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**The Empire Bites Back:**  
**Literary Cannibalism in the Extractiono(s)cene**

**by**

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Philosophy in English and Comparative Literary Studies

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## **DECLARATION AND INCLUSION OF MATERIAL FROM A PRIOR THESIS**

I declare that no part of this thesis has been used or published before.

I also declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own and no part of it is the result of collaborative research.

I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

## ABSTRACT

Our current climate crisis is also a broader crisis of social inequality. It stems from material histories and developments, which themselves find their origins in the development of the capitalist system through colonial expansion. My doctoral research seeks to find ways to identify how these issues are exposed in specific cultural productions emerging from former colonies. This thesis takes the form of a comparative study focusing on works produced in countries on the American and African continents. This is because the transatlantic connections between them, their shared history of colonialism and (neo-)imperialism, socio-economic, environmental and political developments, and their shared linguistic backgrounds, provide a basis on which to build a new literary methodological approach. In my project, I weave together rewriting practices and the cannibalism metaphor and propose ‘literary cannibalism’ as a new way of grasping the objective thrust of these literary rewritings.

Cannibalism is a fantasy projection erected on the prior conception of peoples from former colonies as savages. This thesis proposes that it would make better sense to describe as ‘cannibalistic’ the ‘proto-capitalist’ impulse behind mercantilism and colonial ventures, still present in contemporary neo-imperial practices of extractivism. I establish literary cannibalism as a decolonial mode of writing. It identifies how rewriting the ‘western literary canon’ illuminates the history of extractive capitalism. My thesis is divided into two sections. Part one focuses on the development of this new methodological approach by engaging primarily with theories emerging from former colonies. Part two undertakes a systematic analysis of case studies using this methodology. I analyse a wide corpus of literary texts chosen from a space that I call the ‘extractiono(s)cene’, which traces the movements of the Atlantic Trade route and its connections. These literary texts are all examined in their original contexts and languages: English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

## PREFACE

### *HYGRA KELEUTHA:* THE LIQUID PATHS OF LITERARY CANNIBALISM

In defining the ancient Greeks' relation to the sea, Marie-Claire Beaulieu notes the following:

The sea is ever-present in the landscape and is an important part of everyday life, since it provides sustenance and a path for exchange and communication with distant lands. Yet it conceals a myriad of creatures in its depths, some familiar, like fish, and others born of human imagination, such as mermaids, Nereids, and sea monsters. Similarly, sea travel can lead to neighboring towns and regions, but myths also tell the story of bold sailors who crossed the farthest reaches of the sea, all the way to the horizon. What they encounter there varies from terrifying visions of death to paradisiacal islands inhabited by the gods. The reality of the sea thus constantly overlaps with its imaginary characteristics and makes the sea a point of communication between the visible and the invisible. The sea is a major feature on the Greek map of the world, but it holds what is perhaps an even more crucial place in the geographies of the mind.<sup>1</sup>

The boundlessness of the sea as described in Homeric texts implies a certain impossibility of fully grasping and understanding it in ancient Greek conceptions, though it appears always as a roadway, as the *hygra keleutha*, the liquid roads.<sup>2</sup> The sea as a two-dimensional space that facilitates travel and trade is crucial for this thesis. First because it is the backdrop against which a central type of 'commercial' travel, which has importantly defined the African and American continents, has taken place: the triangular Atlantic trade. Second, because this conceptualisation of the sea as a space, allowing connections and trade, is at the heart of the ontological and epistemological challenges that this thesis tackles. The commodification of space and people during the Atlantic trade persists today in our contemporary socio-economic system. For this reason, I will aim to demonstrate that this commodification is central to the development of our capitalist system.

Considering these issues, the main aim and scope of this thesis is to propose the theorisation of a new methodological approach to literature emerging from a number of former colonies on the American and African continents. This wide corpus is contained in the term 'extractiono(s)cene', which I will define in my introductory chapter (Chapter One below), and the methodology aims to theorise 'literary cannibalism' as a mode of writing, established in

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<sup>1</sup> Marie-Claire Beaulieu, *The Sea in the Greek Imagination* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Beaulieu, pp. 22-23.

my methodological chapter (Chapter Two below). Literary cannibalism in the extractiono(s)cene follows the liquid paths of colonialism and (neo-)imperialism because the metaphor of cannibalism, as I conceive it, directly addresses the continuing effects and impacts of proto-capitalism and neo-liberalism, as I will discuss in more detail below.

I have divided this thesis into four main chapters. In the first, introductory, chapter I lay out the theoretical basis on which this new methodological approach is built, considering other studies and fields with which this thesis engages. I also aim to explain the reasoning behind the demarcation of the corpus studied here, bearing in mind the constraints that a project like this imposes. In the second chapter, I develop my methodological approach as a mode of writing which is multi-layered and works on different levels simultaneously, all of which are entangled. This methodological approach is then tested in the third and fourth chapters by analysing a wide corpus of literary works emerging in and from the extractiono(s)cene. This assessment of the methodology takes the form of a comparative investigation of literatures written in different languages, forms and genres, in a period spanning the early twentieth to early twenty-first centuries. The case studies will be analysed differently with the aim of illustrating and illuminating how the constitutive elements of this methodology work.

Finally, it is important to note a few things before I begin. When I engage with the epistemological and ontological violence of occidental and Eurocentric perspectives, I do so in consideration of a history of colonisation and imperialism which has shaped much of our intellectual, cultural and material world. My aim is not to undermine all writing coming from the west. I do not wish to conflate such a vast expanse of different languages and cultures into the colonial metropolises only and thereby obscure the uneven relations existing within what is understood as 'the west'. Despite this, it remains important, first, to recognise Europe and the United States' benefit from imperial relations and continued uneven power dynamics with the rest of the world, and second, to bear in mind the need to decolonise the content and form of many disciplines and approaches. Because the scope and aim of this thesis is quite ambitious and most of it was written during a global pandemic, it continues to be a work in progress.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION:

### THE MONSTROUS RELATIONS OF COLONIALISM

Several questions and interests motivated the undertaking of this doctoral thesis. I am concerned with interrogating economic, environmental and racial inequalities as well as their entanglements within and in relation to culture. Because our current climate crisis is also a broader crisis of inequality, stemming from material histories that find their origins in the development of the capitalist system through colonial expansion, my exploration seeks to find ways to identify how such issues are exposed in specific cultural productions emerging from former colonies. One particular gargantuan corpus of literary works seemed to distinguish itself from the abundance of artistic and cultural works produced in former colonies. This was a body of works commonly referred to as ‘adaptations’ or ‘rewritings’.<sup>3</sup> I have been especially interested in rewritings originating from the American and the African continents, since these are engaged explicitly or implicitly with the problematically named ‘western literary canon’, which I will call the ‘colonial literary archive’ throughout this thesis.<sup>4</sup> I do this to avoid using the word ‘canon’ further as well as to point to its nature working as an archive, an element which I will discuss further in details later in this chapter. By the ‘western literary canon’ here I mean works emerging in Anglo-American and West European nations that have been

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<sup>3</sup> In this thesis I use the term rewriting because of the stronger performative and active meaning of the term in contrast with adaptation, which has been defined widely in the following works: Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2006), Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (Routledge, 2002), Timothy Corrigan, “Defining Adaptation”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. by Thomas Leitch (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2017), Dennis Cutchins, “Bakhtin, Intertextuality, and Adaptation”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. by Thomas Leitch (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2017), and André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (Routledge, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> My use of the agglomeration ‘western literary canon’ stems from the definition of and debates surrounding the so-called ‘western canon’ as discussed by a number of authors especially John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (The University of Chicago Press, 1993), Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1994), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Routledge, 1994), John Marx, “Postcolonial Literature and the Western Literary Canon”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. by Neil Lazarus (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 83–96 and Ankhi Mukherjee, *What is a Classic? Postcolonial Rewriting and Invention of the Canon* (Stanford University Press, 2014). My use of the term ‘colonial literary archive’ aims to associate certain ‘canonical’ works (as understood in the literature of the above footnote) with a specific colonial tradition. Additionally, the term archive serves to indicate one major issue with a categorisation such as ‘the canon’, which pertains to a religious tradition and refers to the preservation of sanctified persons following their death (see footnote 12). The presence of death and Christian religion intrinsic to ‘the canon’ allow me to associate it to the archive as a dead material space, which Saidiya Hartman describes as “a mortuary”, see more details in p. 41 of this chapter.

considered as masterpieces of literary works and often have been seen as superior as any that could be created in other spaces.

While the sheer number of these works is too high to make a systematic study of them possible in any one thesis, their similarities provide the grounds for a comparative study. Moreover, the very process of selecting which works to address identifies common threads across them, which, in turn, suggests the need for the adoption of specific – and new – methodologies. This thesis proposes a comparative study focusing on works emerging from countries on the American and African continents, because the transatlantic connections between them, their shared history of colonialism and imperialism, their subsequent socio-economic, environmental and political developments, and their shared linguistic background, all provide a basis on which to start building an interpretative structure. I am aware of the potential reductionism the previous sentence might seem to imply: the historical experiences of every country are widely divergent, specific and complex, as are their linguistic contexts. However, since important connections exist, considering them together might allow us to think about literary practices in a new and different way; this might permit us to develop new ideas in the tackling of critical socio-economic, political and environmental issues.

During my investigation I have found another common thread that runs through the corpus of works in addition to that of rewriting: this is the presence of cannibalism, both literal and metaphorical. In this thesis, I weave these two threads together through a new theorisation of what I propose to call ‘literary cannibalism’ – though, as I will show in Chapter Two below, the term itself already exists. Literary cannibalism, as I conceptualise it, develops from a range of works by authors from formerly colonised territories who have employed the metaphor of cannibalism as a way of understanding their own and others’ cultural and creative processes. Because some authors in this thesis play both the roles of critics and fiction writers, another issue was raised, namely that of intentionality. Much postmodernist scholarship, which has influenced contemporary research, adheres to the idea of the ‘death of the author’.<sup>5</sup> While I see this as very valuable in certain contexts, in the case of postcolonial and indigenous literatures and epistemologies this type of approach can be counter-productive and reductionist. I do not pretend to speak for the authors studied here, or to know their intentions, however it is necessary to take their persons and lives into account since they speak from locations that have

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<sup>5</sup> I refer here to Michel Foucault’s and Roland Barthes’s critical works in Michel Foucault, “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?”, *Bulletin de la société française de Philosophie*, 63.3 (1969) and Roland Barthes, “La Mort de l’auteur”, in *Le bruissement de la langue* (Seuil, 1994), pp. 61–67. For more on this debate, also see Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, Third Edition (Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

been repeatedly silenced, marginalised and exploited. I also recognise my own extractive practice here by engaging with these texts and locations as a white European scholar in the privileged space of Academia and take full responsibility for it.

It is critical to consider context because these works are part of wider socio-economic, political, historical and environmental developments. Not only do specific contexts influence these works, but, I argue, they, in turn, also impact the contexts in which they are written. The works play a role in exposing uneven developments and unequal social relations which stem from colonialism and imperialism. These ideas have been considered before through different angles in much scholarship to which this thesis is greatly indebted, especially in the field of materialist literary studies. A principal point of departure for me is Lucien Goldmann's work on literary structures. As he notes in his seminal work *Le dieu caché* (1956):

Une idée, une œuvre ne reçoit sa véritable signification que lorsqu'elle est intégrée à l'ensemble d'une vie et d'un comportement. De plus, il arrive souvent que le comportement qui permet de comprendre l'œuvre n'est pas celui de l'auteur, mais celui d'un groupe social (*auquel il peut ne pas appartenir*) et notamment, lorsqu'il s'agit d'ouvrages importants, celui d'une classe sociale.<sup>6</sup>

Goldmann arrives at the meaning of an artistic work by discovering a 'categorical structure' within it and construing this in homology with the specific social formations and tendencies that constitute the conditions of its emergence. 'Postcolonial' writings, by definition, emanate from social circumstances framed significantly by the colonial order; they are obliged to come into existence in relation to traditions, formations and institutions formed and consolidated under colonialism. I shall argue that 'cannibalism' as a metaphor is most apposite in designating *colonial* practice and behaviour; and that literary cannibalism as practised by 'postcolonial' writers is therefore best understood in terms of the exposition and denunciation of writings of the colonial literary archive. The central aim of this thesis is to theorise how authors engage with this archive, which is a repository of colonial and imperial history, by looking, first, at the deconstructive aspects of their rewriting project, which exposes colonialist practices and oppression, and, second, at the reconstructive ones, which aim to envision decolonised identities, ontologies and ways of living. These two movements do not happen separately but synchronically through my conceptualisation of 'literary cannibalism in

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<sup>6</sup> Lucien Goldmann, *Le dieu caché: Étude sur la vision tragique dans les 'Pensées' de Pascal et dans le théâtre de Racine*. (Librairie Gallimard, 1962), 16-17, my emphasis. Goldmann's work shares with much non-western in that it has been marginalised, yet it retains its importance to contemporary literary materialist criticism, I believe.

the extractiono(s)cene'. Throughout this thesis I theorise literary cannibalism as a mode of writing and the extractiono(s)cene as a reading structure holding together the corpus investigated in the last two chapters of this thesis.

Literary cannibalism as a mode of writing affiliates itself with the traditions developed by many scholars of the “priority of the political interpretation of literary texts” as Fredric Jameson puts it: “It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity”.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, it also engages with an environmental interpretation, which is entangled and indissociable from the political and economic ones, as Patricia Yaeger suggests in asking the following about Jameson’s concept: “Does this model of the political unconscious also describe an energy unconscious?”<sup>8</sup> Moreover, this entanglement is also necessarily tied to our current climate crisis, as Andreas Malm notes: “perhaps global warming is, [...] a political unconscious that already pervades culture”.<sup>9</sup> This is critical in considering formerly colonised spaces in which imperial extractive forms of exploitation have exacerbated and precipitated the consequences of anthropogenic climate change, as I will discuss throughout this thesis in more detail. For this purpose, I theorise literary cannibalism as a mode of writing which identifies the political energy unconscious pointing to the indissoluble relation between socio-economic, political and environmental (in the broader sense of energy and resources) and their presence in the “deep structure” or “base” of the texts studied here.<sup>10</sup> Thus, I define literary cannibalism as an epistemological lens through which the mode of writing of these authors can be interpreted in the context of the extractiono(s)cene as a reading structure. This mode of writing is theorised on the basis of ‘postcolonial’ theoretical and literary works, analysing ‘postcolonial’ rewritings of what is, in many ways, a literary historical archive. Indeed, here I consider the ‘western

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<sup>7</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Routledge, 1989), pp. 17, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Yaeger, “Editor’s Column: Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power, and Other Energy Sources”, *PMLA*, 126.2 (2011), 305–10, p. 309.

<sup>9</sup> Andreas Malm, *The Progress of This Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World* (Verso, 2018), p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Here I refer to the materialist approaches to linguistics and culture developed from Chomsky’s work on the one hand and Marx’s on the other. For a definition of “deep structure” in linguistics, see Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (MIT Press, 1969). For “base” and “ideology”, I refer to the approach that sees linguistic-symbolic meanings as utilised to encode, produce, and reproduce power and dominance relations, in line with Marx’s claim that “[it] is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness” in Karl Marx, *Preface to a Critique of Political Economy* (Electric Book Company, 2000), p. 7. For more on historical materialist approaches please see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, trans. by Christopher John Arthur (Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. by Ben Brewster (Monthly Review Press, 1971), Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (Verso, 1980), and Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (Verso, 2007).

literary canon' as a 'colonial literary archive' and will refer to it as such in order to demystify the concept of canonisation.

Still today, canonisation holds excessive sway over the categorisation of what makes a 'good' cultural production and it is deeply intertwined with different economic implications.<sup>11</sup> In addition, it is important to note that the term 'canonisation' originates from Christianity, like much religious discourse that has been co-opted throughout the history of western colonisation and imperialism, it is complicit with the different structural inequalities that continue to promote occidental ontological and epistemological hegemony.<sup>12</sup> To avoid using this term then, and to identify this body of work as a type of archive, I will refer to it throughout this thesis as the 'colonial literary archive'. Here I will investigate how rewritings of this archive have the objective of redressing years of intellectual, cultural and material oppression and dispossession, of exposing uneven developments that our current economic system maintains. I have kept the term 'postcolonial' in inverted commas throughout the beginning of this introduction because of the fallacious temporal and historical implications that the term contains, even though it has been accepted as a term that goes beyond the meaning its prefix indicates.<sup>13</sup> Another problem is the fact that we cannot possibly see our current world as a 'postcolonial' one, as Neil Lazarus argues in speaking about social developments even in the twenty-first century:

For, conjoining violence and military conquest with expropriation, pillage, and undisguised grabbing for resources, these developments have demonstrably rejoined the twenty-first century to a long and as yet unbroken history, wrongly supposed by postcolonial theory to have come to a close *circa* 1975. This is the history of capitalist imperialism.<sup>14</sup>

While formal colonialism comes to an end, imperial practices do not; they are maintained socio-politically and economically through racial and structural inequalities across the globe. In this introduction, I aim to show how cannibalism is a more appropriate metaphor for the 'proto-capitalist' impulse behind mercantilism and colonial ventures, which are continued in contemporary neo-imperial and neo-liberal practices of extractivism. Here, by 'proto-capitalist' I refer to the earlier form of the economic system we know today as

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<sup>11</sup> I refer here for instance to prizes such as the Nobel or the French *Prix Renaudot*, etc. Because, as I will discuss in chapter two in considering Yambo Ouologuem, there continues to be a double standard in the canonisation of non-western authors and the very fact that such a canonisation is often needed for these authors to be read in the first place speaks to deeper and broader systemic inequalities, which this thesis aims to address directly.

<sup>12</sup> See "Canonize", *Merriam-Webster*, 2020 <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/canonize>>.

<sup>13</sup> Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> Lazarus, p. 15.

capitalism. This activity lets the endless cycle of capital's primitive accumulation utterly consume its labour force, hence menacing its own perpetuation. It is specifically this form of capitalism that the metaphor of cannibalism illustrates most adequately. Crystal Bartolovich argues that contemporary capitalism is indeed more easily compared to parasitism than cannibalism because the latter is a metaphor suggesting an absolute consumption of the labour force, and as such would not allow for the ceaseless productivity of capitalism.<sup>15</sup> Cannibalism hence is fitting to describe what I call 'proto-capitalism' as described by Bartolovich:

Emergent industrial capital had apparently learned the lessons of increasing its appetite for labour without learning so well the necessary limits to this appetite. In this early stage, it can be seen as tending towards a (self-destructive) cannibalism, understood as total incorporation of its necessary other, labour-power, embodied in the labour – thus threatening not only the reproduction of the labour pool, but of capital itself. Cannibalism understood this way represents the necessary – but impossible – *Heißhunger* of capitalism. That capitalism is, on the one hand, driven to consume labour power utterly, and, on the other hand, absolutely prevented from doing so if accumulation is to continue, marks one of its principal contradictions. It is not very surprising, then, that cannibals arrive on the scene with capital's primitive accumulation. Cannibal appetite is essential to capitalist/colonial forces which reinforce proto-*Heißhunger* as a general acquisitive energy even as they undertake a repression of its 'savage' (that is, unlimited) form.<sup>16</sup>

I argue that it is particularly proto-capitalism that is better associated with cannibalism. By proto-capitalism, I also refer to activities such as mercantilism, which I understand as being the catalyst for colonial and imperial projects, since the exploitation of peoples and lands is often 'excused' and 'justified' through some form of colonisation.<sup>17</sup> There have been debates as to whether such projects came before capitalism or if mercantilism or slavery came first, and while our contemporary economic system has evolved from its previous versions, this debate is, in my opinion, somewhat akin to the one questioning whether the egg or the chicken came first. Mercantilism itself motivated colonisation, slavery and extractive modes of agriculture like the plantation. As Sidney W. Mintz notes while the plantation system might not be

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<sup>15</sup> Crystal Bartolovich, "Consumerism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Cannibalism", in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 204–37, pp. 214–215, p. 224.

<sup>16</sup> Bartolovich, p. 225.

<sup>17</sup> Here I refer to Wallerstein's definition of mercantilism in Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750* (University of California Press, 2011) and to Mahoney's definition of "Mercantilist colonialism" in James Mahoney, *Colonialism and Postcolonial Development: Spanish America in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge University Press, 1984).

capitalistic in the contemporary sense of the term, it can be seen, at the very least, as its direct precursor:

the plantation mode of production before 1850, based as it was on slave labor, differs greatly from the so-called capitalist mode of production, the labor power of which is purchased on an impersonal market, as are the other factors of production, and it would be wrong to treat the plantation system as “capitalistic” in the same way that the British factory system of the nineteenth century was capitalistic. Yet to detach the plantations from the emergent world economy that spawned them, or to rule out their contribution to the accumulation of capital in world centers, would be equally mistaken.<sup>18</sup>

In Mintz’s words, despite the fact that even if planters were not capitalists in the contemporary sense of the term, just as “the slaves were not proletarians”, “it also remains true that [plantations,] these curious agroindustrial enterprises[,] nourished certain capitalist classes at home *as they were becoming more capitalistic*”.<sup>19</sup> Achille Mbembe also considers the “structure of our modernity” as cannibalistic: its implementation as such coincides with the Atlantic trade; hence reinforcing the crucial relation between proto-capitalism and cannibalism: “la structure cannibale de notre modernité, [...] se met en place au moment de la traite des Nègres et [...] *s’en nourrit* des siècles durant. Le monde qui émerge de cette structure cannibale est fait d’innombrables ossements humains ensevelis sous l’océan et qui, petit à petit, font squelette et se dotent de chair”.<sup>20</sup> Here I see Mbembe’s words pointing to the slave trade and slavery itself as an institution that can be compared to cannibalism through the image of a cannibalistic modern world materialising and fleshing itself out from the innumerable bones buried in the Atlantic. This is also materially the case if we consider the fact that the remains of the enslaved peoples thrown overboard during the Middle Passage are still present in the ocean today:

Anne Gardulski tells me that because nutrients cycle through the ocean (the process of organisms eating organisms is the cycling of nutrients through the ocean), the atoms of

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<sup>18</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin Books, 1986), p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> Mintz, p. 61, emphasis in original. Additionally, see C.L.R. James who compares enslaved people to a form of proletariat: “The slaves worked on the land, and, like revolutionary peasants everywhere, they aimed at the extermination of their oppressors. But working and living together in gangs of hundreds on the huge sugar-factories which covered the North Plain, they were closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time” and “[w]hen three centuries ago the slaves came to the West Indies, they entered directly into the large-scale agriculture of the sugar plantation, which was a modern system. It further required that the slaves live together in a social relation far closer than any proletariat of the time. The cane when reaped had to be rapidly transported to what was factory production. The product was shipped abroad for sale. Even the cloth the slaves wore and the food they ate was imported. The Negroes, therefore, from the very start lived a life that was in its essence a modern life. That is their history-as far as I have been able to discover” in C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Vintage Books, 1989), pp. 85-86 and p. 392.

<sup>20</sup> Achille Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre* (Découverte, 2013), pp. 259-260, my emphasis.

those people who were thrown overboard are out there in the ocean even today. They were eaten, organisms processed them, and those organisms were in turn eaten and processed, and the cycle continues. Around 90 to 95 percent of the tissues of things that are eaten in the water column get recycled. As Anne told me, “Nobody dies of old age in the ocean.” The amount of time it takes for a substance to enter the ocean and then leave the ocean is called residence time. Human blood is salty, and sodium, Gardulski tells me, has a residence time of 260 million years.<sup>21</sup>

Sharpe’s discussion with Gardulski provides an additional layer of meaning to Derek Walcott’s famous poem “The Sea is History”. This is critical for my argument as the relation between the ocean, and waterways more broadly, and literary cannibalism will be explored in further details throughout the three following chapters. More importantly, Mbembe’s and Sharpe’s words point to the space of proto-capitalism as a form of cemetery, which will also be discussed further below in relation to the conceptualisation of the archive as a mortuary and of (proto-)capitalism as a “necrocene” and a space of extinction.

I differentiate between colonialism and imperialism simply by using the former to refer to the socio-political system put in place over the long sixteenth-century by emerging European nation-states in order to legitimate their exploitation of their colonies’ resources. While the term imperialism refers specifically to the economic activity developing from this exploitation, which is not always legitimised by a colonial state, and which survives beyond the end of formal colonialism. This leads me to another important terminological issue. Indeed, while the term ‘postcolonial’ is generally differentiated from ‘post-colonial’ – in which the hyphen emphasises the temporal dimension bestowed by the prefix – contemporary continuation of specific practices and behaviours – which have allowed the rise and development of colonialism and imperialism – show the pitfalls of the term ‘postcolonial’.<sup>22</sup> For this purpose, in this thesis I engage with the concept of decoloniality, as defined by authors such as Anibal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo, Frantz Fanon and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, to point to the necessary processes that must be undertaken following the historical end of formal colonisation to decolonise former colonies not only intellectually and culturally, but also politically and

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<sup>21</sup> Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Duke University Press, 2016), pp. 40-41. The man-eating process described in this quote can interestingly be considered a type of regenerative anthropophagy rather than the destructive cannibal consumption enacted through slavery. This is crucial, since as I will discuss throughout this chapter and the next, the act and metaphor of cannibalism as understood through indigenous epistemologies often points to this process which aims to preserve rather than destroy. (The difference between anthropophagy and cannibalism will be discussed shortly).

<sup>22</sup> For discussions on these terminologies see for example Neil Larsen, “Imperialism, Colonialism, Postcolonialism”, in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, 1st edn (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2005), pp. 23–52.

economically.<sup>23</sup> Hence, I establish literary cannibalism as a mode of writing which identifies how decolonial rewritings of the colonial literary archive shed light on this history of (proto-)capitalist imperialism, which can be understood as extractive capitalism in Macarena Gómez-Barris's words:

*Extractivismo*, as extractive capitalism is known in the Américas, indicates an economic system that engages in thefts, borrowings, and forced removals, violently reorganizing social life as well as the land by thieving resources from Indigenous and Afro-descendent territories. [...] While racial capitalism refers to the process that historically subordinated African and Indigenous populations, extractivism references the dramatic material change to social and ecological life that underpin this arrangement. Furthermore, the racial logics of South American states are expanded through new forms of extractive capitalism.<sup>24</sup>

It is because of the importance and omnipresence of extraction in (proto-)capitalist and colonial times that literary cannibalism as a mode of writing is accompanied by the extractiono(s)cene as a reading structure that weaves together the corpus studied in this thesis. Specifically, “[e]xtractive capitalism, then, violently reorganizes territories as well as continually perpetuates dramatic social and economic inequalities that delimit Indigenous sovereignty and national autonomy”.<sup>25</sup> This dynamic is identified in the corpus of the rewritings studied here, a term which itself goes beyond the concept of ‘adaptation’, as discussed above, since it refers to an action that, by *re-writing*, aims to shed light as well as redress these uneven relations by establishing a new version of the given narratives and histories of extractive capitalism. In order to clarify how literary cannibalism as a mode of writing in the extractiono(s)cene works, in this introductory chapter, I will firstly show how cannibalism is an appropriate metaphor to refer to proto-capitalism, thus detaching it from its association with the formerly colonised space which saw it as a feature of the ‘savage other’. Then I will define the latter term. Subsequently, in chapter two I will theorise literary cannibalism before applying ‘literary

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<sup>23</sup> See Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (East African Publishers, 1992), Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina”, in *Pensar (en) los intersticios: teoría y práctica de la crítica poscolonial*, ed. by Santiago Castro-Gómez, Oscar Guardiola-Rivera, and Carmen Millán de Benavides (Instituto Pensar, 1999), pp. 117–31, Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (La découverte, 2002); Walter D. Mignolo, “La opción descolonial”, *Revista Letral*, 1 (2008), 4–22.

<sup>24</sup> Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Duke University Press, 2017), p. xvii. See also Eduardo Gudynas, “Extracciones, extractivismos y extrahecciones. Un marco conceptual sobre la apropiación de recursos naturales”, *Observatorio del desarrollo*, 18 (2013), 1–18, *Extractive Imperialism in the Americas: Capitalism’s New Frontier*, ed. by James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer (Haymarket Books, 2014), and Martín Arboleda, *Planetary Mine: Territories of Extraction under Late Capitalism* (Verso, 2020).

<sup>25</sup> Gómez-Barris, p. xviii.

cannibalism in the extractiono(s)cene’ to a corpus of case studies investigated in chapters three and four.

## WHO IS THE REAL CANNIBAL? PROTO-CAPITALISM AS CANNIBALISM

Maggie Kilgour writes that

[t]he need for food exposes the vulnerability of individual identity, enacted at a wider social level in the need for exchanges, communion, and commerce with others, through which the individual is absorbed into a larger corporate body. Eating is the most basic of all these needs, which it can also stand for, and in most cultures it is regulated by strict social practices that determine what can and what cannot be eaten. As “you are what you eat,” eating is a means of asserting and controlling individual and also cultural identity.<sup>26</sup>

Eating materialises both the body and social practices which become markers to regulate and define human categories and humanity itself. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* for instance, the gods create the mirror image of Gilgamesh, a man who is his equal and who will fight him and subsequently become his friend, because at the beginning the epic’s protagonist tyrannises the very people he is supposed to protect.<sup>27</sup> Enkidu is at first a wild man, feeding on grass with other animals: he is the uncivilised mirror image of Gilgamesh. One of the first things Enkidu needs to learn to become civilised is to eat properly: “[h]ow to eat the bread Enkidu knew not, / how to drink ale he had never been shown” (II.P90-91). Thirteen hundred years later, in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus likewise often seeks to discover whether the inhabitants of the lands he reaches are “men, eaters of bread”, hence establishing one element that would determine their humanity, according to *his* perception of what humanity is and despite the possible differences across cultures.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, eating can forge bonds through commensality, which is why unacceptable eating practices often signify much more than a poor diet; rather, they are an indicator of alterity. Commensality and hospitality being close concepts, Polyphemus’s (the cyclops) objectionable anthropophagy represents an absolute otherness against which all of Odysseus’s core values stand ranged.

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<sup>26</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*, trans. by Andrew George (Penguin Books, 1999), I.67-74.

<sup>28</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey of Homer*, trans. by Richmond Lattimore (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2007), IX.89.

Anthropophagy in the *Odyssey* appears at different times and not just in the cyclopic encounter. Odysseus also comes into contact with the Laestrygonians, a tribe of cannibals, characters who can be seen as a classical prototype of the savage man-eating monsters described in medieval and renaissance travelogues. Finally, when Odysseus reaches home, before he can complete his homecoming, he has to deal with the suitors who have taken over his household and who are consuming it. The latter are described as metaphorical cannibals by Telemachus, who likens their literal consumption of his family's resources to the metaphorical consumption of his father's remains, since he believes that his father is dead: "[W]ithout penalty they eat up the substance / of a man whose white bones lie out in the rain and fester / somewhere on the mainland, or roll in the wash of the breakers" (I.160-162). This emphasises the strict rules and values by which the Archaic Greek societies live in Homer's epics. It is important to note that in Homer's time, the Greek territory was populated by different groups, with their identities attached to the city-state. It was only in the fifth century that the idea of a united group, the Hellenes, would form as a response to the "Barbarian threat".<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* pave the way for this development providing a list of barbarian enemies against which to understand and fashion Hellenic values, ethics and identity. One can see that some of these ideals are projected onto outsiders and their refusal to adhere to them proves their lack of civility, and possibly, humanity, as it happens in the *Odyssey* with the Cyclopes, for instance.

They are outside the realm of the law; as Odysseus himself calls them "the lawless outrageous / Cyclopes" (IX.106-107), not merely because they do not respect *his* laws but also because these do not apply to them.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Crotty argues that

there is a certain ineptitude in Odysseus' judgement that Polyphemus has been punished because he violated the codes of hospitality. To eat human flesh is so horrific as to be utterly beyond such codes. To accuse Polyphemus of "not scrupling" (ouk hazeo, 9.477) to eat "his guests" (xeinous, 477) is an unwarranted importing of one culture's ethics into another realm, where such ethics can have no meaning.<sup>31</sup>

Polyphemus tells Odysseus that he does not fear the gods, therefore he does not need to fear their punishment if he does not comply with the rules they establish and on which Odysseus' society (and indeed human society overall according to the Ithacan) is based:

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<sup>29</sup> Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 8-9.

<sup>30</sup> Mark Buchan, "Food for Thought: Achilles and the Cyclops", in *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Kristen Guest (State University of New York Press, 2001), 11-33, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Crotty, *The Poetics of Supplication: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey* (Cornell University Press, 1994), p.146.

Stranger, you are a simple fool, or come far off,  
when you tell me to avoid the wrath of the gods or fear them.  
The Cyclopes do not concern themselves over Zeus of the aegis,  
nor any of the rest of the blessed gods, since we are far better  
than they, and for fear of the hate of Zeus I would not spare  
you or your companions either, if the fancy took me  
otherwise. (IX.273-279)

This can be likened to the cultural relativism famously introduced by Montaigne in the early modern period. Montaigne challenges the notion that the savages' cannibalism is necessarily barbarian and monstrous, inasmuch as, for him, barbarity itself is merely what is not one's custom.<sup>32</sup> Odysseus appears as a potential metaphorical cannibal through a parallel drawn between himself and the Laistrygones. In Book X, when his men are victims of the Laistrygones, they are compared to fish:

These, standing along the cliffs, pelted my men with man-sized  
boulders, and a horrid racket went up by the ships, of men  
being killed and ships being smashed to pieces. They speared them  
like fish, and carried them away for their joyless feasting. (X.121-124)

Similarly, after Odysseus and Telemachus have murdered the suitors in Book XXII, the hero gazes upon them and the corpses are compared to netted fish baked by the sun:

Odysseus looked about his own house, to see if any  
man still was left alive, escaping the black destruction;  
but he saw them, one and all in their numbers, lying fallen  
in their blood and in the dust, like fish whom the fishermen  
have taken in their net with many holes, and dragged out  
onto the hollow beach from the grey sea, and all of them  
lie piled on the sand, needing the restless salt water;  
but Helios, the shining Sun, bakes the life out of them.

Like these the suitors now were lying piled on each other. (XXII.381-385)

This parallel between the Laistrygones and Odysseus not only emphasises the association of the latter with metaphorical cannibalism, but it also highlights how thin and fragile the binary separating the supposedly civilised hero and the cannibal figures of Laistrygones is. It is worth

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<sup>32</sup> "Or je trouve, pour revenir à mon propos, qu'il n'y a rien de barbare et de sauvage en cette nation, à ce qu'on m'en a rapport, sinon que chacun appelle barbarie ce qui n'est pas son usage; comme de vrai, il semble que nous n'avons autre mire de la vérité et de la raison que l'exemple et idée des opinions et usances du pays où nous sommes", Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. by Marie-Madeleine Fragonard (Pocket Classiques, 1998), 129. Montaigne's 'supposed' cultural relativism will be discussed at length in chapters two and three.

noting here the difference between literal and metaphorical cannibalism: while the former refers to the actual act of eating one's own species, the latter indicates behaviour that attempts to consume or erase others, either literally through physical violence, or metaphorically through psychological and intellectual violence, both of which have a tangible impact. This thesis focuses on the latter (metaphorical cannibalism) because this trope was born from anxieties that, in a sense, created the former (literal cannibalism). In other words, western imagining of literal cannibalism, which is nourished by occidental anxieties, produces a context in which metaphorical cannibalism develops. Here I want to reconsider the inventions of 'others' as monstrous man-eaters, pointing to the fact that often it is the behaviour of the one inventing the cannibal that is all-consuming. Challenging the understanding of Odysseus as a heroic and idealised figure is part of this dynamic, and it will be further examined in Chapter Three below, in which I analyse decolonial rewritings of the *Odyssey*. Further, associating Odysseus with metaphorical anthropophagy highlights a critical tension when it comes to considering who the real cannibal is.

In the *Iliad*, Achilles uses metaphorical cannibalism to describe Agamemnon. One of these instances happens during the crucial contention between Agamemnon and Achilles, which is also the conflict that opens the epic. After Agamemnon refuses to return Chryseis, his war captive, to her father, Chryses, a Trojan priest of Apollo, the latter asks for the god's help. Apollo punishes the proto-Hellenes by spreading a plague and after nine years of epidemic, Achilles demands that Agamemnon return Chryseis to her father to put an end to it. However, the king of Mycenae only reluctantly agrees but, in exchange, demands Briseis, Achilles's war captive. In revolt, Achilles refuses to continue fighting under Agamemnon's command in the Trojan war and articulates what he believes to be the Mycenaean's abuse of power by likening him to a cannibal: "King who feed on your people".<sup>33</sup> This additional example in classical literature shows how anthropophagy serves as a signifier to describe metaphorically improper behaviours and relationships between people.

Additionally, as Wendy Olmsted notes, cannibalism is conceived in the Homeric epic as a destruction of the other through assimilation:<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Homer, *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. by Lattimore, Richmond (University of Chicago Press, 1961), I.231.

<sup>34</sup> This conceptualisation of absolute annihilation is also considered by Freud in Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. by James Strachey (Routledge, 2003), and it is adopted widely in understanding of 'savage other' cannibalism as 'revenge cannibalism'. I wish to dissociate my theorisation of literary cannibalism from this western and obsolete conception in order to redefine cannibalism through indigenous epistemologies as I will do in chapter two.

[u]nlike heroes in ordinary circumstances who limit themselves to killing the enemy, Greek warriors in the last third of the *Iliad* strive toward the ‘perfect injustice’ of mutilating the bodies of their enemies and feeding them to the dogs, for the ‘most perfect injustice is cannibalism, since the other is thereby treated as pure object and not only overcome but even digested.’ Cannibalism as metamorphosis *transforms the other into the self*, the ultimate in destruction by assimilation.<sup>35</sup>

I would like to push further Olmsted’s assertion that cannibalism “transforms the other into the self” by contending that the use of cannibalism both as a metaphor and as an accusation levelled against the ‘other’ *turns* this ‘other’ into the self. This is not only done through projection, which can be unconscious, but practically and materially as well. The accusation of cannibalism can be seen as an accurate metaphorical description of what the accuser is actually doing, especially when looking at travel writing, as well as at later writings associated with mercantilism and colonial enterprises. In other words, by accusing the ‘other’ of destruction, the accuser often masks their own destructive behaviour. This is particularly crucial in relation to Columbus’s journal and his arrival in the Americas. Especially because it is in this context that the term ‘cannibal’ is coined for the first time. Before discussing the Columbian narrative – which will be challenged by rewritings analysed in Chapter Three below – I would like to briefly point to the fact that there is a genealogy that can be traced from classical literature and medieval travelogues, from Herodotus to Marco Polo, whose work Columbus had read.<sup>36</sup> For this reason, despite the existence of trade routes during the medieval period, a tradition of ‘otherness’ emerging from the classical ‘western’ tradition is central in informing proto-European travel writing, as Olschki notes, making Marco Polo’s work a crucial one during and after his time:

Little was known in Europe about Asia until the XIIIth century, when missionaries and merchants made their way into the interior of the continent. At that time the scant information about the Orient was limited to what had been handed down in the treatises and accounts of late antiquity, which retained some vague ideas and many fables about the men and things to be found in those distant lands. The wonders of India are commonplace in classical texts. [...] The exchange of goods between East and West contributed very little to the expansion of these geographical horizons, restricted by

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<sup>35</sup> Wendy Olmsted, “On the Margins of Otherness: Metamorphosis and Identity in Homer, Ovid, Sidney, and Milton”, *New Literary History*, 27.2 (1996), 167–84, p. 172, my emphasis.

<sup>36</sup> As the version of Marco Polo’s *Il Milione* edited by Juan Gil attests, in *El Libro de Marco Polo: Anotado por Cristóbal Colón. El Libro de Marco Polo: Versión de Rodrigo de Santaella*, ed. by Juan Gil (Alianza, 1987), p. lxvii. Also, Columbus likely read other classical authors as Juan Gil notes: “A partir de 1498, comienzan a acumularse en sus escritos menciones muy certeras y doctas a Pedro d’Ailly, Pío II, Plinio, Josefo, San Agustín, Juan Balbo y otros no menos sabios” Gil, p. vii.

both experience and tradition. Textiles, gems, pearls and spices were for centuries imported into Europe, but little was known about their lands or origin. Indeed, these limited commercial relations remained indirect, until Marco Polo's time.<sup>37</sup>

This not only explains, the importance of Marco Polo's *Il Milione* to medieval and renaissance European travellers, but also how the lack of knowledge in terms of geography led someone like Columbus to believe that he could find a way to Marco Polo's 'Asia' from the west, being blocked at the East from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>38</sup> The importance of classical sources and Marco Polo's *Il Milione* is evidenced by Columbus's expectation of finding an imagined, constructed picture of 'Asia'. Thus, while on this journey, in order to inform his patrons, the Spanish Monarchs, of the success of this enterprise, he also engages with these exotic and fantastic images. In his *diario de a bordo*, of which only the transcribed copy from Bartolomé de Las Casas remains, marvels and monsters reminiscent of antiquity are depicted, as I will now discuss, and a recurring figure is that of the cannibal. Eduardo Lalo argues that the cannibal in Columbus's diary is a "mask" for the Spanish 'conquest' of the Americas, as it allows him to obscure the Spanish exploitation and violence on the peoples and lands they encounter.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, a supposed lack of civility, whether signified by nakedness or inappropriate diets such as cannibalism, has always been an excuse to take over and exploit other people and their lands. Crucially, as William Arens notes in relation to Brazilian indigenous people, who were decimated during Portuguese settler colonialism:

As result of their contact with and treatment by Europeans who were so quick to label them man-eaters, the Tupinamba failed to survive the sixteenth century. As a result, there is no modern information on the traditional culture of this group. Although there may be some legitimate reservations about who ate whom, there can be none on the question of who exterminated whom.<sup>40</sup>

This part of the extended holocaust which followed Columbus' stumbling onto the Americas associates the very emergence of the term cannibal with what David Watts calls the traumas of the West Indies:

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<sup>37</sup> Leonardo Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia: An Introduction to His 'Description of the World' Called 'Il Milione'* (University of California Press, 1960), pp. 40-42.

<sup>38</sup> For more about the travelling context before Columbus in Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

<sup>39</sup> Eduardo Lalo, "The Misinvention of the Caribbean II: Conquest and Antiencounters" (University of Oxford, 2019) <<https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/session-2-the-misinvention-of-the-caribbean-ii-conquest-and-antiencounters>>.

<sup>40</sup> William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 31.

Social scientists often characterise these islands as having been shaped by two of the most severe human traumas of global significance to have taken place within the last four centuries: first, the virtually total and rapid removal of a large aboriginal population following initial European contact; and, later, the forced transference into them of many hundreds of thousands of Africans from their homelands under conditions of slavery to support a system of plantation agriculture. The environmental degeneration inferred above, which thus far has not been detailed in print, may be deemed to form a third trauma, which is perhaps now of equal and growing importance to the inhabitants.<sup>41</sup>

Hence, the term cannibalism is more readily associated with the destruction of people and land or, rather, the complete consumption of these by mercantilism and later colonial and imperial endeavours, and this, I argue, begins with Columbus's first voyage to the Americas. This twinned history makes cannibalism a productive trope to articulate and use in the field of postcolonial and environmental studies. Before I develop this further, however, it is important to note a fundamental distinction between the terms 'anthropophagy' and 'cannibalism', though they are often used interchangeably.

*Anthropofagos*, literally human-eater, and *androfagos*, literally biologically gendered man-eater, were words that existed to designate humanoid creatures and monsters that fed on human flesh: hence, 'anthropophagy' does not necessarily indicate intraspecies consumption, while 'cannibalism' does. This is critical as it determines whether the eater is considered human or not, as Peter Hulme argues: "Human beings who eat other human beings have always been placed on the very borders of humanity. They are not regarded as *inhuman* because if they were animals their behaviour would be natural and could not cause the outrage and fear that 'cannibalism' has always provoked".<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the term cannibal possesses a strong link with the Caribbean since it originates from Columbus's wilful misunderstanding of indigenous languages. The term appears for the first time in the rest of the proto-European territory through the dissemination of his journal throughout Europe. The production of this cannibal, as Eduardo Lalo argues, is a way for Columbus to conceal the violence of the Spaniards' destructive behaviour in the New World, since, as he writes to the King and Queen of Spain who have funded his travel, he has to report several "emptied places".<sup>43</sup> Indeed, throughout their travel, and as they advance further onto new islands, the admiral and his crew come across

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<sup>41</sup> David Watts, *The West Indies: Patterns of Development, Culture, and Environmental Change Since 1492* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (Methuen, 1986), p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> Lalo, n.p.

dwelling sites that have been deserted. Hence, Lalo argues that the “phantom” of the cannibal haunting the proto-European imagination since Antiquity permits the constitution of a new monster.<sup>44</sup> Lalo’s term is especially critical for my argument here. Indeed, the term ‘phantom’ relates etymologically to ‘fantasy’, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Two below.

Therefore, the cannibal can be seen as a chimeric figure created and conjured by Columbus behind which he can camouflage the Spaniards’ violent intrusions on the islands. In this way, the cannibal provides Columbus with a scapegoat to whom he attributes the flight of indigenous people as well as finding a justification for the subjugation of these people and the appropriation of their land. As mentioned above, this figure summons man-eating myths from classical traditions described by Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Pliny and others, and which are revived throughout travel writing such as in *The Voyage and Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and in Marco Polo’s *Il Milione*. In the quotation from Columbus’s journal below one can observe the lingering of the anthropophagous Polyphemus figure in the description of people with only one eye on their forehead:

[s]obre este cabo encabalga otra tierra o cabo que va también al Leste, a quien aquellos indios que llevaba llamaban Bohío, la cual decían que era muy grande y que había en ella gente que tenía *un ojo en la frente*, y otros que se llamaban caníbales, a quien mostraban tener gran miedo. Y des que vieron que lleva este camino, dice que no podían hablar porque los comían y que son gente muy armada. El Almirante dice que bien cree que había algo de ello, mas que, pues eran armados, sería gente de razón, y creía que habrían cautivado algunos y que, porque no volvían a sus tierras dirían que los comían.<sup>45</sup>

In an entry three days later, Columbus, seeking a confirmation that he indeed has found a new route to the Indies, associates these supposedly anthropophagous people with the Mongol Empire since to him their name, as he has heard it uttered by other indigenous people he has met, sounds similar to the imperial title ‘Khagan’. The presence of the Mongol Empire would be a confirmation that he has reached the Indies since it was mentioned in Marco Polo’s journal. The Venetian had stayed at Kublai Khan’s court during his travels and this is crucial for Columbus who has meticulously studied Polo’s journal. Columbus is desperate to find any substantiation that he has reached his destination, thereby confirming his theory that Asia could be reached from a route through the Atlantic. Knowing, from Polo’s writings, that the

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<sup>44</sup> Lalo, n.p.

<sup>45</sup> Cristóbal Colón, *Diario de a bordo*, ed. by Luis Arranz Márquez (Biblioteca Edaf, 2006), p. 142, my emphasis.

