it demonstrate how English can be seen as a danger to native languages or there is a possibility to revert this trend assuming English not as a dominant language, but as a tool to know and value other cultures and languages stressing the urgency to: "raise cultural awareness and appreciation of cultural differences and promotion of native languages" (Lomelí 124).

Guzman's research delves into the issue of incorporating the intercultural competence in the language classroom by suggesting an applicable methodology and acknowledging the advantages in implementing activities to acquire and develop intercultural skills in the EFL class. This is proposed through the use of C*hicano literature*.

Ramos & Quintero's study is correlated to Guzman's, as it presents students and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards interculturality by the application and the quantitative and qualitative analysis of a survey with the results being categorized and contrasted with previous studies. The study demonstrated the need to change students' negative attitudes towards interculturality in the language classroom and how teachers' beliefs and college formation can be an inflection point to model students' perceptions and language environment regarding teaching intercultural competence by focusing on *cultural awareness* and *rich socialization*.

It is worth to mention that the focus of the book tends to be to English, as it is shown by the number of chapters presented. The main contributions to language learning are made in the field of ELT, not mentioning how the studies in other languages could be used in the language classroom. However, the main limitation that the book presents is the necessity to explore deeper the topics and results presented in each chapter, that is the reason this book can be considered

as the first volume from future works expanding the contributions already exposed. This is by mentioning the need of more studies in English, Nahuatl and Spanish to understand specific items of language and their relations and function in discourse.

The book brings attention to the need to modify and propose linguistic theories outside of the English-speaking world. It suggests superficially the application of linguistic policies to protect local languages and the impact that English could have in undeveloped countries where it has a social and cultural prominence over national languages. It remarks the importance in teaching pronunciation in ELT and the lack of these aspects in teachers' formation or schools' syllabus or grading criteria. The book also brings into the table the possibilities to expand language variety of Nahuatl and its possible impact on language use and position in people's perception and prestige.

The book can be of interest to language teachers as it raises the awareness in the importance of teaching language without diminishing other languages or cultures. It makes teachers conscious about students' perceptions and attitudes towards their linguistic identity, English as an imperialistic instrument and how Chicano literature is a valuable resource to teach interculturality in the language classroom and a positive influence for linguistic and cultural empathy to others. It is relevant to researchers that are interested in Mexican national languages and the relations originated for the inclusion of English, historical studies in indigenous languages and current studies regarding language vitality and beliefs/attitudes towards them.

Insights... is a contribution to the understanding of foreign language learning problems that arise in México. It details where teaching approaches can be failing, and it expresses the usefulness to integrate the intercultural competence and the necessity to change students' opinions towards this by working since language teachers' formation. It expands linguistic theories where Mexican context must be analyzed in a specific pragmatics framework, contributing to the understanding of Spanish in Mexico. It adds to the knowledge of the influence of English in the Mexican context and how it is perceived by EFL students and teachers and the different opinions and attitudes by arising the idea of *cultural awareness*. And it is a valuable source for new meanings and functions of English and Nahuatl in the semantic field, it provides a better understanding of Nahuatl verbs, the previous studies, the dialectal varieties and its linguistic differences through the time, its current status and the importance of future researches to expand the limited knowledge about indigenous languages.