Mongolian Empire is fairly belligerent, he concludes that the missing indigenous people must have been captured by the Great Khan's soldiers:

Toda la gente que hasta hoy ha hallado diz que tiene grandísimo temo de los Caniba o Canima, y dicen que viven en esta isla de Bohío [...], no podían hablar, temiendo que los habían de comer, y no podía quitar el temor, y decían que no tenían sino un ojo y la cara de perro, y creía el Almirante que mentían, y sentía el Almirante que debían de ser *el señorío del Gran Can*, que los cautivaban.<sup>46</sup>

Columbus, looking for riches and lands, but finding himself somewhere far removed from Marco Polo's descriptions, is quick to associate words that sound similar, and which he wants to hear, to evidence that he has reached his intended destination.<sup>47</sup> This passage also raises the issue of Columbus's unreliability since he accuses indigenous people of lying because, being a 'sensible man', he refuses to believe that these monstrous man-eating creatures with just one eye on their forehead and dog-heads actually exist. Rather than considering the fact that he most likely cannot understand what the indigenous people are telling him, he often claims that he can comprehend the different people with whom he comes into contact, something clearly impossible after only a few days of having heard a language with which he does not have any familiarity or any points of reference. Moreover, the possible presence of what he believes to be the belligerent Mongolians of the Khan provides a confirmation that the investment of his royal patrons has not been wasted. This, in relation to the aforementioned argument by Lalo – that the cannibal is a mask Columbus uses to explain the "emptied spaces" of the islands he visits and, in so doing, conceal the violence following the Spaniards in their travels – reinforces the relation between cannibalism, proto-colonialism and proto-capitalism: it is Columbus and his crew who are metaphorically consuming these indigenous people in their hunger for riches.

Additionally, as Carlos Jáuregui points out, "[e]l canibalismo funciona como un mito no sólo del colonialismo, sino de las disciplinas que producen el saber sobre la Otredad", a statement emphasising the relation between the emergence of this trope and the development of mercantile projects into imperialism.<sup>48</sup> Here Jáuregui points to all of the disciplines attempting to grasp, understand and classify 'otherness' – a dynamic present in literature, travelogues, and other types of writing related to the exploitation of people and lands and their expropriation, for instance in official documents and letters from merchants. This points to a

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<sup>46</sup> Colón, p. 146, my emphasis.

<sup>47</sup> For more on this see Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* and Carlos Jáuregui, *Canibalia: Canibalismo, calibanismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina* (Vervuert, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> Jáuregui, p. 19.

dual dynamic when it comes to cannibalism and (proto-)colonialism. Not only are the Spaniards metaphorically consuming the indigenous people they encounter by raping and murdering most of them, but Columbus's writing also metaphorically consumes their identity by assigning to them one fabricated to suit his own ends, as Loichot also points out: "The entire American continent was named by such a misnaming, which swallowed existing names and imposed others. We could see this as an enormous act of linguistic ingestion".<sup>49</sup> Columbus needs to make sense of these people he does not know and understand, but he also needs to do so to present them to the Kings of Spain in order to reassure them that their investment is not being wasted. This is done by depicting indigenous people that can either be domesticated, being servile ("son buenos para les mandar"), or be decimated if they are belligerent.<sup>50</sup> The latter entails the creation of a stock character against which to fight and which can be expropriated of its land 'justifiably'.

A similar dynamic is discussed by Achille Mbembe when he considers the image of Africa and of the "nègre" as an invention of the occident: "l'Afrique en tant que telle – et l'on devrait ajouter le Nègre – n'existe qu'à partir du texte qui la construit comme la fiction de l'autre".<sup>51</sup> Here Mbembe points to the fact that such images are constructed fictionally, much as the one of the cannibal. In Lalo's words above, the "misinvention" of Africa, as that of the Caribbean, is constructed through stereotypes that began to be fashioned and created during Antiquity.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, as Felwine Sarr argues, this

propension des autres à faire du continent africain un espace de projection de leurs fantasmes est vieille. Déjà dans la haute Antiquité, Plin l'Ancien disait que : « De l'Afrique vient toujours quelque chose de nouveau. » [...] Aux siècles des conquêtes, explorateurs et aventuriers investirent cette *mystérieuse* Afrique de leurs fantasmes les plus originaux et les plus scabreux. Le continent des merveilles devint pour certains l'exutoire d'une sauvagerie que refoulaient dans ses *limbes* les nations *civilisées*.<sup>53</sup>

Much scholarship has engaged with the enduring influence of proto-European thought on the contact with the African continent, which, as Brantlinger argues "grew "dark" as Victorian explorers, missionaries, and scientists flooded it with light, because the light was refracted through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition of "savage customs" in the name of

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<sup>49</sup> Valérie Loichot, *The Tropics Bite Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), p. xxv.

<sup>50</sup> Colón, p. 175.

<sup>51</sup> Mbembe, *Critique*, p. 142.

<sup>52</sup> By "misinvention" here I refer to Lalo's coinage in Lalo, n.p. On this subject, see also Curtis A. Keim, *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind* (Avalon Publishing, 2013).

<sup>53</sup> Felwine Sarr, *Afrotopia* (Éditions Philippe Rey, 2016), p. 10.

civilization”.<sup>54</sup> This imagery is still powerful in the perception of the continent abroad, which is often conflated as one big country and either seen as a space of the ‘future’ or a place of hunger, violence and ‘under-development’, fetishised through images of starving children: “Les discours actuels sur l’Afrique sont dominés par ce double mouvement: la foi en un futur radieux et la consternation devant un présent qui semble chaotique”.<sup>55</sup>

Hence, both the American and the African continents have been plagued by fictional and discriminatory images used as excuses to dehumanise and objectify both human and extra-human nature with the aim of their exploitation. While the term cannibal seems to have a closer history with the American continent, for reasons I have suggested, the African continent has also been seen as anthropophagous throughout its history of contact with the occident. As such, I shall consider both continents in this thesis – restricting the specific scope of this study to what I call the extractiono(s)cene, as I will discuss below – without, however, aiming to undermine the plural and rich cultures and differences of each by conflating them. Rather, my aim is to show how the western imagination has often lumped together ‘faraway’ lands to exploit, especially during the triangular Atlantic trade.

By extension, Jáuregui also notes that America has been “construida imaginariamente como una *Canibalia*: un vasto espacio geográfico y cultural marcado con la imagen del monstruo americano comedor de carne humana o, a veces, imaginada como un cuerpo fragmentado y devorado por el colonialismo”.<sup>56</sup> This highlights the fact that the exploitation of land and people in the Americas since Columbus’s arrival can be better described by the metaphor of cannibalism. This is even more critical because the term itself was born from the first contact with what early modern Europeans believed to be a ‘new world’ and could be accordingly named and fashioned. Jáuregui’s understanding of America as a body fragmented and devoured by colonialism points to the articulation and association of land and corporeality, which I will further develop in relation to Eduardo Galeano’s work. I argue that cannibalism is a trope that, more than anything else, refers metaphorically to the exploitation of bodies and lands for financial gain: Mimi Sheller suggests that it “is a ‘useful metaphor for colonial exploitation’ because it so literally spells out the suppressed relation of European colonisers to indigenous others. Practices of cannibalism have also been used to describe western consumer

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<sup>54</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, “Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent”, *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985), 166–203, p. 166. For more on this, also see Christopher L. Miller, *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French* (University of Chicago Press, 1985), Daniel M. Mengara, *Images of Africa: Stereotypes & Realities* (Africa World Press, 2001), and Frits Andersen, *The Dark Continent?: Images of Africa in European Narratives about the Congo* (Aarhus University Press, 2016), among many other works.

<sup>55</sup> Sarr, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Jáuregui, 18.

culture in general as a culture of excessive consumption and insatiable hunger, feeding off human bodies for profit”.<sup>57</sup>

The connection between proto-capitalism and cannibalism is made apparent in the way in which monstrous consumption is part of the vocabulary surrounding capitalist economies, especially deregulated ones, often defined in terms of greed. Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) writes that the “bourgeois order, which at the beginning of the century set the state to stand guard over the newly arisen smallholding and manured it with laurels, has become a vampire that sucks out its blood and brains and throws them into the alchemist’s cauldron of capital”.<sup>58</sup> Here are present two elements from European folklore: the vampire and the cauldron often associated with paganism, ogres or witchcraft. The cauldron shows how European imagery and folklore begin to be mixed with visions of ‘new worlds’ and ‘savage people’: travelogues and, later, cartoons depicting cannibals, often have their characters using large, cast iron pots in which unfortunate European travellers are cooked (often alive). This imagery shows that these anxieties are habitually constructed by westerners, given that some at least of the many peoples with whom they might have come into contact do not forge or work with metals such as iron. The image of the cauldron will become important later on in this chapter when I address “blood sugar” and anti-slavery rhetoric.<sup>59</sup> About fifteen years after *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx uses the metaphors of insatiability and vampirism imagery again throughout the first volume of *Capital*, pointing to capital’s “boundless greed”, and its aim to “absorb the greatest possible amount of surplus-labour. Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks”.<sup>60</sup> He also refers to capital’s “were-wolf’s hunger for surplus labour”.<sup>61</sup>

In this thesis I use the metaphor of cannibalism as a tool for understanding proto-capitalism in the extractiono(s)cene. In other words, colonial projects served to develop extractive agriculture and trade, enriching what were to become European nation states in the Westphalian sense. Columbus, and the other *conquistadores* after him, aimed to find new trade routes to the Indies to develop mercantile enterprises, but they also sought to reach *El Dorado*, a mythical land from which to extract gold and other riches.

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<sup>57</sup> Mimi Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (Routledge, 2003), p. 148.

<sup>58</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 3rd revised edition (Lawrence & Wishart, 1954), p. 112.

<sup>59</sup> This trope is defined in Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 171-206.

<sup>60</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, ed. by Mark G. Spencer, trans. by Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling, and Ernest Untermann (Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2013), i and ii, p. 103, pp. 161-162.

<sup>61</sup> Marx, *Capital*, pp. 168 and 183.

## SPACE, PLACE & PAGE: DEFINING THE EXTRACTIONO(S)CENE

In this thesis I use ‘extractiono(s)cene’ as a multi-layered term that refers to several concepts which I see as interrelated. First, the geographical regions studied in this thesis were and still are today extraction zones. By that I mean regions in which the extraction of natural resources – both through extractivism and through extraction agriculture and the plantation system – aimed to turn these into commodities that enriched emerging European nation states and became part of the daily lives of their inhabitants:

As the Liverpool Maritime Museum puts it in its Transatlantic Slavery Gallery: ‘Much of the social life of Western Europe in the Eighteenth Century depended on the products of slave labour. In homes and coffee-houses, people met over coffee, chocolate, or tea, sweetened with Caribbean sugar. They wore clothes made from American cotton and smoked pipes filled with Virginian tobacco. They used furniture made from mahogany and other tropical woods.’ As Europeans became more and more attached to these goods, they were sucked into the vortex of slavery and its human-consuming economy.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, the Atlantic trade and slavery can be seen as extracting ‘bodies’ from the African continent for slave labour, which often implied working on plantations, themselves an extractive type of agriculture. Additionally, this labour itself is an extraction process by which the strength of objectified bodies is drawn.<sup>63</sup> Achille Mbembe notes that

[I]e monde de la traite des Nègres est la même chose que le monde de la chasse, de la capture, de la cueillette, de la vente et de l’achat. Il est le monde de l’extraction brute. Le capitalisme racial est l’équivalent d’une vaste nécropole. Il repose sur le trafic des morts et des ossements humains. Évoquer et convoquer la mort exige que l’on sache disposer des restes ou des reliques du corps de ceux que l’on a tués en captant leur esprit.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Sheller, pp. 81-82.

<sup>63</sup> Here I use the term ‘bodies’ to emphasise the objectification of the enslaved subjects through slavery and colonialism, WReC encourages us to “especially if we bear in mind Wallerstein’s repeated emphasis (1996) that the production of capital entails ‘the commodification of everything’: ‘commodification’ is a never-ending rather than a once-and-for-all process; it ramifies both *extensively* - through the ceaseless development and conquering of new markets - and *intensively* - through the equally ceaseless quantification of quality” in WReC (Warwick Research Collective), *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 18-19. See also Alexander Butchart, *The Anatomy of Power: European Constructions of the African Body* (Zed Books, 1998).

<sup>64</sup> Mbembe, *Critique*, pp. 200-201.

Here the importance of extractivism as a death-provoking process likens it to the archive, which is also a mortuary from which the identity, the humanity and the very lives of enslaved subjects are either absented or objectified in their articulation as numbers on paper and commodities. This will be discussed further below when considering the archive.

Second, here I follow the current scholarly trend that challenges the emergence of the term Anthropocene by considering other terms that could better represent our current geological, but also economic and cultural, era. The term is composed by the Ancient Greek prefix *Anthropos*- for man and suffix *-kainos* (cene) for recent, often used in geology to refer to epochs.<sup>65</sup> But using this term seems problematic: first, it homogenises all of humanity, obstructing the fact that not all people have the same impact on the environment, and that not all people have lived and are currently living the consequences of climate change; the term ‘anthropocene’ also raises other problems, including the neglect of extra-human species, the fact that the discussion conceives the earth as a globe, or the fact that it is considered an epoch rather than an event, or even a transition period.<sup>66</sup> However, for all its faults, as Anna Tsing notes, it is a term that promotes interdisciplinary discussion on urgent contemporary issues.<sup>67</sup> Many other terms have been considered to replace it in order to better address its pitfalls. Among these are, for example, the “Capitalocene”, the “Plantationocene” the “Chthulucene”, or the “Black Anthropocene”, all considering different main ‘causes’ to our current climate crisis by focusing on erased histories.<sup>68</sup> Many scholars have been engaging with the silenced

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<sup>65</sup> “Love it or hate it, the Anthropocene is emerging as an inescapable word for (and of) the current moment. Popularized by Eugene Stoermer and Paul Crutzen, Anthropocene names an age in which human industry has come to equal or even surpass the processes of geology, and in which humans in their attempt to conquer nature have inadvertently become a major force in its destruction” in Donna Haraway and others, “Anthropologists Are Talking – About the Anthropocene”, *Ethnos*, 81.3 (2016), 535–564, p. 535.

<sup>66</sup> For the lack of consideration of extra-human species see Haraway and others, p. 539, moreover as Kenneth Olwig argues “the earth is not a globe[. . .] the fact that many think and act as if it were a globe has had a deleterious effect on the debate over something that should be called climate change rather than ‘global warming’”. This is because the effects of climate change (such as temperature change) are not experienced uniformly over the anisotropic surface of the earth, as would be the case if the earth was characterized by the isotropic Euclidean space of a globe, and people in areas where this is not being experienced are therefore disinclined to believe that climate change is occurring” in Haraway and others, p. 540. Additionally, for the issues raised about the conception of the anthropocene as a “epoch”, an “era” or a “transition period”, see Haraway and others, pp. 540-541.

<sup>67</sup> Haraway and others, p. 541.

<sup>68</sup> Haraway and others, pp. 557-561. For a general discussion of all these terms see Haraway, Donna, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin”, *Environmental Humanities*, 6 (2015), 159–65, the all the chapters in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. by Jason W. Moore (PM Press, 2016), and Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (Duke University Press, 2019), among many other important works tackling these questions. Specifically, for discussions on the Capitalocene see Andreas Malm, “The Anthropocene Myth”, *Jacobin*, 2015 <<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/03/anthropocene-capitalism-climate-change/>> [accessed 2 March 2020], Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming* (Verso, 2016), Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (Verso, 2015), and Jason W. Moore, “The Capitalocene, Part I: On the Nature and Origins of Our Ecological Crisis”, *The Journal of Peasant*

voices of marginalised communities in the denomination and theorisation of these ‘-cenes’ referring to a time and situations that affect them most directly and urgently.<sup>69</sup> My objective here is not to propose a more appropriate term to address the complex and multi-layered issues faced by our planet and all its living organisms, especially since, as Elizabeth DeLoughrey notes, now “we have produced enough awkward neologisms”.<sup>70</sup> Rather, I am looking for a term that carries within it these critical debates while also pointing to a specific economic and socio-political context. Additionally, I am also trying to engage with the multiple history of oppression, exploitation and dispossession tightly related to our current climate crisis. This allows me to associate my study of cannibalism as a metaphor for proto-capitalism in the extractiono(s)cene to historical materialist theories, especially Jason Moore’s world-ecology framework, which is defined as follows:

Far more than a simple act of discursive re-branding, the world-ecological perspective seeks to illuminate what is often invisible in environmental studies. In place of a thought-structure that posits the “economic” as independent (or relatively so) from the “environment,” would it not be more fruitful to view financialization, industrialization, imperialism (old and new), and commercialization, among many others, as socio-ecological projects and processes in their own right?<sup>71</sup>

Finally, the addition of the ‘(s)’ to ‘extractiono(s)cene’ serves as an indicator of the presence of such issues addressed in cultural productions, both past and present. I see the texts to be studied throughout this thesis as *extractionoscenes in the extractionocene*. ‘Extractiono(s)cene’ refers both to the cultural, as scenes in the sense of sequences of continuous action in film or theatre, and the spatial, in its reference to the place in which actions occur, implying specifically the space in which extraction of resources (from the land, but including that of people) has taken and is taking place. Even more specifically, here I refer to the idiomatic ‘crime scene’ of colonial and (neo-)imperial extractive endeavours. This allows me, on the one hand, to return to the primary connotation of the Greek term from which the

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*Studies*, 44.3 (2017), 594–630. For the Plantationocene see Gregg Mitman, *Reflections on the Plantationocene: A Conversation with Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing* (Edge Effects Magazine, 2019) for example, and for the Chthulucene see Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016). For the Black Anthropocene see Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

<sup>69</sup> See Yusoff and DeLoughrey, but also Kyle P. Whyte, “Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene”, *English Language Notes*, 55.1/2 (2017), 153–62 and Cristina Yumie Inoue, “Worlding the Study of Global Environmental Politics in the Anthropocene: Indigenous Voices from the Amazon”, *Global Environmental Politics*, 18.4 (2018), 25–42, for example.

<sup>70</sup> DeLoughrey, p. 27.

<sup>71</sup> Jason W. Moore, “Ecology, Capital, and the Nature of our Times: Accumulation & Crisis in the Capitalist World-Ecology”, *American Sociological Association*, 17.1 (2011), 107–46, p. 113.

word had developed: “skēnē” meaning “shelter, tent, building forming the background for a dramatic performance, stage; perhaps akin to Greek *skia* shadow”.<sup>72</sup> The possible kinship with the term ‘shadow’ allows me to point to the fact that the violent and destructive dynamics behind colonial and (neo-)imperial extractive exploitation have been and are being obscured; the literary ‘scenes’ that I analyse in the third and fourth chapters of this thesis shed light on these dynamics. On the other hand, returning to the geological prefix ‘-cene’, the reference to and inclusion of these debates in my terminology gives me the means to indicate how the former occurrences of extractivism are crucial in the precipitation and exacerbation of our current climate crisis. Especially in the case of the historically charged expanse I am interested in, which spans from the South of the United States to the Caribbean, Mexico, Colombia, Guyana, Brazil and across the Atlantic to the African continent.

Considering Moore’s interpretation of humanity and the environment as intertwined permit me to construct an interesting definition of cannibalism, especially in relation to proto-capitalism. In Eduardo Galeano’s seminal work *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*, one finds a running thread associating capitalism with cannibalism. In one instance, Galeano refers to slavery in terms of the illegal trafficking of “carne negra”.<sup>73</sup> Whether or not his use of the term flesh might be taken as a formal reference to metaphorical cannibalism, it allows us to associate it with the slave trade, on the basis of the reification of people as bodies and flesh in Atlantic trade discourses. This theme can be seen in works on the triangular trade, both fictional, such as in Olaudah Equiano’s travel memoirs, or Toni Morrison’s *A Mercy*, and non-fictional, such as found in William Pietersen’s or Stephan Palmié’s work.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, the

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<sup>72</sup> “Scene”, *Merriam-Webster* <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scene>> [accessed 2 March 2020].

<sup>73</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*, 17th edition (Siglo XXI de España Editores, S.A., 2017), p. 79.

<sup>74</sup> In Equiano’s narrative, when he is abducted as a child and sold into slavery, he is brought aboard a ship with others to whom he asks “if [they] were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair” in Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, ed. by Vincent Carretta (Penguin Books, 1995), p. 55. In *A Mercy*, in one of the chapters narrated by Florens’s mother, the latter says: “The men guarding we and selling we are black. [...] They assure we that the whitened men do not want to eat we” in Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (Vintage, 2009), p. 156. Pietersen informs us that “[i]ronically, given Western culture’s tradition of joking about supposed African cannibalism, visitors to Africa in the slave trade era and later discovered that Africans reversed the stereotype believing that it was whites who were the cannibals, buying slaves in order to eat them. The tradition of insatiable white man-eaters explained why no one ever returned after being purchased on the coast”, “Africans knew that the voracious labor demands of the white world were consuming millions of their countrymen. And in this belief they were, of course, right. The great Molochs of American slavery and European colonialism consumed generations of African men, women, and children. As a mythopoeic analogy it does not seem farfetched to portray chattel slavery as a kind of economic cannibalism; and in that sense, a mythic sense, stories of white man-eaters were true enough” in William Dillon Pietersen, *Black Legacy: America’s Hidden Heritage* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), p. 4. Similarly, Palmié notes the following: “Africans perceived the Atlantic slave trade as a system of cannibalistic consumption. Fears of being eaten by white captors are widely documented among Africans traveling along the horrible route from initial enslavement, through the middle passage, to the final insertion into the workforce of a New World plantation. Prominent as they figure in

abolitionist movement itself used this metaphor by equating cannibalism and the production and consumption of sugar and other commodities produced by slave labour:

‘so necessarily connected are our consumption of the commodity, and the misery resulting from it,’ Fox argues, ‘that in every pound of sugar used . . . we may be considered as consuming two ounces of human flesh.’ Stories circulated that planters sometimes entombed a slave in each sugar cask to impart a better taste to it. The notion of cannibalism took on a strange new life as eating sugar was envisioned as eating human flesh and blood in a high-impact campaign with extensive national publicity.<sup>75</sup>

Timothy Morton coins this “the ‘blood sugar’ topos. The sweetened drinks of tea, coffee and chocolate are rendered suddenly nauseating by the notion that they are full of the blood of slaves”.<sup>76</sup> These instances reinforce the association of proto-capitalism with cannibalism. The slave trade itself, which is, among other things, a consequence of the emergence of proto-capitalism as a broader economic system, can be associated with cannibalism in two ways: first because the importation of slave labour is only necessary after the Renaissance European slaughter of indigenous people, who were consumed – murdered, raped, and infected with new diseases against which they were not immunised.<sup>77</sup> Second, through the metaphorical consumption of African peoples who, in their displacement are stripped of their freedom, dignity, identity and their humanity; they are metaphorically consumed. This process is similar to one discussed above in Columbus’s journal, in which he ‘creates’ new identities for the indigenous people he encounters.

The beginning and end of Galeano’s book is framed by this association between capitalism and cannibalism, especially the most recent edition which contains a post-face written by the author himself. In this, he concludes his reconsideration of his work by

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the documentary sources on the Central African slave trade, references to such fears of falling victim to cannibalism are more usefully interpreted as pertaining, not to concepts of the literal ingestion of human body matter, but to ideas of the victim's loss of personhood through sorcery of other evil machinations designed to augment the sorcerer’s wealth and power. The Kikongo verb *dia*, thus, not only signifies factual acts of consumption – to eat up foodstuff, to spend money, and so on – but also refers to the wasting of human beings (*dia bantu*) through nefarious sorcery or mystical vengeance. If witchcraft figuratively transformed people into walking meat traded and consumed by witches in an ultimate perversion of normal social relationships, the Atlantic commerce in human flesh literally turned Africans into personified goods, human commodities exported overseas and duly wasted by the plantation economies of the New World” in Stephan Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Duke University Press, 2002), p. 179.

<sup>75</sup> Sheller, p. 89.

<sup>76</sup> Morton, p. 173.

<sup>77</sup> Renaissance sailors were very much affected by new illness too in this contact and still by the ones they carried over to the Americas, though the fact that Amerindian peoples were impacted by new diseases needs to be taken in account. On this see Francisco Guerra, “The Earliest American Epidemic: The Influenza of 1493”, *Social Science History*, 12.3 (1988), 305–25, Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, 30th anniversary ed. (Praeger, 2003) and John Robert McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

comparing economic development to a banquet: “El desarrollo es un banquete con escasos invitados, aunque sus resplandores engañen, y los platos principales están reservados a las mandíbulas extranjeras”.<sup>78</sup> We recall that *Las venas abiertas* begins with a description of Latin America as having specialised in losing when it comes to the international division of labour. The onset of this pattern is traced to early modern Europeans’ arrival in the ‘New World’ and their exploitation of the people: Galeano speaks of the invaders sinking their teeth in “the throat”: “La división internacional del trabajo consiste en que unos países se especializan en ganar y otros en perder. Nuestra comarca del mundo, que hoy llamamos América Latina, fue precoz: se especializó en perder desde los remotos tiempos en que los europeos del Renacimiento se abalanzaron a través del mar y le hundieron los dientes en la garganta”.<sup>79</sup> The English translation of Galeano’s work reads as follows: “those remote times when Renaissance Europeans ventured across the ocean and buried their teeth in the throats of the Indian civilizations”.<sup>80</sup> In the original text, however, the grammatically secondary indirect object of “hundir” (to sink/bury) is not given after the verb: rather it is enclosed in the complement “le” found before the verb and referring back to “América Latina”. Until this sentence, “América Latina” is understood in geographical terms since it is described as “nuestra comarca del mundo” and then as the space that early modern Europeans crossed the sea to reach. Throughout this quotation, however, inhabitants and space are merged, and it is the throat of a personified Latin America into which the Europeans sink their teeth. This combination of the people and land is unfortunately lost in the English translation of Galeano’s work yet it is crucial since it echoes the similar personification of the Latin American territory to which his book’s title alludes.

Thus, the imagery of *Las venas abiertas* is framed in the beginning by the teeth of early modern Europeans and at the end by foreigners’ jaws, showing the lack of evolution and the enforced economic stagnation of former colonies from the moment of political independence to today. Pushed further, this understanding also allows an equation between people and land in the description of the suffering endured by both as a consequence of colonial exploitation. By associating people and land a parallel is drawn between the overworking of both as a consequence of the relentless drive of proto-capitalism, something also found in *Capital* where Marx states that “capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and

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<sup>78</sup> Galeano, *Las venas*, p. 320.

<sup>79</sup> Galeano, *Las venas*, p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, trans. by Cedric Belfrage (Serpent’s Tail, 2009), p. 1, my emphasis. While translation is not my field, this discussion here allows me to emphasise the need to approach works in original languages when possible throughout this thesis.

“dirt”.<sup>81</sup> The powerful image he conjures up here, paralleling blood and dirt, brings to the same level what has often been split as ‘the human’, on the one side, and ‘the extra-human’, on the other. Such a binary is challenged in these quotations from Marx and Galeano, and I argue that this is crucial when it comes to understanding the devastating impacts of (proto-)capitalism on humanity and the environment, which throughout this thesis will be understood through Jason Moore’s world-ecology framework as “humanity-in-nature”:

Capitalism’s governing conceit is that it may do with Nature as it pleases, that Nature is external and may be coded, quantified, and rationalized to serve economic growth, social development, or some other higher good. This is capitalism *as a project*. The reality – *the historical process* – is radically different. While the manifold projects of capital, empire, and science are busy making Nature with a capital ‘N’ – external, controllable, reducible – the web of life is busy shuffling about the biological and geological conditions of capitalism’s process. The “web of life” is nature as a whole: *nature* with an emphatically lowercase *n*. This is nature as a flow of flows. Put simply, humans make environments and environments make humans – and human organization.<sup>82</sup>

Here is it crucial to note that this re-evaluation of the ‘human-nature binary’ is necessary in western ontologies, but in the works studied throughout this thesis, often the engagement with indigenous epistemologies and practices emphasises the lack of such a dichotomy and divide. I aim to engage with indigenous and decolonial scholarship as I theorise literary cannibalism in chapter two. Moreover, throughout this thesis, I will use the conceptualised terminology ‘the colony’ as a pluralised subject noun to define the humanity-in-nature of colonial space, in general pointing to the interwoven relationality of human and extra-human nature. This will be a shorthand, which will also refer back to the objectification and commodification enacted in the extractiono(s)cene and which is challenged by literary cannibalism as a mode of writing. I understand the noun ‘cannibalism’ in the formula ‘literary cannibalism’ not simply as a metaphor, but also a signifier of what I call the monstrous relations of colonialism – to be defined in more detail below. I wish to challenge the simple understanding of literary cannibalism as the intellectual exercise through which a ‘post(-)colonial’ identity is established on the basis of an ‘outwriting’ of the ‘coloniser’ or ‘master’. Such an articulation locks authors from former colonies in a dialectical trap as the colonised writing against the colonisers. It also brings up the issues of revenge-cannibalism

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<sup>81</sup> Marx, *Capital*, 533.

<sup>82</sup> Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, p. 14.

and violence, which, as I will discuss in chapter two, are a projection of the western understanding of cannibalism and misunderstanding of indigenous practices. Moreover, I wish to complexify literary cannibalism by theorising it in terms of with Moore's world-ecological perspective. Moore argues that

[t]he basic units Nature/Society may now be transcended on the terrain of world history. If capitalism is a matrix of human- and extra-human nature, premised on endless commodification, no domain of human experience is exempt from socio-ecological analysis. Modern world history may then be reimagined, away from the Cartesian basic units – Nature/Society – and towards the socio-ecological constitution of modernity's strategic relations.<sup>83</sup>

Here, a new way of considering world history by including a new understanding of humanity that comprises the environment is proposed. In the second chapter of this thesis I analyse a range of authors who have used cannibalism as a metaphor or have theorised and utilised cultural and literary cannibalism in their work. I also show how their understandings of literary cannibalism can be thought about as a mode of writing aiming to rewrite the colonial literary archive. The works I examine are especially concerned with colonial and imperial impacts on 'the colony' in the extractiono(s)cene. So far, no study has put together all of these authors, or considered literary cannibalism as a literary structure identifying the rewriting of the literary archive of colonial histories. Nor is there any study that has approached this material through an historical materialist framework by way of considering the human and ecological impacts of colonialism and imperialism. Obviously, this is partly because previous studies done on literary cannibalism have either seen it only as a development of cannibalism as a broader and main topic, such as Carlos Jáuregui's comprehensive and exhaustive study, *Canibalia: Canibalismo, calibanismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina* (2008), which provides a detailed historical overview of the development and presence of cannibalism from the early modern period to modern Latin American culture (including the French and Spanish Caribbean). Jáuregui discusses in depth Brazilian modernism and Oswald de Andrade; he mentions Suzanne Césaire, examines the work of the de Campos brothers and approaches Suely Rolnik's earlier work.

Many studies focusing on literary cannibalism have been restricted to a specific linguistic field. Among these are Felisa Vergara Reynolds's (2009) doctoral thesis submitted in the Department of Romance Languages and Literature at Harvard University, entitled

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<sup>83</sup> Moore, "Ecology, Capital, and the Nature of our Times", p. 114.

*Literary Cannibalism: Almost the Same, but not Quite/Almost the Same, but Not White*, which focuses on Francophone articulations of literary cannibalism in the Caribbean and on the African continent. The works she investigates in her thesis rewrite the French and the English literary ‘canons’, as well as French history in a specific chapter, and are grounded in former French colonies. According to Vergara Reynolds,

[l]iterary cannibalism is a literary reaction to a political circumstance. From this perspective, the act of re-writing the canon can be interpreted as a weapon used to desacralize and neutralize that which stood throughout centuries for imperialism and oppression. By cannibalizing canonical works, francophone writers strip a heretofore indomitable source of its power.<sup>84</sup>

Her thesis mentions Oswald de Andrade and Suzanne Césaire and provides an in-depth study of Maryse Condé’s work. Other studies do not take literary cannibalism as their main topic, but position it as a step towards new aesthetics. Thus, Valérie Loichot develops a culinary aesthetic in her work *The Tropic Bites Back: Culinary Coups in Caribbean Literature* (2013). In her study, she announces the death of literary cannibalism because she argues that as a literary technique:

[t]he overuse of the metaphor of cannibalism is dangerous because it (1) reinforces the projection of cannibalism and savagery onto Caribbean people; (2) it can be culturally inappropriate because it is based on concept mistranslations; and (3) it loses stable meaning because of its overuse and conceptual slipperiness. In spite of the metaphor’s imperfections, authors such as Oswald de Andrade, Suzanne Césaire, and Maryse Condé – as well as this book – see it as a necessary strategy to practice, analyze, and ultimately leave behind in order to build a culinary poetics independent from colonial confrontation.<sup>85</sup>

I am not certain that the authors she mentions would indeed prefer to “leave behind” the metaphor of literary cannibalism in the pursuit of a “culinary poetics”. The many reiterations of cultural cannibalism from the 1920s to the present suggest otherwise. I disagree with the suggestion that “[t]he overuse of the metaphor of cannibalism is dangerous because it (1) reinforces the projection of cannibalism and savagery onto Caribbean people”. Indeed, the recurring use of metaphorical cannibalism in postcolonial literatures and in essays to negotiate identity and creative process, shows me the endurance of this trope, as I will demonstrate at length in the second chapter. Additionally, in an informal telephone interview with me Maryse

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<sup>84</sup> Felisa Vergara Reynolds, “Literary Cannibalism: Almost the Same, but Not Quite/Almost the Same, but Not White” (Harvard University, 2009), p. iv.

<sup>85</sup> Loichot, p. xxx.

Condé explained that she continues to find literary cannibalism a useful metaphor in her own work.<sup>86</sup> For these reasons, and for those I have argued for above, I maintain that the cannibalism metaphor appropriately illuminates the proto-capitalist practices of extraction and extractivism carried out by colonial powers.

In 1978, Hayden White argued that “in general there has been a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are – verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences”.<sup>87</sup> My aim here is not to conflate history and literature. Rather I want to argue that literature has been, and still is, a repository of history, and, more specifically, of colonial History and histories.<sup>88</sup> Literature may be fictional and may not always provide facts as history strives to do. However, a collection of facts themselves is not enough to paint a picture of the past, which in historical recounting is always biased by the point of view, the school of thought, the language and culture, of the historian. The fact that colonial histories are passed on through and as literature – often implicitly since literature is not seen as history – makes them even more insidious because their problematic content is not challenged as it would be if they were considered as historical documents. Therein lies the problem with the supposed harmlessness of fiction, since by pertaining to be fiction rather than facts it ‘deresponsibilises’ itself. Fiction needs to be seen – especially the narratives constituting this colonial literary archive – as a repository of the past, of colonial and oppressive histories and relationships which need to be challenged. Additionally, traditions of resistance against these repressive regimes – which are also expressed through cultural productions – need to be recognised as such and put in dialogue with the former to challenge them. In this thesis, I will investigate how rewritings challenge the western conception of history and the narrative it offers and imposes. This will be done through a deconstruction of misinventions and stereotypes of the African and American continents, which have crystallised in what I call ‘the monstrous figures of colonial relationality’. I argue that three monstrous figures are created through colonial relationality in different types of cultural productions and their decolonial rewritings, all of which reflect the

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<sup>86</sup> Maryse Condé, Personal Conversation, 04/02/2019.

<sup>87</sup> Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 42.

<sup>88</sup> See for instance Nadine Gordimer who argued that “[i]f you want to read the facts of the retreat from Moscow in 1815, you may read a history book; if you want to know what war was like and how people of certain time and background dealt with it as their personal situation, you must read *War and Peace*” in Nadine Gordimer, *The Black Interpreters: Notes on African Writing* (SPRO-CAS/RAVAN, 1973), p. 7. Though my argument here further challenges historical writing itself and the boundaries set between literature and ‘History’.

relationships between colonisers and colonised, as created by the former.<sup>89</sup> Colonial relationality is concerned with unmaking kin and making unkin through its exploitation of ‘the colony’, which implies forced displacement, murder, rape, and many other forms of death unbinding kinship and lives.<sup>90</sup>

## THE MONSTROUS FIGURES OF COLONIAL RELATIONALITY

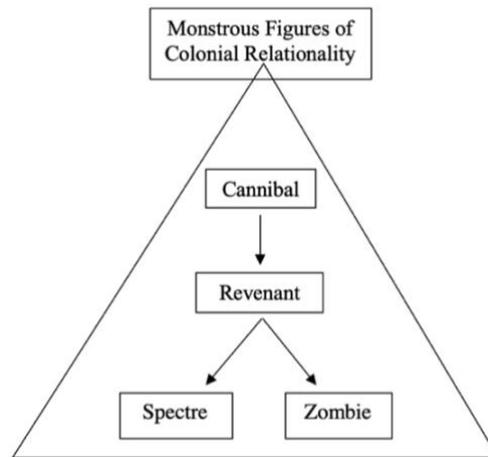


Figure 1

The first ‘monster’, on which this thesis’s methodology rests, is the cannibal. The second and third, which I consider in the second chapter, are based on the spectre and the zombie, which are closely related by the fact that they are both forms of revenant. We must focus on the close etymological relation that the term ‘monster’ has with ‘monument’: these monstrous figures are monuments of colonialism. Crucially, monuments play a critical role in relation to colonisation, being physical reminders of western superiority and hegemony.<sup>91</sup> Many scholars

<sup>89</sup> This is why in this introduction I only address ghosts and zombies in as figured in western conceptions and I will engage with the very different indigenous understanding of revenant and ancestral figures in chapter two.

<sup>90</sup> I would like to thank Professor Neil Lazarus for his coinage of “making unkin and unmaking kin”. Also, on this see Christina Sharpe, ‘Lose Your Kin’, *The New Inquiry*, 2016 <<https://thenewinquiry.com/lose-your-kin/>> [accessed 3 March 2020]. Here I also wish to include the unmaking of kin with ecosystems as argued by Whyte: “Different forms of colonialism, of course, whether through environmental destruction, land dispossession or forced relocation, have ended Indigenous peoples’ local relationships to thousands of plants, animals, insects, and entire ecosystems. While these relationships often continue to be enacted through Indigenous peoples’ living memories, heritage, “felt knowledges” (Million, 2013), social identities (e.g., clans), and philosophies, they have stopped as relationships involving direct ecological interaction. As Audra Mitchell’s research shows, today’s global discourses of extinction are often so focused on “species” that they cannot come to grips with Indigenous peoples’ experiences of having their relationships with nonhumans greatly disrupted by colonialism (Mitchell, 2016)” in Whyte, p. 226.

<sup>91</sup> Relation between colonialism and monuments can also be seen in Mbembe: “L’on sait que, pour être durable, toute domination doit s’inscrire non seulement sur les corps de ses sujets, mais aussi laisser des marques sur l’espace qu’ils habitent et des traces indélébiles dans leur imaginaire” and “La présence de ces morts funestes dans l’espace public a pour but de faire en sorte que le principe du meurtre et de la cruauté qu’ils ont personnifié

often point to the meaning of monster as a ‘warning’ and ‘indication’ by focusing the fact that *monstrum* is a derivative of *monere*. However, *monere* also means “to remind, bring to one’s recollection”, which is the root for the term monument, to which the adverbial suffix *-mentum* is added.<sup>92</sup> The myriad of terms associated with memory and commemoration implied in the word is crucial in understanding these monstrous figures as literary monuments of colonial relations, signifiers that represent a vestige of this history. Indeed, one now obsolete meaning of monument is that of “tomb” and “sepulchre”.<sup>93</sup> This links the term to the conceptualisation of the archive as a mortuary, on which I elaborate in more detail below, as well as representing the enclosed space of the cemetery from which the ghost and the zombie, revenants and undead signifiers, can rise from the tombs as a reminder of the dynamics of colonialism and proto-capitalism. In this thesis, my aim is to use the monstrous figures of the cannibal, the zombie and the ghost as metaphors to describe colonial relationality. For this reason I have purposely chosen figures that have come to meaning partially or fully during the colonial encounter, for this reason, for example, I do not engage with the vampire, which has creole cousins in the Caribbean for instance such as the soucouyant.<sup>94</sup> It is possible to think of the monstrous figures of colonial relationality as deriving from the attempt on the part of the coloniser to either symbolically erase ‘the colony’ by ‘ghosting’ them or, in other words, to render them invisible, while still, however, exploiting them to enrich the emerging European polities. Alternatively, we might see these monstrous figures as deriving from the attempt on the part of the coloniser to remove ‘the colony’ from the realm of the human: they are written as exotic and often pitiful monstrous figures and/or as threatening bogeymen embodying all of the coloniser’s anxieties. I interpret this dehumanisation as a ‘zombification’ of ‘the colony’ and I will further develop these figures and dynamics of ‘ghosting’ and ‘(de)zombification’ in the Chapter Two below.

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continue de hanter la mémoire des ex-colonisés, de saturer leur imaginaire et leurs espaces de vie, provoquant ainsi en eux une étrange éclipse de la conscience et les empêchant, *ipso facto*, de penser en toute clarté. Le rôle des statues et monuments coloniaux est donc de faire resurgir sur la scène du présent des morts qui, de leur vivant, ont tourmenté, souvent par le glaive, l’existence des Nègres. Ces statues fonctionnent à la manière de rites d’évocation de défunts aux yeux desquels l’humanité nègre compta pour rien – raison pour laquelle ils n’avaient aucun scrupule à verser, pour un rien, son sang” in Mbembe, *Critique*, p. 187 and p. 189.

<sup>92</sup> See “Monster”, *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/121738>> [accessed 10 May 2019].

<sup>93</sup> See “Monument”, *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/121852?rskey=OD0Yjh>> [accessed 10 May 2019].

<sup>94</sup> For more details on the ghost as both ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ see *Postcolonial Ghosts: Fantômes post-coloniaux*, ed. by Melanie Joseph-Vilain and Judith Misrahi-Barak (Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2009) and *Espectros: Ghostly Hauntings in Contemporary Transhispanic Narratives*, ed. by Alberto Ribas-Casasayas and Amanda L. Petersen (Bucknell University Press, 2016). For the soucouyant and its differentiation with the European vampire see Giselle Liza Anatol, *The Things That Fly in the Night: Female Vampires in Literature of the Circum-Caribbean and African Diaspora* (Rutgers University Press, 2015).

This thesis looks at literary cannibalism as a decolonial mode of writing aiming to challenge these figures by confronting and then rewriting narratives propagating problematic colonial histories. History should not be perceived as one-sided, since it is inherently not like that, and while it may be difficult to present a more multifaceted version of history, through literature, it may be possible to offer a more complex view on history which is not merely linear and monophonic. Rather, by rewriting works from the colonial literary archive one challenges the pitfalls and shortcomings of a one-sided version. Here, I wish to point not to the kind of ‘universal’ history that would annihilate differences, but rather to a history in the *web of time* proposing a transhistorical view of transnational, transcultural and transspecies kinships and relations. This conceptualisation echoes Moore’s concept of *web of life* which deconstructs the problematic human/nature dualism by proposing a fluctuating and encompassing understanding of environmentally human relations. It also engages with non-western understanding of history and time, which will be discussed in further details in the next chapter.

The concept of archive comes to play a critical role here; indeed, ‘the colony’ in the colonial literary archive are usually either repressed or marginalised and often – if they actually appear in the texts explicitly rather than ‘haunting’ them between the lines – they are either reified and/or negatively constructed, rendered monstrous. This is the case whether we are speaking of rebellious m/other like Medea or a (dis)obedient savage like Caliban or Friday. As in the historical archive, colonised bodies and lands in the colonial literary archive, are typically represented and depicted as frozen images and stereotypes. There have been calls to decolonise ‘the canon’ as well as ‘the archive’, and also to decolonise disciplines, such as history or literature, and it is in the wake of these that I am writing my thesis. The colonial literary archive, I argue, functions like the historical archive described by Saidiya Hartman in her work on the Atlantic trade: “The archive dictates what can be said about the past and the kinds of stories that can be told about the persons catalogued, embalmed, and sealed away in box files and folios. To read the archive is to enter a mortuary; it permits one final viewing and allows for a last glimpse of persons about to disappear into the slave hold”.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, these ‘dead’ images in the “mortuary” of the archives are akin to revenant figures, undead zombies and ghosts. These are signifiers of the monstrous relations of colonialism. An illustration of this dynamic can be seen in Julio Ortega’s novel *Adiós, Ayacucho* (1986).

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<sup>95</sup> Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008), p. 17.

The Peruvian novel traces the journey Alfonso Cánepa undertakes from Ayacucho to Lima in order to retrieve some of his missing bones to give himself a proper burial after he is violently mutilated and murdered by the military police. Cánepa's character is a revenant that could be understood both as a spectre and a zombie because of his bodily materiality and fractured body. This broken corporeality echoes Jáuregui's and Galeano's understanding of Latin America as a fragmented body. Moreover, when Cánepa cannot find his own bones, he decides to complete his body by taking the coloniser's bones in Fernando Pizarro's "gris y mortuorio monumento".<sup>96</sup> Here the narrative explicitly situates the broken corporeality of Cánepa in relation to the colonial past and its consequences. Additionally, the novel aligns colonial and post-colonial violence, two critical forms of violence that happened in different former colonies in Latin America, the Caribbean and on the African continent – even if in different contexts. Indeed, the uneven political and socio-economic developments left after years of colonisation are often followed by turmoil and struggles, and in Peru, not unlike other former colonies, a military regime was instituted which prolonged colonial forms of violence.

Ortega's novel is specifically inspired by the investigative commission prompted by the president Fernando Belaunde Terry in February 1983 and headed by Mario Vargas Llosa following the murder of eight journalists in January 1983 in the village of Uchuraccay. As Víctor Vich and Alexandra Hibbett argue, the attempt to *objectively* reconstruct the events leading to the death of the journalists in Uchuraccay was thwarted by stereotypes and preconceived ideas about Andean indigenous peoples: "Aunque el Informe intentó reconstruir los hechos con la mayor objetividad posible, sostenemos que su enunciación siguió alimentándose de una retórica muy tradicional que lo llevó a juzgar lo sucedido a partir de ideas preestablecidas sobre la cultura andina y sobre los complejos procesos de la modernidad en el Perú".<sup>97</sup> These events, along with the death of 135 community members of Uchuraccay, principally Quechua indigenous people, are part of a wider period known as the *Manchay Tiempo*, a hybrid denomination including *Manchay*, the Quechua word for fear, and the Spanish term for time. This period, which is considered as lasting from 1985 to 2000, was the theatre to many violent struggles opposing the Marxist-Maoist Guerrilla group *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and the military government. Quechua *campesinos* (peasant farmers) were often caught in the crossfire which resulted in several violent deaths of the indigenous

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<sup>96</sup> Julio Ortega, *Adiós, Ayacucho seguido de el Oro de Moscú y otros peligros que acechan a los adolescentes en sus primeros pasos hacia la vida adulta* (Ishi Publications/Mosca Azul Editores, 1986), p. 64.

<sup>97</sup> Víctor Vich and Alexandra Hibbett, "La risa irónica de un cuerpo roto: *Adiós Ayacucho* de Julio Ortega", in *Contra el sueño de los justos: La literatura peruana ante la violencia política*, ed. by Juan Carlo Ubilluz, Víctor Vich, and Alexandra Hibbett (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2009), pp. 175–89, pp. 176–177.

communities. For this reason, by “the start of the 1990s, the Quechua had started to establish themselves in defense patrols known as *rondas campesinas*”.<sup>98</sup> One result of the guerrilla strife during the *Manchay Tiempo* was also a mass immigration of Quechua people, especially youths, to metropolitan spaces, especially Lima, in which they were often forced to live in shantytowns and difficult conditions. This migratory path is illustrated in the novel by the narrator’s journey from Ayacucho to Lima as he believes that he will find the rest of his missing bones in the capital.

Ortega’s novel was also specifically inspired by a journal article in which he reads about the gruesome and violent torture and mutilation of Jesús Oropeza, “a peasant activist from Ayacucho”.<sup>99</sup> Cánepa’s broken body in the novel is not only a signifier for ‘the colony’ exploited and devoured during the colonial period, but also of the indigenous population caught in the crossfire during the *Manchay Tiempo* – despite their constitution of defence patrol, Quechua communities still remain the principal victims of this period – and the fragmented social body of Peru. Furthermore, as Mónica Cárdenas Moreno argues “Alfonso Cánepa representa a los migrantes que se desplazan hacia Lima amenazados por la violencia y el olvido en la sierra, y que llevan consigo los traumas del conflicto, el recuerdo de sus muertos y desaparecidos”.<sup>100</sup> Cánepa’s travel from Ayacucho to Lima can also be seen as referring back to the journey undertaken by Felipe Huaman Poma de Ayala, a Quechua nobleman, who wrote *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno* between 1600 to 1615, addressed to King Philip III, critiquing Spanish colonial rule and its impact on the indigenous populations.<sup>101</sup> Here rewriting history becomes crucial as Cárdenas Moreno notes: “La misión de recomposición histórica que Guamán Poma emprendió y que no tuvo frutos en su tiempo ha adquirido siglos más tarde una fuerza simbólica notable. La peregrinación de Cánepa busca también una transformación simbólica, la resignificación de la historia: atacar el centro del poder y su historia, es decir, Lima y los huesos del conquistador Francisco Pizarro”.<sup>102</sup> The novel challenges both the colonial historical archive as well as the official national one that is being established by the authoritarian government:

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<sup>98</sup> Victoria R. Williams, *Indigenous Peoples: An Encyclopedia of Culture, History, and Threats to Survival* (ABC-CLIO, 2020), p. 899, emphasis in original.

<sup>99</sup> Ortega, p. 348.

<sup>100</sup> Mónica Cárdenas Moreno, “Ruptura del cuerpo y ruptura del lenguaje en la novela de la memoria histórica en el Perú. Estudio comparativo de *Adiós, Ayacucho* de Julio Ortega y *La sangre de la aurora* de Claudia Salazar”, *Revista Del Instituto Riva Agüero*, 1.2 (2016), 11–46, p. 25.

<sup>101</sup> See Peter Beardsell, *Europe and Latin America: Returning the Gaze* (Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 56-58.

<sup>102</sup> Cárdenas Moreno, p. 22.

Claro que en este país uno se muere rápidamente, sin más, lo que revela la suerte de la víctima y la convicción del victimario. La verdadera historia nacional sería este cuento de las variaciones en la matanza en los mataderos de turno. Cada estilo de matar señalaría una época, cada muerto ilustre (Atahualpa, Túpac Amaru, José Olaya, Alfonso Ugarte, Atusparia, y tantos otros), pero también cada muerto anónimo, da cuenta de su cuerpo condenado y torturado, y, en estos tiempos de guerra sucia, desaparecido después de despedazado. Este cementerio nacional es un velar sin término, un luto del alma.<sup>103</sup>

Here Cánepa considers a genealogy of death which relates the Peruvian colonial past with the violent present of the *Manchay Tiempo*. In a gesture redolent of the necropolitics described by Mbembe, he also rhetorically aligns anonymous deaths with those of famous people, reminding readers that each death, and life, is important and hence re-sensitising them to mass killings. Cánepa, representing the broken body of Perú, also represents its scarred history and in trying to reassemble his skeleton he seeks reparations. This is precisely what I think literary cannibalism does: rewriting history, it seeks to repair the psychological and socio-economic as well as environmental scars of colonialism, which never truly disappear:

Réparation, par ailleurs, parce que l'histoire a laissé des lésions, des entailles. Le processus historique a été, pour une large part de notre humanité, un processus d'accoutumance à la mort d'autrui – mort lente, mort par asphyxie, mort subite, mort déléguée. Cette accoutumance à la mort d'autrui, de celui ou de celle avec lequel l'on croit n'avoir rien en partage, ces formes multiples de tarissement des sources vives de la vie au nom de la race ou de la différence, tout cela a laissé des traces très profondes à la fois dans l'imaginaire et la culture et dans les rapports sociaux et économiques. Ces lésions et entailles empêchent de faire communauté. De fait, la construction du commun est inséparable de la réinvention de la communauté.<sup>104</sup>

Literary cannibalism's attempts to 'make kin' and decolonise 'the colony' are aligned with the reinvention of community advocated by Mbembe: there is a need to recover traditional forms of practice and processes of knowledge production, which have been demonised or denigrated by colonisation. Throughout Ortega's novel, the irony and humour used to describe Cánepa's fragmented body urge the reader to consider the importance of each life and what happens when marginalised communities are the ones 'allowed' to die. This can only be done, as Victor Quiroz argues, by tackling and challenging the types of discourse that have been objectifying indigenous people and their culture: "en *Adiós, Ayacucho* se construye la carnavalización del

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<sup>103</sup> Ortega, pp. 15-16.

<sup>104</sup> Mbembe, *Critique*, p. 262.

discurso periodístico, el indigenista y el antropológico, los que cosifican al otro andino”.<sup>105</sup> By confronting institutionalised discourse that reifies otherness – that employs techniques and dynamics analogous with those used during colonial times – Ortega’s novel aims to first consider how history is written and second rewrite this archive, as well decolonise the writing of history itself. This is continued when Cánepa decides to complete his skeleton by taking Pizarro’s bones, as Quiroz contends:

la tumba que contiene los huesos de Pizarro funciona como depósito/Archivo del primigenio poder colonizador que organiza el cuerpo social peruano, el cual ha sido cuestionado sistemáticamente a lo largo de la novela. Del mismo modo, el cuerpo degradado del “conquistador”, de quien solo quedan huesos, se erige como un símbolo del decaimiento del sistema moderno/colonial continuado por el Estado criollo peruano.<sup>106</sup>

In Hartman’s words quoted above, the archive can be considered a mortuary; this idea is here materialised through Pizarro’s tomb being read as an archive. Both the colonial and the authoritarian powers leave their victims anonymous and objectified in communal graves and in sealed files. Cánepa attempts to challenge this history of depersonalisation and objectification by contesting modes of knowledge production through the characters of the journalist and the anthropologist as mentioned above, but also by envisaging a Peruvian body politics and social body that unifies all its origins, from colonial to indigenous, in Cánepa’s reassembled body. There is even an attempt in the novel to offer a political ecology, as when Cánepa claims that Peruvian economists have “saldado el país al extranjero, y lo han hecho sin remordimientos, con una convicción absoluta”.<sup>107</sup> As Justin McBrien notes, death and capital are close cousins:

Capital was born from extinction, and from capital, extinction has flowed. [...] Today’s debate about planetary crisis has yielded the concepts of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene. Both recognize extinction but have yet to grasp its ontological significance — for humanity or for capitalism. What I wish to propose is that we recognize the Necrocene — or “New Death” — as a fundamental biogeological moment of our era: the Capitalocene. The Necrocene reframes the history of capitalism’s expansion through the process of *becoming extinction*.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Victor Quiroz, “La carnavalización del archivo en *Adiós, Ayacucho* de Julio Ortega”, *Mester*, 43.1 (2014), 41–64, p. 41

<sup>106</sup> Quiroz, p. 57.

<sup>107</sup> Ortega, p. 33.

<sup>108</sup> Justin McBrien, “Accumulating Extinction: Planetary Catastrophism in the Necrocene”, in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. by Jason W. Moore (PM Press, 2016), pp. 116–37, p. 116, emphasis in original.

Proto-capitalism and contemporary capitalism are both built on the mass murder and destruction of human and extra-human nature and continue to cause such devastation, which has led to our current climate emergency. Hence (proto-)capitalism's expansion through colonial relationality is built on making, rather than "becoming", extinction, or, put differently, on making unkin and unmaking kin. What better than undead signifiers, or revenants, to illustrate the 'necro(s)cene' of (proto-)capitalism then? *Adiós, Ayacucho* uses the revenant as a way of addressing both the country's colonial past and also the continuing violence of the post-colonial order. Similarly, throughout the third and fourth chapters of this thesis, I will show how rewriting history is a way to challenge the state of affairs when 'the colony' has been made a revenant through ghosting or zombification. First, however, I will theorise how literary cannibalism undertakes this work as a mode of writing and I will do so by emphasising what I call 'cannibal connections': weaving together different works produced within the extractiono(s)cene which have conceptualised identity construction and creative processes through the metaphor of cannibalism.

## CHAPTER 2

### CANNIBAL CONNECTIONS:

#### FROM *ANTROPOFAGIA CULTURAL* TO LITERARY CANNIBALISM

In this thesis, my goal is to theorise literary cannibalism as a mode of writing in the extractiono(s)cene, which is the reading structure holding together the corpus investigated in the third and fourth chapters. In this chapter I hope to be able to propose a new theory of metaphorical cannibalism as an artistic process by studying comparatively and bridging together what I call ‘Cannibal Connections’; works of authors from former colonies on the American and African continents who have utilised this metaphor in their literary and intellectual productions. The chapter will be sub-divided into five sections, each considering elements constitutive to literary cannibalism as a mode of writing as I propose it here.

While I will engage with a wide corpus of literature, I focus primarily on authors from former colonies and their conceptualisations of culture and literature in relation to socio-economic, political, and environmental issues. My aim, in part, will be to indicate the limits of western scholarship in providing appropriate tools to investigate these writings. However, in addition, I aim to fashion a theory based on indigenous and decolonial ontologies and epistemologies. Hence, while I engage several scholars from the Global North, I try to avoid giving their voices priority and authority over those from the Global South.<sup>109</sup> In so doing, I hope, instead, to give priority to voices that have been marginalised in speaking about their own experiences.

The geographical constellation of the authors studied here reinforces the spatially and historically entangled ‘space’ that I call the extractiono(s)cene, defined in the previous chapter, which follows the movements of the Atlantic Trade route. Literary cannibalism as a mode of writing highlights how the act of rewriting the colonial literary archive is not to be perceived as mimicry or imitation, but rather as a decolonising gesture. The very act of rewriting the colonial text has several overlapping aims, as I will demonstrate shortly, the main one being to challenge the obsolete concept and uneven cultural dynamic of canonisation itself. Overall, I argue that by using literary cannibalism to understand the genesis of cultural productions one can identify the following dynamics in literature emerging from former colonies: (i) the

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<sup>109</sup> Both the ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ are potentially problematic expressions, though I deploy them here as a way to refer to the broader spaces they are used to indicate in scholarship, which also include an understanding that specific histories and developments are attached to these labels.

development of independent national culture and literature; (ii) the rewriting of History; (iii-iv) the decolonisation and de-objectification of the commodified identities imposed onto peoples and lands during colonialism – this movement is separated into two sections which tackle the ‘ghosting’ (erasure) and the ‘zombification’ (demonisation) of ‘the colony’; and (v) a movement towards kin making in the extractiono(s)cene. While for obvious reasons I limit my analysis in this thesis to specific spaces, my belief is that the analytical lens I use has the potential to be adopted in investigating any ‘postcolonial’ literatures. To add an important note: my aim is not to ascribe intentionality to the authors whose works I investigate in these last two chapters of my thesis, but rather to propose a new methodological approach to literature from the extractiono(s)cene.

## REWRITING IS NOT MIMICRY: DECOLONISING LITERATURE

Valerie Loichot argues that literary cannibalism “curses in the other’s language by ingesting its words and regurgitating them in a new form, and in doing so remains stuck in a dialectical trap”.<sup>110</sup> This implies that rewriting is generally understood as a type of imitation, which, in this sense, would be limiting the power of works created by authors from former colonies. But Loichot’s understanding of language as belonging to the ‘other’ is problematic here. Though Spanish, English, French and Portuguese are originally the colonisers’ languages, through linguistic evolution, changes and creolisation, the languages now spoken on the American and African continents deriving from these European ones are, in a very real sense, owned by the speakers. It is therefore necessary to see them as the authors’ languages rather than the ‘colonisers’ ones – this does not include the many indigenous languages that are still spoken on both continents.<sup>111</sup> It is for similar reasons that the act of rewriting also needs to be

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<sup>110</sup> Loichot, p. 168.

<sup>111</sup> There has been quite a heated debate concerning these issues, especially in relation to the context of decolonisation. In many countries on the African continent, in respect to the use of French or Arabic in the Maghreb, for instance. Debates concerning the use of native languages rather than English can be seen in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s work *Decolonising the Mind*, mentioned in Chapter One above, which is crucial in the African context for this discussion. See also Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, “The Language of African Literature”, in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Routledge, 1994), pp. 435–55. Wole Soyinka’s and Chinua Achebe’s approach differs greatly as one can read in the following piece, for example: Chinua Achebe, “The African Writer and the English Language”, in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Routledge, 1994), pp. 428–34. Consider also the nature of this debate in the Caribbean context, in which the *créolistes’* argument is often in contrast to that of other Antillean authors writing in French. See Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* (Gallimard, 1993), for instance, versus Maryse Condé’s contribution to this debate in Zineb Ali-Benali and Françoise Simasotchi-Bronès, “Le rire créole : Entretien avec Maryse Condé”, *Littérature*, 154 (2009), 13–23, for instance.

understood as an action aimed at redressing intellectual and material oppression rather than an act of imitation. As I will show in Chapters Three and Four, through the analysis of case studies I have selected for this thesis, the category of ‘rewriting’ can be quite broad and does not simply entail a direct adaptation of a literary text, but can also involve a rewriting of anthropological or historical works and archives.

For all these reasons, literary cannibalism and the engagement with the practice of rewriting are actually dynamics that give rise to original works and which, through the fact that they adapt the colonial literary archive, engage with a specific past and histories. Understanding literary cannibalism as imitation commits one to narrowly approaching the metaphor of cannibalism through a western perspective. My goal here is to decolonise the metaphor of cannibalism by displacing it from its association with ‘the colony’ and using it as a more apt metaphor for describing colonial and (neo-)imperial extractive practices. These are crucial here, since these practices attempted to erase ‘the colony’'s humanity and creativity to better commodify them. VS Naipaul famously described the Caribbean as a place in which nothing new can be created: “The history of the islands can never be satisfactorily told. Brutality is not the only difficulty. History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was ever created in the West Indies”.<sup>112</sup> I understand this statement as an indication that the history of material and intellectual colonialism can be seen as having erased the possibility of any creativity because of the violent physical and mental oppression it provoked. Naipaul’s words have been addressed by many other authors from the West Indies, notably Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott, whose works aim is to demonstrate the creative potential of the Caribbean. In the wake of hurricane Gilbert, which hit Jamaica in 1988, Brathwaite echoed Naipaul’s contention:

the house we build is practically totally destroyed. Here are all the artifacts and all the archives all the manuscripts all these spiritual tokens and totems of the Caribbean sea and our trodden world we’ve been trying all these years to find to keep to treasure to preserve to hold against the precarious past and towards a future caring: for our all-we community to share and overstand : gone . suddem . flatten . juss like that . where golden bamboo flutes is now is bleak and wet and mud and dumb and silence silence silence As if some Powvr wish to wash away even her ashes here and no bird sing as if Naipaul right after all . That we have created nothing.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> V.S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies – British, French and Dutch – in the West Indies and South America* (Andre Deutsch Limited, 1962), p. 29.

<sup>113</sup> Kamau Brathwaite, *ConVERsations with Nathaniel Mackey* (We Press, 1999), pp. 139-140.

Here, Brathwaite uses his “Sycorax video style”, one he uses throughout his work and which challenges the colonial literary archive in both form and content.<sup>114</sup> The name itself refers to Shakespeare’s Sycorax, the silenced and absent mother of Caliban from whom Prospero has stolen the island on which he then asserts his colonial dominance. “Sycorax video style” visually challenges ‘English’ as the coloniser’s language, appropriating it in a form better suited to the realities of (formerly) colonised spaces. In this quote, one can see the multiple legacies of colonialism and (neo-)imperialism embedded; the first layer points to socioeconomic issues, emphasising the state in which Jamaica, like many other islands in that region, has been left with the ruins of Empire, bound up in an uneven world-economy even after the supposed end of colonisation. Additionally, the house described also has a metaphorical valence. Its depiction of the island as a museum in which “all the artifacts and all the archives all the manuscripts all these spiritual tokens and totems” are kept shows the entanglement of material and cultural forms of oppression. The effects of these are likened to a hurricane destroying and erasing what has been created in the Caribbean, notwithstanding political independence, when the individual islands moved from being colonies to being ‘postcolonies’.<sup>115</sup> Creation can only thrive after true intellectual and socio-economic independence.

These systemic and structural inequalities also reach deep down into the cultural sphere. Consider the case of the Malian author Yambo Ouologuem. Ouologuem was the first African writer to be awarded the prestigious French literary prize *Renaudot* for his 1968 novel *Le Devoir de violence*. The novel’s acclaim was only rivalled by the scandal following the discovery of its supposed plagiarism of Graham Greene’s and André Schwarz-Bart’s works.<sup>116</sup> While today Ouologuem and his work have been redeemed in public opinion, as the republication of *Le Devoir de violence* in 2018 in honour of his death shows, the violence with which Graham Greene himself and the press reacted and censured the Malian author points to

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<sup>114</sup> As described by Nicholas Laughlin: “his groundbreaking (and often bewildering) “Sycorax video style,” which he describes as “a use of computer fontage to visualise his sense of dream & morph & riddim drama — videolectic enactment.” It emerged fully in *Dreamstories* (1994): a visual poetry, using the resources of an early computer word processor, deploying a variety of typefaces and styles, unconventional syntax and punctuation, and sometimes idiosyncratic spellings. “Sycorax video style” cannot properly be quoted; it must be visually reproduced. As his name for it makes clear, Brathwaite sees this form as a rebellion against “Prospero’s” poetry, staid lines advancing in orderly fashion from left to right, and stanzas marching in ranks down the page” in Nicholas Laughlin, “Notes on Videolectics”, *CRB: The Caribbean Review of Books*, 2017 <<http://caribbeanreviewofbooks.com/crb-archive/12-may-2007/notes-on-videolectics/>> [accessed 11 March 2020].

<sup>115</sup> See Achille Mbembe, *De la postcolonie: Essai sur l’imagination politique dans l’Afrique contemporaine*, seconde édition (Éditions Kathala, 2000).

<sup>116</sup> See Miller, pp. 216-245 and James Olney, *Tell Me Africa: An Approach to African Literature* (Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 204-247.

the intellectual inequality and double standards visited on authors from the Global South.<sup>117</sup> Ouologuem's novel, in his own words, aims to destabilise the psychological and cultural violence perpetrated on people from former colonies, on top of the physical violence, by decolonising the images of African peoples as constructed by the west:

“My aim,” Ouologuem told a correspondent from *West Africa*, “is to do violence to the misconceptions of Africans so that we can realise what the real problems are. This is our ‘duty of violence’[...] it is precisely this grossly distorted image of Africa and Africans that Ouologuem would destroy, replacing it with a valid portrait based on a revision of history and a redefinition of personality, a redrawing of the African image.”<sup>118</sup>

This dynamic is also present in his 1964 poem “Quand parlent les dents nègres”. Ouologuem challenges standard images of the African as a cannibal by associating narratives of African cannibalism with gossip and unfounded chatter, through the idiom used in the second line of the poem: “Les gens me croient cannibal / Mais vous savez ce que les gens disent”.<sup>119</sup> What “people say” here refers to the discursive exoticisation of ‘the colony’ through colonial rhetoric, such as travel writing, which literary cannibalism as a mode of writing challenges by ‘dezombifying the colony’, as I will explain below. The poem’s emphasis on the violence done to the speaker’s body serves metonymically to refer to the more general violence of colonialism:

Des gens m’ont soudain tous entouré  
Ligoté  
Jeté terrassé  
Aux pieds de la justice [...]  
Les couteaux faisant défaut  
Ce qui s’explique chez les végétariens  
Occidentaux  
On se saisit d’une lame Gillette  
Et patiemment  
Criss  
Crass

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<sup>117</sup> This contrasts with the fact that Shakespeare, for instance, continues to be celebrated for his genius and originality even though his plays include entire passages taken verbatim from other works, in addition to the cannibalisation of plots and characters. See more in Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare’s Plays* (Routledge, 1977) and Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare’s Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* (Bloomsbury, 2016).

<sup>118</sup> Olney, pp. 209-210.

<sup>119</sup> Yambo Ouologuem, “Quand parlent les dents nègres”, *Présence Africaine*, 57 (1966), 91–92, p. 91.

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On m'ouvrir le ventre<sup>120</sup>

A poignant irony attaches to the description of the violent treatment of the speaker as “justice”, contrasted with the vegetarianism of the Europeans in the poem. The ethical choice to not eat meat and thereby to reduce animal suffering is of course undermined by the fact that the African body is subjected to extreme violence.<sup>121</sup> This shows the dehumanisation of the colonial “body” in general and its reconstruction as a commodity. Additionally, it can also be argued that a specific critique is being extended to western society more broadly; here the poem indicates how supposedly ethical movements like vegetarianism, despite their “moral extensionism”, do not consider other binaries in their conception of the world, nor uneven power dynamics involving human life as entangled with and in nature.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, often the fashionable shift to a vegetarian or vegan diet does not take into account the consequences visited upon people whose livelihoods depend on the agricultural industry or the possible human-environmental impact of such diets.<sup>123</sup>

Additionally, in the poem, the episode of the Red Riding Hood tale in which the hunter opens the wolf’s stomach to save the grandmother – this is a tale in which, ironically, anxieties surrounding a man-eating wolf are deployed – is here adapted to portray the Europeans opening the speaker’s stomach. However, since the accusation of cannibalism is invented and generated through occidental anxieties, it is not blood and human remains that are found in the speaker’s stomach, but tomatoes: “Une plantation de tomates y fleurissait / Irriguée par des ruisseaux de vin de palme / Vivent les tomates”.<sup>124</sup> This flourishing inner garden can be understood not only as a way to show the speaker’s kinship with his environment and his agricultural work, since he is “un cultivateur”, but also to ridicule European fantasies and anxieties surrounding

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<sup>120</sup> Ouologuem, pp. 91-92.

<sup>121</sup> This irony can be found in Sam Selvon’s novel *Moses Ascending* also when Moses considers the treatment of pets by British people: “you know what English people are like when it comes to animals. I used to wish I was a dog when I first come to Brit’n” in Sam Selvon, *Moses Ascending* (Penguin Books, 2007), p. 65.

<sup>122</sup> I use the conceptualisation of “moral extensionism” here as defined by Christine E. Gudorf and James E. Huchingson: “To be true to its object, environmental ethics must expand our circle of moral standing to allow for the inclusion of other animals, plants, and systems of plants and animals, not to mention mountains and rivers. Commitment to the project of this “moral extensionism” is the fundamental challenge and a distinguishing feature of environmental ethics” in Christine E. Gudorf and James E. Huchingson, *Boundaries: A Casebook in Environmental Ethics* (Georgetown University Press, 2010), pp. 8-9.

<sup>123</sup> While vegan and vegetarian diets have benefits in terms of human-environmental impacts, often the adoption of such diets for fashionable or health and dietary reasons do not take into account their actual pitfalls. See more in Isabella Tree, “If You Want to Save the World, Veganism isn’t the Answer”, *The Guardian*, 25 August 2018 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/25/veganism-intensively-farmed-meat-dairy-soya-maize>> [accessed 15 April 2020] and Richard Gray, “Why the Vegan Diet is Not Always Green”, *BBC Future*, 13 February 2020 <<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200211-why-the-vegan-diet-is-not-always-green>> [accessed 15 April 2020], for instance.

<sup>124</sup> Ouologuem, p. 92.

cannibalism as supposedly happening on the African continent. Specifically, the repetition of the “Vivent les tomates” line throughout the poem emphasises this. The verb to live “vivre”, conjugated in the third person plural, is a homophone to the French interjection “vive” meaning “long live” or “up with” the noun following it.<sup>125</sup> Here, one could argue that this homophony derides both the inconsistent ethics of the occidental vegetarians and also their projection of primitivism onto the African continent and its peoples, in which indigenous ontology and epistemologies are often reduced to a simplified type of animism. The failure of the occidental vegetarian characters in the poem to empathise with the speaker can be put in stark opposition with indigenous kinship making across species.

Many different indigenous societies aim to create real bonds environmentally, especially since their epistemologies often do not perceive humanity and nature as a binary, and therefore do not need an ‘extension’ of morality to accept ‘other species’ in their morality and empathy.<sup>126</sup> By creating a national and decolonised literature both in form and content, authors from former colonies adopting literary cannibalism as a mode of writing challenge the erasure and undermining in western historiography, literature, and anthropology of their people’s traditions and practices. These have often fetishised and scorned indigenous epistemologies and praxes and attempted to organise them according to western understandings of religion and spirituality. This can be seen in ethnological writing from Herodotus to Montaigne, the inventor of armchair anthropology, who in describing Brazilian Tupinamba indigenous people brought to the French court, argues that “[c]es nations me semblent donc ainsi barbares, pour n’avoir reçu fort peu de leçon de l’esprit humain, et être encore fort voisines de leur naïveté originelle”.<sup>127</sup> The supposed primitivism of the ‘other’, constructed in occidental travel writing and anthropological works, is challenged in the rewritings I shall investigate in Chapter Three.

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<sup>125</sup> The importance of that term during liberation struggles in Lusophone Africa must also be noted here. See for instance the continued use of the term in the Mozambican anthem, in Igor Cusack, “From Revolution to Reflection: The National Anthems of the New Lusophone Worlds”, *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 45.2 (45-67), 2008.

<sup>126</sup> Many indigenous epistemologies and praxes across the world promote harmonious and kindred relationality with the ecosystems of which we are part. One could take the example of Menominee culture as described by Whyte: “The forest ecosystem is understood in terms of kinship relationships, where “elder plants,” such as maples, have rich knowledge to share with humans who show respect. Elder maples are considered to be looking out for humans! People *learn from* the forest, not the other way around. The elder plants philosophy is ecological, emphasizing the collective agency of multiple plants and animals in the forest in which different species (or nations, including the Menominee people) are morally responsible for one another, interdependent and involved in mutual learning (Grignon and Kimmerer, 2017). Many Menominee Tribal members retain close spiritual and cultural connections to the forest, using the forest as a place for ceremonies, family recreation, and planting and harvesting, as well as a point of pride that Tribal members enjoy showing to respectful and appreciative visitors. The forest is like a collective agent with spiritual and economic powers” in Whyte, p. 233.

<sup>127</sup> Montaigne, p. 130.

In challenging Naipaul, Walcott notes that: “Nothing will always be created in the West Indies, for quite a long time, because what will come out of there is like nothing one has ever seen before”.<sup>128</sup> Works produced in former colonies cannot be understood and investigated solely on the basis of the approaches that have been theorised in the Global North, as the emergence of postcolonial theory emphasises, for instance. This is not to say that essentialist approaches should be taken in investigating such works, but rather that there is a continued need to make space for voices from former colonies when it comes to theory as well as literature. For this reason, the very concept of mimicry in art is problematic: in the first place all artistic and cultural works everywhere exhibit a certain level of imitation and intertextuality with what has come before; second, in the postcolonial context specifically, what has come before is often mostly the European past and traditions due to the erasure of pre-existing cultures during colonisation. As Walcott argues:

No, cultures can only be created out of this knowledge of nothing, and in deeper than superficial, existential sense, we in the Caribbean know all about nothing. We know what we owe Europe either revenge or nothing, and it is better to have nothing than revenge. We owe the past revenge or nothing, and revenge is uncreative.<sup>129</sup>

Walcott’s claim that revenge is uncreative is crucial in my understanding of cannibalism, which moves away from its conceptualisation as a metaphor focused on vengeance. This is how it has been understood hitherto in western thought, including psychoanalytic theory.<sup>130</sup> In decolonising cannibalism, one must engage with the way it has been conceived by indigenous peoples creating and undertaking its rituals. By understanding how indigenous peoples really regard this act, one is put in a position from which a new conception of metaphorical cannibalism can be proposed.

Aiming to decolonise anthropology in his 2019 essay *Metafísicas Canibais*, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro engages with Tupi indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and practices. In considering cannibalism in particular and focusing on indigenous linguistics, he reassesses the meaning of the term ‘enemy’ and its relation to the conceptualisation of cannibalism in Tupi culture. This contrasts strongly with the occidental understanding of cannibalism as a bellicose and vengeful practice, as mentioned in Montaigne’s essay, for instance. In describing Tupinamba’s ritualistic cannibalism, he explains that their consumption of the enemy is not,

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<sup>128</sup> Derek Walcott, “The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?”, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 16.1 (3-13), 1974, p. 9.

<sup>129</sup> Walcott, “The Caribbean”, p. 12.

<sup>130</sup> See Loichot, p. xxvi, pp. xxix-xxx, p. 141, pp. 144-145 and p. 168, and see Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. by James Strachey (Routledge, 2003), for example.

“pour s’en nourrir, ainsi que faisaient anciennement les Scythes, c’est pour représenter une extrême vengeance”.<sup>131</sup> However, as Viveiros de Castro notes, Tupi indigenous people integrated their ‘enemies’ into their tribes and family before the ritual ceremony of ‘cannibalism’, by making them into their brothers-in-law. In Tupi-Guarani language, ‘enemy’ and ‘brother-in-law’ are both signified by the same term: “era costume darem-se-lhes mulheres do grupo como esposas – ou seja, eles eram transformados em cunhados (“inimigo” e “cunhado” se diz em tupi-guarani antigo com a mesma palavra: *trovajar*, termo que significa literalmente “contrário” ou “fronteiro””.<sup>132</sup> This disputes Montaigne’s conclusion of “extreme vengeance” by rather showing that peace and kinship are reached through this *incorporation* of the ‘enemy’ into the tribe. The ritualised action of consuming small amounts of human flesh takes place after this integration of the ‘enemy’ into the tribe: “visto que se tratava de um canibalismo ritual, em que a ingestão da carne da vítima, em termos quantitativos, era insignificante; ademais são raras e inconclusivas as evidências, nas fontes que conhecemos, de quaisquer virtudes físicas ou metafísicas atribuídas ao corpo dos inimigos”.<sup>133</sup> Here the nature of this ceremony materially grounds the previous metaphorical integration of the ‘enemy’ through kinship rituals such as marriage.

This allows, first, a questioning of traditional western conceptions of cannibalism as a violent act of aggression and second a new conceptualisation of it as an act of ritualistic union and incorporation. Indeed, these practices aim toward kin making, rather than annihilation, through consumption, contrary to how cannibalism has been conceptualised in occidental discourse. For this reason, literary cannibalism as a mode of writing aims to ‘dezombify the colony’ as I will explain below; to rid ‘the colony’ of the monstrous imagery projected on them by the colonisers. Similarly, Suely Rolnik argues, in her “Antropofagia zumbi”, that the anthropophagous metaphor, with which the movement of Brazilian modernism engages in the 1920s, is not merely revenge cannibalism but rather a “critical devoration”:

a cultura brasileira nasce sob o signo da devoração crítica e irreverente de uma alteridade que foi desde sempre múltipla e variável. A idéia de Antropofagia é uma resposta à necessidade de afrontar não só a presença impositiva das culturas colonizadoras, mas também – e sobretudo – o processo de hibridação cultural como parte da experiência vivida pelo país.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Montaigne, p. 134.

<sup>132</sup> Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Metafísicas canibais: Elementos para uma antropologia pós-estrutural* (Ubu Editora/N-1 Edições, 2018), p. 157, emphasis in original.

<sup>133</sup> Viveiros de Castro, p. 159.

<sup>134</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Antropofagia Zumbi” (presented at the Encontro Internacional de Antropofagia, São Paulo, 2005), p. 3.

Here Rolnik provides some background for the emergence of *Antropofagia Cultural*. This modernist movement is an essential starting point for literary cannibalism as I theorise it in this thesis. It is during the São Paulo 1922 *Semana de Arte Moderna*, which critically coincide with the centenary of Brazil's independence that the first works of the modernist movement appear.<sup>135</sup> Much of the work produced by Brazilian modernist authors aims to develop an independent and national culture and identity. Oswald de Andrade is one of the key figures of this movement and his *Manifesto Antropófago* (thereafter *MA*) is central to the development of cultural anthropophagy. Before the publication of the *MA* in 1928, de Andrade publishes in 1925, after a trip to Paris, a collection of poems entitled *Poesia Pau Brasil* (thereafter *PPB*) which “embraced the fact that “brasil” is the name of the first commodity extracted from the territory, Brazilwood, and used extraction as a model for appropriating cultural value from and for the marketplace. In this way, Brazil was portrayed as an agent of its own (colonial) destiny, no longer simply a subordinate collateral”.<sup>136</sup> This materialist understanding of Brazilian colonial and (neo-)imperial history becomes an even more crucial focus for de Andrade after the 1929 financial crisis that greatly impacted the Brazilian economy. De Andrade was part of what was called the São Paulo coffee elite, a group whose livelihood, based on the coffee economy and export, was significantly affected by this financial crisis, as I will discuss in more detail below.

With his *PPB*, de Andrade reconsiders Brazil's uneven cultural and economic relations, particularly with Europe. Crucially, this work is produced as he returns to São Paulo from Paris, and through this journey outside of Brazil he “re-discovers” his country.<sup>137</sup> Jorge Schwartz describes *PPB* as an historical journey as well as a spatial one across Brazilian territory and culture: “Encontramos nele uma espécie de percurso histórico que se inicia no descobrimento, passa pelo Brasil colonial, pelo barroco de Minas Gerais (“Roteiro de Minas”), pela província-cosmopolita (“Postes da Light”) e chega até o Carnaval”.<sup>138</sup> This journey through time and space is opened by a dedication to Blaise Cendrars “in the occasion of the discovery of Brazil”.

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<sup>135</sup> Jorge Schwartz, “Um Brasil em tom menor: Pau-Brasil e Antropofagia”, *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, 24.47 (1998), 53–65, p. 54.

<sup>136</sup> Fernando J. Rosenberg, *The Avant-Garde and Geopolitics in Latin America* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), p. 78.

<sup>137</sup> As Paulo Prado argues: “Oswald de Andrade, numa viagem a Paris, do alto de um atelier de Place Clichy – umbigo do mundo – descobriu, deslumbrado, a sua propria terra. A volta á patria confirmou, no encantamento das descobertas manuelinas, a revelação surpreendente de que o Brasil existia. Esse facto, de que alguns já desconfiavam, abriu seus olhos á visão radiosa de um mundo novo, inexplorado e misterioso. Estava criada a poesia « pau-brasil »” in Paulo Prado, “Prefácio Poesia Pau Brasil”, in *Pau Brasil*, ed. by Paulo Prado, Edição Fac-Símile (A Bela e o Monstro, Edições, 2014), pp. 5–13, p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> Schwartz, p. 56.

This dedication engages, on the one hand, with the fallacious idea that the American continent is a ‘new world’ that has been ‘discovered’ by Renaissance European travellers.<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, it also sets the tone of the collection as one engaging directly with the European canon, and with European modernism specifically, but through irony and cannibalisation. De Andrade develops this concept more extensively in his *MA* a few years later.

The first poem of *PPB* provides one of the first instances of cannibalisation in de Andrade’s work: it is presented in the form of a prayer entitled “Scapular”, which effectively rewrites the Lord’s prayer. Here, Christian religion is parodied and its hegemony in the history of Portuguese settler colonialism as well as in contemporary Brazilian society is challenged. The emphasis on religion also allows de Andrade to concentrate on one of the most important tools in the cultural and economic colonisation of both indigenous peoples in Brazil and peoples brought over from the African continent to work on plantations: “Dai-nos Senhor / A Poesia / De Cada Dia”.<sup>140</sup> In this short poem, the speaker prays to the Lord, asking to receive one’s daily “poetry” rather than bread, hence placing culture at the same level of primary needs such as eating or drinking, invoking the entanglement between cultural and material life mentioned above.

This entanglement is present throughout this collection, which has the twofold aim of proposing a decolonisation of culture and a rewriting of history, two major elements of literary cannibalism as a mode of writing. These dynamics are embedded in the collection and are intrinsically connected: rewriting history permits the poet to decolonise culture and a decolonisation of culture allows for a retelling and rewriting of history. This link is also emphasised in the theorisation of literary cannibalism that I develop throughout this chapter. The circularity begins through a ‘de-archaisation’ of the Portuguese language, by mixing it with Afro-Brazilian and indigenous speech:<sup>141</sup> “A língua sem arcaísmos. Sem erudição. Natural e neológica”.<sup>142</sup> The simultaneous work of decolonising and of rewriting is also done through the engagement with European documents linked to the discovery of Brazil in the section entitled “Historia do Brasil”, such as Claude D’Abbeville’s and Manoel Calado’s description

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<sup>139</sup> See Chapter Three below.

<sup>140</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *Pau Brasil*, ed. by Paulo Prado, Edição Fac-Símile (A Bela e o Monstro, Edições, 2014), p. 17.

<sup>141</sup> “Em Oswald de Andrade, a valoração da língua nacional aparece através do uso sincrético de africanismos, do tupi e do macarrônico ítalo-paulista que caracterizou a fala de São Paulo, fortemente influenciada pelo fluxo migratório dos anos vinte. O retorno ao primitivismo, no caso da língua, deu-se não pela relevância do tupi como língua materna, mas pelo exorcismo das formas cultas e a apropriação da linguagem cotidiana como norma” in Schwartz p. 56.

<sup>142</sup> de Andrade, *Pau Brasil*, p. 20.

of the new lands.<sup>143</sup> The cannibalisation of these documents can be viewed as challenging the official archive of discovery to retell versions of this history which have been silenced. Consider, for instance, the first poem of the section “Poemas da colonização”, entitled “The Transaction”, “which charts the colonial transition from a sugar-based economy to a mining economy to one dominated by coffee plantations, all undergirded by slave labour”:<sup>144</sup>

O fazendeiro criara filhos  
Escravos escravas  
Nos terreiros de pitangas e jabuticabas  
Mas um dia trocou  
O ouro da carne preta e musculosa  
As gabiobas e os coqueiros  
Os monjolos e os bois  
Por terras imaginareis  
Onde nasceria a lavoura verde do café<sup>145</sup>

The circularity of the poem connects the transition from a sugar-based to coffee-based economy by emphasising the perpetuation of uneven wealth distribution and labour relations. This can be seen through a comparison of the first and last lines of the poem in particular. In the opening line the verb “criar”, used in the past tense points to an element of plantation life that is often silenced in the historical archive; the reproduction of the labour force through sexual violence.<sup>146</sup> In Portuguese, “criar filhos” means “to raise children” and generally the verb implies nurturing; the connotation can be understood as lost here given that some children fathered by the plantation owner will be the result of rape and become, in turn, enslaved labourers. This creation of a larger labour force via sexual violence at the beginning of the poem is echoed in the concluding line which uses a verb cognate to the one in the first line; “nascer”, “to be born”. The grammatical shift from the past to the conditional progressive tense shows the evolution from the colonial-time sugar-based economy to a coffee-based economy, the main commodity crop in Brazil at the time the poem is written. The use of the “future-in-the-past” of the conditional progressive illustrates a stagnation in the narrative told by the poem; while time has passed and the type of commodity extracted from the soil has changed, some socio-economic dynamics remain the same at their core. At the end of the nineteenth and

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<sup>143</sup> See Daniel F. Silva, *Anti-Empire: Decolonial Interventions in Lusophone Literatures* (Liverpool University Press, 2018), pp. 55-56 and de Andrade, *Pau Brasil*, pp. 25-34.

<sup>144</sup> Silva, p. 56.

<sup>145</sup> de Andrade, *Pau Brasil*, p. 37.

<sup>146</sup> This crucial dynamic will also be discussed in more detail the third chapter in relation to rewritings of Euripides’s *Medea*.

beginning of twentieth century, Brazil's plantation labour can thus be seen as perpetuating uneven and violent dynamics that begin under colonialism. Hence, the mirroring of the poem's beginning and end points to power and wealth continuing to be centralised in the person of the plantation owner.<sup>147</sup> This also indicates the role familial relations play in Southern Brazilian plantations, from enslaved filiation through sexual violence to the tendency in the late nineteenth century to employ family units for 'free labour', enabling the success of the Brazilian coffee economy.<sup>148</sup> This resource secures the wealth of particularly large landowners in Brazil, given the low price of coffee world-wide, including the São Paulo coffee elite, many of whom are part of the modernist movement.<sup>149</sup> The country is kept in a position of perpetual economic subjugation to the external powers, especially Europe and the United States. As Silva argues, the poem depicts "independence – the advent of the Brazilian empire – as a continuity of colonialism with a similar economic structure, rather than as a historical break".<sup>150</sup>

The attempt to decolonise Brazilian culture during modernism is thwarted by the 1929 financial crisis, which drove coffee prices into the ground and greatly affected the Paulista coffee elite economically. De Andrade's recognition that Brazil is economically dependent on the countries from the Global North pushes him to political engagement: he joins the Brazilian Communist Party. In reflecting on this situation in 1937, de Andrade wrote a piece in which he described Brazil as a "dessert country": "Somos um país de sobremesa. Com açúcar, café e fumo só podemos figurar no fim dos *menus* imperialistas. Claro que sobremesa nunca foi essencial. Quando os nossos grandes compradores, por falta de dinheiro ou mitragem, suspendem a sobremesa, mergulhamos nas mais desgraçadas e imprevistas das crises".<sup>151</sup> The description of Brazil as a "dessert country" "placed at the end of the imperialist countries' menus" points to the cannibalism trope as a way of describing colonial and (neo-)imperial

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<sup>147</sup> See Steven Topik and Mario Samper, "The Latin American Coffee Commodity Chain: Brazil and Costa Rica", in *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*, ed. by Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank (Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 118–46. p. 148 and also more in Mauricio A. Font, *Coffee, Contention, and Change in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Basil Blackwell, 1990) and Nancy Priscilla Naro, "The Transition from Slavery to Migrant Labour in Rural Brazil", *Slavery & Abolition*, 15.2 (1994), 183–96.

<sup>148</sup> As Steven Topik and Mario Samper note "the secret of the success of the coffee production system was partly the self-provisioning of slave and then free coffee workers. Most of their pay came in the form of permission to use small but fertile plots of land to grow provisions and graze livestock rather than in money. As a result, workers could provide for themselves and even expand their operations despite very low cash wages" in Steven Topik and Mario Samper, p. 127. See also June Wyer, "Child Labour in Brazilian Agriculture", *Critique of Anthropology*, 6.2 (1986), 63–80; Verena Stockle, "The Labors of Coffee in Latin America: The Hidden Charm of Family Labor and Self-Provisioning", in *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 65–93.

<sup>149</sup> Steven Topik and Mario Samper, pp. 124-125 and Silva, p. 57.

<sup>150</sup> Silva, p. 57.

<sup>151</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *Estética e política: Obras completas de Oswald de Andrade*, ed. by Maria Eugenia Boaventura (Editoria Globo, 1991), p. 167, emphasis in original.

practices. De Andrade's commitment is to the material independence of Brazil from the imperialist powers. Cultural independence is inconceivable without this, as Luís Madureira notes:

The Portuguese terms for dessert, *sobremesa* (literally: "upon the table"), functions as an appropriate figure for the serving up of Brazil's agricultural products on the "tables" of developed Capital: "Nature / upon the table" ("Naturaleza / sobre a mesa"), to quote from one of Oswald's early poems (*Pau Brasil*, 46). It also suggests an inversion of the relation between base and superstructure (i.e., a *sobre/ mesa* country, or "a country with an imported superstructure"). According to Renato Ortiz, this reversal defined underdeveloped projects of modernization (*A moderna cultura* 35-36). *Antropofagia*, in its politico-economic variant, is thus a recipe for self-development.<sup>152</sup>

The colonisers had consumed Brazil's resources to generate their wealth. In inverting the cannibalism metaphor in *Antropofagia cultural*, de Andrade cannibalises European culture to decolonise and create an independent one for Brazil. Because of the cultural vacuum created by colonisation, the modernist movement must turn to the European past as well as the afro-indigenous one in seeking to create a national culture. For artists from former colonies, it also becomes obvious that economic independence cannot be separated from an intellectual one. This is interesting in relation to the cannibalism metaphor given that food sovereignty is often a central issue in former colonial spaces. This is the case in particular for French former colonies which have become part of France through *départementalisation*, who have been subject to similar crises. As Valérie Loichot argues in respect to Martinique, for instance:

Historically and economically, France has forced Martinique into the status of perennial dependent, within what François Vergès has called an economy of debt. This clearly differs from an economy based on a reciprocal exchange of goods. In an economy of debt, the colonial power entraps the colonized recipient such as France ensnared Martinique, in a perpetual position of need.<sup>153</sup>

In 2009, strikes took place in a number of overseas departments, where the cost of life had become unbearable for most inhabitants. These actions "cast a spotlight on a number of urgent issues pertaining to the relationship between humans and their environment, and the economic – and social – impact of globalization and multi-national companies".<sup>154</sup> The strikes began in Guadeloupe and spread to Martinique, French Guyana and La Réunion. Following these

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<sup>152</sup> Luís Madureira, *Cannibal Modernities: Postcoloniality and Avant-Garde in Caribbean and Brazilian Literature* (University of Virginia Press, 2005), pp. 43-44.

<sup>153</sup> Loichot, p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> Louise Hardwick, "Towards Biopolitical Ecocriticism: The Example of the *Manifeste pour les 'produits' de haute nécessité*", *French Studies*, 70.3 (2016), 362–82, p. 362.

industrial actions, a group composed of intellectuals, activists, and artists came together to write a manifesto entitled: *Manifeste pour les “produits” de haute nécessité*. As Louise Hardwick notes, the authors of this *Manifeste*

belong to a generation that reached maturity in a period characterized by a growing sense of political disillusionment with departmentalization and subsequent independence movements; both political courses had failed to prevent the (further) erosion of the islands’ autonomy. Glissant had famously campaigned for the independence of the *départements d’outre-mer* (DOMs) as a young man, and was subsequently banned by Charles de Gaulle from returning to the French Antilles until 1965. While the *Manifeste* does not explicitly call for the DOMs’ independence (since the 2003 constitutional reform, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Réunion are now technically designated by the term *département et région d’outre-mer* or DROM; the term DOM is still widely used), it does prescribe greater autonomy, promoting ‘une responsabilité politique endogène’ (*Manifeste*, p. 4) as a way out of the political and social crisis of 2009. Several co-signatories, including Chamoiseau, are self-declared *indépendantistes*.<sup>155</sup>

One of the aims of this *Manifeste* is to define which ‘products’ can be considered essential to survival, hence the use of inverted commas in the title around the term “produits”. As Oswald de Andrade had done decades earlier in the Brazilian context, the authors of the *Manifeste* consider the crucial entanglement between cultural and material independence, reflecting on the difference between the “prosaïque” and the “poétique” and concluding that both are necessary if people are to live, rather than just survive:<sup>156</sup>

Dès lors, derrière le prosaïque du « pouvoir d’achat » ou du « panier de la ménagère », se profile l’essentiel qui nous manque et qui donne du sens à l’existence, à savoir : *le poétique*. Toute vie humaine un peu équilibrée s’articule entre, d’un côté, les nécessités immédiates du boire-survivre-manger (en clair : le prosaïque) ; et, de l’autre, l’aspiration à un épanouissement de soi, là où la nourriture est de dignité, d’honneur, de musique, de chants, de sports, de danses, de lectures, de philosophie, de spiritualité,

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<sup>155</sup> Hardwick, p. 365.

<sup>156</sup> For more on the importance of economic and cultural entanglement and independence see Sarr who argues that: “L’économie et la culture sont deux puissants déterminants des actions individuelles et collectives. L’économie est un ordre de l’efficacité tourné vers l’allocation optimale des ressources. Elle est également devenue, comme discipline, un espace de réflexion sur la théorie de l’agir humain et sur ce qui le fonde. La culture est définie par les anthropologues comme un ensemble de pratiques et de valeurs, de traits distinctifs matériels et spirituels, identifiant un groupe social donné. C’est une notion polysémique, employée dans une variété de sens” in Sarr, p. 67.

d'amour, de temps libre affecté à l'accomplissement du grand désir intime (en clair : le poétique).<sup>157</sup>

In this quote, the authors of the *Manifeste* emphasise the indispensability of intellectual, cultural and artistic, as much as material, sustenance. The importance in considering both the “prosaïque” and the “poétique” as entangled in terms of survival and wellbeing hints to the colonial past of the islands and the understanding of its current situation as an overseas department as neo-colonial. The lives of the French former colonies – now overseas departments – are dependent on and articulated around economic and abstract calculations which focus on that which can be extracted from the islands to benefit of the metropole. This material and cultural domination is questioned in the *Manifeste* so as to open the way for a creation of both economic and cultural structures on the islands. Moreover, the entanglement of the “prosaïque” and the “poétique” is necessary to render tangible and understandable the abstract economic developments and fluctuations that impact materially the inhabitants of the overseas departments. For this purpose, the authors identify price inflation as a consequence of a cannibal-like neo-liberalism: “La « hausse des prix » ou « la vie chère » ne sont pas de petits diables-ziguidi qui surgissent devant nous en cruauté spontanée, ou de la seule cuisse de quelques purs békés. Ce sont les résultantes d'une dentition de système où règne le dogme du libéralisme économique”.<sup>158</sup>

Moreover, the authors identify a perpetuation of colonial dynamics in the contemporary neo-liberal economic system. They do so by indicating how the commodification of human and extra-human life in the productive system alienated the inhabitants of the overseas departments from their lands and cultures. This includes food practices through promoting the import and consumption of European foodstuff on the islands:

le labyrinthe obscur et indémêlable des prix (marges, sous-marges, commissions occultes et profits indécents) est inscrit dans une logique de système libéral marchand, lequel s'est étendu à l'ensemble de la planète avec la force aveugle d'une religion. Ils sont aussi enchâssés dans une absurdité coloniale qui nous a détournés de notre manger-pays, de notre environnement proche et de nos réalités culturelles, pour nous livrer sans pantalon et sans jardins-bokay aux modes alimentaires européens.<sup>159</sup>

The authors of the *Manifeste* aim to re-construct the community that colonialism and (neo-)imperialism dissolve through colonial relationality. The authorial collaboration behind this manifesto embodies this objective, collaboration also being central for the group who

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<sup>157</sup> Ernest Breleur and others, *Manifeste pour les “produits” de haute nécessité* (Éditions Galaade, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> Ernest Breleur and others, p. 3.

<sup>159</sup> Ernest Breleur and others, p. 6.

started the strikes in the first place: the Guadeloupean collective “Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon”, or LKP. LKP expresses themselves in creole to foreground the importance of the cultural in their fight for material independence and sovereignty. Their collective mission is embodied by their activism, in that they promote kinship and collectivity in their industrial action, from car-pooling to protesting against skyrocketing food prices:

Il faut aussi s’attarder sur le mot de « lyannaj », car il ne signifie pas que l’attache, le lien, l’union, le collectif, il signifie aussi que l’on encercle l’ennemi, il se rattache aussi à l’expression « fouté lyann » qui signifie mettre en difficulté, frapper durement, serrer la vis à quelqu’un. « Nou an lyannaj » signifie que nous sommes ensemble dans la lutte mais aussi dans le quotidien.<sup>160</sup>

The authors of the *Manifeste* carry this project through in their publication: all royalties are donated to the Guadeloupean and Martinican unions’ hardship funds to support striking workers. The island of Martinique has a history of this type of writing, and two of the authors of the *Manifeste* are part of this tradition of independentist writing. A decade before, Patrick Chamoiseau had co-authored the famous *Éloge de la créolité*, in which the authors remember Aimé Césaire as the creator of Négritude and one of their intellectual ‘fathers’, whose work will be studied in more detail in Chapter Three.<sup>161</sup> A fervent proponent of *départementalisation* when he was elected mayor of Fort-de-France in 1945, Césaire argued that if Martinicans became French citizens officially, they would be considered equal to other French people. His belated realisation that that would never be the case is poignantly recorded in his rewriting of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in 1969.

Césaire, his wife Suzanne and René Depestre ran a journal called *Tropiques* during the installation of the Vichy regime in Martinique between 1941 and 1945, when the inhabitants of the island were subjected to the same repressive cultural directives (including censorship) as their French counterparts back in the metropole. One of the essays written by Suzanne Césaire entitled “Misère d’une poésie John-Antoine Nau” and published in 1942, tackles both French exoticism and racism as well as the pressure of the regime. In this article, Césaire criticises the exoticism with which the French poet John-Antoine Nau describes Martinique and its inhabitants, after a short stay on the island during his honeymoon.

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<sup>160</sup> Gerty Dambury, “Guadeloupe: Le Créole, langue de la mobilisation”, 2016 <[<sup>161</sup> Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant, \*Éloge\*, p. 18.](https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/rue89-nos-vies-connectees/20090216.RUE8506/guadeloupe-le-creole-langue-de-la-mobilisation.html#:~:text=Il%20faut%20aussi%20s'attarder,la%20vis%20%C3%A0%20quelqu'un.> [accessed 10 March 2020].</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

Throughout, the article shuttles from a covert to an overt critique of the poet's work, partly due to the censorship laws, and partly in its practice of literary cannibalism: Suzanne Césaire uses the cannibalism trope to describe Martinican poetry. Her article begins with satire and covert critique: “Les Martiniquais ne l’ont pas oublié. Nul n’a décrit plus amoureuxment nos paysages”.<sup>162</sup> In these two sentences, Suzanne Césaire brings to the forefront the work of memory that colonised people need to undertake to prevent the intellectual and material violence of colonialism from consuming, and even completely erasing, their identity, already obscured through the Atlantic trade. Also, the irony with which Césaire characterises Nau’s description of Martinican landscapes as “lovingly” is central here since it leads to discussion about how his poetry exoticises and eroticises ‘the colony’. Césaire accepts that Nau’s work may be a type of literature, but insists that it is not “poetry”: “De la littérature? Oui. Littérature de hamac. Littérature de sucre et de vanille. Tourisme littéraire [...] Poésie, non pas”.<sup>163</sup> Césaire is effectively reassessing the French canon here, given that Nau is a canonical author who had received the Prix Goncourt in 1903. She differentiates between literature as a saleable commodity, a type of institution, and poetry as a piece of work implying a certain skill. By challenging the coloniser’s work and arguing that the established colonial literary archive zombifies ‘the colony’, she proposes a new type of decolonised and independent poetry for Martinique: “La poésie martiniquaise sera cannibale ou ne sera pas.”<sup>164</sup>

This line also famously cannibalises another acclaimed French author, André Breton, considered in the metropole as the father of surrealism. Breton concludes his novel *Nadja* with the sentence, “la beauté sera CONVULSIVE ou ne sera pas”.<sup>165</sup> Breton was a friend of the Césaires and had come to visit them in Martinique, famously writing a poem in which Suzanne is exoticised, much as Nau had exoticised Martinique itself.<sup>166</sup> Loichot argues that:

Césaire’s discreet cannibalism [...] provides a surreptitious yet unflinching, response to the surrealist writer who flattened her into an eroticized exotic muse. [...] Her cannibalizing of Breton can be seen as an act of revenge against the writer who attempted to cannibalize her, that is, to reduce her intellect and literary production to

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<sup>162</sup> Suzanne Césaire, *Le grand camouflage: Écrits de dissidence, 1941-1945*, ed. by Daniel Maximin (Seuil, 2009), p. 63.

<sup>163</sup> Césaire, *Le grand camouflage*, p. 65.

<sup>164</sup> Césaire, *Le grand camouflage*, p. 66.

<sup>165</sup> André Breton, *Nadja* (Gallimard, 1964), p. 190.

<sup>166</sup> The connection between women and the environment that begins to be drawn here will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three through the analysis of case studies considering the feminisation of the land as a strategy of colonial rhetoric.

the image of exotic beauty, as he famously claimed: “Suzanne Césaire: belle comme la femme du punch”<sup>167</sup>

But my suggestion is that Suzanne Césaire’s rebellion against Breton’s attempt to confine her to the status of a passive muse in the practice of literary cannibalism, is not as a way of enacting revenge, but rather as a creative process through which her own cultural independence can be established. Like Oswald de Andrade and the authors of the *Manifeste*, Césaire does not want to feed on the colonisers and their culture, but rather wishes to proclaim intellectual and material independence to reach economic and cultural sovereignty. She aims to feed, literally and metaphorically, on the products available on the island, disputing the hegemony of European culture that has been established during colonialism, and which continues to be imposed on the French overseas regions and departments even today. The drive for economic independence reinforces the need to decolonise culture and produce new national histories, as Luís Madureira argues with reference to de Andrade: “Oswald de Andrade’s renowned “Manifesto Antropófago” (1928) anticipates the inversion between the margin and centre that Paul Gilroy (in *Black Atlantic*) proposes as the point of departure for a rewriting (from the margins) of the history of modernity”.<sup>168</sup> In the *MA*, de Andrade’s challenges occidental historiography in many ways, not least meta-textually: in signing the manifesto, he displaces the regulation of time according to western standards: “Em Piratininga. Ano 374 da Deglutição do Bispo Sardinha”.<sup>169</sup> Instead of following the Gregorian calendar beginning on the date of Christ’s birth, his dating begins with the “swallowing of Bishop Sardinha” by the Kaeté indigenous population, a subgroup of the Tupi people. The supposed act of cannibalism marks the beginning of Brazilian time here.

In its historiographical dimension, literary cannibalism focuses on a re-conceptualisation of what history is in the first place. Rodolfo Usigli who is considered the father of Mexican theatre because of his continued work to develop a national theatre there, used the cannibal metaphor to emphasise the need to produce and consume a culture internal to Mexico, just as Suzanne Césaire had done in the Martinican context. Both were trying to move away from the occidental zombification of ‘the colony’ – to let Martinican and Mexican audiences feed on a representation of themselves, created by themselves, rather than being force-fed distorted images of themselves fashioned by the colonisers:<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Loichot, pp. 150-151.

<sup>168</sup> Madureira, pp. 13-14.

<sup>169</sup> De Andrade, *Obras completas*, p. 19.

<sup>170</sup> The idea of force-feeding is further relevant in terms of colonial education and propaganda. Indeed, the speaker of Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* describes them as lies that have been force-fed to him and

In the context of Usigli's production as a whole, the concept of cannibalism suggests that the situation in a theatre, where Mexicans [...] devour the image of their own selves. Destruction is not the key to this full context. [...] But whether through political commentary, social realism, psychological analysis, or historical reassessment, he ensured that his theatre became, above all, a Mexican recipe for Mexican audiences.<sup>171</sup>

In establishing a national and decolonised culture through theatre, and using the cannibalism metaphor to do so, Usigli points to the kin making potential of the trope. He also engages with the rewriting and re-conceptualisation of history in creating a national theatre, as I will show below in analysing one of his most famous plays. He understands history as non-linear: “Yo quiero servir al teatro y servir a la historia siguiendo mi criterio de que la historia no es ayer, sino hoy, mañana y siempre”.<sup>172</sup> This is an element that is crucial to literary cannibalism as a mode of writing, but that has also preoccupied many Caribbean and Latin American scholars and authors.

## REWRITING HISTORY

In thinking about Caribbean ontology and identity, Brathwaite develops the concept of ‘tidalectics’ in opposition to Hegelian dialectics thereby decolonising Caribbean philosophy:<sup>173</sup>

What is the origin of the Caribbean? How do we come from? Where do we come from? And why are we as we are? Why are we so leaderless, so fragmented, so perpetually caught up with the notion of hope and still at the same time Sisyphean? Why is our psychology not dialectical – successfully dialectical – in the way that Western philosophy has assumed people's lives should be, but **tidalectic**, like our grandmother's – our nanna's – action, like the movement of the ocean she's walking on, coming from one continent/continuum, touching another, and then receding ('reading') from the island(s) into the perhaps creative chaos of the(ir) future...<sup>174</sup>

Kamau Brathwaite's concept of tidalectics works on different levels, taking issue with linearity in identity and history construction and epistemological models. Evolving from Plato's

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his island: “Et nous sommes debout maintenant, mon pays et moi, les cheveux dans le vent, [...] l'Europe nous a pendant des siècles *gavés* de mensonges” in Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Présence Africaine, 1983), p. 57, my emphasis.

<sup>171</sup> Peter Beardsell, *A Theatre for Cannibals: Rodolfo Usigli and the Mexican Stage* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992), pp. 220-226.

<sup>172</sup> Rodolfo Usigli, *Corona de Luz, La Virgen* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1965), p. 33.

<sup>173</sup> Simultaneously, Paget Henry is working on a similar project to decolonise philosophy as his publication of *Caliban's Reason* attests. See Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (Routledge, 2000).

<sup>174</sup> Brathwaite, p. 34, emphasis in original.

dialectical dialogues, in which opposing sides of a discussion are people, Hegelian dialectics promote a linear thought process in which different conceptions come into opposition, and through the process of resolution and incorporation lead to a conclusion. This epistemological approach is built on linearity and dichotomies – only one direction is possible – while the circularity and continuum of Brathwaite’s tidalectics advocate for a continuous and cyclical evolution of knowledge and identity which thrives on embracing divergence. Elizabeth Deloughrey explains that

Tidalectics engage what Brathwaite calls an “alter/native” historiography to linear models of colonial progress. This “tidal dialectic” resists the synthesizing telos of Hegel’s dialectic by drawing from a cyclical model, invoking the continual movement and rhythm of the ocean. Tidalectics foreground “alter/native” epistemologies to colonialism and capitalism, with their linear and materialist biases. In contradistinction to Western models of passive and empty space, such as *terra* (and *aqua nullius*), which were used to justify territorial expansion, tidalectics reckons space and time that requires an active and participatory engagement with the island seascape. In keeping with Caribbean thought and aesthetics, tidalectics also challenge the Western bifurcation between nature and culture and position both as always already modern.<sup>175</sup>

Tidalectics entails an excavation of submerged histories, because each wave in the surf uncovers elements that have been overlooked or forgotten and brings to the surface pieces to complete a history that has, previously, been told in a linear and unifocal point of view through western historiography. Tidalectics also focus on *how* history can be written and the need to decolonise creative and cultural processes: “‘They’ – these imposed meters – couldn’t allow me to write the sunlight under her feet – she walk on water *and* in light, the sand between her toes, the ritual discourse of her morning broom”.<sup>176</sup> Western genres and modes of writing imposed through colonial education are not always the most effective for authors from former colonies. For this reason, tidalectics also make it possible to *wave* together different temporalities, forms and contents to create histories and narrative making kin across the extractiono(s)cene, which aim to mend the dissolution of kinship under colonial relationality.

Brathwaite argues: “In my formulation, our history starts far far beyond [before] Columbus”.<sup>177</sup> With the insertion of “[before]” in his quote, Brathwaite notes and emphasises the entanglement of space and time contained in the term “beyond”. This cannibalisation of

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<sup>175</sup> Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, “Revisiting Tidalectics: Irma/José/Maria 2017”, in *Tidalectics: Imagining an Oceanic Worldview Through Art and Science*, ed. by Stefanie Hessler (The MIT Press, 2018), p. 94.

<sup>176</sup> Brathwaite, p. 35, emphasis in original.

<sup>177</sup> Brathwaite, p. 39, insertion in original.

writing and referencing conventions mirrors the conceptual cannibalisation of western philosophy from “dialectics” to “tidalectics”. Similarly, literary cannibalism as a mode of writing deconstructs linearity and dichotomies in western historiography and epistemologies by rewriting them both in form and content. Brathwaite’s “Sycorax video style” in particular shows how this rewriting engages both with form and content on the page. This echoes Walcott’s earlier claims that “Caribbean history is irrelevant, not because it is not being created, or because it was sordid; but because it has never mattered, what has mattered is the loss of history, the amnesia of the races, what has become necessary is imagination, imagination as necessity, as invention”.<sup>178</sup> Because colonial relationality dissolves kinship and creates binaries, creative work through literary cannibalism aims to mend collectivity and deconstruct dichotomies and, in so doing, imagines new forms and versions of history.

The process of (re)writing history is particularly salient in the work of Rodolfo Usigli. In one of his most famous plays, *El gesticulador* (1937), César Rubio, a university history professor, leaves Ciudad de México in disgrace with his family after failing to be granted tenure and retreats to a small town in the north. Just as the Rubios have moved in, Oliver Bolton’s car breaks down in front of their home. Bolton is a young, sun-burned, north American professor of Latin American history from Harvard University on his way to the capital to undertake archival research and fieldwork.<sup>179</sup> After a long discussion with César, he comes to the conclusion that the man is, indeed, a missing revolutionary hero of the same name, because the professor reveals extended knowledge of the subject. As Rubio insists later, he does not lie to Bolton, he merely declines to deny the north American’s conjectures and “sells him what he wants”: “Yo no mentí. Puesto que oíste, debes saberlo. Yo no afirmé nada, y le vendí solamente lo que él quería comprar”.<sup>180</sup> It is easy for Rubio to sell this ‘new’ history to Bolton because of the latter’s yearning for a more romanticised and exciting version of the facts in which the revolutionary César Rubio does not die. He yearns to continue seeing him as larger than life:

Bolton (*brillante*): Tampoco es lógico sobre todo. Usted sabe qué hombre era César Rubio ... el caudillo total, el hombre elegido. ¿Y qué me da? Un hombre como él, matado a tiros en una emboscada por su ayudante favorito.

César: No es el único caso en la revolución.

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<sup>178</sup> Walcott, “The Caribbean”, p. 6.

<sup>179</sup> “Aparece en el marco el profesor OLIVER BOLTON, de la Universidad de Harvard. Tiene treinta años y una agradable apariencia deportiva. Es de un rubio muy quemado por largos baños de sol” in Rodolfo Usigli, *El gesticulador: Piezas para demagogos en tres actos*, ed. by Rex Edward Ballinger (Meredith Publishing Company, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>180</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, p. 43.

Bolton (*escéptico*): No, no. ¿Él, que era el amo de la revolución, muere así nada más... cuando más necesario era? Me habla usted de cadáveres desaparecidos, que nadie ha visto, de papeles que no son prueba de su muerte.

César: Pide usted demasiado.

Bolton: El enigma es grande. Y la teoría parece absurda. No corresponde al carácter de un hombre como Rubio, con una voluntad tan magnífica de vivir, de hacer una revolución sana; no corresponde a su destino. No lo creo. [...]

Bolton: ¡No me diga usted ahora que murió de enfermedad, en su cama, como ... como un profesor!

César (*mirándolo extrañamente*): ¿Qué quiere usted que le diga, entonces?

Bolton: La verdad... si es que usted la sabe. Una verdad que corresponda al carácter de César Rubio, a la lógica de las cosas. La verdad siempre es lógica.<sup>181</sup>

Bolton's determination to discover a more sensational and, according to him, more logical, truth leads him to believe credulously that the professor he has just met, more or less the same age and born in the same village as a Mexican revolutionary hero who is also his namesake, is actually this disappeared hero who has left the revolutionary struggle to teach its ideals to younger minds:

César: [...] Sí... lo explica todo. El hombre olvidado, traicionado, que ve que la revolución se ha vuelto una mentira, *pudo* decidirse a enseñar la historia ... la verdad de la historia de la revolución, ¿no? [...]

Bolton: Sí. ¡Es ...maravilloso! Pero usted...

César (*con su extraña sonrisa*): ¿Esto no le parece a usted increíble, absurdo?

Bolton: Es demasiado fuerte, demasiado... heroico; pero corresponde a su carácter.

¿Puede usted probar...?<sup>182</sup>

In the dialogue above, it is possible to read Rubio's question to Bolton, "does this seem incredible, absurd to you?" as a direct challenge: is the young professor not realising the absurdity of his mistake motivated by his desire to uncover a more thrilling version of history? The exchange between the characters is consistently ironic and more than once the exoticisation of the Latin American 'other' by Bolton is emphasised. This happens in a first instance when Bolton describes his passion for the history of Mexico, motivated by the fact that it is a "país increíble, lleno de maravillas y de monstruos".<sup>183</sup> This assertion encloses the

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<sup>181</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>182</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, p. 33, emphasis in original.

<sup>183</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, p. 23.

country in stereotype. Bolton offers to pay Rubio for the information he is seeking about the Mexican revolution:

Bolton: No soy yo quien puede comprar, es Harvard.

César (*dudando*): Ustedes los compran todo.

Bolton (*sonriendo*): ¿Por qué no, si es para la cultura?

César: Los códices, los manuscritos, los incunables, las joyas arqueológicas de México; comprarían a Taxco, si pudieran llevárselo a su casa.<sup>184</sup>

Here Rubio highlights the marketisation of knowledge and the commodification of culture inherent in the trade of priceless archaeological and historical artefacts North American agents buy from Mexico to exhibit in their museums, universities and archives. Rubio exclaims in jest that North Americans would buy the city of Taxco if they could bring it home. The city serves as a signifier of colonial history in the extractiono(s)cene since it is famous for its colonial architecture and its association with silver – with both the jewellery craft and the mining of the precious metal. Finally, Rubio lets Bolton believe that he is the missing revolutionary, but asks him to keep his identity secret, to which the latter agrees. Obviously, Bolton is unable to keep his promise and publishes several articles in the *New York Times* revealing his discovery. Both the respected newspaper and the Harvard professor are ridiculed in the play: they mistakenly assign Mark Twain’s quote “truth is stranger than fiction” to Shakespeare.<sup>185</sup>

This play provides a humorous space in which both history itself and the production of it by historians and writers are opened up for consideration. As Rubio notes in the play: “la historia no es más que un sueño. Los que la hicieron soñaron con cosas que no se realizaron; los que la estudian sueñan con cosas pasadas; los que la enseñan (*con sonrisa*) sueñan que poseen la verdad y que la entregan”.<sup>186</sup> This topic is even more central in the three historical plays that Usigli wrote after *El gesticulador*: namely, *Corona de sombra* (1943), *Corona de fuego* (1960), *Corona de luz* (1963). In the second (1964) prologue to *Corona de Luz*, a play focusing on the Mexican “mito guadalupano”, Usigli discusses how he had to finally address history as a topic: “Tenía que suceder, natural, fatalmente, que me vira yo obligado en un momento dado a enfrentarme a esa inmensurable pirámide de México que es la Historia – con H (mayúscula)”.<sup>187</sup> Throughout this second prologue he reconsiders the relation between fiction and history and the role of the historian, intriguingly describing his own plays as ‘anti-

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<sup>184</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>185</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, p. 48.

<sup>186</sup> Usigli, *El gesticulador*, p. 32, emphasis in original.

<sup>187</sup> Usigli, *Corona de Luz*, p. 69.

historical’, which recalls Walcott’s argument, cited above, about the need to imagine the history lost to the Atlantic Trade:

Y la filosofía adjudicada aquella primera pieza antihistórica sigue siendo válida para mí y me parece aplicable a esta comedia también antihistórica: “Si no se escribe un libro de historia, si se lleva un tema histórico al terreno del arte dramático, el primer elemento que debe regir es la imaginación, no la historia. La historia no puede llenar otra función que la de un simple acento de color, de ambiente o de época. En otras palabras, sólo la imaginación permite tratar teatralmente un tema histórico”.<sup>188</sup>

Beardsell rightly points out the paradoxical nature of the term, as well as its multifacetedness:

In his studies of the theatre Usigli made clear that he was fully aware of the tradition of historical drama, particularly in its connection with Greek, Roman, Shakespearian, and modern tragedy. Yet he chose to apply the label “*antihistóricas*” to each of the three *Coronas*. It is a turn that appears to indicate negation while simultaneously and paradoxically insinuating that each play does indeed have a historical ingredient. Conveniently preempting any complaint about the inaccurate representation of actual events, he threw the emphasis on his deliberate inclusion of nonhistorical elements.<sup>189</sup>

The apparent contradiction contained in the term sheds light on the problematic issues that the writing of history raises in both literary and historiographic studies. Literature necessarily records history since it is, by its very nature, an historical artefact. Always products of their time, literary works represent invaluable databases of mores, social relations, economic developments and power dynamics. This is even more crucial when it comes to considering colonial history. The occidental colonial archive provides incomplete histories, thus why it is necessary to decolonise this archive and rewrite the history it offers. Usigli addresses these issues in his prologues when attempting to “justify the method used in one of his historical plays” as Beardsell argues. The points he makes “clearly illustrate Latin American awareness of the way in which history was written by Europeans [...]. Facts became inseparable from a point of view – inseparable, even, from the imagination of the writer”.<sup>190</sup> The history that has been written through a Eurocentric perspective implicates either an erasure or commodification of ‘the colony’. By undertaking a rewriting of this history, revisionist literature decolonises the colonial literary archive. As a mode of writing, what I call literary cannibalism then has another, twofold, aim: firstly to ‘flesh out the ghost of the colony’; and secondly to ‘dezombify

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<sup>188</sup> Usigli, *Corona de Luz*, p. 70, emphasis in original.

<sup>189</sup> Beardsell, *A Theatre for Cannibals*, p. 164.

<sup>190</sup> Beardsell, *Europe and Latin America*, p. 20.

the colony'. This operation is either undertaken simultaneously or individually depending on the way 'the colony' is represented in the colonial literary archive, as I explain next.

## **FLESHING OUT THE GHOST: THE APPARITIONAL 'COLONY' IN THE COLONIAL LITERARY ARCHIVE**

In *Necro Citizenship* (2001), Russ Castronovo refers to the Foucauldian biopolitics of citizenship in discussing how certain groups or individuals, such as enslaved peoples, are seen as socially dead:<sup>191</sup>

By virtue of *corpus* meaning "body," the rights of citizenship, rituals of the public sphere, rites of remembrance, and freedom associated with incorporation into political community vitally concern corpses and death. Fastened to the corpse and body politic are also darker patterns of *discorporation* such as dispossession, privatization, amnesia, and unfreedom. And while buried within *corpus* lies the corpse, as when Virgil speaks of the shades of the dead, the word also bears strong associations to the living body in ways that suggest practices and memories that still quicken human subjects though they may be both incorporated and discorporated by necro citizenship.<sup>192</sup>

The corpse figures buried within the literary corpus that I address throughout this thesis are the spectre and the zombie. As I suggested in the introductory chapter above, these are monstrous signifiers of colonial relationality. Here I use the terms 'ghost' and 'spectre' indiscriminately, though I will spend some time considering their etymologies below. My point is that both the ghost and the zombie are revenants insofar as they are monstrous figures representing the undead, even if they do so in different ways. The ghost as a monster is famous for its haunting presence, often returning to the physical realm because of unfinished business; and what business is left more unfinished than the (de)colonial one?

As one of the monstrous figures of colonial relationality studied here, the ghost is a signifier of the coloniser's attempt to erase 'the colony' from the latter's cultural, socio-political, and economic life. This attempt to symbolically obliterate 'the colony' is thwarted by the fact that they cannot simply be disconnected from the work they undertake for the emerging European nation-states, work which not only generates these states' wealth, but also the

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<sup>191</sup> One cannot mention the concept of slavery and social death without thinking of course of Orlando Patterson's work on the subject, see for instance Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>192</sup> Russ Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Duke University Press, 2001), p. 3, emphasis in original.

foodstuffs and material objects which they use daily. This connection can be extended to the ‘semi-periphery’, an in-between space between the core and the periphery in which the latter is kept in uneven relations with the former and often internal to it.<sup>193</sup> This semi-periphery is as marginalised and overworked as ‘the colony’ and one can find an encounter of both these peripheries in gothic novels such as Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Importantly, the occultism of the gothic genre plays a crucial role in terms of the erasure of production and labour conditions. Indeed, in a proto-capitalist society “[r]ather than remembering, in good Marxist fashion, that the laborer is the one who produces the object and its (added) value, the occultist takes the object for an autonomous agent, enhancing its status as a fetish while seeking to deny it. Historical processes and the fact that it is people who oppress people are obfuscated”.<sup>194</sup> This erasure, however, is complicated by the constant re-surfacing of the spectral ‘colony’.

This re-surfacing dynamic is similar to a haunting, a coming-back enacted by a *revenant*: “Question de répétition: un spectre est toujours un revenant. On ne saurait en contrôler les allées et venues parce qu’il *commence par revenir*”.<sup>195</sup> The spectre, as Derrida argues, is always a *revenant*. The term comes from the French verb ‘to return’ in the *participe présent* mood. This construction, more challenging to translate in English in just one form, nominalises verbs, thereby giving them simultaneous valence as nouns, adjectives and verbs. *Revenant* can be thus be translated with a noun or with a gerund, a form which also makes it an adjective. The ambiguity that remains in French in this sentence – also present later on in the same page when Derrida claims that “l’esprit vient en *revenant*” – allows us to interpret *revenant* as both a noun and a verb, since the noun cannot exist without the verbal form which translates the repetitive and cyclical action of returning enacted by the spectre.<sup>196</sup> Indeed, this act is the very origin of the spectre as Derrida notes, thus establishing the impossibility of

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<sup>193</sup> By semi-periphery, I refer here to the term used by Wallerstein, which he defines as follows: “on a number of economic criteria (but not all), the semiperiphery represents a midway point on a continuum running from the core to the periphery. This is, in particular, true of the complexity of economic institutions, the degree of economic reward (both in terms of average level and range), and most of all in the form of labor control. The periphery (Hispanic America) used forced labor (slavery and coerced cash-crop labor). The core, as we shall see, increasingly used free labor. The semiperiphery (former core areas turning in the direction of peripheral structures) developed an inbetween form, sharecropping, as a widespread alternative” in Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (University of California Press, 2011), p. 138.

<sup>194</sup> María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, “Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities”, in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory*, ed. by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1–27, p. 5.

<sup>195</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L’État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Galilée, 1993), p. 32, emphasis in original.

<sup>196</sup> Derrida, p. 32, emphasis in original.

stopping the ghost and its haunting. Hence, in the colonial literary archive, ‘the colony’ are either zombified (made monstrous) or there is an effort to erase their presence. However, this attempt is thwarted by their return, in the process of which they materialise immaterially as spectres haunting the text. This creates a presence of ‘the colony’ appearing uncannily between the lines of the literary text. For this reason, it takes a different reading approach to the text to excavate the erased ‘colony’, such as Edward Said’s contrapuntal reading, for instance, one way of reading ‘the colony’ between the lines of the metropolitan novel. Basing his methodology on music theory, Said explains his theory of contrapuntal reading in *Culture and Imperialism* as follows:

As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts. In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities.<sup>197</sup>

The colony is uncanny in this archive in the Freudian sense of the term. Deconstructing the term in his 1919 essay on the uncanny, Freud first establishes firstly the definition of the noun without the negative prefix, the ‘homely’: “1. also Heimlich, heimelig, ‘zum Hause gehörig, nicht fremd, vertraut, zahm, traut und traulich, anheimelnd etc.’ [‘belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, dear and intimate, homely, etc.’]”.<sup>198</sup> He argues that “[t]he uncanny (*das Unheimliche*, ‘the unhomely’) is in some way a species of the familiar (*das Heimliche*, ‘the homely’)”, and concludes later that it is what was once familiar and has been repressed: “the uncanny [the ‘unhomely’] is what was once familiar [‘homely’, ‘homey’]. The negative prefix *un-* is the indicator of repression”.<sup>199</sup> The act of repression is central to the definition: “for this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed. The

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<sup>197</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage, 1994), p. 51.

<sup>198</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. by David McLintock (Penguin, 2003), p. 126.

<sup>199</sup> Freud, p. 134 and p. 151.

link with repression now illuminates Schelling's definition of the uncanny as "something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open".<sup>200</sup> 'The colony' is uncanny also because they used to be homely and familiar. The space of 'the colony' was home for European merchants of proto-capitalism and for plantation owners. Also, much of the colonisers' wealth was generated by the Atlantic trade and the exploitation of colonies through plantation agriculture (including slavery), and the cultivation and exportation of commodities such as sugar, tobacco, fruits, etc. The American and African continents were (and are) also mined for gold, copper, bauxite, iron, ore, rubber, and oil, among others. The uncanny 'colony' is thus very much part both of the national history and of the identity of the colonising countries.

Here comes into play another meaning related to the ghost and the repression from whence it escapes. The English word 'ghost' comes from a Germanic term meaning 'spirit, soul' and evolved today to mean both, as in the Christian terminology of the 'holy ghost' and the immaterial creature, at times frightening and full of wrath, as the Sanskrit and Avestan etymologies of the word inform us.<sup>201</sup> However, in romance languages, one of the terms used for the ghost comes from the Ancient Greek *phantasm* meaning appearance. This etymology remains in the less used English *phantom* and in most of the romance languages; as *fantôme* in French or *fantasma* in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. These show the kindred etymology the terms have with a 'fantasy', itself coming from the Ancient Greek *phantasia*.<sup>202</sup> Ghosts are imaginary apparitions, repressed fantasies that the colonisers create, just like cannibals and zombies, to articulate the 'otherness' of 'the colony' in which they bury their anxieties: "Projetant ses fantasmes sur le Nègre, le raciste se comporterait comme si le Nègre dont il construit l'image existait vraiment".<sup>203</sup> Mbembe's argument here echoes Lalo's, discussed in the introductory chapter above about the cannibal being a fantasy invented by Columbus. These spectral fantasies, or ghosts, escape the repression to act as a reminder of the colonisers' creations and their violent acts. I argue that this is similar to what Derrida calls "une *hantologie*. Cette logique de la hantise ne serait pas seulement plus ample et plus puissante qu'une

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<sup>200</sup> Freud, p. 148.

<sup>201</sup> See "Ghost", *Online Etymology Dictionary* <<https://www.etymonline.com/word/ghost>> [accessed 6 March 2020] and "in English such anger seems to be an epistemological necessity, since, although *ghost* corresponds to *spiritus* in Latin, the two words have different implications: *spiritus* comes from words meaning breath (as in *gust*), while *ghost* comes from pre-Germanic words implying rage. The ghost, in other words, is an angry dead person who for whatever reason will not stay dead, and demands that the living somehow make amends. AS the common word for ghost in French, *revenant*, implies, ghosts are the ones who come back" in Leo Baudry, *Haunted: On Ghosts, Witches, Vampires, Zombies, and Other Monsters of the Natural and Supernatural Worlds* (Yale University Press, 2016), p. 40, emphasis in original.

<sup>202</sup> See "Fantasy", *Online Etymology Dictionary* <<https://www.etymonline.com/word/fantasy>>.

<sup>203</sup> Mbembe, *Critique*, p. 167.

ontologie ou qu'une pensée de l'être".<sup>204</sup> In returning immaterially the ghost demands to be considered as an existing being and this "non-présence du spectre exige qu'on prenne en considération son temps et son histoire".<sup>205</sup> The spectral 'colony' demands justice – to be fleshed out, to be made corporeal and, through this process, to be de-objectified. This is one of the goals of literary cannibalism as a mode of writing.

My argument builds upon theoretical elaboration in two works, both published in 1993: Terry Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian* and Derrida's *Les Spectres de Marx*. By placing these two works alongside one another, it becomes possible for us to develop a complex picture of the spectrality enacted in literature. Castle focuses on the repressive gesture – the attempt to erase. Derrida discusses its necessary failure. Castle introduces the apparitional lesbian as follows: "The lesbian remains a kind of "ghost effect" in the cinema world of modern life: elusive, vaporous, difficult to spot – even when she is there, in plain view, mortal and magnificent, at the centre of the screen. Some may even deny that she exists at all".<sup>206</sup> Similarly, I argue that the writing of the colonial literary archive attempts to erase the presence of 'the colony'. However, it turns out to be impossible given as 'the colony' are necessary for the very livelihood of the (proto-)Europeans, just as Said notes that they are essential for the characters' lifestyles in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for instance.<sup>207</sup> Castle writes that the "primary goal in [her] book[, is ...] to bring the lesbian back into focus, as it were, in all her worldliness, comedy, and humanity".<sup>208</sup> I hope for something similar as my goal in this thesis. "The lesbian is never with us, it seems, but always somewhere else: in the shadows, in the margins, hidden from history, out of sight, out of mind, a wanderer in the dusk, a lost soul, a tragic mistake, a pale denizen of the night".<sup>209</sup> I want to argue, *mutatis mutandis*, that if we read decolonial rewritings as exercises in literary cannibalism, we might succeed in bringing 'the colony' into focus, by shedding light on its psychological, cultural, and material realities. This is what I see an excavation of the uncanny 'colony' in the colonial literary archive and it is made possible because 'the colony' are present in this archive as an immaterial haunting, resurfacing between the lines after having been repressed by the erasure undertaken by western ghosting.

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<sup>204</sup> Derrida, p. 31, emphasis in original.

<sup>205</sup> Derrida, p. 166.

<sup>206</sup> Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> Said, p. 73.

<sup>208</sup> Castle, p. 2.

<sup>209</sup> Castle, p. 2.

The attempt to erase the ‘other’ can be seen as a ‘ghosting’, which Castle defines as being “made to be invisible – by culture itself” and once the ‘other’ has been ghosted, it can be “exorcized”.<sup>210</sup> This points also to the dynamic of zombification, or making ‘the colony’ monstrous to better exploit it, as I will discuss below. Indeed, if ‘the colony’ keeps returning and cannot be ghosted, then it must be exorcised, hence ‘the colony’ is only allowed to appear in material form to be obliterated again. However, this second attempt of erasure is thwarted by the very nature of the spectre, which, as Derrida notes, cannot be controlled since it continually returns.<sup>211</sup> As Michael Mayerfeld Bell argues, despite their immateriality, ghosts are political: “ghosts make claims about the territories of social life. Ghosts are political. The possession of a place by a ghost thus is not a non-material phenomenon”.<sup>212</sup> Their haunting makes a statement and creates kinship as Mayerfeld Bell notes in what he calls “ghosts of belonging”.<sup>213</sup> Ghosts of ‘the colony’ haunt the metropole, either between the lines of the colonial literary archive, because they enable the lifestyle of the metropole through imperial exploitation of ‘the colony’, or through residency or citizenship in the metropolitan space following migration or *départementalisation*.<sup>214</sup> This concept of kinship is crucial in defining literary cannibalism as a mode of writing, since the works that will be analysed as case studies in the second half of this thesis aim to strengthen ties across the Atlantic, just as the ‘Cannibal Connections’ studies do in this chapter. The spectre in the colonial literary archive claims the metropole as its space to haunt and, through this, emphasises the fact that the history and identity of the colonisers necessarily include ‘the colony’, despite their attempt to erase or zombify ‘the colony’. This, as argued in my introductory Chapter, is a way of making unkin and unmaking kin as the dynamics of colonial relationality do, since, by refusing to recognise ‘the colony’ their humanity, the colonisers break their innate kinship ties with them, making conceptually possible the reification and therefore exploitation of ‘the colony’.

The novel appears to be an ideal literary genre for hauntings – though the case studies investigated in my Third and Fourth Chapters below challenge the conventional genre nomenclature established in western scholarship – for a variety of reasons, some of which have been explored in other works such as Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* and Patrick Brantlinger’s

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<sup>210</sup> Castle, p. 4 and p. 6.

<sup>211</sup> Derrida, p. 32.

<sup>212</sup> Michael Mayerfeld Bell, “The Ghosts of Place”, *Theory and Society*, 26.6 (1997), 813–36, p. 832.

<sup>213</sup> Mayerfeld Bell, p. 824.

<sup>214</sup> Examples of this will be discussed in the Third and Fourth Chapters through works looking at migration to the metropole such as Sam Selvon’s *Moses Ascending* or César Mba Abogo’s *El porteador de Marlow*, for instance.

*Rule of Darkness*.<sup>215</sup> To some extent, it could be argued that the Gothic genre more broadly – due in part to the time in which it developed – is intrinsically linked to colonialism. Indeed, it is very apt to negotiate anxieties present during colonialism, or rather express the lack of said negotiation, which foster the creating of a literature of dread, as Brantlinger notes: “Although the connection between imperialism and other aspects of the late Victorian and Edwardian culture are innumerable, the link with occultism is especially symptomatic of the anxieties that attended the climax of the British Empire”.<sup>216</sup> Many examples could be taken up to illustrate this argument, but three novels in particular are relevant here since Chapter Four below will analyse rewritings of these works: Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902). While I will not discuss these works in depth here, I will shortly engage with criticism that has offered new perspectives on these canonical works since these are crucial to identifying the spectral ‘colony’ between the lines.

As the basis of the two narratives in both of the Brontë novels, the repressed ‘colony’ emerges as they provide the economic foundation that allows the protagonists to lead comfortable lives. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester’s wealth, as well as the inheritance that later permits Jane her proto-feminist independence, stem, respectively, from Jamaica and Madeira:

even if Rochester’s tainted colonial wealth has been burned away by the end of the novel [...], the very wealth Jane is able to bring him, which enables her to meet him on equal terms [...] has colonial source. It comes from her uncle in Madeira, who is an agent for a Jamaican wine manufacturer, Bertha’s brother. And the location of Jane’s uncle John in Madeira, off Morocco, on the West of Africa coast, where Richard Mason stops on his way home from England, also indirectly suggests, through Mason’s itinerary, the triangular route of the British slave traders, and suggests that John Eyre’s wealth is implicated in the slave trade.<sup>217</sup>

This is even more critical considering that Madeira was the laboratory for the development of the sugar plantation:

As Central Europe’s metallurgical boom took flight, a different kind of commodity revolution was unfolding in the Atlantic. This was the rise of King Sugar, modernity’s original cash crop. Combining the ecology of cane and capital, a special lethality defined the sugar plantation system. Sugar not only devoured forests and exhausted soils – it was an apparatus of mass killing in the form of African slavery. On Madeira,

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<sup>215</sup> See Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 227-254.

<sup>216</sup> Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>217</sup> Susan Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women’s Fiction* (Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 93.

located off the western coast of north Africa, the first sugar boom – and the first signs of the modern sugar-slave nexus – took shape. Madeira’s sugar boom began in the 1470s, ousting Mediterranean producers from their privileged position. In the two decades after 1489, sugar production soared – and labor productivity with it. So did deforestation. For sugar was a cash crop that famously devoured nearby forests. As an economic activity it resembled smelter more than farm.<sup>218</sup>

The novel ends with the erasure of Bertha Mason, the monstrous embodiment of ‘the colony’, leaving Rochester free to marry Jane, hence re-establishing a racial and national order, which has been destabilised by the threat of miscegenation in the union of a creole and an English gentleman, as John Marx argues, “*Jane Eyre* established a formula for bringing the Empire into the home while containing its influence”.<sup>219</sup> In *Wuthering Heights*, the presence of Liverpool as the place where Heathcliff has been picked up introduces ‘the colony’. Indeed, as Susan Meyer argues:

In 1769, the year in which Mr. Earnshaw found Heathcliff in the Liverpool streets, the city was England’s largest slave-trading port, conducting seventy to eighty-five percent of the English slave trade along the Liverpool Triangle, exchanging manufactured goods from the Mersey region for West African slaves, who were exchanged for plantation crops in the American and the Spanish American colonies. Perhaps the young Heathcliff, Linton suggests, is the cast-off offspring of one of those slaves, or “an American or Spanish castaway”.<sup>220</sup>

Furthermore, as Christopher Heywood explains, the production of wealth from the forced labour of the uncanny ‘colony’ also intersects with the Yorkshire semi-periphery:

In the formative period portrayed in *Wuthering Heights*, wealth came from Yorkshire cotton manufactures as well as the sugar plantations in the Caribbean. Both were based on produce of slave plantations, and both were in decline by 1830s. Moreover, the old fortunes of private plantation proprietors reappeared in the vast fortunes of the new mill owners, built, it appeared, on an enslaved workforce. An expanded Emancipationist attack included the plight of the industrial working class, the importing of indentured cheap labour from Asia to the Caribbean, and the imposition of colonial rule by industrial nations.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Moore, “The Capitalocene, Part I”, p. 615.

<sup>219</sup> John Marx, *The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 132.

<sup>220</sup> Meyer, p. 98.

<sup>221</sup> Richard Heywood, “Introduction”, in *Wuthering Heights*, ed. by Richard Heywood (Broadview Literary Texts, 2002), pp. 18–90, p. 58.

Here also surfaces the relation to the wider context of Britain's emergence as a nation, and as one of the first nations to undergo systematic industrialisation. Historically speaking, wealth acquired through 'the colony' is a critical element that allowed Britain to emerge as a powerful nation state. Furthermore, the association between 'the colony' (periphery) and the semi-periphery here plays a critical role. The uneven relations within and without the European continent points to the tension internal to the colonial literary archive in the Brontë sisters' works.<sup>222</sup> *Heart of Darkness* similarly shows spectral images of otherness, but this time within the colonial space itself, showing the erasure and zombification that happens in 'the colony' whenever and wherever labour takes place. This is different from the novel set in the metropolitan space which typically attempts to obscure labour and its conditions while focusing only on the resulting wealth. For this reason, 'the colony', which were spectral in the metropolitan novel, are now made corporeal in the novel set *in* the colonial space, in which the conditions of slavery and forced labour cannot be obscured anymore. The coming back, or *revenir*, of the uncanny 'colony' can be seen to function as a way of forcing the reader to remember from where the metropolitan wealth originates. However, whenever works are set in the colonial space, the uncanny 'colony' now materialises and must be made monstrous, or in my terminology, 'zombified' so it can continue to be de-humanised and exploited without triggering moral reconsideration. The zombie, as a monstrous figure of colonial relationality conceptualised here represents how 'the colony' are seen and represented by the colonisers.

## DEZOMBIFYING 'THE COLONY'

Next, I emphasise the importance of considering the zombie in its original indigenous and non-colonial contexts in order to decolonise the figure of the undead and excavate its meaning outside of the colonial literary archive. The term zombie is multifaceted: "An especially important definition is that of Moreau de Saint-Mery, who presents for the first time in writing the night world of what he names *revenans* (spirits), *loupgaroux* (vampires), and *zombis*, which he defines as a "Creole word that means spirit, revenant"".<sup>223</sup> The zombie figure's status between life and death points to another demonised 'in-betweenness', the racialised one of

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<sup>222</sup> As Moore notes "the twists and turns of the struggle for empire within Europe turned crucially on the cascading and geographically uneven transformations of local and distant environments", in Jason W. Moore, "'Amsterdam Is Standing on Norway" Part I: The Alchemy of Capital, Empire and Nature in the Diaspora of Silver, 1545–1648", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 10.1 (2010), 33–68, p. 53.

<sup>223</sup> Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (University of California Press, 1995), p. 37.

hybridity and miscegenation, another anxiety haunting western consciousness and cultural productions, as I will show below in relation to American narratives of Haitian zombies. Also, the zombie, which, like the cannibal, has a complex and importantly colonial history, is the third monstrous figure of colonial relationality. In the colonial literary archive, the simultaneously-dead-and-alive, colonial, objectified subjects occupy a liminal space, in which they are physically dead and part of the past, but also come alive being written, discussed and read. They are often, however, described merely as ‘slaves’ or ‘colonised’ and written as such, which entails a reification and dehumanisation.

The figure of the zombie perfectly embodies this situation, especially through its evolving meanings and representations, its history and its use in imperial and racist propaganda and popular culture. I will follow the historical development of this figure in order to trace the journey of this monstrous signifier of colonial relationality. From its use in making ‘the colony’ monstrous to how it can represent emancipation and resistance if understood through its indigenous and postcolonial history. Joan Dayan points to the critical relation between the figure of the zombie and Haitian history of slavery, as well as to the evolution of the figure during the Revolution that began in 1791:

Born out of the experience of slavery, the sea passage from Africa to the New World, and revolution on the soil of Saint-Domingue, the zombi tells the story of colonization. [...] The name zombi, once attached to the body of Jean, who killed off whites and avenged those formerly enslaved, revealed the effects of the new dispensation. Names, gods, and heroes from an oppressive colonial past remained in order to infuse ordinary citizens and devotees with a stubborn sense of independence and survival. The undead zombi, recalled in the name of Jean Zombi, thus became a terrible composite power: slave turned rebel ancestor turned lwa, an incongruous, demonic spirit recognized through dreams, divination, or possession.<sup>224</sup>

The zombie is wrested from a history of slavery and oppression to serve as an emancipatory figure of the revolution. Notably, Dessalines also used the term ‘cannibal’ for that purpose when he announced that he was “avenging America” by fighting back against the “true cannibals”: “Oui, nous avons rendu à ces vrais cannibales guerre pour guerre, crimes pour crimes, outrages pour outrages. Oui j’ai sauvé mon pays, j’ai vengé l’Amérique”.<sup>225</sup> However, just like the island of Haiti itself, the Revolution and its symbols eventually were debased and degraded in western rhetoric and politics. Europe saw Haiti as setting an undesirable example

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<sup>224</sup> Dayan, pp. 36-37.

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 46.

for their other colonies, and then began the embargo to which the island was subjected for several decades. Haiti could only attempt to extirpate itself from this boycott by paying an independence debt demanded by Charles X in 1825 in order to compensate French planters for the loss of their lands and their enslaved people. The extortionate amount required by France meant Haiti had to borrow money; this is where the vicious cycle of indebtedness in Haiti began. This unacceptable and cruel cycle was accompanied by substantial negative propaganda about the island, which has since been demonised for two centuries. Consequently, the zombie figure became an exotic bogeyman along with vaudou, which was described as a sort of barbaric black magic. Renewed accusations of cannibalism were made, which are part of a broader discourse of ‘otherness’ finding its roots in European history, as I discussed in the First Chapter above and as Kate Ramsey argues:

many of the historically most feared forms of supernatural aggression in Haiti – including anthropophagy and the transformation of humans into animals – strongly resemble the supernatural crimes attributed to “sorcerers” in Europe in the late Middle Ages, and later to African and African-descended ritual specialists in the context of the slave trade and colonization. [...] Haiti’s nineteenth-century European detractors seized upon such rumors as proof of the regression of civilization in the “Black Republic”.<sup>226</sup>

Additionally, the rise of the United States as a superpower since its independence and its expansion to the south of its borders, led to the American occupation and a second colonisation for Haiti. With the excuse of ‘civilising’ their southern neighbours, the US occupied Cuba twice, for instance, where American investment in sugar plantation had enormously increased:

The U.S. occupation of Haiti must be situated in the larger history of U.S. military intervention and territorial acquisition (or attempt thereof) in the Pacific, the Caribbean, and Latin America following the Civil War. [...] In 1904 Roosevelt announced his famous corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, asserting the right and responsibility of the United States to intervene as an “international police power” in the affairs of its “southern neighbors” in case of foreign debt delinquency and/or the “general loosening of the ties of civilized society”.<sup>227</sup>

The occupation of Haiti in particular resembles a second colonisation because of the military and financial control achieved over the island by the United States. To further exploit the island, the US went so far as to change by force Jean-Jacques Dessalines’ 1804 independence law

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<sup>226</sup> Kate Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 79.

<sup>227</sup> Ramsey, p. 118.

forbidden foreigners to own land in Haiti. They did so by drafting a new constitution lifting this ban and when Haiti's parliament refused to approve this change, the United States Marines dissolved this legislative body "under the nominal authority of the client government. This charter was later "passed" by an extraconstitutional plebiscite, in which it is estimated that less than 5 percent of the Haitian population participated, under an armed guard of marines".<sup>228</sup> This first legal change was the first in a long line that allowed the U.S. to appropriate most of Haiti's natural resources.

It is in this 'surreal' situation – in which corporate interests and racism dominated – that the figure of the zombie, as it developed in contemporary popular culture, was produced. In 1929, William Seabrook published a fictional, pseudo-anthropological work on Haiti entitled *The Magic Island*, accompanied by highly racist and stereotypical engravings that further contributed to the perception of Haiti as an exotic and dangerous island. This work of fiction is narrated by Seabrook himself in a first-person focalised voice. In a chapter entitled "... Dead Men Working in the Cane Fields", he presents the following dialogue between himself and his friend Polynice:

"At this very moment, in the moonlight, there are *zombies* working in this island, less than two hours' ride from my own habitation. We know about them, but we do not dare to interfere so long as our own dead are left unmolested. If you will ride with me tomorrow night, yes, I will show you dead men working in the cane field. Close even to the cities, there are sometimes *zombies*. Perhaps you have already heard of those that were at Hasco..." "What about Hasco?" I interrupted him, for in the whole of Haiti, Hasco is perhaps the last name anybody would think of connecting with either sorcery or superstition".<sup>229</sup>

Seabrook's incredulity, based on the fact that it cannot be possible for the Haitian-American Sugar Company (HASCO) to be involved with any 'voodoo nonsense', shows the racist and patronising attitude that the American occupation promoted.<sup>230</sup> It also speaks to a fear of

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<sup>228</sup> "The most prominent example of this was the 1918 U.S.-sponsored Haitian Constitution, which lifted the interdiction of alien landholding that had been in place since Haitian independence. When the Haitian legislature, the only body with the legal power to revise the constitution, refused to approve the version drafted by U.S. civil and military authorities in 1917, it was dissolved by the marines under the nominal authority of the client government. This charter was later "passed" by an extraconstitutional plebiscite, in which it is estimated that less than 5 percent of the Haitian population participated, under an armed guard of marines. As historical studies of the occupation have further shown, the legalization of foreign land ownership became the condition of possibility for the subsequent passage of a series of new laws that empowered the U.S. corporate interests and disrupted the already precarious existence of Haitian peasants in the agriculturally richest regions of the country" in Ramsey, p. 119.

<sup>229</sup> William B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), pp. 94-95, emphasis in original.

<sup>230</sup> In this instance specifically, as in other below, I use the Americanised spelling of vaudou to distinguish this negative view of the syncretic religion as black magic from its reality.

miscegenation that will continue to be contained in other instances of the zombie figure in American popular culture. Just as anxieties surrounding cannibalism embody explorers' and colonisers' fears of being consumed by 'mysterious' and 'savage' land and people they visit and meet during the US occupation of Haiti. The contact with the island and its 'natives' – actually the descendants of forcibly displaced and enslaved peoples – generated new tropes to translate American anxieties. Seabrook's novel inspired the 1932 film *White Zombie*, in which a young white American woman, Madeleine, is zombified by a voodoo priest who has fallen in love with her. Overnight, as a zombie, she leaves her husband, Neil, to follow the call of her 'new master'. Her husband begins to look for her everywhere; when he loses any hope of finding her, his companion encourages him to keep searching, to which Neil replies: "Well, surely you don't think she's alive, in the hands of natives? Oh no, better dead than that!"<sup>231</sup> Neil's hope that Madeleine be dead rather than alive and "in the hands of the natives" reveals how Haiti became a space for the US to

negotiat[e] the politics of race, gender, sexuality, and national identity. Contests for meaning waged in Haiti's name, moreover, would continue beyond the final withdrawal of the Marines in August 1934. Since the long occupation, Haiti has continued to serve, in more and less veiled ways, as a reflection of U.S. American fears and desires, and thus as a salable commodity.<sup>232</sup>

From its origins as Haitian, black magic, living dead worker on the plantation controlled by an evil voodoo master to profit from their slave-labour, the zombie evolved into a cannibalistic ghoul starring in Hollywood's biggest blockbusters, remaining still a creature of the market and for the market, to generate profit.

In Seabrook's novel and the first movies of the 1930s and 40s it was the character of the voodoo master which was feared, since they had the power to take over and control any corpse, and thus reminded spectators of Haiti's barbarity and supposed black magic. Since George Romero's 1968 *Night of the Living Dead* the dread is displaced onto the creature of the zombie itself. The figure has continually evolved in contemporary cinema and sometimes appear as a violent and rapid cannibalistic drone while at others it is humanised and sentient. Though in most of the western contemporary productions in which zombies appear little is left of the emancipatory figure of the Haitian revolution. Junot Díaz's short story "Monstro" (2012)

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<sup>231</sup> "White Zombie (1932) Movie Script" <[https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie\\_script.php?movie=white-zombie](https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=white-zombie)> [accessed 6 March 2020], n.p.

<sup>232</sup> Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 215.

brings back the zombie to the colonial context and uses it as a key to read power relations. In other words, the figure is a monstrous signifier of colonial relationality, which in literary cannibalism as a mode of writing works as a way to dezombify (or decolonise) ‘the colony’ made monstrous (zombified). Díaz’s short story attempts to not only decolonise the zombie figure, but also to rewrite histories that have been ‘mistold’ by the colonial literary archive. “Monstro” considers the metaphorical contagious nature of colonialism discussed above in Chapter One. This element is crucial in considering that both alien invasion and abduction and pandemic plots, two key tropes of science fiction literature, are not merely works of the imagination: they are a reality, having taken places in colonised regions across the triangular trade. Hence, even though the zombie is more often accepted as a horror-genre trope, its recuperation in “Monstro”, a science fiction short story, unearths a critical issue related to literary categorisation. Díaz’s short story is a literary work that challenges genre nomenclature, by defying the very act of writing stories and History. Hence, this work presents a literature that aims both in content and form to represent the history of colonisation, exploitation and racism and the effects they had, and still have, on ‘the colony’.

“Monstro” does not explicitly mention zombies, but the title itself, “phonetic for *monstruo* in Spanish”, brings up monsters.<sup>233</sup> The use of the term in the short story, like the term monster in general, has been widely understood as referring to its etymological meaning of ‘warning’ derived from ‘showing’. This short story, however, also supports my drawing on the etymology of the term as ‘monument’, as discussed in Chapter One above. Hence, the short story itself can be read as depicting the ruins, or material traces, of the colonial past. This is also made visible if one reads the short story as a retelling of the Haitian revolution, aiming to challenge how it has been written into history thus far. As Kerstin Oloff notes about it and Pedro Cabiya’s *Malas Hierbas* (2010): “In their renderings, the figure of the zombie contains within it, even if negatively and in nightmarish form, the challenged posed by the legacy of the universalism of the Haitian Revolution”.<sup>234</sup> It is possible, and it has been argued before, to see the “infected” – “viktims” and “possessed” – in the short stories as zombies.<sup>235</sup> The action of

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<sup>233</sup> Sarah Quesada, “A Planetary Warning?: The Multilayered Caribbean Zombie in “Monstro””, in *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination*, ed. by Monica Hanna, Jennifer Harford Vargas, and José David Saldívar (Duke University Press, 2016), pp. 291–318, p. 292.

<sup>234</sup> Kerstin Oloff, “Toward the World-Zombie: The Monstrous, the “Human” and the Dominican-Haitian Frontier in Pedro Cabiya’s *Malas Hierbas* (2010) and Junot Díaz “Monstro” (2012)”, in *Re-Thinking ‘Identities’: Cultural Articulations of Alterity and Resistance in the New Millennium*, ed. by Lucille Cairns and Santiago Fouz-Hernandez (Peter Lang, AG, 2014), pp. 189–212, p. 191.

<sup>235</sup> See Oloff, Quesada, and Emily A. Maguire, “The Heart of a Zombie: Dominican Literature’s Sentient Undead”, *Alambique: Revista Académica de Ciencia Ficción y Fantasía / Jornal Acadêmico de Ficção Científica e Fantasia*, 6.1 (2018), 1–20.

“Monstro” unfolds from the perspective of a first-person narrator who has returned home from the US during the University summer break to visit his mother in the Dominican Republic. She is unwell and has moved back to the island to seek treatment, facing a much more dire situation in the United States given the weakness and costliness of its health care system.<sup>236</sup> On the other side of the border, in Haiti, an outbreak has taken place: “La Negrura they called it. Darkness”.<sup>237</sup> From the beginning, the narrator associates the disease with climate change by associating it to abnormally fluctuating temperatures:<sup>238</sup> “The infection showed up on a small boy in the relocation camps outside Port-au-Prince, in the hottest March in recorded history. The index case was only four years old”, as well as other impacts on the environment: “Strangest thing, though: once infected, few viktims died outright; they just seemed to linger on and on. Coral reefs might have been adios on the ocean floor, but they were alive and well on the arms and backs and heads of the infected”.<sup>239</sup>

There is also a grounding of the zombie figure with a non-binary understanding of the Human/Nature dichotomy. Creating a quasi-apocalyptic discourse, which considers how anthropogenic climate change includes humanity: “Everybody blamed the heat. Blamed the Calientazo. [... T]he planet cooking like a chimi and down to its last five trees – something berserk was bound to happen”.<sup>240</sup> Indeed, the consequences of these changes, contrary to what many people think, are not just environmental, but also human. This brings forth the critical debates I mentioned in Chapter One regarding the pitfalls of terminology when it comes to considering current issues of our climate emergency. Another crucial contemporary issue addressed through the short story’s focus on climate change is immigration. Indeed, as global warming exacerbates, the number of climate migrants will only increase since it is likely that countries from the Global South are, and will continue to be, the first to feel the effects and consequences of climate change.<sup>241</sup> This contemporary anxiety is shown towards the end of the story after the “viktims” have become the “possessed” as the illness evolves and Port-au-Prince is bombed to avoid further contagion:

Nothing was working except for old diesel burners and the archaic motos with no points or capacitors. People were trying out different explanations. An earthquake. A nuke. A Carrington event. The Coming of the Lord. Reports arriving over the failing fatlines

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<sup>236</sup> Quesada, p. 299.

<sup>237</sup> Junot Díaz, “Monstro”, in *Latin@ Rising: An Anthology of Latin@ Science Fiction and Fantasy*, ed. by Matthew David Goodwin (Wings Press, 2017), pp. 80–102, p. 80.

<sup>238</sup> Quesada, p. 301.

<sup>239</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 81 and p. 82.

<sup>240</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 80.

<sup>241</sup> Though Greenland and other arctic spaces are also on the frontline of our climate crisis.

claimed that Port-au-Prince had been destroyed, that Haiti had been destroyed, that thirteen million screaming Haitian refugees were threatening the borders, that Dominican military units had been authorized to meet the *invaders* – the term the gov was now using – with ultimate force.<sup>242</sup>

The use of the term “invaders” raises the issue of migration and the appalling treatment of migrants, which has only worsened since Díaz wrote “Monstro” in 2012, especially when bearing in mind the current treatment of immigrants in the United States for instance. Migration is, to many extents, a legacy of colonialism, on the one hand, because of the lack of infrastructure in the countries that were drained and exploited during the colonial period and then forced to take IMF loans during the decolonial period.<sup>243</sup> On the other hand, the racist and discriminatory rhetoric surrounding immigration in the Global North can also be seen as such a legacy as it stems from residual traces of colonial and imperial discourse. The zombie figure signifies this development of colonial relationality. Thus, to tell the story of this legacy, Díaz moves the zombie from its usual horror genre setting to a science fiction one, here echoing another of his character: Yunió from *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and his famous line “who’s more sci-fi than us?”:

Revolutionizing the narrative with humor, Díaz’s active syncretization of genre and colonialism – literature and history – works congruently to reveal the bestiality of empire (old and new). Even though Díaz regrets that science fiction is a genre that “nobody takes seriously,” he explains that it is “best suited to explaining the events of colonialism and its extreme cultural violence.” [...] Díaz takes full advantage of science fiction to weave a narration that is racially charged, arising from the Caribbean plantocracy.<sup>244</sup>

Hence, the zombie as a figure brings back a history of capital accumulation that has been a catalyst for colonialism and imperialism and has therefore impacted ‘the colony’ in the extractiono(s)cene in many ways. The zombie carries this history, which is revived in Díaz’s short story. This reminds us how anthropogenic climate change already impacts the poorest, who, themselves, often have had little to no impact on the environment:

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<sup>242</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 101, emphasis in original.

<sup>243</sup> Though migration is also a pre-capitalist phenomenon, considering many nomad groups for instance, the specific fluxes and routes that are established today often follow the Global North/South or Metropole/Periphery divide established during colonialism, as I will show in further details in the case studies of Chapter Three and Four. Additionally, as Christina Sharpe argues, “The ongoing crisis of capital in the form of migrants fleeing lives made unlivable is becoming more and more visible, or, perhaps, less and less able to be ignored. [...] The crisis is often framed as one of refugees fleeing internal economic stress and internal conflicts, but subtending this crisis is the crisis of capital and the wreckage from the continuation of military and other colonial projects of US/European wealth extraction and immiseration” in Sharpe, *In the Wake*, p. 59.

<sup>244</sup> Quesada, p. 294.

All sorts of bizarre outbreaks already in play: diseases no one had names for, zoonotics by the pound. This one didn't cause too much panic because it seemed to hit only the sickest of the sick, vikims who had nine kinds of ill already in them. You literally had to be falling to pieces for it to grab you[. ...] And since it was just poor Haitian types getting fucked up – no real margin in that. Once the initial bulla died down, only a couple of underfunded teams stayed on.<sup>245</sup>

Critically, the short story has been written in the wake of the Haitian earthquake of 2010, which, like other natural disasters in that region, aggravates the challenging situation in which former colonies are often left.<sup>246</sup> Slowly, the illness evolves and the narrator remarks that

Doctors began reporting a curious change in the behavior of infected patients: they wanted to be together, in close proximity, all the time. They no longer tolerated being separated from other infected, started coming together in the main quarantine zone, just outside Champ de Mars, the largest of the relocation camps. All the vikims seemed to succumb to this ingathering compulsion. Some went because they claimed they felt “safer” in the quarantine zone<sup>247</sup>

The peculiar illness results in a need for the infected to be constantly together, into a mutism that itself mutates into singing. The narrator describes the different steps which this change undergoes, the period of mutism, called “the Silence” in the narrative, associates the “vikims” with abnormality as the narrator describes their refusal to speak as that to say “anything *human*”.<sup>248</sup> This dehumanisation of the zombie figures allows a connection to be drawn with slavery since people who were forcibly abducted and enslaved were often dehumanised in the way they were treated being bought and becoming figure in accounting ledgers, but also through the cruel physical treatment they suffered. Moreover, as the illness continues to evolve, the “vikims” are demonised: “There were widespread rumors that the infected were devils, even reports of relatives attempting to set their infected family members on fire”, and they finally become the “possessed” before turning into zombie-like cannibals towards the end of the short story.<sup>249</sup> The transformation of the infected victims into cannibalistic, homicidal killers follows a pattern reminiscent of the demonisation of Haitian people before, during and after the

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<sup>245</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, pp. 81-82.

<sup>246</sup> See Junot Díaz, “Apocalypse: What Disasters Reveal”, *The Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum*, 2011 <<http://bostonreview.net/junot-diaz-apocalypse-haiti-earthquake>> [accessed 10 March 2020].

<sup>247</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 84.

<sup>248</sup> “Eight months into the epidemic, all infected vikims, even the healthiest, abruptly stopped communicating. Just went silent. Nothing abnormal in their bloodwork or in their scans. They just stopped talking – friends, family, doctors, it didn't matter. No stimuli of any form could get them to speak. Watched everything and everyone, clearly understood commands and information – but refused to say anything. Anything *human*, that is” in Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 85, emphasis in original.

<sup>249</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 85.

Revolution discussed above. Additionally, after the period of mutism, the “viktings” begin singing in unison, this period is described by the narrator as “the Chorus”.<sup>250</sup> These symptoms displayed by the “infected”, assembling and singing, can be associated with practices aiming towards community building during slavery, often violently pre-empted and interpreted by masters fearing uprisings: “The formation of these communities was essential for slaves, and planters sought to undo them to preclude revolts. Separated from their families or linguistic and ethnic groups, some found a home in these palenques, *quilombos*, or clans. The solitude these slaves could not endure is similar to the kind the zombies find dreadful in “Monstro””.<sup>251</sup>

Moreover “the Silence”, followed by “the Chorus”, which on the one hand, as Quesada argues “recalls the cases of vodun bewitchment of the plantation era”, on the other hand, can also refer to other practices of resistance through dance and song such as Capoeira in Brazil or the rich tradition of songs by enslaved African-American people used both as resistance and code for escaping in the United States.<sup>252</sup> These resistance practices are also ones that aim to make kin across new communities, as I will explore in the next section. Additionally, the movement from “Silence” to “Chorus” allows the consideration of language on a deeper level in the case of the Caribbean, but of Haiti particularly, since it also brings up issues surrounding the use and imposition of colonial European languages, in place of the African languages spoken by the enslaved groups, and later the evolution of Creole, which in the case of the revolution also served to homogenise the population, as Dayan argues:

During the revolution, Creole was imposed as the national language by the Creole (Haitian-born) leaders Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe. This emerging language, initially used as a means of communication between slaves and masters, was an amalgam of French vocabulary and syntactic contributions from West Africa, as well as Taino, English, and Spanish. The African-born former slaves, who spoke one of at least two or three African languages, were silenced and subjugated to the Creole linguistic monopoly, a creolization that made for a linguistic accord conducive to political control by Creoles.<sup>253</sup>

The groups, silenced by both colonial history and later by the emergence of creole, appear in the short story here as proposing a different type of communication not understood by the onlooker. This allows the reader to reconsider issues of language and communication in the

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<sup>250</sup> “Shortly after the Silence, the phenomenon that became known as the Chorus began. The entire infected population simultaneously let out a bizarre shriek – two, three times a day. Starting together, ending together” in Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 85.

<sup>251</sup> Quesada, p. 307, emphasis in original.

<sup>252</sup> Quesada, p. 308.

<sup>253</sup> Dayan, p. 5.

short story which challenges these notions throughout in its use of both colloquial and formal registry and its intermixing of Spanish and English. Moreover, it shows the ways, mentioned above, in which the Haitian Revolution has been misrepresented by western historiography and popular culture. It is crucial that, just like in the late eighteenth-century when the revolution broke in Haiti – and the first massacres took place, with those involved perceived as savage killers – in Díaz’s short story the “viktims” become homicidal monsters:

That shit was no riot. Even we could tell that. All the relocation camps near the quarantine zone were consumed in what can only be described as a straight massacre. An outbreak of homicidal violence, according to the initial reports. People who had never lifted a finger in anger their whole lives – children, viejos, aid workers, mothers of nine – grabbed knives, machetes, sticks, pots, pans, pipes, hammers and started attacking their neighbors, their friends, their pastors, their children, their husbands, their infirm relatives, complete strangers. Berserk murderous blood rage. No pleading with the killers or backing them down; they just kept coming and coming, even when you pointed a gauss gun at them, stopped only when they were killed.<sup>254</sup>

The massacres prompt what the narrator calls the “Great Powers” to act and their decision is to bomb Port-au-Prince.<sup>255</sup> The bomb’s effect is felt as far as Cuba, Puerto Rico and Florida and it has many consequences, including a power outage, which itself provokes more death: “Tens of thousands died as a direct result of the power failure”.<sup>256</sup> While this line appears to have further meaning in the wake of the 2010 Haitian Earthquake, it also now echoes the state of other Caribbean islands since the repeated hurricanes and violent storms of 2017 and 2019, which have destroyed infrastructure across the region, leaving many people without electricity or shelter.

Moreover, as Quesada notes, the use of language in describing the event, and particularly of the word “white”, leaves space for multiple interpretations: “The Detonation Event – no one knows what else to call it – turned the entire world white”.<sup>257</sup> Quesada focuses on its relation to the race binary and its extension to lightness and illumination: “In this case, whiteness as the counterpoint of its binary other is produced by such intense illumination that it does not reveal clarity. Rather, its brightness is blinding, both literally (for it blinds DeGraff) and figuratively, as it occludes the distinction of reality. The reinscription of the universal in

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<sup>254</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, pp. 97-98.

<sup>255</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 99.

<sup>256</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 101.

<sup>257</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 99.

light, like the dichotomy of blanqueamiento and negrura, is thus reversed in “Monstro”<sup>258</sup>. She further relates this to Díaz’s essay on the apocalypse, mentioned above, showing how the lack of illumination destabilises the race binary and thus re-evaluates it, showing how, in fact, whiteness and light provoke “occlusion and blindness”<sup>259</sup>. I want to bring this argument further to support my general understanding of the short story as a challenge of Western historiographical and fictional reports of the Haitian revolution by proposing that the use of the term can also be seen as a ‘whitening’ or ‘white-washing’ of history. The bombing, metaphorically, represents European and North American colonial and imperial agendas and interventionism in the region; the destruction symbolises the writing of this region’s history from a one-sided Euro-American-centric perspective. Díaz’s short story decolonises the zombie figure by illuminating its misuse in western popular culture in the time since the publication of Seabrook’s novel. The disproportionate reaction from the “Great Powers” can also be interpreted as symbolically representing the embargo and isolation imposed onto Haiti after the revolution and the demonisation of the island and its inhabitants that followed. This aimed to stop revolutionary ideas from spreading to other European colonies in the region, something echoed in the short story when the narrator considers the reasons for the bombing:

Initially, no one believed the hysterical evacuees. Forty-foot-tall cannibal motherfuckers running loose on the Island? Negro, please. Until a set of soon-to-be- iconic Polaroids made it out on one clipper showing what later came to be called a Class 2 in the process of putting a slender broken girl in its mouth. Beneath the photo someone had scrawled: Numbers 11:18. *Who shall give us flesh to eat?*<sup>260</sup>

The infected “viktims” have now become “forty-foot-tall cannibals”, with photographs as evidence. The use of the polaroid format, an older type of photography now coming back in fashion, generally in black and white, recalls the engraving in Seabrook’s novel and the Halperin brothers’ movie *White Zombie*. As in the film, the monstrous figure in the polaroid is attacking “a slender broken girl”, reviving anxieties of miscegenation and referring back to the perception of Haiti constructed in western depictions.

The biblical reference annotated on the polaroid not only brings back the religious hierarchy on the island in which Christianity is seen as the civilised religion, preferred to the savage and primitive ‘voodoo’ (which actually is a syncretism containing elements of Catholicism and which does not pertain to sorcery in any way). Furthermore, the specific

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<sup>258</sup> Quesada, pp. 312-313.

<sup>259</sup> Quesada, p. 313.

<sup>260</sup> Díaz, “Monstro”, p. 101, emphasis in original.

passage from the Book of Exodus refers to the founding myth of the Hebrews' liberation from their slavery in Egypt. The presence of slavery here strengthens the reading of the short story as a retelling of the Haitian revolution. Moreover, there are two interwoven story lines in the narration: the Haitian pandemic is told alongside the narrator's life spent with his friends in the Dominican Republic. One of his friends is obsessed by the idea of taking photographs of all the beaches in the Dominican Republic before they 'disappear' in the climate crisis. Rather than actually fighting to preserve these spaces, he capitalises on the reproduction of a catastrophist discourse, further commodifying and fetishising nature.

Moreover, when the situation in Haiti degrades, this character insists on travelling there to capture it through his lens: "He was also the one who wanted to go to Haiti, to take pictures of all the infected people. Mysty was, like, You can go catch a plague all by your fool self, but he waved her off and recited his motto (which was also on his cards): To represent, to surprise, to cause, to provoke".<sup>261</sup> This impulse, to capitalise on Haiti's suffering, painfully echoes the contemporary situation of the island and the image the rest the world often receives of it through its different mediation in history and in the media. As Gina Athena Ulysse argues, Haiti needs new narratives to challenge its depiction as either a victim or a monster.<sup>262</sup> This also brings back the discussion to European and American exploitation of Haiti's cultural capital as a commodity to sell media and negotiate anxieties, discussed earlier. "Monstro" aims to challenge the use of the zombie figure in order to rehabilitate it along with other traditional practices of 'the colony'. It also proposes seeing the zombification in western cultural productions such as in Seabrook's *The Magic Island*, as a metaphor for colonial oppression. The term 'dezombify' I use throughout this thesis is akin to that of 'decolonising' and refers particularly to the way the Euro-American-centric perspective has 'zombified' 'the colony'. By dezombifying 'the colony', literary cannibalism as mode of writing permits decolonising 'the colony's' identity and practices, including those used for community building.

## **MAKING KIN IN THE EXTRACTIONO(S)CENE**

In an essay concerning Caribbean culture, Walcott emphasises the urgency of developing an 'American' identity for the region: "But we were American even while we were British, if only in the geographical sense, and now that the shadow of the British Empire has passed through

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<sup>261</sup> Díaz, "Monstro", p. 90.

<sup>262</sup> See Gina Athena Ulysse, *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post-Quake Chronicle* (Wesleyan University Press, 2015), especially p. xxv.

and over us in the Caribbean, we ask ourselves if, in the spiritual or cultural sense, we must become American”.<sup>263</sup> While Walcott’s suggestion appears hypothetical, the lack of question mark at the end of his statement points to the possible close-ended nature of it. This implies that, really, the Caribbean he refers to in the pronoun “we” should focus on *how* they must become American rather than *if* they must. The difficulty of engaging with ‘American’ as a term is primarily due to the adoption of this term by the United States for self-reference, displacing it as a word that can refer to the whole continent.<sup>264</sup> Moreover, in theorising literary cannibalism as a creative practice to describe her work Maryse Condé has argued that it can be seen as a Pan-American cultural unit, hence re-appropriating the term ‘American’, along with that of ‘cannibalism’: “ce grand courant du cannibalisme littéraire qui fit surface en divers lieux des Amériques et témoigne en dépit d’évidentes disparités d’une certaine unité culturelle de la région”.<sup>265</sup> Pushing this further, I think it can be seen as an extractiono(s)cene cultural unit. In other words, literary cannibalism is an apt decolonial mode of writing; creating connections and promoting dialogue between the constellation created by the Atlantic triangle and the violence that slavery, forced labour and colonialism imposed onto peoples and communities.

Some of the violence that can be found in the rewritings studied in this thesis ought to be located not in the act of rewriting itself, but rather in the inescapable nature of the legacy of colonial and (neo-)imperial relations. For this reason, literary cannibalism as a mode of writing allows light to be shed on the continued violence the colonisers exerted, but which has often been erased and obscured in historical and fictional accounts. It also allows for a space in which authors from former colonies can address the intellectual, psychological and material violence enacted onto them. This violence is also present epistemologically in western historiography and literature, in both form and content, in the attempt to write ‘the colony’ out of it by ghosting (erasing) them or by zombifying (demonising) them. This violence, which is both intellectual and material, dissolves kinship on different levels, or, as I put it in Chapter One, makes unkin and unmakes kin. Literary cannibalism rewrites these dissolved relations with the aim of mending them and re-making kin across the extractiono(s)cene. Here, I refer to Donna Haraway’s definition of ‘making kin’:

My purpose is to make “kin” mean something other/more than entities tied by ancestry or genealogy. [...]. Kin-making is making persons, not necessarily as individuals or as

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<sup>263</sup> Walcott, “The Caribbean”, p. 3.

<sup>264</sup> For more on this see José Martí, *Nuestra América* (Editorial Ariel, 1973) and J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (University Press of Virginia, 1998).

<sup>265</sup> Maryse Condé, “Des héros et des cannibales : Réécriture et transgression dans la littérature des Petites Antilles de langue française”, *Portulan*, 3 (2000), 29–38, p. 29.

humans. I was moved in college by Shakespeare’s punning between kin and kind—the kindest were not necessarily kin as family; making kin and making kind (as category, care, relatives without ties by birth, lateral relatives, lots of other echoes) stretch the imagination and can change the story. [...] I think that the stretch and recomposition of kin are allowed by the fact that all earthlings are kin in the deepest sense, and it is past time to practice better care of kinds-as-assemblages (not species one at a time). Kin is an assembling sort of word. All critters share a common “flesh,” laterally, semiotically, and genealogically. Ancestors turn out to be very interesting strangers; kin are unfamiliar (outside what we thought was family or gens), uncanny, haunting, active.<sup>266</sup>

Making kin has the objective of emphasising the empathic relations between peoples across any type of socially constructed and violently imposed dichotomies, including extra-human nature. All of these are contained in the clustered terminology ‘the colony’ I use throughout this thesis. Therefore, by making kin in the extractiono(s)cene, literary cannibalism aims to rewrite histories that are conscious of and conscientious about the violent pasts, presents and futures of colonial projects motivated by the accumulation of wealth at the expense of ‘the colony’’s wellbeing and lives.

In the introduction to *Wildness: Relations of People and Place*, Gavin Van Horn explains that his book’s project is to “share stories *across the wild continuum*”, a formulation that shows another way to challenge the cartesian dualism on which the occidental human/nature binary is constructed.<sup>267</sup> This very dichotomy obscures the entangled relations and kinships between human and extra-human nature which have led to an ease in reifying the latter to better exploit it during the rise and development of capitalism. Hence, in order to fully flesh out the ghost and dezombify ‘the colony’, literary cannibalism also reveals these kinship ties. The rewritings studied in Chapters Three and Four also shed light on the continued presence of ancestors, challenging another western binary; life and death as extreme, and incompatible, opposites. More broadly, the questioning of Eurocentric dualisms in indigenous epistemologies emphasises a kinship existing across species, as described by Van Horn:

Wildness is not simply an external goal – a place we protect, a landscape we honor, or the ecosystem complexity we restore. We also carry wildness within. We are *related* – relatives of – other plants and animals (and fungi and algae and protozoa and so on) who inhabit this earth with us, and some of whom inhabit this earth on and in us. We

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<sup>266</sup> Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene”, pp. 161-162.

<sup>267</sup> Gavin Van Horn, “Introduction: Into the Wildness”, in *Wildness: Relations of People and Place*, ed. by Gavin Van Horn and John Hausdoerffer (The University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 1–8, p. 4, emphasis in original.

are kin. This applies generally: as human beings, we share an evolutionary and ecological kinship, a family tree whose branches reach through place and time, knitting us together on a common journey.<sup>268</sup>

By de-reifying nature and showing this entanglement, hence ‘dezombifying the colony’, the works investigated in Chapters Three and Four aim to redress the violent dispossession, exploitation and extraction that has been done onto them culturally and materially during colonialism and (neo-)imperialism. Achille Mbembe, in particular, brilliantly explains this process of objectification, or *production*, of black humanity by white humanity through the slave trade in the aim of extracting ‘it’ as a natural resource to produce wealth:

Le substantif « Nègre » est, ensuite, le nom que l’on donne au produit résultant du procès par lequel les gens d’origine africaine sont transformés en *minerai* vivant dont on extrait du *métal*. Telle est sa double dimension métamorphique et économique. Si sous l’esclavage l’Afrique est le lieu privilégié d’extraction de ce minerai, la plantation dans le Nouveau Monde, par contre, est le lieu de sa fonte, et l’Europe le lieu de sa conversion fiduciaire. Ce passage de l’*homme-minerai* à l’*homme-métal* et de l’*homme-métal* à l’*homme-monnaie* est une dimension structurante du premier capitalisme. L’extraction est d’abord arrachement ou séparation d’êtres humains singuliers des origines où ils tirent leur naissance. Elle est, ensuite, ablation ou extirpation – condition pour que le pressage (sans lequel il n’est point d’extraction aboutie) puisse effectivement avoir lieu. En faisant passer l’esclave par le laminoir et en le pressurant de manière à en extraire le maximum de profit, on ne convertit pas simplement un être humain en objet. On ne le marque pas seulement d’une empreinte indélébile. On produit le Nègre.<sup>269</sup>

‘Extraction’ identifies not only the agricultural labour done on the plantation and the processes at work in the mine, during the rubber harvest, or when drilling for oil, but is also a way of describing the dynamics of slavery itself. Mbembe’s emphasis on the production of abducted African peoples undertaken discursively and materially during their ‘extraction’ to enslave them, points to the alienation present between human and extra-human nature.

My argument is that literary cannibalism as a decolonial mode of writing illuminates and generates relations across dichotomies, these binaries which allowed us to linguistically isolate groups in order to rationalise their exploitation for financial gain. In its unfolding,

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<sup>268</sup> Van Horn, pp. 4-5, emphasis in original. See also, Whyte’s considerations on Anishinaabe culture, in which “[i]dentity fluidity has an important role in these traditions, where historical accounts show that people constantly transformed their identities in relation to other humans and nonhumans to form new strategic kin connections and to take up the projects of ancestors who had walked on”, in Whyte, p. 228.

<sup>269</sup> Mbembe, *Critique*, pp. 67-68.

literary cannibalism also promotes greater empathic and ethical relations. The idea of making kin here also encompasses Édouard Glissant's *Poétique de la relation*, following and developing from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome.<sup>270</sup> Glissant's concept of *relation* proposes new ways to see identity connections.<sup>271</sup> He sees the plantation as one of the main spaces in and from which the *Relation* is developed: "la Plantation est un des lieux focaux où se sont élaborés quelques-uns des modes actuels de la Relation".<sup>272</sup> The plantation is a space in which relations are sown and cultivated across time and provides a means of connecting cultures, languages, works and authors and reflecting critically on Pan-American culture.<sup>273</sup> Or, in the case here, cultures across the extractiono(s)cene. Hence, without attempting to minimise the cruelty, violence and suffering that unfolded in this space, one can see how the plantation, and by extension, the extractiono(s)cene overall, can be analysed as a node in the centre of this constellation of histories and relations:

C'est dans la Plantation que, comme dans un laboratoire, nous voyons le plus évidemment à l'œuvre les forces confrontées de l'oral et de l'écrit, une des problématiques le plus enracinées dans notre paysage contemporain. C'est là que le multilinguisme, cette dimension menacée de notre univers, pour une des premières fois constatables, se fait et se défait de manière tout organique. C'est encore dans la Plantation que la rencontre des cultures s'est manifestée avec le plus d'acuité directement observable, quoiqu'aucun de ceux qui l'habitèrent n'eût le moindre soupçon qu'il s'agissait là véritablement d'un choc de cultures. Le métissage culturel qui nous occupe tous, nous pouvons là en surprendre quelques-unes des lois de formation. C'est dans les prolongements de la Plantation, dans ce qu'elle a enfanté au moment même où elle disparaissait comme entité fonctionnelle, que s'est imposée pour nous la recherche d'historicité, cette conjonction de la passion de se définir et de l'obsession du temps, qui est aussi une des ambitions des littératures contemporaines.<sup>274</sup>

The plantation is the space of shared history from which new relations develop that are multilinguistic and multicultural but, most importantly, "multinatural" in Viveiros de Castro terms, as I shall explain below.<sup>275</sup> The plantation is itself also a space created by colonial

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<sup>270</sup> See Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (Gallimard, 1990), especially pp. 39-40.

<sup>271</sup> See Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 23 and p. 31.

<sup>272</sup> Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 79.

<sup>273</sup> Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 86.

<sup>274</sup> Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 89.

<sup>275</sup> Viveiros de Castro, p. 69.

relationality, especially the cannibalism of the colonisers, in how it is viewed by Glissant as a stomach:

La Plantation est un des ventres du monde, non pas le seul, un parmi tant d'autres, mais qui présente l'avantage qu'on peut le scruter avec le plus de précision possible. Ainsi la limite, qui était sa faiblesse structurelle, devient pour nous un avantage. Et pour finir son enfermement a été vaincu. Le lieu était clos, mais la parole qui en est dérivée reste ouverte.<sup>276</sup>

The image of the plantation as a gut echoes the beginning of Glissant's work, which opens with a discussion about the boat's 'stomach': "le ventre de la barque. Une barque, selon ta poétique, n'a pas de ventre, une barque n'engloutit pas, ne dévore pas, une barque se dirige à plein ciel. Le ventre de cette barque-ci te dissout, te précipite dans un non-monde où tu cries. Cette barque est une matrice, le gouffre-matrice".<sup>277</sup> Here there is an invitation to reconsider the phenomenological nature of the boat; one might think that a boat does not have a stomach, that a boat does not swallow or devour; however, some do – specifically the ships transporting enslaved peoples from the African to the American continent. The boat becomes a new environment: a "gouffre-matrice", womb and matrix in which a new life is developed and the plantation continues this elaboration after the arrival of the ship in the 'new world'.

These two stomachs are also matrices in which the structure of the following two chapters is based. Indeed, there is a movement from the sea to the shore, from the womb of the boat to that of the plantation: Chapter Three investigates rewritings of travel writing and the narratives of the Atlantic trade, including the Columbian narrative, the *Odyssey*, Euripides's *Medea*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Chapter Four then considers rewritings of the Brontë sisters' novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to investigate the 'plantation's womb'. In other words, Chapter Four investigates literature of extractive practices, including different types of plantation agriculture and the mining of mineral resources. It also focuses on how the objectified life of 'the colony' in the colonial literary archive is rewritten through literary cannibalism specifically to shed light on how these extractive practices produce and cheapen life in the generation of wealth.

Here is echoed anew cannibalism as a monstrous signifier of colonial relationality illustrating the dynamics between coloniser and colonised. More broadly, Glissant's image picks out uneven power relations, also addressed by Mondher Kilani who argues that "[l]e

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<sup>276</sup> Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 89.

<sup>277</sup> Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 18.

cannibalisme avant d’être une façon de manger est une façon de penser les relations sociales”.<sup>278</sup> Instead of undoing and violating human kinship, cannibalism promotes relations across and against the violent history of enslavement and displacement, as in Oswald de Andrade’s words from his 1924 *MA*: “Só a Antropofagia nos une. Socialmente. Economicamente. Filosoficamente”.<sup>279</sup> The shared history evolving between the ship and the plantation can be seen as “multinatural”, to use Viveiros de Castro’s term. Based on the re-understanding of multiculturalism proposed by Deleuze, Viveiros de Castro conceptualises “multinaturalism” a decolonised anthropological practice, which engages with indigenous epistemologies and praxes:

A noção de multinaturalismo se mostra útil, neste sentido, por seu caráter paradoxal: nosso macroconceito de “Natureza” não admite um verdadeiro plural e parece sempre pedir uma inicial maiúscula; isso nos leva espontaneamente a perceber o solecismo ontológico contido na ideia de “(várias) naturezas”, e portanto a realizar o deslocamento corretivo que ela impõe. Parafraseando a conhecida passagem de Deleuze sobre o relativismo (1988:30), diríamos então que o multinaturalismo amazônico não afirma uma variedade de naturezas, mas a naturalidade da variação, a variação *como* natureza. [... . O] multinaturalismo perspectivista é uma transformação em dupla torção do multiculturalismo ocidental.<sup>280</sup>

Understanding “variation as nature” opens new ways of conceptualising kin making. These new ways involve the possibility of thinking about beings and relations ontologically, informing new anthropological practices aimed at being less biased and opening space for the possibility of equivocation in communication across cultures. Multinaturalism is associated with perspectivism and cannibalism in Viveiros de Castro’s project – all are taken and developed from indigenous knowledge and practices as a way to decolonise anthropology: “O perspectivismo ameríndio é uma estrutura intelectual que contém uma teoria de sua própria descrição pela antropologia – pois ele é uma *outra antropologia*, uma contra-antropologia disposta transversalmente à nossa”.<sup>281</sup> By articulating this decolonised “counter-anthropology” with cannibalism from the indigenous perspective, Viveiros de Castro proposes an anthropology of kinship: “a antropologia multinaturalista nativa assume como condição vital

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<sup>278</sup> Mondher Kilani, “Le cannibalisme: Une catégorie bonne à penser”, *Études sur la mort*, 1.129 (2006), 33–46, p. 36.

<sup>279</sup> De Andrade, *Obras completas*, p. 13.

<sup>280</sup> Viveiros de Castro, p. 69.

<sup>281</sup> Viveiros de Castro, p. 72, emphasis in original.

de autodescrição a apreensão “semiofísica” – a execução e a devoração – do “ponto de vista do inimigo”. A antropofagia enquanto antropologia”.<sup>282</sup>

This bolsters the point this thesis is making about the need to decolonise cannibalism. In turn, the metaphor of cannibalism is decolonised and re-conceptualised in the theorisation of literary cannibalism as a mode of writing in the extractiono(s)cene. Using it as an analytical lens to investigate literature emerging from former colonies allows identifying how this literature (re-)makes kin, decolonises and nationalises literary genres and forms, rewrites history, fleshes out the ghost and dezombifies ‘the colony’. The purpose of the next two chapters is to systematically test this methodology by applying it to selected texts.

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<sup>282</sup> Viveiros de Castro, p. 160.



## CHAPTER 3

### “THE SEA IS [REPRODUCTIVE] HISTORY”: EXCAVATING SUBMERGED HISTORIES



Figure 2

Theodor Galle's plate ca. 1600 depicts Amerigo Vespucci gazing at a nearly naked woman who is seated on a hammock and gesturing toward him.<sup>283</sup> This scene metaphorically represents Vespucci's arrival in the Americas and his confirming that Columbus had not, in fact, 'discovered' a new road to Asia, but a 'new world' for the proto-Europeans. The woman on the plate embodies the anthropomorphised continent to which he gives his name. This christening appeared appropriate at the time, as Lisa Hopkins explains:

In 1507, Martin Waldseemüller in his *Cosmographiae Introductio* proposed the name "America" for Columbus's newly discovered land on the explicit grounds that "I do not see why anyone should object to its being called after Americus the discoverer, a man of natural wisdom, Land of Americus or America, since both Europe and Asia have derived their names from women."<sup>284</sup>

<sup>283</sup> Theodoor Galle, *The Discovery of America, Plate 1* <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/659655>>.

<sup>284</sup> Lisa Hopkins, "Marlowe's Asia and the Feminization of Conquest", in *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*, ed. by Debra Johanyak and Walter S. H. Lim (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 115–30, p. 115.

Europe and Asia are named after female characters from Greek mythology.<sup>285</sup> This emphasises the importance of Classical sources in the articulation and conception of new continents proto-Europeans were encountering in their explorations of the world. Other images from classical sources, especially those of monstrous ‘others’, play similar roles. Indeed, in the background of the ‘meeting’ scene between Vespucci and America depicted above, one can observe a group of cannibals roasting a leg on a fire, preparing for their next meal, stressing the crucial role that anthropophagous imagery has played in conquest, travel and colonial narratives since Herodotus’s time. While in classical sources such anthropophagous creatures are depicted as physically monstrous, here they are shown as naked human beings, relegated to the imagery of ‘cannibal savages’ who need to be civilised rather than powerful monsters like the Cyclops Odysseus encounters in the *Odyssey*. This humanisation occurs because the proto-Europeans want to stay in these lands to exploit them and indigenous peoples rather than having to flee from them to save his life, as Odysseus had to do. Interestingly, in the group of cannibals in the background there are also women, and one appears to be holding a baby.

Depicting the ‘cannibal savages’ as humans, rather than humanoid or monsters, affords the proto-European men landing on these shores the possibility of copulating with indigenous women since it would be inappropriate to lust after or rape non-human creatures – and push miscegenation a step too far. However, Vespucci himself pays no mind to the women present and is only interested in the embodiment of America in the forefront of the plate, the one whose natural resources he wishes to extract, like Columbus in Carpentier’s novel analysed below. The anthropomorphised America is shown nearly naked, signifying the concept of the American continent as a *tabula rasa* in a wild and unspoiled state, ready for the proto-Europeans to take over and ‘develop’. It also signifies the sexualisation of the feminised land: the rhetoric of the ‘new world’ as a woman to ravish and inseminate, is common at the time, whether in supposedly factual travel writing or fictional works.<sup>286</sup> Vespucci appears as a potential courtier reminding us of the reproductive labour women and the land do, both inside and outside enslaved conditions. In the case of women specifically, they produce additional labour power to ensure the perpetuation of the productive system. Indeed, as Silvia Federici argues,

in France and England the state adopted a set of pro-natalist measures that, combined with Public Relief, formed the embryo of a capitalist reproductive policy. Laws were

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<sup>285</sup> Robert E. Bell, *Women of Classical Mythology: A Biographical Dictionary* (ABC-CLIO, 1991), p. 74 and p. 196.

<sup>286</sup> See Louis Montrose, “The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery”, *Representations*, 33 (1991), 1–41.

passed that put a premium on marriage and penalized celibacy, modelled on those adopted by the late Roman Empire for this purpose. Family was given a new importance as the key institution providing the transmission of property and the reproduction of the work-force[, ...] a true war against women clearly aimed at breaking the control they had exercised over their bodies and reproduction [was declared. [...]] Thus, starting in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, while Portuguese ships were returning from Africa with their first human cargoes, all the European governments began to impose the severest penalties against contraception, abortion and infanticide.<sup>287</sup>

This chapter follows the thread that runs between the feminisation of land in different types of exploration and conquest writings and the exploitation of women's bodies during the same period. Further, it considers these in relation to the criminalisation of contraception and the accusations of witchcraft that followed it as a way to further marginalise unruly women. Likewise, the land is often exoticised and depicted as dangerous when it does not comply with proto-European's desires for exploitation, as one can see, for example, in Chamoiseau's and Nunez's novels studied below.

In Alejo Carpentier's novel *El arpa y la sombra* (1979), the fictionalised character of Columbus is shown describing what he thinks to be India to his financial patrons with the hyperbolic language associated in his mind with the "refining of an epithalamium": "« *Es ésta la tierra más hermosa que ojos humanos hayan vistos...* », y por ahí seguimos, con afinación de epitalamio".<sup>288</sup> This reference to classical poetry composed for a bride and her husband as they enter their nuptial chamber, in which they will consummate their marriage, foregrounds issues concerning the feminising of the land and of its 'rape' that occur in the exploration-turned-exploitation of 'the colony'. Here I refer to the 'rape' of women and land, which, as I will show below, appears as an initial moment of contact under mercantilist and colonial endeavours. In this chapter, my study of the exploited body and land is continued through an exploration of 'rebellious others' who resist such an objectification produced both materially and discursively by the colonisers. The aim of reifying 'the colony' to better exploit it is based on the impulse of primitive accumulation, as defined by Marx. However, this definition needs to be supplemented by the focus on gender provided in Federici's work. In the introduction to her *Caliban and the Witch*, Federici explains as follows:

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<sup>287</sup> Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, Second and revised edition (Autonomedia, 2014), p. 88.

<sup>288</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *El arpa y la sombra* (Siglo veintiuno editores, 1979), p. 130.

my description of primitive accumulation includes a set of historical phenomena that are absent in Marx, and yet they have been extremely important for capitalist accumulation. They include (i) the development of a new sexual division of labor subjugating women's labor and women's reproductive function to the reproduction of the work-force; (ii) the construction of a new patriarchal order, based upon the exclusion of women from waged-work and their subordination to men; (iii) the mechanization of the proletarian body and its transformation, in the case of women, into a machine for the production of new workers.<sup>289</sup>

Federici situates her analysis with reference to the “witch-hunts of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, arguing that the persecution of the witches, in Europe as in the New World, was as important as colonization and the expropriation of the European peasantry from its land were for the development of capitalism”.<sup>290</sup> In this chapter, I argue that the articulation of ‘the colony’ in the colonial literary archive as a ‘monstrous and rebellious body’ to control and exploit is challenged in rewritings by authors from former colonies, who tap the rebellious potential of both ‘the savage cannibal’ and ‘the witch’. Both types shock so intensely because they threaten to annihilate the production system based on primitive accumulation perpetuated through commodified reproductive labour.<sup>291</sup> As Angela Burns argues in relation to Euripides’s *Medea* (not only a witch but also an infanticide mother) – a text I will turn to below:

The fear of insubordinate women which serves as a fictional warning in *Medea* is perceived as a very real threat in contemporary society. It is not that there exists an overwhelming fear of militant hysterical infanticide or dread that *Medea*-like women will suddenly start assassinating state leaders; rather that women will, all the same, through their refusal to submit to patriarchy, destroy the nuclear family, thereby restricting access to legitimate procreative potential and thus the ‘very basis of society itself’.<sup>292</sup>

Since the overall production system depends upon the nuclear family to produce new workers, the destabilisation or destruction of this family unit can be seen as an attack to the core of this system. Additionally, the nuclear family itself “emerges in the period of primitive accumulation also as the most important institution for the appropriation and concealment of women’s

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<sup>289</sup> Federici, p. 12.

<sup>290</sup> Federici, p. 12.

<sup>291</sup> The witch is often associated to both cannibalism and children eating or killing, additionally her choice to live outside of men’s laws and land, often alone, indicates her refusal to abide to patriarchal structures and regulations.

<sup>292</sup> Angela J. Burns, “‘A Thoroughly Modern Medea’: The Fear of Female Insubordination in Euripides’ *Medea* and Contemporary Legislative Policy”, in *Unbinding Medea: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Classical Myth from Antiquity to the 21st Century*, ed. by Heike Bartel and Anne Simon (Legenda, 2010), pp. 263–80, p. 274.

labor”.<sup>293</sup> Hence, the very fashioning of the nuclear family, and the gender roles supposedly inherent to it, is attached to the reproductive exploitation of women’s bodies in the (proto-)capitalist system. Unruly women were therefore demonised through indictments, such as witchcraft, and criminalised if they defied or threatened this (re-)productive system through any form of celibacy or contraception. This economic system also perpetuates through an objectification and “cheapening” of life: the land and the labourer are worth less than the wealth that can be generated from overworking them. Jason Moore describes this “cheapening” process as follows:

This era of primitive accumulation gave rise not only to the ‘accumulation of capital’ and the ‘accumulation of men’ (Foucault 1977, 221), but also a new world-praxis: Cheap Nature. This praxis was one of accumulating and organizing not only human bodies, but of assigning their value through the Humanity/Nature binary. That so many humans could be reassigned to the domain of the not-human (or not-quite human) allowed capitals and empires to treat them cheaply – even as this cheapening was fiercely resisted. [...] Cheapening [...] renders] the work of many humans – but also of animals, soils, forests and all manner of extra-human nature – invisible or nearly so.<sup>294</sup>

Here one can see a crucial flaw of the (proto-)capitalist system, which permits us to identify it with cannibalism, as I have discussed in my introductory chapter above. Devaluing and cheapening human and extra-human lives runs the risk of their depletion through overexploitation. In investigating a Guyanese short story entitled “Erzulie”, by Pauline Melville, Michael Niblett emphasises how the murders committed by the eponymous protagonist “offer a mimetic image of the peculiarly ‘cannibalistic’ form of accumulation by dispossession pursued by neoliberalism”.<sup>295</sup> He further explains:

In short, neoliberalism ate its own reproductive foundations, including the bounties of ‘cheap’ nature (both human and extra-human) created in the peripheries of the world-system by the relations of power, accumulation, and nature specific to the mass production capitalism of the twentieth century. Environments and resources were drained and degraded, while the world’s poor were subject to “dietary immiseration” as a means to drive down the value of labour (Moore 2012, 237). If Erzulie’s killings mirror the violence of this socio-ecological asset stripping, at the level of form the

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<sup>293</sup> Federici, p. 97.

<sup>294</sup> Moore, “The Capitalocene, Part I”, p. 600.

<sup>295</sup> Michael Niblett, “Peripheral Irrealisms: Water-Spirits, World-Ecology, and Neoliberalism”, in *Marxism, Postcolonial Theory, and the Future of Critique: Critical Engagements with Benita Parry*, ed. by Sharae Deckard and Rashmi Varma (Routledge, 2018), pp. 78–95, p. 85.

deployment of the folkloric watermamma motif within an otherwise realist framework figures the ruptures and dislocations it engendered.<sup>296</sup>

Niblett refers to a fluid and multifaceted divinity, going by several names and which can be found throughout what Antonio Benítez Rojo calls “la cultura afroatlántica” (developed from John Thornton’s coinage of the word).<sup>297</sup> A merging of the European mermaid with African and Amerindian beliefs, “Mami Wata” – “(pidgin English for “Mother Water” or Mistress Water,” sometimes rendered as “Mammy Water”)” or even Man/Manman dlo in French creole – “epitomizes and embodies hybridity. She is a transcendent, transformative, transcultural, transnational, transgendered, and trans-Atlantic being. She straddles both land and water, culture and nature (being half-human, half-fish)”.<sup>298</sup>

This chapter will investigate works which resist the devaluation and cheapening of human and extra-human life produced by proto-capitalist and neoliberalist ontologies through the reification of ‘the colony’, by focusing on the kin making and dezombification processes present through the recurrences of the Mami Wata/Manman dlo character (henceforth Mami Wata). However, this investigation does not aim to celebrate Mami Wata’s hybridity, which would be to risk eclipsing the violence and brutality of colonisation and imperialism behind it. In line with Niblett, who builds on Benita Parry’s critical engagement with discussions of Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*, which perceives colonialism “as an encounter effecting cultural exchanges, rather than an affliction visited by expansionist imperialism”, this chapter will focus on the brutality of empire as channelled through the character of Mami Wata.<sup>299</sup> My emphasis on the character of Mami Wata intends to show how, in the rewritings studied here, she subverts socially constructed boundaries which are vestiges of the colonial literary archive. Consequently, she also appears as an antagonist to the Columbian figure, a character embodying the colonialist drive to name, map, territorialise and otherwise objectify ‘the colony’.

The aim of this chapter is thus to test my methodological approach of literary cannibalism as a mode of writing in the extractiono(s)cene (elaborated in Chapter Two above) through reference to a representative corpus of writings and rewritings. The works I analyse in this chapter rewrite Homer’s *Odyssey* (ca. 8<sup>th</sup> century BC), Euripides’s *Medea* (431 BC), the

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<sup>296</sup> Niblett, “Peripheral Irrealisms”, pp. 85-86.

<sup>297</sup> Antonio Benítez Rojo, *Archivo de los pueblos del mar* (Ediciones Callejón, 2010), p. 113.

<sup>298</sup> Henry John Drewal, Charles Gore, and Michelle Kisliuk, “Siren Serenades: Music for Mami Wata and Other Water Spirits in Africa”, in *Music of the Sirens*, ed. by Linda Austern and Inna Naroditskaya (Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 294–316, p. 294 and p. 295.

<sup>299</sup> Niblett, “Peripheral Irrealisms”, p. 81.

Columbian narrative of discovery through letters and journals (15<sup>th</sup> century), William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611), and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Throughout this corpus of rewritings, I argue, the recurrence of a Columbian-type figure, often opposed to that of a Mami Wata character, permits us to see how the latter's rebellious potential is enclosed in its opposition against reproductive labour.

I would like to emphasise here the role of repetition: by rewriting canonical works engaging with different forms of proto-capitalist exploitation, the corpus studied here itself engages with *contemporary* forms of profiteering present in our current neo-liberal system, which have perpetuated colonial abuse, pushing our world to the precipice of a climate crisis. The Columbian figure plays a critical role in this context, since Columbus is one of the first 'creators' of 'new world' history, a writer limited by a Eurocentric perspective and informed by classical and medieval authors writing about the east. The plurality of these Columbian figures has been noted by many other writers, including Saint Lucian author Derek Walcott whose works will be explored in this chapter: "My Crusoe, then, is Adam. Christopher Columbus, God, a missionary, a beachcomber, and his interpreter, Daniel Defoe. He is Adam because he is the first inhabitant of a second paradise. He is Columbus because he has discovered this new world, by accident, by fatality".<sup>300</sup>

These rewritings also destabilise the established literary presentation of characters as either colonised or coloniser by complicating and blurring boundaries. As Maeve Tynan writes with respect to Walcott: "Walcott sees Friday and Crusoe not as diametrically opposed figures but as part of a larger composite identity representing the diverse ancestry of the Caribbean diaspora. Rather than repeating the binary oppositions of master/slave, Crusoe/Friday, white/black, centre/periphery, and so on".<sup>301</sup> My aim in this chapter is to show how the potential of the 'cannibal savage' figure, often embodied by Caliban or Friday, is merged with the unruly witch embodied by both Medea and Caliban's mother, Sycorax, in addition to other figures studied here, such as la Malinche and la Llorona, who can all be identified as iterations of the Mami Wata character. The ambivalence of Mami Wata, in particular, specifically gives writers the ability to break open the master/slave binary and the related binary between human and extra-human nature since she is "as fluid and as amorphous as water itself".<sup>302</sup> Furthermore, it also destabilises binaries which have been violently imposed on indigenous and Afro-

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<sup>300</sup> Derek Walcott, "The Figure of Crusoe", in *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*, ed. by Robert D. Hammer (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), pp. 33–40, p. 35.

<sup>301</sup> Maeve Tynan, *Postcolonial Odysseys: Derek Walcott's Voyages of Homecoming* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 34.

<sup>302</sup> Henry John Drewal, Charles Gore, and Michelle Kisluik, p. 295.

Atlantic epistemologies through proto-European systematic colonial policy and racist colonial ideology.<sup>303</sup> This epistemological and material violence also imposes a ‘realism’ on arts, which is constantly challenged by postcolonial cultural productions since it limits what ‘realism’ can be outside of the Eurocentric perspective, as this chapter will show. Hence, the rewritings in this chapter challenge the travel and discovery narratives, the Columbian figure attached to these, genre nomenclatures as developed in western scholarship, and the naming and conceptualisation of ‘the colony’ enacted in all of the above. As Priska Degras argues, “[m]étaphore de l’Histoire, la question du Nom s’inscrit dans le texte de la loi coloniale, mais aussi dans de large pans de la production poétique et romanesque des Amériques”.<sup>304</sup>

Naming in this chapter encompasses also a broad range of conceptual constructions of ‘otherness’, including territorialisation and mapping. The terminology I use in this thesis represented in the shorthand ‘the colony’ is subjected on different levels to this naming and territorialisation, which, as Glissant notes is essential to conquest: “Le territoire est une base pour la conquête. Le territoire exige qu’on y plante et légitime la filiation. Le territoire se définit par ses limites, qu’il faut étendre. Une terre est sans limites, désormais. C’est pour cela qu’il vaut qu’on la défende contre toute aliénation”.<sup>305</sup> Glissant draws attention here to the relation between land and reproduction through the connection made between filiation and land. Land is not only legitimatised through filiation and filiation through land, but also filiation permits access to new (or old) lands. In Cherríe Moraga’s *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*, for example, Jáson wishes to retrieve his son that he has sent into exile with his mother Medea. The reason for this desire is to legitimise his claim to his land in the new country of Aztlán he and Medea helped create through a revolution. In Aztlán, only indigenous people have claims to the land. Jáson is a descent of white American peoples, and his claim has been built on his marriage to Medea which has been nullified after her exile.<sup>306</sup> In the hope of keeping this claim, he marries a new wife but, when she turns out to be barren, he realises that he needs his son’s return to keep his claim.<sup>307</sup> Jáson’s unnamed new wife, Medea and Chac-Mool only become important to him for instrumental reasons based on land possession and filiation. Here, as in other cases, the land and women’s bodies are exploited for production and reproduction, legitimacy and legacy. The de-territorialisation of ‘the colony’ is achieved through their de-

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<sup>303</sup> Henry John Drewal, “Beauteous Beast: The Water Deity Mami Wata in Africa”, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. by Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle (Routledge, 2013), pp. 77–101, p. 78.

<sup>304</sup> Priska Degras, *L’obsession du Nom dans le roman des Amériques* (Éditions Kathala, 2011), p. 11.

<sup>305</sup> Glissant, *Poétique*, p. 166.

<sup>306</sup> Cherríe Moraga, *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (West End Press, 2001), p. 65.

<sup>307</sup> Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, pp. 70-71.

objectification, which is conceptualised differently in each of the works studied in this chapter. Some of the works engage with colonial naming directly, while other works more broadly consider resistance against colonial oppression and dispossession imposed discursively through literature and historiography.

Colonial ‘naming’, though, is not merely limited to the imposition of a name on a people or land, as is the case for Caliban’s and Friday’s literal ‘christening’ by Prospero and Crusoe. The imposition of a specific identity onto ‘the colony’ functions similarly as it strips from ‘the colony’ their own identity and zombifies them, in the manner I described in Chapter Two. Hence, while intradiegetically, Jason does not name Medea in Euripides’s play, he rejects her from the group to which he belongs, refusing the possibility that infanticide can be committed by the ‘Greeks’: “You loathsome creature, hateful beyond all other women to the gods, to me and to the whole human race[. . .] There is no Greek woman who could ever have brought herself to do this”.<sup>308</sup> Extradiegetically, Euripides cements this character as the epitome of ‘otherness’ by making it a witch, a woman, a barbarian, and an infanticide. I aim to connect Medea to the Mami Wata figure through the association made between Sycorax and the Afro-Atlantic deity in Nalo Hopkinson’s short story “Shift” (2011), for instance, but also through the association that can be drawn between Sandrine Bessora’s *Petroleum* Médée character and Mami Wata.<sup>309</sup> Hopkinson’s short story proposes a rewriting of *The Tempest*, in which Caliban’s mother Sycorax is merged with Mami Wata.<sup>310</sup> The limitations seen to the Caliban figure in postcolonial studies are here displaced through the fluidity of the Mami Wata character.<sup>311</sup>

By contrasting the Columbian narrative, this chapter will focus on excavating submerged histories of the Atlantic Trade. Historiography itself needs to be decolonised for history to be rewritten, as Walcott notes: “So if someone asks me, as a Caribbean person: ‘Where is your history?’ I would say: ‘It is out there, in that cloud, that sky, the water moving.’ And, if the questioner says: ‘There’s nothing there,’ I would say: ‘Well, that’s what I think

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<sup>308</sup> Euripides, *Medea and Other Plays*, trans. by James Morwood (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 36.

<sup>309</sup> In Sandrine Bessora’s novel *Petroleum*, the character of Médée is compared to Mami Wata by Jason, who in the novel is a Gabonese cook on the oil ship: “- Je ne connais qu’un homme-poisson et c’est une sirène. Elle s’appelle Mamiwata. Son ventre est froid. Son regard se durcit et il ajoute d’un ton sec : - Elle te ressemble” in Sandrine Bessora, *Petroleum* (Denoël, 2004), p. 55.

<sup>310</sup> Nalo Hopkinson, *Falling in Love with Hominids* (Tachyon, 2015), p. 134, pp. 138-139, and p. 141.

<sup>311</sup> About the limitations of Caliban as a postcolonial figure see Jonathan Goldberg, *Tempest in the Caribbean* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 87 and pp. 94-95, and Shona N. Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 107-109.

history is. There's nothing there.' The sea is history".<sup>312</sup> Here Walcott provides a context for his famous poem "The Sea is History". The poem reconsiders that which is an 'appropriate' repository of history by its opposition to a Eurocentric perspective attached to inanimate ruins and archives:

Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?  
Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,  
in that grey vault. The sea. The sea  
has locked them up. The sea is History.<sup>313</sup>

The analysis that follows is divided into two sections, the first section of this chapter will consider rewritings of the Columbian narrative and the general genre of anthropological and travel writing by analysing comparatively Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1947) and *Une tempête* (1969), Sam Selvon's *Moses Ascending* (1975), Alejo Carpentier's novel *El arpa y la sombra* (1979), Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* (1980), Derek Walcott's *The Odyssey: A Play* (1993), Elizabeth Nunez's *Prospero's Daughter* (2006), Nalo Hopkinson's short story "Shift" (2011), and Patrick Chamoiseau's *L'empreinte à Crusoe* (2012). The presence of rebellious 'others' will begin to merge in this section and will crystallise in iterations of the Mami Wata figure, leading to the Chapter's second section.

In the second section, I will then investigate works that provide a pre- (and post-) history to the Columbian arrival and show how the distancing from western epistemologies and forms of literature and historiography permits a decolonial cultural productions in Eduardo Lalo's novel *Historia de Yuké* (2018).<sup>314</sup> This dissociation takes the form of an intellectual and material decolonisation in Patrick Chamoiseau's play *Manman dlo contre la fée Carabosse* (1982), in which the colonising Columbian figure of la fée Carabosse is defeated by the liberating Mami Wata character. I will investigate the decolonisation thus introduced through Mary Condé's *Moi, Tituba sorcière... Noire de Salem* (1986), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Cherríe Moraga's *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (2000), and Sandrine Bessora's *Petroleum* (2004).

All of these works fit coherently together and explore the themes of 'discovery', conquest and naming, as well as the rise of slavery and plantation economy. All include

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<sup>312</sup> Derek Walcott, "Derek Walcott: The Sea is History", in *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*, ed. by Frank Birbalsingh (Macmillan Caribbean, 1996), pp. 22–28, p. 25.

<sup>313</sup> Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems 1948-1984* (Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 364. Additionally, this poem also hints at the Atlantic Slave trade as discussed in Chapter Two above in relation to Sharpe's consideration of residence time.

<sup>314</sup> This pattern is continued in the investigation of the works studied in Chapter Four.

transatlantic travel within the extractiono(s)cene; in doing so, they raise the issue of maritime traffic and the relation to the sea, which needs to be understood as more than a stage on which these ‘scenes’ are played out. The sea and the ocean are de-objectified and de-territorialised in the corpus analysed here through their personification in the iterations of the Mami Wata character. Mercantilism and imperial ventures have reified the seas and oceans, made them a space for exploration, conquest, and exploitation, producing them as territories, in much the same way as land has been, in order to possess them and make them two dimensional stages of colonial and (neo-)imperial action. As Karen Bakker argues, “[i]n the standard approach, water is largely framed as a backdrop to politics: an inert resource, struggles over the control of which are often the source of (at times violent) human conflicts”.<sup>315</sup>

Playing on Walcott’s poem, and the conception of Mami Wata, I want to *wave* together motherhood and the sea, as the title of this chapter implies. The aim is to re-humanise the latter to combat its objectification and territorialisation as well as to use it as a channel for considering the objectification of bodies in colonial practices. The association between motherhood and the sea through reproduction is present in the works studied across the two sections and is connected to the Afro-Caribbean deity of Mami Wata. In Walcott’s *Omeros* for instance, as Tynan argues, the “phonetic translation” of the poem’s title (also Homer’s Greek’s name) is an “act of renaming [which] both restores Homer’s own cultural specificity as Greek, while simultaneously reinvesting him as a Caribbean poet”.<sup>316</sup> However, this critical act of renaming, which is also an act of giving a new meaning to the name through the phonetic translation points to the homophony of the French and the homonymity of the French Creole words for mother (“mère”/ “mer”) and the sea (“mer” / “mer”):

and *O* was the conch-shell’s invocation, *mer* was  
both mother and sea in our Antillean patois,  
*os*, a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes  
and spreads its sibilant collar on a lace shore.<sup>317</sup>

All elements of the term “Omeros” here refer to water semantically or phonetically, including *O* which phonetically represents the French and French creole word for water (“eau”). Similarly, in Patrick Chamoiseau’s *L’empreinte*, the Friday character who believes himself to be Robinson Crusoe because of his amnesia and isolation on the island, describes the sea as “la

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<sup>315</sup> Karen Bakker, “Water: Political, Biopolitical, Material”, *Social Studies of Science*, 42.4 (2012), 616–23, p. 617. This interest in water is also continued in Chapter Four below and continued to freshwater spaces such as rivers and their role in colonial travel and energy regulation.

<sup>316</sup> Tynan, p. 109.

<sup>317</sup> Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 14.

mère marâtre”.<sup>318</sup> This alliteration points to an imagery of cruel and bad step-mother from fairy tales in which the word *marâtre* is often used instead of the more common *belle-mère* in contemporary French. Additionally, the idea of ‘reproduction’ is connected to the sea through the “metaphor of the sea as a poetic site” as Valérie Bada notes with respect to Walcott’s *The Odyssey* – an observation which can be extended to all the texts studied here, all water-bound.<sup>319</sup> The associations between the sea and motherhood not only expand the land-women connection to the ocean, but also allude to the sea as a life-giving force through the link with reproduction, and also, a potentially life-taking force if one considers deaths at sea, whether by misfortune or act of volition. One thinks of the murders of or suicides (and infanticides) committed by abducted Africans during the Middle Passage, extending the parallel between Medea – the infanticide mother – and the sea as a life-taking force.<sup>320</sup> This weaving is perpetuated today in the exploitation of land, sea and women as objectified ‘spaces’ from which to extract natural resources. As Cherríe Moraga notes in relation to Chicanx women: “We do not control how we produce and reproduce, how we labor and love. And *how will our lands be free if our bodies aren’t?*”<sup>321</sup>

It is necessary for us to study here how this intertwining began in the western literary and historiographic canon if we wish to shed light on its extension all the way into the biopolitical present. This is a point made by Eduardo Lalo in several different interviews concerning his novel *Historia de Yuké*. Lalo explains that the Caribbean islands were a laboratory for the Spanish *conquistadores*, who knew exactly what to do once they set foot on the continent: “Pienso y lo he dicho en otros textos que el Caribe fue el laboratorio para la penetración de los españoles. Cuando Cortés llega a México ya sabe lo que tiene que hacer”.<sup>322</sup> One of the characters in his novel, a callous and violent coloniser, Capitán Frío, tortures and mutilates the taínos and enslaved African people. These practices, as Lalo explains, formed part of the ‘experiments’ undertaken in the Caribbean laboratory of colonisation:

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<sup>318</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *L’empreinte à Crusoe* (Gallimard, 2013), p. 117.

<sup>319</sup> Valérie Bada, “Derek Walcott’s *The Odyssey*: A Post-Colonial “Odd Assay” of the Epic Genre as Regenerative Source of “Latent Cross-Culturalities””, in *Crucible of Cultures: Anglophone Drama at the Dawn of a New Millennium*, ed. by Marc Maufort and Franca Bellarsi (Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 231–42, p. 234.

<sup>320</sup> For more on the ambivalence of the Mami Wata deity as both motherly and life-giving as well as life-taking see Drewal, Charles Gore, and Michelle Kisliuk, p. 302 and p. 305, Cooper, p. 47 and p. 50, Drewal, “Beauteous Beast”, pp. 77-78, and Martina Urioste-Buschman, “The Caribbean Allegory of Mami Wata: A Decolonial Reading of Gendered “Plantation Memories” within Contemporary Jamaican Fiction”, in *Essays: Exploring the Global Caribbean*, ed. by Susan Roberson (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 2–19, p. 3, p. 5 and pp. 14-15.

<sup>321</sup> Cherríe Moraga, *The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry* (South End Press, 1993), p. 173, emphasis in original.

<sup>322</sup> Mónica López Ocón, “Puerto Rico es una isla escrita”, 2018 <<https://www.tiempoar.com.ar/nota/puerto-rico-es-una-isla-escrita>> [accessed 5 January 2020].

Siempre digo que el Caribe fue el laboratorio de América. Cuando llegaron Cortés y Pizarro ya sabían lo que tenían que hacer. Estuvieron treinta años ensayando con las enfermedades, la intimidación. Esto que hace el Capitán Frío, que le corta la nariz y las orejas a alguien y lo deja en la playa es lo que hacían los conquistadores. Ni falta que hizo que te dijeran “¿quieres ser mi esclavo?”. Es el acto de violencia de entrada, para preparar el terreno.<sup>323</sup>

Lalo points to the violent use and abuse of the bodies of indigenous people as well as those abducted from the African continent and brought to work as and on ‘the colony’. He draws attention to the legacy of such practices in contemporary debate surrounding abortions in which nation states perpetuate colonial practices through their biopolitical power. Certain states’ denial of women’s reproductive rights perpetuates colonial biopower insofar as they deny women authority over their own bodies. I concur with Lalo who has spoken of this continuation of colonial power dynamics, as it echoes the enforced reproductive labour imposed onto enslaved women discussed throughout this chapter:

Yo creo que la conquista no termina nunca. Que claramente se cristaliza de generación en generación. Sobre el debate del aborto en la Argentina, decía que el aborto no es legal porque la Conquista ubicó a la mujer en un lugar en que no tienen derecho sobre su cuerpo. Eso es producto de la Conquista, eso es esclavitud, es la servidumbre. Es otro aspecto de una política sobre los cuerpos.<sup>324</sup>

The merging of the ‘rebellious cannibal savage’ figure and the Mami Wata character allows writers to make kin across the extractiono(s)cene, bridging the different types of proto-capitalist and neoliberal types of exploitation of ‘the colony’. Moreover, the focus on infanticide committed by iterations of the Mami Wata figure shows its merging with the ‘rebellious cannibal savage’ figure since it embodies an opposing choice as extreme as the violence of proto-capitalist cannibalism, discussed in Chapter One above. In other words, the horrors of slavery and colonisation here are emphasised by the ultimate choice of infanticide, which, despite being atrocious to the mothers committing it, is still not as cruel as having their children born into slavery and its brutal reality. Hence, infanticide is conceived as a way to rebel against the patriarchal and colonial reproductive labour system and as a way for mothers to keep their children safe by preserving them in an ‘other space’.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> March Mazzei, “Eduardo Lalo, el vengador del idioma castellano”, *AGlo: Anuario de Glotopolítica*, 2018 <<https://glotopolitica.com/2018/08/13/eduardo-lalo-el-vengador-del-idioma-castellano/>>.

<sup>324</sup> March Mazzei, “Eduardo Lalo, el vengador del idioma castellano”, *AGlo: Anuario de Glotopolítica*, 2018 <<https://glotopolitica.com/2018/08/13/eduardo-lalo-el-vengador-del-idioma-castellano/>>.

<sup>325</sup> I will define this ‘other space’ in more detail in the second section of this chapter.

## ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND TRAVEL WRITING AND THE COLUMBIAN FIGURE

In the first course to be served in this first section of my chapter, I shall be considering narratives that resist and deconstruct anthropological and travel writing and the Columbian narrative and figure. This will be done by considering the presentation of the Columbian figure as that of a liar and storyteller with the aim of reconceptualising the manner in which Columbus has been depicted throughout time as a hero and discoverer. By studying comparatively the iterations of the Columbian figure, we can see how it is put into question either through literary form and satire or through its opposition to iterations of the Mami Wata character. The texts studied in this section also satirise the form and content of the epic, anthropological and travel writing, drama and the emerging form of the novel. Especially the works that rewrite Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, including Sam Selvon's *Moses Ascending*, which I understand as a satire of armchair anthropology and fictional travel writing. These texts push both form and content *ad absurdum* to emphasise the problems present in the western tradition.

In Carpentier's *El arpa y la sombra* the Cuban author focuses notably on the canonisation and sanctification of the Genoese explorer by the Catholic Church. This is a triptych novel in which the central section is devoted to the confessions of Columbus on his deathbed. This section shows him for the ambitious and opportunistic man he was, thirsty for adventure, recognition and gold rather than the idealised discoverer and hero he has been depicted as being. Central to this are Columbus's lies in *El arpa y la sombra* – not least the seeds of mystification he plants through “chismes, rumores puestos a correr, cosas dichas como quien no dice nada, secreteos, discreteos, confidencias hechas bajos promesas y juramento de que no se repetirían a nadie, cartas leídas a medias”<sup>326</sup> – designed to convince powerful and wealthy patrons to finance his travels, on what he considers to be “his sea”: “mi mar [...]. Este océano que contemplaba desde las empinadas costas de Puerto Santo era de mi propiedad”.<sup>327</sup> There are also the lies that he is forced to tell his men and his financiers back in Spain throughout his travels. Indeed, Columbus decides to lie to his men during their first journey to prevent any disobedience or mutiny from any exasperated crew members who may be starting to realise that their captain has no idea where he is actually going:

me resolví a recurrir a la mentira, al embuste, *al perenne embuste en que habría de vivir* (y esto sí lo diré al franciscano confesor a quien ahora espero) desde el domingo

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<sup>326</sup> Carpentier, p. 95.

<sup>327</sup> Carpentier, p. 91.

9 de Septiembre en que acordé contar cada día menos leguas de las que andábamos porque si el viaje era luengo no se espantase ni se desmayase la gente.<sup>328</sup>

Here Columbus considers, in retrospect – since his confessions are narrated from his deathbed as he awaits his confessor – the fact that he has lived in a constant lie. This relates to the elaboration of the ‘historical’ Columbus as a heroic figure in western historiography. Indeed, Columbus notes “vamos a llamarlos *indios*, ya que estamos probablemente en los primeros contrafuertes naturales de unas Indias Occidentales”.<sup>329</sup> The geographical ignorance of the Spaniards leads them to misname ‘the colony’ and then to construct their colonial order on the basis of their misunderstanding. When Columbus seeks to describe his ‘discovery’ to his financier he purposely lies, realising that he has no knowledge of where he is:

En cuanto al paisaje, no he de romperme la cabeza: digo que las montañitas azules que se divisan a lo lejos son como las de Sicilia, aunque en nada se parecen a las de Sicilia. Digo que la hierba es tan grande como la de Andalucía en abril y mayo, aunque nada se parece, aquí, a nada andaluz. [...] Hablo de campos de Castilla, aquí donde nada, pero nada, recuerda los campos de Castilla. No he visto árboles de especias, y auguro que aquí debe haber especias. Hablo de *minas de oro* donde no sé de ninguna. Hablo de perlas, muchas perlas, tan sólo porque vi algunas almejas «que son señal de ellas». [...] Y lo peor de todo es que no tengo la menor idea de dónde estamos [...]. Y aseguro – me aseguro a mí mismo – que muy pronto le veré la cara al Gran Khan.<sup>330</sup>

Columbus is trying to convince both himself and the self-interested readers who have funded his travels that he has reached his intended destination and will be able to extract the resources he came to extract: gold, pearls and spices. In *El arpa*, Columbus is very aware that his ‘lies’ become stories based on Classical imagery that fed previous explorers he has read, such as Marco Polo:

Narré cómo había visto tres sirenas, un día 9 de enero, en lugar muy poblado de tortugas – sirenas feas, para decir la verdad, y con caras de hombres, no tan graciosas, musicales y retozonas como otras que yo hubiese contemplado de cerca, semejante a Ulises (¡tremendísima mentira!) en las costas de Malagueta.<sup>331</sup>

The presence of the mermaids in this quote permits us to make a connection not only to the Mami Wata character, but also to Odysseus. We might think of the cunning of the Homeric hero, which in Walcott’s *The Odyssey: A Play* is characterised as lying and associated to his madness, originating from his trauma of being lost at sea for so long after a decade of battling

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<sup>328</sup> Carpentier, p. 108, my emphasis.

<sup>329</sup> Carpentier, p. 125.

<sup>330</sup> Carpentier, pp. 130-131, emphasis in original.

<sup>331</sup> Carpentier, p. 151.

in Troy. In the section of Walcott's play that rewrites the Homeric episode in which Odysseus pleads for Nausicaa's help while shipwrecked on the Phaeacian shores, not revealing his identity and concealing who is really is, Walcott's Odysseus calls himself a liar:

NAUSICAA: You know his stories?

ODYSSEUS: That liar Odysseus?

SECOND COURTIER: Tell us his stories, stranger.<sup>332</sup>

Readers and audience are both aware of the dramatic irony here, knowing that it is Odysseus himself who is concealing his identity and ironically calling himself a liar while he is lying. The intentionality of the lie is emphasised, as it is when Carpentier's Columbus acknowledges his systematic deceit. However, Walcott's play also questions whether these inventions are also products of imagination or madness and not mere opportunistic lies, even though these are not mutually exclusive. By considering Odysseus's lies or madness, the play challenges the glorification of its Homeric counterpart, often praised as a hero despite his shortcomings, and therefore also subverts the epic genre, as Bada argues,

Walcott's adaptation of *The Odyssey* is grounded in a revisionary process of the epic genre whose acclaimed heroism and metaphorising compulsion lead to the disappearance of the historical subject into poetic abstraction. Walcott infiltrates into the interstices of the traditional Homeric epic a critique of the genre and is, at the metafictional level, engaged in the same conflict as Odysseus with the poet identified as the voice of "metaphor" (121). Walcott says[: "[...]one reason I do not like talking about an epic is that I think it is wrong to try to ennoble people [...] And first to write history is wrong. History makes similes of people, but these people are their own nouns[']"<sup>333</sup>

Doubt surrounding Odysseus's madness is sown in the episode rewriting Book XII of Homer's *Odyssey*. In Walcott's play, the stage directions inform the reader that "ODYSSEUS *curls up. On either side, Scylla and Charybdis. EURYCLEIA is rocking a cradle, she and BILLY BLUE sing in turn*".<sup>334</sup> These details challenge the existence of these mythical monsters Odysseus meets in his travels and suggest that they might be merely bogeymen created through imagination or madness:

EURYCLEIA (*Sings*)

Are all of these monsters a child's imagination?

(*The six heads approach ODYSSEUS*)

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<sup>332</sup> Derek Walcott, *The Odyssey: A Play* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1993), p. 54.

<sup>333</sup> Bada, p. 240.

<sup>334</sup> Walcott, *The Odyssey*, p. 106.

BILLY BLUE (*Sings*)

Or the madness of a mariner too long alone?

(*ODYSSEUS screams. They overturn the raft*)<sup>335</sup>

This “madness of a mariner too long alone” pertains to all the Odysseus, Prospero and Crusoe figures in the corpus studied here – and the Charybdis episode creates a link back to Jason and the Argonauts, the whirlpool is also present in Book IV of Apollonius of Rhodes’s version of the *Argonauts*. Moreover, these marine monsters can be interpreted as iterations of the Mami Wata characters. They are ‘exotic monsters’ made up by the travellers. In Hopkinson’s short story “Shift”, this link is reinforced when Ariel considers how Scylla and Charybdis are monstrous identities invented to define the ‘others’ such as Sycorax, Ariel’s and Caliban’s mother in this rewriting of *The Tempest*:

She tell me say I must call her Scylla, or Charybdis. Say it don’t make no matter which, for she could never remember one different from the other, but she know one of them is her real name. She say never mind the name most people know her by; is a name some Englishman give her by scraping a feather quill on paper<sup>336</sup>

Here, Sycorax points to the epistemological violence performed on to ‘the colony’ whose identity is erased by the identity imposed by the coloniser. In this quote, Sycorax could be referring to any Renaissance Englishman creating a new identity for ‘the colony’ to subdue it, “scraping a feather quill on paper” historically or fictionally. She could also be referring to Shakespeare himself, metatextually, challenging the power of the canonical author to *write* and create ‘the colony’, or this white man could also be Prospero, or all of the above at once. This reinforces the idea of the Columbian figure as a liar and/or storyteller, and the master of a unilateral narrative: “Of course, that white man, him only write down part of the story”.<sup>337</sup> Similarly, the ‘monsters’ invented to describe ‘the colony’ in travel writing and the canonical fiction challenged here can also be said to come from an imagination fed by classical sources and the potential madness of a lonely mariner like Crusoe or Prospero. The latter is not, in reality, alone, unless Prospero’s closing words about the play he stages for Miranda’s betrothal could be interpreted as more than a simple *teatrum mundi* reference, as words that apply to *The Tempest* itself:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:

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<sup>335</sup> Walcott, *The Odyssey*, p. 106.

<sup>336</sup> Hopkinson, p. 134.

<sup>337</sup> Hopkinson, p. 140.

And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
 The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
 Leave not a rack behind. *We are such stuff  
 As dreams are made on; and our little life  
 Is rounded with a sleep.*<sup>338</sup>

The final lines could imply that the whole plot of the play (*The Tempest*) could as easily have been imagined and dreamt by Prospero, just as Walcott's sleeping Odysseus imagines Scylla and Charybdis. Under this interpretation, he has imagined Sycorax, Ariel, Caliban, and the whole island in much the same way as the colonial literary archive articulates and creates 'the colony'. As Walcott's Odysseus says to Penelope in reference the "stranger things out there" and the "monsters" he has encountered: "We make them ourselves". These are the last words his character utters in the play.<sup>339</sup>

In the works I am exploring in this chapter, the 'monsters' of the colonial literary archive are all interpreted as having been conjured into existence as phantasmatic fictions by the 'explorers' and 'colonisers', who are themselves cast as iterations of the Columbian figure. Sometimes 'the colony' themselves internalise this imposition of 'otherness'. In Césaire's *Cahier*, during the exile in Paris of the speaker, he encounters a black man who makes him realise how he has become able to racialise other black men. In this episode, another black man is constructed as the pitiful 'other' mocked by two white women sitting behind the speaker:

Un soir dans un tramway en face de moi, un nègre.

C'était un nègre grand comme un pongo qui essayait de se faire tout petit sur un banc de tramway. Il essayait d'abandonner sur ce banc crasseux de tramway ses jambes gigantesques et ses mains tremblantes de boxeur affamé. [...] Son nez qui semblait une péninsule en dérade et sa négritude même qui se décolorait sous l'action inlassable mégie. [...]

C'était un nègre dégingandé sans rythme ni mesure. [...]

Un nègre sans pudeur et ses orteils ricanaient de façon assez puante au fond de la tanière entrebâillé de ses souliers.

La misère, on ne pouvait pas dire, s'était donné un mal fou pour l'achever. [...]

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<sup>338</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughn and Alden T. Vaughn (Bloomsbury, 1999), pp. 253-254, my emphasis.

<sup>339</sup> Walcott, *The Odyssey*, pp. 159-160.

Et l'ensemble faisait parfaitement un nègre hideux, un nègre grognon, un nègre mélancolique, un nègre affalé, [...]. Un nègre comique et laid et des femmes derrière moi ricanait en le regardant.

Il était COMIQUE ET LAID,  
COMIQUE ET LAID pour sûr.

J'arborai un grand sourire complice...<sup>340</sup>

This section has been understood by Sylvia Wynter as an adaption of the Cyclopic encounter, which she calls “*Encounter with the Cyclops on a Paris Tram*”:

It is in Césaire’s *Cahier* that the Cyclops figure appears as a loser Other to a new mode of the Odysseus victor, a loss now defined by the alterity accoutrements of both his Blackness and his poverty, and set in the powerful episode in the poet’s confrontation with a choice of options, a test of allegiance. Recounting it, he shows himself to have failed.<sup>341</sup>

It might seem that the speaker fails the test of allegiance that Wynter mentions here, notably because the description of the episode is framed in the *Cahier* by a reference to the speaker’s cowardice: “Il faut savoir jusqu’où je poussais la lâcheté” and “Ma lâcheté retrouvée !/ Je salue les trois siècles qui soutiennent mes droits civiques et mon sang minimisé. / Mon héroïsme, quelle farce !”<sup>342</sup> I argue that the “farce” of the speaker’s heroism, or rather the lack thereof, relates back to Odysseus’s contested heroism discussed above; as Justine McConnell notes, “[j]ust as Odysseus is compelled to learn from his mistake in taunting the Cyclops and revealing his true name to him, so too in *Cahier*, the narrator’s meeting with this Cyclopean figure forces him to reconsider his own behaviour”.<sup>343</sup> The accumulation of negative terms that are used in the lengthy description of the black man work on an ironic level to emphasise the absurd rhetoric of racism which prompts people like the women of the episode to mock the black man. This is the same rhetoric that creates and articulates the otherness of ‘the colony’ which is presented *reductio ad absurdum* in Césaire’s *Cahier* and *Une tempête*, and also in Chamoiseau’s *Manman dlo* as I show below.

The irony to which I have referred above is revealed by two other intertexts in the episode which are blended with the Homeric one. The first of these is Charles Baudelaire’s poem “L’Albatros” (ca. 1841); the second is Edmond Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897).

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<sup>340</sup> Césaire, *Cahier*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>341</sup> Sylvia Wynter, ““A Different Kind of Creature”: Caribbean Literature, The Cyclops Factor, and the Second Poetics of the Propter Nos”, in *Sisyphus and Eldorado: Magical and Other Realisms in Caribbean Literature*, ed. by Timothy J. Reiss (Africa World Press, 2002), pp. 143–67, p. 154.

<sup>342</sup> Césaire, *Cahier*, p. 40 and p. 41.

<sup>343</sup> Justine McConnell, *Black Odysseys: The Homeric Odyssey in the African Diaspora Since 1939* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 46.

The speaker stresses the adjectives “comique et laid”: he repeats these words three times and then capitalises them twice, placing them visually in chiasmic form on the script. The albatross in Baudelaire’s poem is similarly described by the speaker. Just as the black man in the tramway is mocked by the white women for his pitiful appearance, produced by the misery in which he lives (a direct consequence of the colonial and capitalist system instituted by white French people themselves), so too is the bird chided and taunted by the sailors, who make him trip and laugh at him:

Ce voyageur ailé, comme il est gauche et veule !  
 Lui, naguère si beau, qu’il est *comique et laid* !  
 L’un agace son bec avec un brûle-gueule,  
 L’autre mime, en boitant, l’infirme qui volait !

Le Poète est semblable au prince des nuées  
 Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l’archer  
 Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées,  
 Ses ailes de géant l’empêchent de marcher.<sup>344</sup>

The bird here is a metaphor for the figure of the secluded and doomed poet, embodied by the speaker in this poem. Just as the sailors in the poem mistreat the bird, so the women’s racist and condescending laughter ostracises the black man. The complicity of the speaker in this shows the racism to which he has himself been subjected whilst in Paris and which he has internalised. This marginalisation continues, in the *Cahier*, on his returns to his “native land”, a place he no longer recognises. The internalised racism can also be noted in the following line of the aforementioned passage: “Son nez qui semblait une péninsule en dérade et sa négritude même qui se décolorait sous l’action inlassable mégie”.<sup>345</sup>

In French culture, comparing a nose to a peninsula has become intertwined with Edmond Rostand’s very famous play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The eponymous protagonist of the play is a witty man perceived by all as ugly because of his oversized nose, for which he is often mocked. The character is known for his repartee and one of his most quoted soliloquies – appearing in the first act – comes after the Vicomte de Valvert weakly provokes him by mentioning that he has “un très grand nez”.<sup>346</sup> Cyrano answers this lamentable insult with a long tirade offering different ways and tones with which one could mock his nose:

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<sup>344</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal*, ed. by Jacques Dupont, 2nd edition (GF Flammarion, 2006), pp. 61-62, my emphasis.

<sup>345</sup> Césaire, *Cahier*, p. 40.

<sup>346</sup> Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, ed. by Jean-Yves Guérin (Honoré Champion éditeur, 2018), p. 63.

Ah ! Non ! C'est un peu court, jeune homme !  
 On pouvait dire... oh ! Dieu ! ... bien des choses en somme...  
 En variant le ton, — par exemple, tenez :  
 Agressif : « moi, monsieur, si j'avais un tel nez,  
 Il faudrait sur le champ que je me l'amputasse ! »  
 Amical : « mais il doit tremper dans votre tasse :  
 Pour boire, faites-vous fabriquer un hanap ! »  
 Descriptif : « c'est un roc ! ... c'est un pic... c'est un cap !  
 Que dis-je, c'est un cap ? ... *c'est une péninsule !* »<sup>347</sup>

The monologue continues with innumerable further examples. In Francophone popular culture this soliloquy is frequently cited and emphasis placed on the accumulation of the descriptive tone culminating in the hyperbolic description of the nose as a peninsula. Likewise, the speaker's hyperbolic and extreme descriptions in Césaire's *Cahier* can be seen as more poetic and powerful images than the racist and condescending women can muster as they simply laugh at the black man. Cyrano is proud of his nose: “apprenez / Que je m'enorgueillis d'un pareil appendice, / Attendu qu'un grand nez est proprement l'indice / D'un homme affable, bon, courtois, spirituel, / Libéral, courageux, tel que je suis”.<sup>348</sup> So too the speaker of the *Cahier* is proud of his blackness and so challenges the racism which has become internalised for him, as he now comes to realise: “Son nez qui semblait une péninsule en dérade et *sa négritude même qui se décolore* sous l'action inlassable mégie”.<sup>349</sup> Négritude here does not just stand for blackness but also refers to the cultural movement that Césaire founded, alongside other authors, and whose philosophy is present throughout his *Cahier*.<sup>350</sup> The black man whom the speaker encounters on the tram in Paris shows him how his own (the speaker's) Négritude has become bleached. How not only his blackness, but his socio-political engagement with the state of blackness, has been undermined by internalised racism, which is why his nose is not just a “péninsule” like Cyrano's, but “une péninsule en dérade”. In these terms, leaving the harbour, can be understood as leaving French culture. This is what the *Cahier* does in creating a new type of poetry and identity, aiming to make kin across the black Francophone world, to rewrite history, to create a new decolonial aesthetics and to dezombify ‘the colony’.

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<sup>347</sup> Rostand, p. 64, my emphasis.

<sup>348</sup> Rostand, p. 62.

<sup>349</sup> Césaire, *Cahier*, p. 40, my emphasis.

<sup>350</sup> See Mireille Rosello, “Introduction”, in *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, trans. by Mireille Rosello and Annie Pritchard (Bloodaxe Books, 1995), pp. 9–68, pp. 46–49.

Ironically, Césaire will become a strong proponent of the *départementalisation* of Martinique during his tenure as mayor of Fort-de-France. His hope, presumably, was that an annexation of the former colony to the metropole would unite all ‘French citizens’ and so create equality across races through equality of citizenship. However, Césaire’s disappointment in the results of *départementalisation* can be felt in his play *Une tempête* in which Caliban realises that Prospero has lied to him. Prospero, who embodies colonisation in this play, is called a cancer by Caliban, and colonialism therefore as a terminal illness from which the island suffers. *Départementalisation* is then figured as a neo-colonial and neo-imperial situation:

Prospero, tu es un grand illusionniste :  
le mensonge, ça te connaît.  
Et tu m’a tellement menti,  
menti sur le monde, menti sur moi-même,  
que tu as fini par m’imposer une image de moi-même :  
Un sous-développé, comme tu dis,  
un sous-capable.  
voilà comment tu m’as obligé à me voir,  
et cette image, je la hais ! Elle est fausse !  
Mais maintenant, je te connais, vieux cancer,  
Et je me connais aussi !<sup>351</sup>

Here Caliban shows that he is aware that Prospero has used his magic to deceive and manipulate everyone. A similar deceit is integral to colonial discourse in general, the *mission civilisatrice* that justifies the domination and exploitation of the ‘poor savages and cannibals’ of the Americas. Caliban also shows how these lies have fashioned his own identity, as one of the ‘monsters’ imagined and created by Walcott’s Odysseus in the play discussed above. Also, his comparison of Prospero and colonialism with cancer, recalls similar association in Césaire’s *Cahier*, as Mireille Rosello notes: the speaker “equates colonialism with a disease ruthlessly gnawing at his country, like a strange virus with no antidote. [...] Countless allusions to decay and diseases weave a tightly metaphorical network throughout the *Notebook*”.<sup>352</sup> Similar to this parasitic and cannibalistic “metaphorical network” of diseases, the lies told by the iterations of the Columbian figure fabricate an intertwined identity imposed onto ‘the colony’, which can only develop immunity to the diseases by identifying the liars and the lies.

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<sup>351</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Une tempête* (Éditions du Seuil, 1969), p. 88

<sup>352</sup> Rosello, pp. 61-62.

Elizabeth Nunez's novel *Prospero's Daughter* and Hopkinson's short story "Shift" take this idea further. In the novel, Prospero's deceit is supplemented by a certain amount of madness. Like Carpentier's *El arpa*, Nunez's novel is a triptych, in it an investigator John Mumsford ("The Englishman"), Carlos (Caliban), and Virginia (Miranda) are all given space to voice a part of the story that is unfolding, including its pre-history through flashbacks. The novel rewrites *The Tempest* by taking Dr. Gardner's (Prospero's) accusation that Carlos has raped Virginia as the central event motivating an enquiry by John Mumsford. The latter can be read as one of the noble Italian characters who have been shipwrecked in Shakespeare's play, especially since his point of view on the current situation of the isolated island of Chacachacare (off the coast of Trinidad) is informed by his being a white Englishman and an outsider. Carlos is 'zombified' by Gardner through the accusation of rape, though the accusation is false. In fact, it is Gardner himself who has been violating not only his daughter Virginia, but also the house servant Ariana (Ariel), as Virginia notes: "Weeks later, the inspector confessed to me that my father himself had planted doubts in his mind. I listened in shame as he told me that the very first day he met him, my father raised his suspicions with his indecent talk about virgin knots, spoilt meats, fire i' th' blood. [...] Suspicions of a sick mind that had transferred to Carlos his lascivious longings for a woman".<sup>353</sup> This echoes Aimé Césaire's *Une tempête* in which Caliban rebels against Prospero's accusations that he has raped his daughter and assigns the accusations to Prospero's own perverted imagination: "Violer ! Violer ! Dis-donc, vieux bouc, tu me prêtes tes idées libidineuses. Sache-le : Je n'ai que faire de ta fille".<sup>354</sup> In Nunez's novel, the idea that Prospero projects his own sexual desires and needs onto Caliban is supplemented by Gardner's 'loneliness', as Virginia recalls him talking about one of the times she was abused by her father: "The third time, he wanted my compassion. "I have no friends, no family, no one who looks like me. Only you. I get so lonely"". <sup>355</sup> It may be that Virginia is the only one who 'looks like' her father, but that does not stop him from also abusing Ariana.

In absurd consideration of Virginia's social status as opposed to her psychological and physical integrity and dignity, Prospero preserves his daughter's virginity when abusing her, hoping thereby to be able to arrange a good marriage for her. Reflecting on her father's violence, Virginia comes to realise how fragile the binaries manufactured by her father are:

Did Father fear that he would cease to exist, that he would no longer be who he deceived himself to be if Ariana was not who he defined her to be? Was it so essential

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<sup>353</sup> Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter* (Ballantine Books, 2006), p. 285.

<sup>354</sup> Césaire, *Une tempête*, p. 27.

<sup>355</sup> Nunez, p. 253.

to this deception that I, his English rose, remain untouched, her jewel safe in her dower?  
Was Father's construction of his worth so dependent on his construction of the lack of  
worth of people whose skin color was darker than his?<sup>356</sup>

The epistemological violence used to reinforce these binaries not only aims to maintain Gardner's superiority, but it also permits him to take over Carlos's home. Gardner's conceit and categorisation of identities permit him to arrange everyone around him in a specific hierarchy and thus maintain power over them. A power only possible if this categorisation of their and his identity remains stable and consistent, which is why he needs to enforce it through different type of physical and psychological violence.

Similarly, the Friday-turned-Crusoe character in Chamoiseau's novel shows how naming permits him to materialise, in a fit of madness caused by isolation, the non-existent 'other' he imagines being on the island with him: "pour le faire exister plus encore, je décidai de lui donner un nom".<sup>357</sup> All three of the works studied here which consider Crusoe as an iteration of the Columbian figure suggest, in different ways, that the Crusoe character essentially *creates* the Friday character in Defoe's novel. In Walcott's play *Pantomime*, for instance, in a discussion between Harry Trewe and Jackson Phillip, respectively the Crusoe and Friday characters, the persistence of these colonial dynamics is exposed:

Harry: Attempted suicide in a Third World country. You can't leave a note because the pencils break, you can't cut your wrist with the local blades...

Jackson: We trying we best, sir, since you all gone.

Harry: Doesn't matter if we're a minority group. Suicides are taxpayers, too, you know,

Jackson.

Jackson: Except it ain't going to be suicide. They go say I push you.<sup>358</sup>

Walcott's play dramatises the uneven relations that remain even after formal colonisation has ended. We see the patronising and condescending opinion that Harry – the Crusoe-Columbian figure embodying Britain on the island of Tobago where the play is set – holds about 'Third World' countries, which fails altogether to reckon with the role played by the imperial past and present in producing 'backwardness'. Jackson understands – all too well – that were Harry to commit suicide, he (Jackson) would be held responsible. In the play Harry wants to put up a pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe*, but when Jackson refuses to be "walking in front a set of tourists naked playing cannibal", Harry proposes inverting the roles.<sup>359</sup> After Jackson takes this

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<sup>356</sup> Nunez, p. 253.

<sup>357</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 176.

<sup>358</sup> Derek Walcott, *Remembrance and Pantomime: Two Plays* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980), p. 97.

<sup>359</sup> Walcott, *Pantomime*, p. 96.

switch seriously and plays the role of Crusoe, Harry asks him to stop and refuses to continue the pantomime he has been forcing onto Jackson. The latter thus responds:

Here am I getting into *my* part and you object. This is the story... this is history. This moment that we are now acting here is the history of imperialism; it's nothing less than that. And I don't think that I can – should – concede my getting into a part halfway and abandoning things, just because you, as my superior, give me orders. People become independent. Now I could go down to that beach myself and with this hat, and I could play Robinson Crusoe, I could play Columbus, I could play Sir Francis Drake, I could play anybody discovering anywhere, but I don't want you to tell me when and where to draw the line! (*Pause*) Or what to discover and when to discover it. All right?<sup>360</sup>

In this quote, Jackson points not only to the ridiculousness of the “discovery” discourse, but to the continuation of the Columbian figure in the character of Robinson Crusoe. Moreover, he also adverts to the limitations imposed on the former colonies once they become ‘independent’, both materially and culturally. The idea that that is not real independence is felt in Harry’s behaviour which still seeks to impose a way of doing things ‘the right way’. So, when Jackson rewrites the script for the pantomime proposing a different story line, Harry exclaims: “You people create nothing. You imitate everything. It’s all been done before, you see, Jackson. The parrot. Think that’s something? It’s from *The Seagull*. It’s from *Miss Julie*. You can’t ever be original, boy. That’s the trouble with shadows, right? They can’t think for themselves”.<sup>361</sup> We feel the lingering colonial patronisation evident in the address to Jackson as “boy”; meanwhile, his suggestion that Jackson is unable to be original is ironic, given that the script for the pantomime which he has co-authored is based on Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, itself already something of a cliché.<sup>362</sup> Jackson had earlier compared colonisation to the creation of shadows (hinting at the colonial ghosting and zombification that I discussed in Chapter Two above). Harry now takes this idea further: he states that, as shadows being a part of the body from which they emanate, two-dimensional imprints of the colonial psyche, colonial subjects cannot think for themselves. In the colonial imagination, the identity of ‘the colony’ is understood as having been shaped entirely and only by colonialism. Jackson, however, is speaking about something quite different, namely that colonial relationality has consequences even today, most notably in the context of immigration:

you smiled at me as a child does smile at his shadow’s helpless obedience[. ...] But after a while the child does get frighten of the shadow he make [...] until it is the

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<sup>360</sup> Walcott, *Pantomime*, p. 125, emphasis in original.

<sup>361</sup> Walcott, *Pantomime*, p. 156.

<sup>362</sup> Wacclott, *Pantomime*, pp. 98-99.

shadow that start dominating the child, it is the servant that start dominating the master ...(*Laughs maniacally, like The Shadow*) and that is the victory of the shadow, boss. (*Normally*) And that is why all them Pakistani ad West Indians in England, all them immigrants Fridays driving all you so crazy. And they go keep driving you crazy till you go mad. In that sun that never set, they's your shadow, you can't shake them off.<sup>363</sup>

The issue of immigration is considered in Sam Selvon's 'Moses Trilogy', and especially in the first instalment, the 1956 novel entitled *The Lonely Londoners*. In this novel, which shows the lives of different immigrants from the West Indies in the capital, the reader meets Moses for the first time. This character is present in all three novels of the trilogy. I am specifically interested in Selvon's *Moses Ascending*, a novel in which one can read direct references to *Robinson Crusoe*. Moses, as the title indicates, has now socially and economically ascended and is able to purchase a house and become a landlord, affording him the time and means to focus on his literary memoirs. His friend Sir Galahad criticises his work, telling him that he must engage more closely with the outside world to create something worth reading. He especially means to get Moses engaged with the Black Power movement whose headquarters are located in Moses's basement – a place he does not frequent from on high. However, as a good armchair anthropologist, Moses tells him: "Let me remind you that literary masterpieces have been written in garrets by candlelight, by men who shut themselves away from the distractions of the world".<sup>364</sup> I contend that this antiquated vision of anthropological and literary creation satirises the colonial literary archive and the forms in which 'otherness' has been constructed in it.

The relationship Moses establishes with two of his tenants particularly emphasises the satire of fictional autobiographical travel writing and its exoticising of 'otherness'. After Galahad's criticism of his memoirs, Moses searches for interesting facts about his life to document and realises that in "this selfsame house dwelt two Pakis who might provide the very impetus I so sorely needed to get back to my opus! Men of mystery and topicality, men in the news and views".<sup>365</sup> The intermixing of high register with made-up words and internalised racism, combined with the exaggeration of Moses's cognitive dissonance, draws attention to the racism and exoticising present in the colonial literary archive. Thus when Moses discovers

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<sup>363</sup> Walcott, *Pantomime*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>364</sup> Selvon, p. 56. For a definition of armchair anthropology, see Roger A. Berger, "From Text to (Field)Work and Back Again: Theorizing a Post(Modern)-Ethnography", *Anthropological Quarterly*, 66.4 (1993), 174–86, p. 174 and p. 184, Efram Sera-Shriar, "What is Armchair Anthropology? Observational Practices in 19th-Century British Human Sciences", *History of the Human Sciences*, 27.2 (2014), 26–40, and Matthew Engelke, *How to Think Like an Anthropologist* (Princeton University Press, 2018), p. 10, p. 57, and p. 252.

<sup>365</sup> Selvon, pp. 59-60.

that his tenant Faizull has been harbouring and taking care of a sheep in the house's backyard, he notes that:

I was adding two and two together rapidly in my mind and making five. The sight of Faizull minding sheep in my backyard was very intriguing. I feel as if I was on the track of something pertinent at last, because, just before, I did read in the newspapers about some Pakis in the Black Country slaughtering animals in their back gardens, and how the English people rise in arms against this barbaric custom.<sup>366</sup>

The use of the term “barbaric” in this quote engages with English people's perception of the custom and satirises colonial clichés being accompanied by Moses's amoral comedy.<sup>367</sup> This also draws attention to the novel's satirical approach which dismantles anthropological writing by aligning this genre with Moses's adoption of the West Indian trickster figure.<sup>368</sup> Faizull informs Moses that he plans to slaughter the sheep a few days later for a “religious feast-day”, so the latter asks to be able to observe this practice to document it in his memoirs: “I went back upstairs, full of eastern promise”.<sup>369</sup> Moses approaches the ceremony in a modernised ethnographic way: “I couldn't wait for Sunday to come, so I could observe the ceremony and take notes. I wish I did have a camera, to take out some photos, just to reinforce the chapter I was hoping to write”.<sup>370</sup>

In getting further involved with Faizull, Moses gets implicated in the illegal traffic of immigrants, which permits us to see a further parallel between him and Defoe's slave-trading Robinson Crusoe. As Chamoiseau points out in his novel's postface: “C'est triste : le Robinson de Defoe était un négrier”.<sup>371</sup> Just like Defoe's protagonist, Moses attempts to justify his choice to his reader: “But it must not be imagined that I accept this blood money without trepidation and qualms”.<sup>372</sup> Yet, when one “fantastic and incredible shipment of humanity” arrives, he is quick to resort to the language of commodification. Seeing a woman carrying a child, he observes: “when it have a babe-in-arms (that makes twelve and a half, my monetary instinct

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<sup>366</sup> Selvon, p. 65.

<sup>367</sup> See “Elements of the Mock-Heroic in West Indian Fiction: Samuel Selvon's *Moses Ascending* and Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*”, in *Re-Siting Queen's English: Text and Tradition in Post-Colonial Literatures*, ed. by Gillian Whitlock and Helen Tiffin (Rodopi, 1992), pp. 91–101 and Helen Tiffin, ““Under the Kiff-Kiff Laughter”: Stereotype and Subversion in *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*”, *Kunapipi*, 17.1 (1995), 130–39.

<sup>368</sup> For more on the trickster figure in Selvon's works see Michel Faber, “Moses and the Queen's English: Dialect and Narrative Voice in Samuel Selvon's London Novels”, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 21.2 (1982), 385–92; Nasta Sushuela, “Setting Up Home in a City of Words: Sam Selvon's London Novels”, *Kunapipi*, 17.1 (1995), 78–95; and Swift Dickinson, “Sam Selvon's “Harlequin Costume”: *Moses Ascending*, Masquerade, and the Bacchanal of Self-Creolization”, *MELUS*, 21.3 (1996), 69–106.

<sup>369</sup> Selvon, pp. 66–68.

<sup>370</sup> Selvon, p. 68.

<sup>371</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 284.

<sup>372</sup> Selvon, p. 93.

quickly calculate)".<sup>373</sup> These episodes, coupled with Moses's 'protestant ethics' of self-betterment and economic ascension (similarly embodied and advocated by Defoe's Crusoe as the *homo economicus* par excellence), reinforce the association between him and Crusoe, as does the studied emphasis on the 'truthfulness' of his memoir: "None of this narrative is fiction: if I lie I die".<sup>374</sup> Considering the satire and humour deployed in the novel and in pointing to the fictionality of Defoe's work, *Moses Ascending* destabilises proto-European myths of travel and expansion and dismantles the stereotypes of which this type of writing is full.

One stereotype that persists throughout the archives, with which these rewritings engage in different ways, is the hypersexualisation and exoticisation of 'the colony'. Moses's ascension echoes Defoe's description of Crusoe's achievement as the product of his hard work. However, because it is also related to his status as a black man faced with structural and systemic inequalities, his ascension is described as "years of slavery [...] in Brit'n".<sup>375</sup> The 'ascension' in the novel is literal as well as figurative: Moses rises from a basement room to the master bedroom "in the highest flat in the house".<sup>376</sup> As he rises, he internalises the racism to which he himself has been subjected: he decides that he will not let rooms to black people.<sup>377</sup> Just like the speaker of Césaire's *Cahier*, in relation to French culture, so too does Moses internalise mainstream British culture; when he gets his "man Friday, a white immigrant name Bob from somewhere in the Midlands," he teaches him "the ways of the Black man" on the one hand – "in no time at all he learn how to cook peas and rice and to make a beef stew" – and the official culture on the other: he wants to "teach him the Bible when I could make time".<sup>378</sup> When Moses realises, after a long time, that Bob cannot read, he takes it upon himself to teach him, and as Roydon Salick explains, "[n]ot surprisingly, the first sentence Bob learns is "Dan-is-the-man-in-the-van" (130), one of the many memorable rhyming sentences from the *West Indian Reader*, from which generations of West Indians learned to read".<sup>379</sup> The colonial education and intellectual oppression lurks in the background of Moses's ascension and newly acquired social status.

Unsurprisingly, however, he is prevented from rising to the level achieved by Defoe's Crusoe because of the inequalities deriving from colonial relationality and which continue,

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<sup>373</sup> Selvon, p. 95.

<sup>374</sup> Selvon, p. 106.

<sup>375</sup> Selvon, p. 4.

<sup>376</sup> Selvon, p. 4.

<sup>377</sup> Selvon, p. 3.

<sup>378</sup> Selvon, p. 6. See also Hari Kunzru, 'Introduction', in *Moses Ascending* (Penguin Books, 2007), pp. xiv-xv for more about the internalisation of British popular culture in the novel.

<sup>379</sup> Roydon Salick, *The Novels of Sam Selvon: A Critical Study* (Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 139.

even in the present, to plague society both structurally and systemically; Moses eventually returns to the basement from whence he first came. His fall suggests the impossibility that people from former colonies, whether living in the western metropolises or in formerly colonised space, will ever achieve equality. Moses realises that he can only return to his position upstairs through subterfuge:

One final word. It occurs to me that some black power militants might choose to misconstrue my Memoirs for their own purposes, and put the following moral to defame me, to wit: that after the ballad and the episode, it is the white man who ends up Upstairs and the black man who ends up Downstairs. But I have an epilogue up my sleeve. For old time's sake Robert still knocks one with Brenda on and off. What I plot to do is to go up top, and not only inform Jeannie of his infidelity, but arrange for the both of us to catch Master Robert in *flagrento delicto*, when I will fling down the gauntlet.<sup>380</sup>

“Man Friday” Bob from the Midlands has now become Master Robert, but not for long thanks to Moses's ‘infallible’ plan, which he hopes will provoke the former's downfall through a mirroring of the same sexual indiscretion that was the cause of his own demise: he too was caught in *flagrante delicto*, but sleeping with Jeannie, Bob's wife, rather than Brenda. The double use of the erroneous Latin idiom “in *flagrante delicto*”, frames both Moses's sexual indiscretion and his imagining of Bob's.<sup>381</sup> Inside this frame, a conversation between the two shows that even though Bob has now surpassed his master and become “Robert”, he can, like his master get linguistically confused:

‘How can you tell which is transitive when the pluperfect is irregular, and the past participle is superlative?’ ‘You stump me there, Robert,’ I admit[. ...] I merely shrug and say, ‘*Quien sabe?*’ ‘I'm doing French too,’ he says, ‘but I haven't come across that one. What with our entry into the Common Market, it will stand me in good stead’.<sup>382</sup>

These parallels between Bob and Moses, against the background of the latter's ascension and downfall, and echoed by their various linguistic mistakes, emphasise similarity rather than difference. This points to the perpetuation of racism and double standards discursively and materially imposed by inequalities produced by colonial relationality, since Bob is always more likely to thrive over Moses due only to the colour of his skin.

In Chamoiseau's novel, this is further emphasised in the overlap created by the fact that the Friday character shipwrecked on a desert island, and coming across a journal with Crusoe's

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<sup>380</sup> Selvon, pp. 184-185.

<sup>381</sup> See the two erroneous uses of the Latin idiom by Moses in Selvon, p. 176 and p. 185.

<sup>382</sup> Selvon p. 184.

name, believes himself to be Crusoe. The reader is given some subtle hints throughout the narration that he might not be Crusoe but does not discover until the end of the novel that he had, in fact, been a young Dogon boy working for Crusoe and who had been abandoned on the island after an accident aboard the ship. After the event, the head wound he had sustained affected his sanity, according to Crusoe's journal, which had made the young man realise that he wanted to free the abducted African peoples Crusoe was trading.<sup>383</sup> The novel chronicles the different stages of madness experienced by the narrator, isolated on the island; in these he encounters many 'others', all of which are imagined. He first expects to meet 'monstrous savages' after he sees a footprint in the sand:

ça ne pouvait pas être des gens civilisés ; il ne s'agissait pas d'une trace de botte ou de sabot ; de plus, aucun navire ne se trouvait à l'horizon ; [...] celui ou ceux qui avaient débarqué-là ne pouvaient être que des cannibales natifs de cette contrée ; j'étais incapable de me situer où se trouvait cette île, mais dans un fond de mon esprit se tenait l'évidence que des endroits aussi désespérants ne pouvaient être qu'infestés d'ogres, de goules, de démons et d'une longue clique de cannibales<sup>384</sup>

In this quote, the narrator appears as an iteration of the Columbian figure, not only in the assumption that civilised means dressed and on horseback, but also that the 'other' must necessarily be monstrous. Like Columbus, he does not actually know where he is, but assumes that faraway lands must be equated with monstrous alterity. Like Columbus and other travellers before him, his education is based on classical and medieval traditions:

les premières images de ma vie de reclus avaient été rapportées de la frégate ; [...il y avait] des bouts de parchemin sur lesquels des enluminures reproduisaient des paysages: *châteaux, champs de blé, églises, Vierge Marie, Christ, ponts, moulins, fleuves et rivières, troupeaux, dames et messieurs, cavaliers et bateaux, Lancelots et rois Arthur, métayers, cyclopes, harpies....*<sup>385</sup>

Interestingly, the narrator himself subverts the cannibal myth by destabilising what Peter Hulme calls the "cannibal scene": "the primal scene of 'cannibalism' as 'witnessed by Westerners is of its aftermath rather than its performance. At the centre of the scene is the large cooking pot, essential utensil for cannibal illustrations; and surrounding it is the 'evidence' of cannibalism; the discarded human bones".<sup>386</sup> In Chamoiseau's novel, human bones are replaced by cat bones that the narrator consumes: "les chassant pour les manger ; je faisais des

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<sup>383</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, pp. 263-274.

<sup>384</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 51.

<sup>385</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 133, emphasis in original.

<sup>386</sup> Peter Hulme, "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene", in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. by Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-38, p. 2.

flûtes avec leurs os ; j'accrochais leurs cranes au-dessus des semailles".<sup>387</sup> Given that cat bones should be easy to distinguish from human ones, here the text brings to the forefront the possibility that the cannibal scene has been imagined by the travellers.

As seen above in the English case, so too here French language and landscape are imposed on and force-fed to 'the colony'. The narrator attempts to domesticate the island, which is perpetually the 'other'. The island's 'wild nature' threatens to engulf the narrator and resists all his best efforts to 'civilise' it: "autour de moi les lianes rampantes avaient tout envahi, avalant mes pancartes, profanant mes traces et mes sentiers, escaladant mes haies et palissades".<sup>388</sup> The depiction of the island, "dans ce qu'elle avait toujours été – immense et inépuisable – et que j'avais cru avoir domestiqué ; je me sentais infime en face d'une telle profusion", foreshadows the images of consuming nature that I explore in Chapter Four below in my discussion of works that engage with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.<sup>389</sup>

The narrator's attempts to domesticate the island are accompanied by the sense of ownership that he feels over this space he creates and orders: it is his island – "mon île" – and his dominions – "mes domaines" – in which all must be brought to order: "le calme revint très vite dans la plupart de mes domaines ; un silence d'ordre et de discipline se réinstalla ; je me sentis quelque peu apaisé ; fort de cette remise en ordre, je me mis à inspecter mes domaines sur sept lieues à la ronde".<sup>390</sup> Gardner (Prospero) in Nunez's novel, another Columbian figure, likewise wishes to domesticate Chacachacare and, specifically, Carlos's (Caliban's) home, which he has taken over as his own house. Gardner views nature as 'the enemy', one he domesticates through science and reason: "He was suspicious of things unaltered. Nature to him was a traitor bringing disease to roses in bloom, blight to crops before harvest. Cancer to humans. Rain made floods. Drought dried grass and sucked moisture from fruit. But on his land the grass was green; flowers blossomed in the dry season".<sup>391</sup> He appropriates Carlos's home and re-orders it to his own alien standards: "None of the rooms followed any sort of logic that would be recognizable in an ordinary home. (This, too, Gardner would rectify)".<sup>392</sup> Colonial British culture imported enters into conflict with Carlos's father's indigenous knowledge and practice, which are harmonised with the space.<sup>393</sup> The same logic is evidenced

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<sup>387</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 92.

<sup>388</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 66.

<sup>389</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 108.

<sup>390</sup> Chamoiseau, *L'empreinte*, p. 67 and pp. 53-54.

<sup>391</sup> Nunez, p. 73.

<sup>392</sup> Nunez, p. 112.

<sup>393</sup> "My father wanted to remind us that the island where we lived belonged first to the flora and fauna we found here" in Nunez, p. 113.

in Gardner's treatment of people. Directly quoting Shakespeare's Prospero, he tells inspector Mumford that "they have such natures that nurture never stick": Carlos becomes "his experiment [...]". He would succeed where the alchemist had not. He would turn brass into gold".<sup>394</sup>

Gardner's homophonic surname emphasises his role as the manipulating cultivator of all the characters in the novel. This manipulation is both emotional and corporeal. However, here he does not succeed in imposing his lies as truth and in controlling the narrative: the novel begins with Ariana's (Ariel's) letter to inspector Mumford informing the latter of the Englishman's conceits.<sup>395</sup> Unlike Shakespeare's Prospero, Nunez's Gardner is not in control and the story is told in part through the narration of Virginia (Miranda) and Carlos. By allowing their version of the facts to be voiced, the novel reveals events that remained unshown in Shakespeare's play, such as Caliban's alleged rape attempt. In Nunez's novel, Virginia's narration reveals to the reader that Gardner's accusation of Carlos really is a projection of his own sexual desires and needs onto the young man:

"Bloody devil! Bastard! Lascivious slave! You think you fooled me? You think I didn't know who you were? Filth! Pervert!" [Gardner] stepped closer to Carlos. The inspector pushed him back. "Pervert!" he spat out again. I cringed. The inspector must have cringed, too. Ariana had told him what Father had done to her. But he did not know about me, what Father had done to me. He did not know how well my father knew which one of them was the pervert.<sup>396</sup>

Even as Gardner continues to lie about his actions, he exclaims that "[t]hey lie. Lying is in their nature" projecting his guilt onto Ariana and Carlos, even though at this point of the novel all the characters are aware that it is he who has been raping both his daughter and the indentured servant Ariana. The latter had been the daughter of Carlos's parent's helper and she becomes Gardner's servant under blackmail after her mother dies.<sup>397</sup> Carlos's parents' house was bequeathed to their son upon their deaths, but Gardner takes it over when he arrives on the island after having fled Britain when his unregulated and unauthorised testing on cancer patients is discovered (after one of his wealthier patient dies).<sup>398</sup> Gardner keeps this secret hidden as long as he can, lying not only to others, but also to himself in believing that he is a victim of envious people back home. In Nunez's novel, Gardner's deceit is emphasised when

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<sup>394</sup> Nunez, p. 42 and p. 156.

<sup>395</sup> Nunez, p. 3.

<sup>396</sup> Nunez, p. 299.

<sup>397</sup> Nunez, p. 300.

<sup>398</sup> Nunez, p. 70.

his daughter Virginia notes his use of emotional manipulation to perpetuate his lies: “The story he had told me was different from the one he told Carlos, though calculated also to gain my gratitude. My father wanted people to be beholden to him. He thrived on their gratitude. He did not lie about doing his bit for the Empire. He wanted me to know he had sacrificed his life for me”.<sup>399</sup>

Nalo Hopkinson similarly “*perform[s] a paradigm shift on The Tempest*”, (her own words) – hence the title of her short story – because she “never liked Prospero, with his entitled sense of ownership of everyone around him”.<sup>400</sup> However, Hopkinson’s short story does not present Miranda as a victim of Prospero, as Nunez’s novel had done. Rather Miranda’s racist hypersexualisation of Caliban is emphasised:

*Once, after the touch of other pale lips, you looked into the eyes of a golden girl, one Miranda, and saw yourself reflected back in her moist, breathless stare. In her eyes, you were tall, handsome, your shoulders powerful and your jaw square. You carried yourself with the arrogance of a prince. You held a spear in one hand. The spotted, tawny pelt of an animal that had never existed was knotted around your waist. You wore something’s teeth on a string around your neck and you spoke in grunts, imperious. [...] She had sighed and leapt upon you, kissing and biting, begging to be taken. You had let her have what she wanted. When her father stumbled upon the two of you writhing on the ground, she had leapt from her feet and changed you again; called you monster and attacker[...] and spoken the lies that had made you her father’s slave for an interminable length of years.*<sup>401</sup>

This hypersexualisation and exoticisation of ‘the colony’ is opposed to the relationship that Virginia and Carlos develop in Nunez’s novel, which grows into familial kinship when, at the end of the novel, the former is pregnant with his child: “The baby kicks in my womb and turns. I move my hand instinctively to the place where my belly rolls: a gentle, undulating wave. Carlos covers my hand with his”.<sup>402</sup> The concluding lines of Nunez’s novel show not only the possibility of remaking kin by mending what colonial relationality has dissolved, but also remind us of the relation between water and motherhood when Virginia’s stomach moves in wave-like rolls. (Re-)Making kin remains a principle element present in iterations of the Mami Wata character, embodied in Nunez’s novel by Carlos’s mother. The unnamed woman in the novel can be associated with Sycorax, because she grew up in Algiers, and to Mami Wata,

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<sup>399</sup> Nunez, p. 244.

<sup>400</sup> Hopkinson, p. 132, emphasis in original.

<sup>401</sup> Hopkinson, p. 137, emphasis in original.

<sup>402</sup> Nunez, p. 313.

because of affinity with water and being a “champion swimmer”.<sup>403</sup> Additionally, she meets Carlos’s father when, on a dare, she jumps in the ocean from a cruise ship and he saves her as she struggles to swim because the violent dive broke her rib.<sup>404</sup> The kinship she establishes with Carlos’s father challenges different colonial histories, including the one of Algeria’s since in the novel she is a British white woman who has grown up in Algiers, hence a *pidé noir*, though her family does not return to Europe after the country’s liberation. Despite the fact that Gardner has attempted to destroy the community created by Carlos’s parents, the union between Virginia and him at the end of the novel re-establishes new kinships across the extractiono(s)cene.

### **M/OTHER EARTH: EXTRACTIVISM AND THE REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR OF MANY MEDEAS**

Making kin is also a main element in other novels studied here, such as Eduardo Lalo’s novel *Historia de Yuké*, in which Puerto Rico’s pre-history before the arrival of the Spaniards is re-imagined. In the novel, an abducted and enslaved African character, Olufunke becomes part of one of the last taíno tribes left on the island. As Lalo notes in an interview, only Eurocentric understandings of the conquest have been recorded. He also notes that science fiction scenarios of alien invasion and abduction are likely to represent ‘the colony’’s silenced version of the conquest:

Tenemos una visión europea de la Conquista, sobre todo a partir de los cronistas de Indias. A los originarios de Boriquén, que era el nombre indígena de Puerto Rico, los caribes, el término *español* le era totalmente incomprendible. Lo mismo sucede con el yoruba que era raptado tierra adentro del continente africano, llevado a la costa y metido en la bodega de un barco en condiciones espeluznantes hasta llegar al Caribe. Ninguno de los dos sabía qué pasaba. Lo que vivieron fue como una película de ciencia ficción con extraterrestres. Esas poblaciones, incomunicadas, tuvieron que hacer una serie de transacciones y una de las primeras fue la lengua. Se dice que el español se enriquece con palabras indígenas, pero eso no da cuenta del proceso que tuvo lugar porque la historia está vista desde el lado de los conquistadores.<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Nunez, p. 119.

<sup>404</sup> Nunez, p. 119.

<sup>405</sup> Mónica López Ocón, “Puerto Rico es una isla escrita”, 2018 <<https://www.tiempoar.com.ar/nota/puerto-rico-es-una-isla-escrita>> [accessed 5 January 2020].

Lalo's novel and Chamoiseau's play *Manman dlo contre la fée Carabosse* both offer polyphonic versions of the conquest in their attempts to give voice to the silenced 'colony'. Their works also illustrate the collaboration between Africans and Amerindians mentioned in Lalo's quote above. This collaboration is signified in Chamoiseau's play by the alliance of the indigenous-animal characters with the Afro-Caribbean goddess Mami Wata. By considering the different iterations of the Mami Wata figure that follow the Medean storyline in this section and by identifying infanticide as an act of resistance against colonial and neo-imperial exploitation, these works focus on the different power dynamics that function to dissolve kinship across the extractiono(s)cene, ghosting 'the colony' from the historical archive and zombifying them as monstrous women and witches.

At the beginning of Chamoiseau's play, Mami Wata and her daughter Algoline live separately from the rest of the characters and she's feared by them because she allegedly eats children who do not behave.<sup>406</sup> The play, a *théâtre conté* for children, aims to provide a new version of the history of colonisation and slavery in Martinique to a younger audience. As the *conteur* laments, this audience will generally know la fée Carabosse better than Manman dlo not only because French colonial projects aimed to assimilate 'the colony', but also because of modern-day departmentalised education which informs children throughout the French overseas departments as to their "ancêtres les gaulois".<sup>407</sup>

Qui ne connaît pas Manman dlo?

Bien sûr, Manman dlo est là

là quelque part dans votre tête

quelque part dans le bout d'hibiscus qui vous sert

de cœur [...]

Aaa Manman dlo est bien là !

Mais avant bien avant

dans tout votre corps vivant

il y a la Fée Carabosse

Tikidam dam vous la connaissez mieux celle-là !<sup>408</sup>

The play proposes to decolonise Martinican culture, including children's literature. Both Chamoiseau's play and Lalo's novel are influenced by and pertain to the realm of orality, pointing to the non-recorded nature of the indigenous and African versions of history as well

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<sup>406</sup> This element is also crucial when it comes to my analysis of Moraga's play below and of the folklore myth of la Llorona, a female bogeyman for disobedient children in the Spanish speaking communities in the United States and Mexico in particular.

<sup>407</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Nègre je suis, nègre je resterai : Entretiens avec Françoise Vergès* (Albin Michel, 2005), p. 51.

<sup>408</sup> Patrick Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo contre la fée Carabosse* (Éditions Caribéennes, 1982), p. 7.

as to the lack of records concerning their complex cultures and traditions, often merged and conflated during the conquest and colonisation. Both works use tropes and forms from children's literature, which provides a space to satirise the absurdity and violence of the conquest and to challenge the received western canonical form of history and literature. Lalo's novel lays stress on the dezombification of 'the colony' and the kin making involved between marginalised groups, especially in opposition to the main Columbian figure in the novel: Capitán Frío. Chamoiseau's play, meanwhile, satirises colonialism and imperialism to reveal the absurdity of these enterprises.

Lalo's novel is divided into two parts, the first one set during the immemorial time before the arrival of the Spaniards in the Caribbean and the second during the exploitation of the Caribbean and the beginning of the Atlantic Trade. Throughout the novel, 'the colony' is dezombified through the personification of nature in major characters, which challenges the perception of extra-human nature as inert. The pre-history recounted in the first part sets out an alternative foundational myth of Puerto Rico, serving to rewrite history by providing a missing account of the island, specifically of the Yunque mountain called in the novel by its taíno name: Yuké. Lalo's primary goal is to challenge the general misconception surrounding the Amerindian holocaust, as he explains in an interview:

La idea del exterminio es muy conveniente para los europeos porque de esa forma supuestamente se borra muy rápido la memoria de un pueblo. [...] En la escuela se enseña que los taínos desaparecieron antes de la mitad del siglo XVI. Pero la lengua precolombina que más palabras le ha dado a las lenguas del mundo es el taíno. Por lo tanto, es un engaño histórico pensar que esa cultura desapareció prontamente y de manera definitiva. Las culturas del Caribe están llenas de influencias taínas y caribes, lo que pasa es que no se lo ha querido ver.<sup>409</sup>

By recovering indigenous histories and ontologies, *Historia* resists the ghosting effected by the colonisers. In the novel, what is called "el Tiempo del Olvido" represents the period of colonisation and slavery.<sup>410</sup> The second part of the novel moves from a description of harmonious life on the island in the pre-conquest period to the violence brought about through contact: 'the colony' is brutalised in many ways by the Spaniards, recalling the initial 'rape' representing the first encounter, which will be discussed again below. The character of Capitán

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<sup>409</sup> Mónica López Ocón, "Puerto Rico es una isla escrita", 2018 <<https://www.tiempoar.com.ar/nota/puerto-rico-es-una-isla-escrita>> [accessed 5 January 2020].

<sup>410</sup> The beginning of this period is announced by a character who is called the "root of life" ("la raíz de la vida"), an anthropomorphised black shrimp. His connection to fresh- and saltwater in the novel emphasises the association between water and life, see Eduardo Lalo, *Historia de Yuké* (Corregidor, 2018), p. 21 and p. 54.

Frío embodies this violence. After years on the island, he becomes accustomed to announcing his presence by mutilating indigenous people: “Ahora acostumbraba anunciar su presencia con un cañonazo y dejaba en la playa a un indio al que había cortado la nariz o las orejas. [...] Para el mendigo y el bandolero que había sido, las Indias eran un paraíso. Todo se podía tomar o arrebatar y no había deseo que no pudiera cumplirse si se llevaba el látigo y la espada”.<sup>411</sup> Frío uses the excuse that he has endured a destitute upbringing as a beggar to justify his exploitation and abuse of ‘the colony’.

The embodiment of colonial relationality, Capitán Frío dissolves all forms of human bonding and kinship: hence his opposition to the collaboration and community established between Olofunke and the taínos.<sup>412</sup> As a young man, Frío kills another young man to take his place on the boat to the ‘new world’, assuming the identity of his victim and also lying to achieve his goals – just as the previous iterations of the Columbian figure mentioned above had done. This sets the tone for all the killings he will commit in the Caribbean: “Frío estuvo dispuesto a matar para conseguirlo, y esta inclinación a la audacia le abriría camino más allá del océano”.<sup>413</sup> The cheapening of human and extra human lives is absolute in Frío’s mind. He does not see the murders he commits as a problem – not even in terms of the loss of workers. Rather, he will profit from it being involved in the Atlantic trade: “Frío no consideraba un desperdicio la eliminación de hombres aptos para el trabajo. Para eso se traerían más esclavos a la colonia y de su comercio, además, obtendría beneficios”.<sup>414</sup> No lives but his have any value to him and he eventually reaches his goal of becoming a lord once the land is “emptied” of indigenous people: “La tierra vaciada de indios podía entregarse a quien el gobernador dispusiera, y Frío se había convertido en el señor de una llanura fértil y extensa”.<sup>415</sup>

The goal of emptying the island of its indigenous people in order to take full ownership and possession of ‘the colony’ can also be seen in la fée Carabosse’s colonisation of Martinique in Chamoiseau’s play. The witch stumbles onto an island as she is travelling, comically portraying Columbus’s accidental arrival to the Caribbean.<sup>416</sup> She is accompanied by her broom, an anthropomorphised character who is her servant, called “Balai” (“Broom”). Soon after landing, Carabosse effectively takes possession of the island: “Regardez cette richesse / Eh bien tenez-vous bien / tout cela est à nous !”<sup>417</sup> This surprises her companion Balai, who

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<sup>411</sup> Lalo, *Historia*, p. 127.

<sup>412</sup> Lalo, *Historia*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>413</sup> Lalo, *Historia*, p. 119.

<sup>414</sup> Lalo, *Historia*, p. 141.

<sup>415</sup> Lalo, *Historia*, p. 137.

<sup>416</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 9.

<sup>417</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 11.

accuses her of theft, so she rationalises her legitimate right to take ownership of the island by redefining theft and establishing herself as law-maker:

CARABOSSE

C'est comme cela ! Que voulez-vous que je vous dise !

C'est dans la forme de mon esprit

Je pars de chez moi

Je débarque autre part

et tout ce qui est devant moi

est à moi [...]

BALAI

c'est du triste nom de vol que je qualifierais cela

CARABOSSE

Qué vol ?!

Il n'y a pas de vol sans définition légale

Et les lois c'est nous qui les établissons !

D'ailleurs pour calmer vos émois, je vais en promulguer

une tout de suite Balai... notez ... [...]

Nouvelle définition du vol, adaptée à la terre découverte

par Mademoiselle de Carabosse, des sapins et des neiges, diplômée

de la sorcellerie gréco-latine...<sup>418</sup>

Her legal authority here is granted by and to herself as she considers herself having “discovered” this new land. The play comically portrays the conquest and colonisation and its mechanisms as equivalent to theft. And in redefining theft she establishes that “c'est bien aux représentants de la brillante culture-/ sorcière gréco-latine que revient le fardeau de régenter / ce monde” echoing the French *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>419</sup> The emphasis on “Graeco-roman witchcraft” and culture in the play satirises Eurocentric cultural hegemony that accompanied the material oppression of people during colonisation and imperialism. This also questions the establishment of Europe as ‘the cradle of the world’ by considering, side by side, Antiquity and witchcraft. This association appears oxymoronic in levelling the dark ages of Medieval witch-hunts and proto-European violence with ancient cultures, which, today, continue to play a crucial role in European identity construction. Carabosse even goes so far as to legally

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<sup>418</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>419</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 17.

redefine humanity in her first moments on the island, to ensure full control of the new resources that she plans on exploiting:<sup>420</sup>

BALAI :

je relis :

« Nouvelle définition de l’humanité d’une sorcière,  
adaptée à la terre découverte par Mademoiselle de Carabosse,  
des sapins et des neiges, diplômée de toute la sorcellerie  
gréco-latine : l’on peut considérer qu’une sorcière est humaine  
quand elle possède en tous points les caractéristiques  
suivantes :

les beaux cheveux rouges de Mademoiselle de Carabosse

la même façon de tripler les « R » et le même langage que Mademoiselle de Carabosse

les mêmes cultes et règles de sorcellerie pratiqué par Mademoiselle de Carabosse en  
vertu de la plus sublime des cultures-sorcières, la gréco-latine

la même robe que Mademoiselle Carabosse. »

CARABOSSE :

Biiien

Ajoutez s’il vous plaît : le même nez, les mêmes yeux,  
et le même fond de teint que Mademoiselle de Carabosse...

N’oubliez pas mon DE je vous prie...<sup>421</sup>

Legally defining humanity as she pleases through a classification that can only include herself, Carabosse guarantees herself absolute ownership over the island. In this quote, the play points to the fact that the violent dispossession and oppression of the colonial enterprise is based on absurd racial binaries imposed through epistemological violence. Here the way the letter “R” is pronounced, as a sign of ‘humanity’, echoes Frantz Fanon’s discussion of linguistic discrimination described in his *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952).<sup>422</sup> Hence, the play’s objective is to dezombify ‘the colony’, both by educating younger audiences on their history of colonisation and slavery, something generally eclipsed in the French education imposed in departmentalised Martinique, and by teaching them about creole and Afro-Caribbean culture. The character of Papa-Zombi, specifically, without whom Manman dlo could not defy Carabosse, embodies resistance:

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<sup>420</sup> “CARABOSSE : Nous / augmenterons notre lots d’esclaves / de toutes les créatures / qui nous tomberont sous la patte [...] Nous / décimerons ces herbes / pour leur arracher / le secret fabuleux / des sept combinaisons” and “CARABOSSE: Nous / emprisonnerons cette Nature / entière / toute entière / dans une formule mathématique” in Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 101 and p. 103.

<sup>421</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>422</sup> See Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Seuil, 2015), p. 16.

PAPA-ZOMBI:

Sur toi aussi Manman dlo  
Aaa tu dois être  
une de ces personnes  
qui se souviennent encore que je fais du bien  
Mon nom  
Zombi  
chez les hommes d'ici  
est devenu synonyme de méchanceté et d'effroi  
Ils croient que la Merveille  
est comme la vie de plantations :  
néfaste et cruelle !

MANMAN DLO:

Comme ils ont tort !  
Je m'en souviens ho !  
J'étais enfant comme Algoline à cette époque  
ho ! Papa-Zombi  
vous aidiez de mille manières tous les Nègres marrons [...]  
C'est pourquoi  
Békés et Missionnaires vous ont dénigré :  
vous permettiez une résistance  
Je m'en souviens...<sup>423</sup>

In this dialogue, Manman dlo and Papa-Zombi discuss the demonisation of the latter which began during slavery and was undertaken specifically by plantation owners and missionaries, referring back to the discussion of the zombie in Chapter Two above. The play recovers Papa-Zombi's capacity for resistance. This dezombification of 'the colony' highlights the mechanisms of violent oppression and dispossession obscured during the period of colonialism and slavery. In Chamoiseau's play, this period is called "la Grande Nuit", echoing Lalo's novel's naming of the same period as "el Tiempo del Olvido", mentioned above.<sup>424</sup> Both the idea of 'forgetting' and of 'night', in the Puerto Rican novel and the Martinican play, respectively, hint at the work of erasure that colonisation and slavery undertake. Finally, Manman dlo manages to re-establish the bonds dissolved by Carabosse's colonial relationality by defeating her in a magic contest. Once she has defeated Carabosse, all of the islanders who

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<sup>423</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>424</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 104 and Lalo, *Historia*, p. 54.

had been magically frozen by Carabosse come back to life. Manman dlo appears to be immune to Carabosse's magic because of her fluid nature, subverting western binaries on which the witch's magic is based and from which it takes power:

MANMAN DLO:

Vieille femme

Ne te fatigue pas

Je suis hors d'atteinte de ton pouvoir

Je suis une grande communion naturelle

mon sang est de sève verte

je suis un peu arbre

mes cheveu sont d'algues

et mon corps est d'eau claire

je suis un peu fleuve

ma voix est de pluie forte

et mon cœur c'est la Terre

ahaaha comment peux-tu atteindre cela ?

CARABOSSE (*impuissante*) :

Mais c'est impossible<sup>425</sup>

The action ends shortly after Manman dlo defeats Carabosse and frees the island. The *conteur* ends the narration by letting the audience know that since then "Manman dlo ne mange plus les petits enfants / désobéissants".<sup>426</sup> In this comment we are reminded once more of Mami Wata's ambiguous nature.

The Mami Wata character in Chamoiseau's play is similar to that of la Llorona in Cherríe Moraga's play insofar as they are both bogeyman figures used in folk stories to make children behave.<sup>427</sup> This is shown in *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*, when Chac-Mool and Mama Sal discuss the myth of la Llorona:

MAMA SAL: She got such a lonesome llanto. Es el llanto de La Llorona.

CHAC-MOOL: La Llorona never scared me.

MAMA SAL: No? Not even when you was a little esquincle?

CHAC-MOOL: No I felt sorry for her, not scared.

MAMA SAL: Pues a mí, me asustaba mucho ella.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 136.

<sup>426</sup> Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 140.

<sup>427</sup> See also Chamoiseau, *Manman dlo*, p. 140 for Manman dlo as a bogeyman figure.

<sup>428</sup> Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, pp. 37-38.

Here, Chac-Mool's pity for la Llorona foreshadows his role in making kin across gender divisions. In considering Euripides's *Medea*, Cherríe Moraga argues that "at last, upon encountering this myth [...] my jornada began to make sense. This is the original Llorona y tiene mucha hambre. [...] *She is the story that has never been told truly*, the story of that hungry Mexican woman who is called puta/bruja/jota/loca because she refuses to forget that her half-life is not a natural-born fact".<sup>429</sup> In her play, Moraga merges Medea with other Mexican and Chicano figures, including la Llorona and la Malinche, which inform images of woman- and mother-hood in Mexican and Chicano cultures. Writing three decades before Moraga, in *Los Argonautas* (1964), Sergio Magaña had also linked the myth of Medea with la Malinche's mythified history, comparing the Spanish conquest of Mexico with the Greek myth and drama and establishing a previous genealogy between Jason/Cortés and Medea/Malinche.<sup>430</sup>

La Malinche plays a crucial role in Mexican, and by extension Chicano, culture. Octavio Paz's essay, "Los hijos de la Malinche", crucially defines Mexican identity as intertwined with la Malinche and the feature of rape as the first encounter between colonisers and colonised, discussed at the beginning of this chapter: "La Chingada es una de las representaciones mexicanas de la Maternidad, como la Llorona o la "sufrida madre mexicana" que festejamos el diez de mayo. La Chingada es la madre que ha sufrido metafórica o realmente".<sup>431</sup> Paz further explores the different meanings of the verb *chingar*, whence the nickname of la Malinche comes: 'the violated woman'. He considers that "[l]o chingado es lo pasivo, lo inerte y abierto, por oposición a lo que chinga, que es activo, agresivo y cerrado. El chingón es el macho, el que abre. La chingada, la hembra, la pasividad pura".<sup>432</sup> He adds that this act of violation, embodied in the figure of la Malinche, serves as the best metaphor for colonisation:

Si la Chingada es una representación de la Madre violada, no me parece forzado asociarla a la Conquista, que fue también una violación, no solamente en el sentido histórico, sino en la carne misma de las indias. El símbolo de la entrega es la Malinche, la amante de Cortés. Es verdad que ella se da voluntariamente al conquistador, pero éste, apenas deja de serle útil, la olvida. [...] Y del mismo modo que el niño no perdona

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<sup>429</sup> Quoted in Paula Straile-Costa, "Myth and Ritual in *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*: Cherríe Moraga's Xicana-Indígena Interpretation of Euripides' *Medea*", in *Unbinding Medea: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Classical Myth from Antiquity to the 21st Century*, ed. by Heike Bartel and Anne Simon (Legenda, 2010), pp. 209–23, p. 216, my emphasis.

<sup>430</sup> See Sergio Magaña, *Los Argonautas o Cortés y La Malinche* (Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1967).

<sup>431</sup> Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad. Postdata. Vuelta a el laberinto de la soledad*. (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996), p. 83.

<sup>432</sup> Paz, p. 85.

a su madre que lo abandone para ir en busca a su padre, el pueblo mexicano no perdona su traición a la Malinche.<sup>433</sup>

Throughout these reflections, Paz draws attention to the binary gender roles imposed in the course of the conquest, which are supplemented by the dichotomy opposing Spaniards and indigenous peoples. But a contradiction is evident in the last quote: if la Malinche gives herself willingly to the conquistador, then how can she represent the violated woman? Malintzin Tenepal did really exist though her story has been written by different groups of people during and after the conquest, making her a symbol of womanhood and indigeneity. In both cases she represents the ‘bad woman’ and the ‘traitor of her people’ in Mexican and Chicano culture. This shows that the colonial writing of her identity becomes supplemented by *machista* patriarchal discourse in Mexican and Chicano culture. Moraga’s play aims to dezombify this understanding of womanhood and indigeneity, which creates marginalisation and oppression among Mexican and Chicano people across the gender and sexual dichotomies that this fiercely patriarchal culture has established. Moraga sees this as the issue and pitfall of the 1960s Chicano Civil Rights Movement, *El Movimiento*, which rallied around and demonstrated for Mexican American empowerment whilst simultaneously marginalising Chicano women and non-heteronormative people:

At times, they took the worst of Mexican machismo and Aztec warrior bravado, combined it with some of the most oppressive male-conceived idealizations of “traditional” Mexican womanhood and called that cultural integrity. They subscribed to a machista view of women, based on centuries-old virgin-whore paradigm of la Virgen de Guadalupe and Malintzin Tenepal. Guadalupe represented the Mexican ideal of “la madre sufrida,” the long-suffering desexualised Indian mother, and Malinche was “la chingada”, sexually stigmatized by her transgression of “sleeping with the enemy,” Hernán Cortez. Deemed a traitor by Mexican tradition, the figure of Malinche was invoked to keep Movimiento women silent, sexually passive, and “Indian” in the colonial sense of the word.<sup>434</sup>

Moraga challenges not only Greek drama, but also pre-Columbian myths and Mexican and Chicano tales and legends, that have informed Mexican and Chicano *machista* views of womanhood for centuries. This culture feeds heavily on the Aztec warrior ethos to construct patriarchal Mexican masculinity and it is further reinforced in the recuperation of this mythology against the Spanish conquest. In other words, by excavating indigenous knowledges

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<sup>433</sup> Paz, p. 94.

<sup>434</sup> Moraga, *The Last Generation*, pp. 156-157.

in this instance, Mexican and Chicano cultures have problematically marginalised groups existing within their own broader group. For this reason, Moraga aims to give new meanings to this mythology to integrate women and queer people into Mexican and Chicano cultures. For this purpose, she focuses on the Mesoamerican creation myth of the Hungry Woman, and the death of the moon goddess Coyolxauhqui at the hand of her brother the god of war Huitzilopotchi. Their mother Coatlicue, the goddess of creation and destruction, is complicit in this murder, by choosing to let her son kill her daughter. Here, Moraga also hints at the participation of Mexican and Chicana women in the patriarchal discourse. By engaging with these wide-ranging mythologies that encompass both western and Amerindian past, Moraga aims to inscribe different marginalised people into their discriminatory pantheons:

“The official story was a lie... Who would kill their kid over some man dumping them? It wasn't a strong enough reason. And yet everyone from Anaya to Euripides was telling us so. Well if *traición* was the reason, could infanticide then be retaliation against misogyny, an act of vengeance not against one man, but man in general for a betrayal much graver than sexual infidelity: the enslavement and deformation of our sex?” These questions lead Moraga to create an alternative mythology in order to work out a potentially more liberatory space for women. She offers that women – and, in particular, Chicanas and Latinas – might be hungry for justice and for an existence they do not have to protest violently. [...] Moraga chooses to tell the story of women who are not satisfied with the “whore/witch/dyke/madwoman” categories used against them, because these women do not conform to the expectation of patriarchy.<sup>435</sup>

Along with the other novels in this section, analysing Moraga's reminder of the need for intersectionality in indigenous struggles shows the various layers and infliction of brutality within the extractiono(s)cene. Studying the position of women in this context this requires taking into account several levels of oppression, further pointing to the importance of the issue of sexual violence, both as representative of the brutality of the colonial past, but also of the patriarchal present.

Maryse Condé's, Toni Morrison's and Sandrine Bessora's novels, all rewritings of the Medea myth, excavate submerged histories of colonisation and (neo-)imperialism by specifically focusing on the initial moment of rape. While rape should not be as central as Paz sees it, because it thus fetishises and objectifies womanhood, it cannot be forgotten lest it erases the brutality of the conjuncture of colonial and patriarchal past and present, with its

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<sup>435</sup> Tanya González, “The (Gothic) Gift of Death in Cherríe Moraga's “The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea (2001)”, *Chicana/Latina Studies*, 7.1 (2007), 44–77, pp. 48-49.

continuation in the neo-liberal and neo-imperial present. Condé's novel begins on the Atlantic trade ship with this initial rape: "Abena, ma mère, un marin anglais la viola sur le pont du *Christ the King*, un jour de 16\*\* alors que le navire faisait voile vers la Barbade. C'est de cette agression que je suis née. De cet acte de haine et de mépris".<sup>436</sup> The initial violence and extraction of black peoples from the African continent, to be enslaved and brought to the Americas, is perpetuated in other contemporary types of extraction, including that of oil. Past violent practices of enslavement and uneven relations persist in Bessora's novel in which oil is extracted from the Gabonese sea to benefit France and the other European countries owning the fictional oil company: "The slave ship has, in the novel, been replaced by the oil ship. The ship still operates as a metaphor of the world: it contains all the race, class, national, and gender divisions while at the same time being positioned outside of a national territory. It is, additionally, a metaphor of the world as a workplace".<sup>437</sup>

Throughout Bessora's novel, the initial 'rape' is superimposed onto the action of extracting oil from the soil. Repeatedly, drilling for oil is compared to a violent sexual encounter, violating the earth, itself compared to a woman. Often this is supplemented by a consideration of Gabonese workers' conditions: "D'abord, les muscles indigènes ont téléguidé un énorme tube creux du plancher de forage à la croûte continentale. Il y a eu pénétration. Elle était vierge".<sup>438</sup> The reduction of indigenous labourers' characters to their physical strength ("les muscles indigènes") hints at the parallel between the slave and the oil ship, mentioned above. Moreover, in the novel, when oil is extracted by the "*Ocean Liberator*" ship and its international team of workers and engineers, it is continually compared to childbirth, strengthening the idea of feminisation of the land.<sup>439</sup> "le petit arrive. Il est tout près... Hourra. [...] Pas d'éruption en vue. Naissance sans violence. Naissance sans douleur. Quelques larmes d'émotion pour accueillir le dernier-né d'Elf-Gabon".<sup>440</sup> Hence, the initial 'rape' on the slave ship is continued in the present for many former colonies through neo-liberal and neo-imperial

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<sup>436</sup> Maryse Condé, *Moi, Tituba sorcière... Noire de Salem* (Mercure de France, 1986), p. 13.

<sup>437</sup> Alexandra Perisic, "Life after Oil: The Politics of Labor in Bessora's *Petroleum*", *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 5.3 (2018), 406–22, p. 410. See C.L.R. James, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (Schocken Books, 1985).

<sup>438</sup> Bessora, *Petroleum*, p. 11. Additional instances of this comparison, including childbirth imagery, can be found at pp. 7, 20, 23, 24, 27, 29, 35, 50, 55, 68, 70-71, 73, 75, 85, and 280.

<sup>439</sup> The name of the oil ship "*Ocean Liberator*" echoes the neo-imperial rhetoric of 'liberating' natural resources through extractivism practices, which is emphasised in the first line of the novel in which the company's "prophecy" is the mission the ship workers need to fulfil: "Après un long périple, l'Or noir rencontrera la faille. Son voyage s'achèvera par trois mille mètres de fond. Le Libérateur le délivrera des entrailles de la terre" and in the description of Médée extracting petrol from the ground: "Médée a libéré Bitume de la Terre qui le gardait prisonnier" in Bessora, p. 7 and p. 80, and see also p. 218.

<sup>440</sup> Bessora, p. 29.

resource exploitation. As Moraga also notes – and I argue that her statement here can be extended to other former colonies – “Chicano Nation is a mestizo nation conceived in a double-rape: first, by the Spanish one and then by the Gringo”.<sup>441</sup> The violence imposed through these multiple violations of ‘the colony’, both as people and land, is matched by what appears to be another type of violence: infanticide. However, I argue that the novels under review here engage with this act as a subversion of the multiple imposed forms of reproductive labour.

In Bessora’s novel, for instance, infanticide is displaced onto the Elf-Gabon company, since oil is the child in the novel to which, as noted above, Médée helps give birth. Also, as Alexandra Perisic has argued, the use of the detective novel form specifically permits the novelist to unearth and bring to light these uneven and exploitative dynamics of imperialism:

In *Petroleum*, the target of the crime is no longer a person, but an entity: the Elf-Gabon company. Etienne, the sole human victim of the crime, is also one of the primary suspects. I concur with Close’s assessment that detective fiction arises as an appropriate form to address the rise in violence in the age of neoliberalism, the new political emphasis on terrorism, and an increasing insistence on the importance of national and personal security. I would add that in conjunction to reflecting the rising social inequalities in the world metropolises, detective fiction stages the dialectic between the known and the unknown that is reflective of the contemporary modes of power and marginalization.<sup>442</sup>

Condé’s, Morrison’s, and Moraga’s texts can all be seen in these terms, as undertaking a type of detective work in excavating submerged, un- and mis-told histories, especially through ‘clearing’ Medea’s name. Indeed, to return to the words of Moraga, cited above, the “official story was a lie... Who would kill their kid over some man dumping them? It wasn’t a strong enough reason”. When we read Condé’s and Morrison’s novels alongside Bessora’s, we also glimpse an ever-expanding socio-historical horizon or timeline, since the two former novels consider the rise and development of plantation economy in the Americas, while the latter focuses on oil extraction as a neo-imperial project.<sup>443</sup> In Chapter Four, below, I will discuss

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<sup>441</sup> Moraga, *The Last Generation*, p. 153.

<sup>442</sup> Perisic, p. 419.

<sup>443</sup> “*Moi, Tituba* is set during the late 1600s, when the plantation economy is just beginning to thrive in the American colonies, and the novel interrogates the foundational narratives and ideologies of the societies that were later to become the independent nation-states of Barbados and the United States of America. Scrutinizing the profit-driven society of Barbados, to which white English planters came in order to increase their financial well-being, as well as the religious society of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, to which white English Puritans came in order to ensure their spiritual well-being, *Moi, Tituba* insists that the benefits allotted to individual colonists through their societies’ survival and success cannot be separated from the dehumanization and genocide of the Indian and African peoples upon whose territorial and bodily resources they rely” in Kristen Pitt, “Resisting Colony and Nation: Challenging History in Maryse Condé’s *Moi, Tituba, sorcière... Noire de Salem*”, *Atenea*, 27.1 (2007), 9–18, p. 10.

another group of works taking as their subject matter the perpetuation of colonial and imperial dynamics in today's practices of extractivism.

In *Moi, Tituba*, Condé aims to fill in certain blanks in the history of Tituba, a real-life black woman who lived during the Salem trials and whose full story is missing from the archive.<sup>444</sup> In doing so, she also engages with another historical/fictional depository in making Tituba meet Hester Prynne from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). In the novel, the character of Tituba herself in the novel considers her future absence from historical archives in the time to come. By engaging with these archives, the character aims to relocate her and 'the colony's' repressed and forgotten history:

Il me semblait que je disparaissais complètement. Je sentais que dans ces procès des sorcières de Salem qui feraient couler tant d'encre, qui exciteraient la curiosité et la pitié des générations futures et apparaîtraient à tous comme le témoignage le plus authentique d'une époque crédule et barbare, mon nom ne figurerait que comme celui d'une comparse sans intérêt. On mentionnerait çà et là « une esclave originaire des Antilles et pratiquant vraisemblablement le "hoodoo" ». On ne se soucierait ni de mon âge ni de ma personnalité. On m'ignorerait. [...] Aucune, aucune biographie attentionnée et inspirée recréant ma vie et ses tourments ! Et cette future injustice me révoltait ! Plus cruelle que la mort !<sup>445</sup>

In this passage, Tituba imagines voyeuristic future generations following the "crédule and barbare" Salem trials. In describing the trials and the time in which they take place as gullible and barbaric, the character operates an inversion between the supposedly barbarian 'other' and the supposedly civilised Salem community. She aims to convey not only the cruelty and brutality of witch trials but also the absurdity of the accusation of witchcraft, since in the novel it is clear that the children denouncing the supposed witches are lying. As Silvia Federici reminds us, it "is generally agreed that the witch-hunt aimed at destroying the control that women had exercised over their reproductive function and served to pave the way for the development of a more oppressive patriarchal regime".<sup>446</sup> The general point is given further emphasis in Kathleen Gyssels's reading of *Beloved*, *Moi, Tituba* and Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* in which principal characters appear as scapegoats due to their origins: in the context of slavery, systemic racism over-determines the gender discrimination already evident in the witch-hunt:

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<sup>444</sup> See Katia Gottin, "La voix "à venir" du sujet féminin dans le Nouveau Monde: Conversation et énonciation dans *Moi, Tituba sorcière... Noire de Salem*", *Nouvelles Études Francophones*, 21.1 (2006), 95–108, p. 96.

<sup>445</sup> Condé, *Moi, Tituba sorcière*, p. 173.

<sup>446</sup> Federici, p. 14.

Morrison, Condé comme Marshall donnent à lire la concurrence entre cultes africains-américains et religion officielle. Leurs « négresse[s] des grands chemins » (*TM*) sont haïes moins à cause d'actes répugnants ou condamnables, mais parce qu'elles sont autres, mal domptables, et donc mal assimilables. Boucs émissaires en période de troubles et de malchances, moments qui sont précisément des mutations dans l'identité collective et individuelle, les sorcières sont de retour dans les romans de Marshall, de Condé et de Morrison.<sup>447</sup>

With respect to *Beloved*, Jenny Sharpe bids us reflect on the fate of Margaret Garner, an escaped enslaved woman who murdered her daughter to prevent her recapture, and on whom Morrison's character Sethe is based:

Margaret Garner, who first breathes Ohio's "air of freedom when she is seven years old and who, twelve years later, on the evening of January 27, 1856, escapes from Kentucky and heads back to Ohio. She has with her her four children, her husband Robert, and his parents, Mary and Simon. [...] Remember that Margaret Garner is recaptured, and in her attempt to deny ownership to those who would claim her and her children as property, she succeeds in killing her daughter Mary.<sup>448</sup>

*Beloved* proposes a retelling of Garner's story which engages with the violence and trauma of slavery and reconsiders her association with the Medea myth, as instituted by Thomas Satterwhite Noble whose 1867 painting portraying Garner's infanticide is entitled *The Modern Medea*.<sup>449</sup> In all four of the works considered here, the binary between life and death is destabilised through a revision of indigenous epistemologies which provide a counter-context in which ancestors and loved ones who have passed away remain close to the characters in the novel.<sup>450</sup> In Condé's novel, Tituba tells us of the "invisible ones" who accompany her: "Je

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<sup>447</sup> Kathleen Gyssels, *Sages Sorcières?: Révisions de la mauvaise mère dans Beloved (Toni Morrison), Praisesong for the Widow (Paule Marshall), et Moi, Tituba, sorcière noire de Salem (Maryse Condé)* (University Press of America, 2001), p. xiv.

<sup>448</sup> Sharpe, *In the Wake*, p. 104.

<sup>449</sup> See Leslie Furth, "'The Modern Medea' and Race Matters: Thomas Satterwhite Noble's 'Margaret Garner'", *American Art*, 12.2 (1998), 37–57.

<sup>450</sup> As Étienne-Marie Lassi argues in respect to Bessora's novel: "En plus de postuler l'existence des génies, entités surnaturelles maléfiques ou bienfaitantes suivant les circonstances et maîtresses absolues de l'élément naturel qu'elles habitent, ce qui tient lieu de culture locale dans *Pétroleum* conçoit aussi la mort comme un passage de l'état d'être de chair à celui d'esprit. Ces esprits élisent domicile dans la nature et « vivent » en communion avec les vivants de la communauté dont ils influencent l'existence positivement ou négativement" in Étienne-Marie Lassi, "La nature ré-enchantée de Bessora : La pétro-critique par les mythes dans *Pétroleum*", in *Aspects écocritiques de l'imaginaire Africain*, ed. by Étienne-Marie Lassi (Langaa RPCIG, 2013), pp. 169–85, p. 181. Additionally, the focus on oil in the novel is crucial in terms of deconstructing life and death as a dichotomy since petrol is seen in the novel as bringing back to life dead matter considering that it is made out of fossils: "Né de la vie morte, le pétrole, c'est vous : un déchet organique. Oui, madame, le pétrole est ce qu'il reste des êtres vivants après pourrissement. C'est qu'il restera de vous après votre décomposition" in Bessora, p. 174. Moreover, Médée herself temporarily dies when Louise, Jason's aunt, puts her in deep sleep so she is freed from prison where she

n'étais jamais seule puisque mes invisibles étaient autour de moi, sans jamais cependant m'oppresser de leur présence".<sup>451</sup> This existence of a third space allows the characters to save their children from the exploitation and violence to which they will inevitably be subjected: "Moi, je n'avais rien vu de tel. J'avais assisté à un spectacle de totale barbarie. Ce fut peu après cela que je m'aperçus que je portais un enfant et que je décidai de le tuer".<sup>452</sup>

In Condé's novel the infanticide is rationalised in the context of the system of slavery, which destines the unborn child is destined to a life of enslavement and subjection without the possibility of escape: "Pour une esclave, la maternité n'est pas un bonheur. Elle revient à expulser dans un monde de servitude et d'abjection, un petit innocent dont il lui sera impossible de changer le destin".<sup>453</sup> In the case of Morrison's novel, a similar commodification of women's reproductive labour is emphasised when the character of Paul D notes that he "wasn't surprised to learn that they had tracked [Sethe] down in Cincinnati [after she ran away], because, when he thought about it now, her price was greater than his; property that reproduced itself without cost".<sup>454</sup> The commodification of women's bodies and reproductive labour extends even beyond the end of formal slavery: in Moraga's play, the infanticide committed by Medea is intended to protect her son Chac-Mool from being used by his father Jásón and becoming like him should he moves back to Aztlán: "You want normal? Then go with your father. He's perfectly normal. It's normal to send your five-year-old child and his mother into exile and then seven years later come back to collect the kid like a piece of property. It's normal to lie about your race, your class, your origins, create a completely unoriginal fiction about yourself and then name yourself *la patria's poet*".<sup>455</sup> Here, Medea points to Jásón not only as an iteration of the Columbian figure but also as the agent of their exile. While in Morrison's novel, Sethe escapes from slavery and in Condé's novel Tituba is forcibly transported from one enslaved location to another and distanced from her native Barbados, in Moraga's play Medea is a veteran of Aztlán's independence war who is exiled because she is a rebellious woman and queer:

MAMA SAL: Pan-indigenismo tore América apart and Aztlán was born from the pedacitos.

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has been incarcerated after having been wrongly accused of causing the explosion on the oil ship. For Médée to be free and with Jason, she must be officially dead, see Bessora pp. 319-320.

<sup>451</sup> Condé, *Moi, Tituba sorcière*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>452</sup> Condé, *Moi, Tituba sorcière*, p. 82.

<sup>453</sup> Condé, *Moi, Tituba sorcière*, p. 83.

<sup>454</sup> Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage, 1987), p. 228.

<sup>455</sup> Cherríe Moraga, *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (West End Press, 2001), p. 75.

SAVANNAH: Uniting the disenfranchised diaspora of Indian-mestizos throughout the Southwest.

MAMA SAL: We were contentos for awhile –

SAVANNAH: Sort of. Until the revolutionaries told the women, put down your guns and pick up your babies.

MAMA SAL: ¡Fuera de las calles!

SAVANNAH: And into the kitchens! Now that's not in the "official" version. [...]

SAVANNAH: And then en masse, all the colored countries –

MAMA SAL: Threw out their jotería.

SAVANNAH: Queers of every color and shade and definition.

MAMA SAL: Y los homos became peregrinos ... como nomads, just like our Aztec ancestors a thousand years ago. [...]

SAVANNAH: And we made a kind of gypsy ghetto for ourselves in what was once a thriving desert.

MAMA SAL: They call it "Phoenix", pero entrenos, we name it "Tamoanchán", which means –

CHAC-MOOL: "We seek our home."

MAMA SAL: And the seeking itself became home.<sup>456</sup>

In all four works the conventional social meaning of infanticide, and of death itself as the end of life, is subverted by the presence of an 'other side' that bespeaks of a different social logic. In Morrison's novel, when Sethe sees her former owner arrive after she has run away, she collects "every bit of life that she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carrie[s], pushe[s], drag[s] them through the veil, out, away, over there where no one could hurt them. Over there. Outside this place, where they would be safe".<sup>457</sup> In this quote, Sethe also establishes the insoluble maternal connection that sees infanticide as a type of suicide. Moraga elaborates, explaining that infanticide as suicide rather than a murder because a mother "never completely separates from her child. She always remains a part of her children"; hence, according to her when "La Llorona kills her children, she is killing a male-defined Mexican motherhood that robs us of our womanhood".<sup>458</sup> Infanticide serves to put an end to enforced social reproduction and to the binaristic construction of gender. Medea's death

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<sup>456</sup> Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>457</sup> Morrison, *Beloved*, p. 163 and see also Sethe telling Beloved who has returned: "My plan was to take us all to the other side where my own ma'am is. They stopped me from getting us there, but they didn't stop you from getting there", p. 203 and "Sethe cried, saying she never did, or meant to – that she had to get them out, away, [...] That her plan was always to that they would all be together on the other side, forever", p. 241.

<sup>458</sup> Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years/Lo que nunca pasó por sus labios*, Expanded Second Edition (South End Press, 2000), p. 146 and p. 147.

in Moraga's play has often been interpreted as a suicide.<sup>459</sup> Indeed, Medea is incarcerated in a secure psychiatric hospital following the 'murder' of her son Chac-Mool after which she goes mad, or so it appears. As she is detained there, Chac-Mool appears to reappear and to kill Medea just as she has killed him:

MEDEA: Why have you come here?

CHAC-MOOL: To take you away.

MEDEA: Away... where?

CHAC-MOOL: Home. [...]

*[He leads her by the hand back to the bed. He holds a handful of powdered herbs and puts them into a smaller paper cup of water.]*

MEDEA: Mijo?

CHAC-MOOL: Here, drink this. It'll help you sleep.

*[Chac-Mool holds Medea's head while she drinks. She is instantly drowsy. Chac-Mool gathers her into his arms as she falls into a deep sleep. It is a pieta image]*<sup>460</sup>

This scene can be perceived as either depicting Medea's suicide and hallucinating Chac-Mool's presence, or through a gothic lens, one can see Chac-Mool's apparition as a ghostly one. I argue that the reappearance and the repetition of the *pietà* suggests, on the contrary, that Chac-Mool has actually returned to bring Medea with him to this 'other place'.<sup>461</sup> Thus Tanya González points to Chac-Mool's living presence at the end of the play: "Chac-Mool refuses death as a limiter of life. He is not a ghost, because death did not evacuate him of life. Yet, he returns to his mother after his death, not a ghost of himself, but as himself – a living apparition that verifies and validates Medea's gift of death".<sup>462</sup> This, coupled with the etymology of Chac-Mool's name, further reinforces the idea that he is not dead in the western ontological sense, but rather that he has begun to live in this 'other space' in which patriarchal conceptions of motherhood and womanhood and their commodification through reproductive labour do not exist.<sup>463</sup> This is also the case in Morrison's novel, in which *Beloved* comes back:

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<sup>459</sup> See for instance: "In the end, and in order to prevent his indoctrination into Aztlán's misogyny and machismo, she kills her son with a poisonous beverage. She is incarcerated in a psychiatric prison and commits suicide by drinking the same beverage that killed her son, who appears as a ghost to relieve his mother's pain by making her drink from the lethal beverage — made from the herbs that Luna had previously left in the prison ward" in Juan Ráez Padilla, "Crying for Food: The Mexican Myths of "La Llorona" and "The Hungry Woman" in Cherríe L. Moraga", *Comparative American Studies*, 12.3 (2014), 205–17, p. 209.

<sup>460</sup> Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>461</sup> "[MEDEA takes Chac-Mool into her arms. She rocks him, singing.] / MEDEA: *Duérmete mi niño / Duérmete mi sol / Duérmete pedazo / de mi corazón.* [...] *[He passes out. It is a pieta image, MEDEA holding him limp within her arms]*" in Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, p. 91.

<sup>462</sup> González, p. 71.

<sup>463</sup> "MEDEA: Déjame ver. (*She traces the tattoo with her finger.*) You know what that bowl is for ...there on his belly? / CHAC-MOOL: For sacrificed hearts. Chac-Mool carries them to the gods. / MEDEA: He's the messenger. Entre este mundo y el otro lado. / CHAC-MOOL: And he's a warrior, right? Isn't that what you always told me ?

Beloved, she my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don't have to explain a thing. I didn't have time to explain before because it had to be done quick. Quick. She had to be safe and I put her where she would be. But my love was tough and she back now.<sup>464</sup>

Condé's and Moraga's works notably consider the queering of Medea as a way to include further marginalised groups in the extractiono(s)cene.<sup>465</sup> As Moraga explains: "When I first learned the Mexican story of la Llorona, I immediately recognized that the weeping woman, that aberration, that criminal against nature, was a sister. Maybe by being a lesbian, my identification was more easily won, fully knowing my crime was tantamount to hers".<sup>466</sup> What is then demonstrated is that homosexuality appears as an additional threat to the patriarchal (proto-)capitalist system since, like infanticide, it subverts reproductive labour.<sup>467</sup> For this reason, Bessora's novel brings full-circle this subversion of the (re)productive system through its focus on the Elf-Gabon company as the target of the murder. It also subverts the mythic intertext in which the character of Medea facilitates Jason's heroic quest by making her the main agent of the quest in the novel.<sup>468</sup> This inversion is also seen in the reversal of the characters' 'races' in the novel; Medea the dark-skinned barbarian becomes Médée in

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[...] MEDEA: He's a fallen warrior, hijo. / CHAC-MOOL: Well, why would you name me like that, for someone who didn't win? / MEDEA: Winning's not the point" in Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, p. 29.

<sup>464</sup> Morrison, *Beloved*, p. 200.

<sup>465</sup> "I argue that Tituba must also be read as occupying a sexually interstitial space, metaphorically underwriting a shift from traditional Western hetero-homo notions of sexual identity to a recognition of sexual hybridity, plurality, and intersectionality. [...] In *Moi, Tituba sorcière . . .*, Condé toys with the question of whether desire between women is a native export or a colonial import. Staging the encounter between Tituba and Hester as something of a love affair, even as *Moi, Tituba sorcière . . .* (re)writes Caribbean (hi)stories of desire between women, it suggests that, like the Caribbean itself, desire between women in Caribbean literatures is born out of the simultaneously destructive and creative interactions between Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the United States" in Keja L. Valens, *Desire between Women in Caribbean Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 66.

<sup>466</sup> Moraga, *Loving in the Years of War*, p. 145.

<sup>467</sup> "If the fate of the queer is to figure the fate that cuts the thread of futurity, if the jouissance, the corrosive enjoyment, intrinsic to queer (non)identity annihilates the fetishistic jouissance that works to *consolidate* identity by allowing reality to coagulate around its ritual reproduction, then the only oppositional status to which our queerness could ever lead would depend on our taking seriously the place of the death drive we're called on to figure and insisting, against the cult of the Child and the political order it enforces, that we, as Guy Hocquenghem made clear are "not the signifier of what might become a new form of 'social organisation,'" that we do not intend a new politics, a better society, a brighter tomorrow, since all of these fantasies reproduce the past, through displacement, in the form of the future. We choose, instead, not to choose the Child, as disciplinary image of the Imaginary past or as site of a projective identification with an always impossible future. [...] And so what is queerest about us, queerest within us, and queerest despite us is this willingness to insist intransitively – to insist that the future stop here", in Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 30-31.

<sup>468</sup> "Par contre, dans *Pétroleum*, c'est la femme, le héros de la quête. Autrement dit, c'est Médée, et non l'Argonaute aux multiples périples, qui détient la « puissance d'agir » dans ce texte. [...] À noter, tout le long du roman, il figure comme l'objet passif du désir féminin et des rêves de Médée" in Marie Carrière, *Médée Protéiforme* (Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2012), p. 153. This is further notable considering that Bessora's novel consider the Medean myth broadly, outside of the limitations imposed by Euripides's dramatic adaptation, this is seen for instance in the comparison between oil and the Golden Fleece, hence including the myth of the Argonauts and their arrival in Colchis, see Bessora, p. 245.

*Petroleum*, a French geologist from Normandy, and Jason the Hellenic white man becomes the Gabonese cook on the oil ship.<sup>469</sup> This studied inversion sheds light on the effects of patriarchy as represented in the other works, in which women are literally and metaphorically ‘relegated to the kitchen’: in Condé when Tituba wants to be part of the enslaved people’s revolt, she is told by her lover that the “devoir des femmes, Tituba, ce n’est pas de se battre, faire la guerre, mais l’amour !”<sup>470</sup> In *Beloved*, Sethe is made to work in a kitchen, and, as quoted above, after the revolution is over in Aztlán, women are sent back to the kitchen.<sup>471</sup>

I mention kitchens partly to recall another aspect of literary cannibalism as a mode of writing, with which Moraga’s play engages, most apparently in its title, *The Hungry Woman*: the idea of being ‘hungry for justice’.<sup>472</sup> In rewriting history and dezombifying ‘the colony’, this mode of writing attempts to call attention to the violence enacted on ‘the colony’ materially and intellectually through colonialism and (neo-)imperialism. They demand to be heard and for reparations to be made. The fact that such cultural and material violence is perpetuated in our contemporary system through neo-liberal practices of extractivism underlines the issues in in naming our epoch postcolonial: “By playing with murder as an act of – and death as a space of – subversion of patriarchal power, Moraga highlights the difficulties in escaping ideologies that perpetuate discourses of difference [... and] shows us the challenges of living outside the parameters of what gets defined as the norm”.<sup>473</sup> By opposing iterations of the Mami Wata character to iterations of the Columbian figure, rewritings of the Medea myth displace and invert the power contained in the patriarchal (re)productive system and the violence associated with it. It also shows the power wrapped in the acts of resistance and non-conformity of the Mami Wata characters, further reinforced and concretised in Bessora’s novel, as Sylvère Mbondobari argues:

Dans *Petroleum*, la quête de l’Or noir donne lieu à différents types de violence : violence contre la nature, violence contre les populations autochtones, violence politique, violence coloniale et violence postcoloniale. Mais contrairement, au mythe

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<sup>469</sup> See Bessora, pp. 14-17.

<sup>470</sup> Condé, *Moi, Tituba sorcière*, p. 233.

<sup>471</sup> Morrison, *Beloved*, p. 14 and Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>472</sup> As Moraga argues, maybe La Llorona’s wail is not for her children as the legend claims: “It is always la Llorona’s cries we mistake for the wind, but maybe she’s not crying for her children. Maybe she’s crying for food, sustenance. Maybe que tiene mucha hambre la mujer. And at last, upon encountering this myth – this pre-capitalist, pre-colonial, pre-catholic mito – my jornada began to make sense. This is the original Llorona y tiene mucha hambre. I realized that she has been the subject of my work all along, from my earliest writings, my earliest feminism. She is the story that has never been told truly, the story of the hungry Mexican woman who is called puta/bruja/jota/loca because she refuses to forget that her half-life is not a natural-born fact” in Moraga, *Loving in the Years of War*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>473</sup> González, pp. 50-57.

originel qui met l'accent sur la violence de la figure féminine, Bessora fait de Médée une femme autonome et subversive, qui refuse la soumission à la hiérarchie d'Elf-Gabon et aux règles politiques et sociales dictées par la logique coloniale.<sup>474</sup>

In the following chapter, this investigation will be continued with references to the rewritings that tackle the ways in which neo-liberal extractive practices serve to perpetuate the colonial and imperial practices, which emerged and were developed during the period of plantation economy. This genealogy is identified in Bessora's novel in the following neologism correlating petrol extraction to colonisation and imperialism: "pionniers admirables de la colonisation puis de la pétrolisation".<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Sylvère Mbondobari, "Prose postcoloniale et enjeux mémoriels: Discours, mythes, et mémoire coloniale dans *53 cm* et *Pétroleum* de Sandrine Bessora", in *Postures postcoloniales: Domaines africains et antillais*, ed. by Anthony Mangeon (Éditions Kathala, 2012), p. 119.

<sup>475</sup> Bessora, p. 90.

## CHAPTER 4

### FROM THE SEA TO THE SHORE: THE CONTINUATION OF EXTRACTIVE IMPERIALISM FROM PLANTATION ECONOMY TO THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY

In her latest work, Christina Sharpe elaborates a complex theorisation of “living in the wake”, a phrase to which she attributes multiple facets and meanings. Crucially, she explains that one of its elements is the idea of living in “a past that is not the past”:

The work we do requires new modes and methods of research and teaching; new ways of entering and leaving the archives of slavery, of undoing the “racial calculus and . . . political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago” (Hartman 2008, 6) and that live into the present. [...] With this as the ground, I’ve been trying to articulate a method of encountering a *past that is not past*. A method along the lines of a sitting with, a gathering, and a tracking of phenomena that disproportionately and devastatingly affect Black peoples any and everywhere we are.<sup>476</sup>

This phrasing is reiterated throughout her seminal work and she explains how different authors “living in the wake”, such as Toni Morrison, engage with this temporal conceptualisation.<sup>477</sup> As Sharpe explains, in *Beloved*, Sethe “wants to keep [Denver] from being overtaken by the *past that is not past*”.<sup>478</sup> This formulation serves to articulate not just the afterlives of enslavement, oppression and dispossession, but the omnipresent structural and systematic inequalities lived by “Black peoples any and everywhere”. In this chapter I engage with this idea. My aim is twofold. First, I hope to show how, through their practice of literary cannibalism, the works that I study shed light on the perpetuation of colonial and imperial practices in our neo-liberal present. Put simply: to see how the past is not the past. Second, I hope to show this by emphasising how this mode of writing destabilises the linearity of history in rewriting it, both in content and form, by understanding it through tidalectics, merging the “past-present-future” distinctions. Such an understanding of time suggests that the past is never the past. Critically, by decolonising western historiography in form and content, the works I have selected as case studies in this chapter propose a new version of history, both in terms of the individual and the collective, that has been erased from the colonial literary archive. For this purpose, this chapter comparatively investigates rewritings of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*

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<sup>476</sup> Sharpe, *In the Wake*, p. 13, my emphasis.

<sup>477</sup> For more examples see Sharpe, *In the Wake*, p.62, p. 73, p. 99.

<sup>478</sup> Sharpe, *In the Wake*, p. 105, my emphasis.

(1847) (*JE* henceforth), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) (*WH* henceforth) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) (*HoD* henceforth). Some of the revisionary works I will discuss provide a 'pre-history' to their 'source' novel, challenging its erasure and the ghosting and zombification of 'the colony'. Others contest the 'history' that their 'source' novel offers, by providing a parallel version which elucidates the development and perpetuation of colonial and imperial exploitation from plantation economy to neo-liberal resource extractivism.

### **“THE RIVER HAS BEEN PUT ON TAP”: COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF DOMESTICATION<sup>479</sup>**

In his essay “An Image of Africa”, Chinua Achebe notes that “*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as “the other world,” the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality”.<sup>480</sup> He later concludes that “Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist”.<sup>481</sup> Conrad’s racism – however unexceptional it might seem in the context of the time in which he lived and wrote – leads to a dehumanisation of the African continent and people: “Africa as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. [...] The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world.”<sup>482</sup> What is critical also, as Achebe notes in a later essay entitled “Africa’s Tarnished Image”, is that even though some of this dehumanising literature may not be flourishing anymore, the stereotypes it promoted continue to plague depictions of the continent and its inhabitants in contemporary media:

The vast arsenal of derogatory images of Africa amassed to defend the slave trade and, later colonization, gave the world not only a literary tradition that is now, happily, defunct, but also a particular way of looking (or rather *not* looking) at Africa and Africans that endures, alas into our own day. And so, although those sensational “African” novels that were so popular in the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth have trickled to a virtual stop, their centuries-old obsession with lurid and degrading stereotypes of Africa has been bequeathed to the cinema, to journalism, to

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<sup>479</sup> Rohan D’Souza, “Framing India’s Hydraulic Crises: The Politics of the Modern Large Dam”, *Monthly Review*, 60.3 (2008), 112–24, p. 115.

<sup>480</sup> Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa”, in *Things Fall Apart*, ed. by Francis Abiola Irele (Norton Critical Editions, 2009), pp. 169–81, p. 170.

<sup>481</sup> Achebe, “An Image”, p. 176.

<sup>482</sup> Achebe, “An Image”, p. 176.

certain varieties of anthropology, even to humanitarianism and missionary work itself.<sup>483</sup>

In “An Image of Africa”, Achebe wonders whether a work such as *HoD*, which is so dehumanising, should be considered a work of art. My focus in this chapter will fall, instead, on the ways in which this dehumanisation or ‘zombification’ is questioned and challenged in the rewritings I examine. My view is that the works I investigate in this chapter do not just challenge this dehumanisation – evident everywhere in the colonial literary archive – but work to destabilise it in different ways. The central goal of the rewritings is therefore to rehumanise colonised human and extra-human subjects, hence to dezombify ‘the colony’ and to flesh out what has been ghosted – a project often tackled through a self-conscious engagement with the received literary genres and practices. In the first section of this chapter, I engage with works that provide a pre-history of ‘the colony’ to illuminate the erasure enacted by the colonial literary archive *during* the European presence on the African and American continents. A project with which Achebe himself engages in his writing as he explains in his essays “The Novelist as Teacher” (1965): “I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God’s behalf delivered them”.<sup>484</sup> In this section, this aim is also accompanied by a focus on genre and literary form to consider the rewriting of history in both form and content.

Water plays a crucial role in connecting all the works in this section, and this chapter more broadly, since the case studies investigated here follow different flows by moving inland from the sea to the shore and from oceans to rivers. In *HoD*, the Thames and the Congo river are counterposed to emphasise the antithesis drawn between the metropole and the African continent. The Thames is “the old river in its broad reach [which] rested unruffled at the decline of day after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth”.<sup>485</sup> Au contraire, the Congo river is described as “a mighty big river that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land” and as Marlow, the narrator, notes “the snake had charmed me”.<sup>486</sup> Here the utilitarian and serviceable Thames is opposed to the animalised

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<sup>483</sup> Chinua Achebe, “Africa’s Tarnished Image”, in *Things Fall Apart*, ed. by Francis Abiola Irele (Norton Critical Editions, 2009), pp. 209–20, p. 210.

<sup>484</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (Heinemann, 1977), p. 45.

<sup>485</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. by Paul B. Armstrong, Fifth (Norton Critical Editions, 2017), p. 4.

<sup>486</sup> Conrad, p. 8.

and exoticised Congo. While the Thames is presented as a river that has performed good service to its people, the Congo appears as a dangerous and threatening space. The Thames is also presented as a repository of colonial memory:

The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the great knights-errant of the sea. [...] Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from a sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of the unknown earth!<sup>487</sup>

While Marlow also later notes the prior darkness of England by considering the Roman presence on the island, the celebration of English adventurers braving the sea to pursue riches and fame lauds them as iterations of the Columbian figure. Moreover, it inscribes the space of the waterway as one complicit with the primitive accumulation and mercantilism, as motivating and making possible such endeavours – “leading to the uttermost ends of the earth”.<sup>488</sup> Rivers and seas are commercial spaces, as I have been concerned to suggest throughout this thesis.

Achebe’s novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) dezombifies ‘the colony’ by providing a pre-history for the Igbo people before the arrival of European settlers in Nigeria. It depicts the clash between the indigenous groups and the settlers. The novel dramatises the complex sociological organisation of the tribal groups described, aiming to challenge the sort of colonial stereotyping exemplified by the report that Kurtz compiles in Conrad’s novel, commissioned by the “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs”:

Seventeen pages of close writing he had found time for! [...] He began with the argument that we ‘whites, from the point of view of development we had arrived at, must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with the might as of a deity’ [... . A]nd at the end of that moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightening in the serene sky: ‘Exterminate all the brutes!’<sup>489</sup>

This short and simple report extols the virtues and superiority of European civilisation and reduces the different indigenous groups of the Congo to the label “the savages” and “the brutes”. Kurtz’s report is concluded by a post-scriptum advocating a holocaust of said “brutes”,

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<sup>487</sup> Conrad, pp. 4-5.

<sup>488</sup> Conrad, p. 4.

<sup>489</sup> Conrad, pp. 49-50.

which Marlow, however, separates from the rest of the report before returning it to his manager later in the novel. Achebe's novel dramatises the life of different Igbo tribal groups, showing how complex are the histories and lives Kurtz would presume to synthesise in seventeen pages. Achebe will devote his whole novel to narrating the single life of one Igbo man, Okonkwo. The end of *Things* directly engages with the logic underlying Kurtz's report, as Achebe's District Commissioner considers whether to give any space at all to Okonkwo in the report that he is engaged in writing:

The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details. He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*.<sup>490</sup>

Here the unnamed District Commissioner echoes Kurtz's reduction of African people to objects. The irony contained in his suggestion that Okonkwo's story might provide material for a "reasonable paragraph", if not a whole chapter is reinforced by the fact that the District Commissioner himself remains unnamed in the novel. He is therefore put in the anonymous position that he aims to place the objects of his study.

The novel itself decolonises this, and all, types of western writing by challenging western form and content. *Things* merges an ethnographic style with oral traditions and hence decolonises not only western travel writing and anthropology, but also historiography. As Francis Abiola Irele argues "the oral tradition can be said to function in Achebe's novel in a dual capacity: as both an authentic representation of the culture that serves as the reference of the manifest content, and at the same time, as an integral component of the narrative mode".<sup>491</sup> This also points to the different manners in which myths, historiography and news were communicated in an oral society, as the novel shows by emphasising Okonkwo's fame and often reporting events and facts through hearsay "as it was said".<sup>492</sup> The importance of oral traditions is also illustrated through the many tales that different characters tell throughout the narrative, part of wider indigenous practices that are also detailed throughout the novel, indicating the complex ritual organisation of these Igbo groups. The Feast of the New Yam,

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<sup>490</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, ed. by Francis Abiola Irele (Norton Critical Editions, 2009), p. 117.

<sup>491</sup> Francis Abiola Irele, "Introduction", in *Things Fall Apart*, ed. by Francis Abiola Irele (Norton Critical Editions, 2009), pp. ix–xxi, p. xx.

<sup>492</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 3.

for instance plays a crucial role in the community's timekeeping, agricultural practices and spiritual pantheon.<sup>493</sup>

These indigenous practices include specific relations to the land and a complex knowledge of what is needed to preserve it, including the necessity to set fire to the bush for its regeneration: "After the Week of Peace every man and his family began to clear the bush to make new farms. The cut bush was left to dry and fire was then set to it. As the smoke rose into the sky kites appeared from different directions and hovered over the burning field in silent valediction".<sup>494</sup> This knowledge of the land and relationship of custodianship toward it is non-existent for the European colonial officials and missionaries, described by Obierika as "locusts" destroying lands due to their ignorance concerning the terrain in which they have just arrived.<sup>495</sup> This crucial concern with indigenous epistemologies and practices in relation to land and agriculture is ever more important in our current climate crisis, a notable example being the bushfires that ravaged and continue to devastate Australia since autumn 2019 which were partially instigated by the disregard of aboriginal practices in settler colonial culture.<sup>496</sup>

The arrival of the British colonial officials in Achebe's novel is also followed by the commodification of palm oil, a critical resource that the communities have been extracting for years and with specific skills and care. Indeed, the social role of a tapper is quite crucial and requires a specific expertise, as Obierika notes: "It wounds my heart to see these young men killing palm trees in the name of tapping".<sup>497</sup> While some people in Umuofia rejoice at the commodification of palm oil since it permits them to enrich themselves, the other side of the coin is the overexertion of palm trees due to the overproduction of oil and the lack of expertise of tappers: "The white men had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia".<sup>498</sup> This development is crucial in the industrialisation of Nigeria, today

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<sup>493</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 23, see also Eleni Coundouriotis, *Claiming History: Colonialism, Ethnography, and the Novel* (Columbia University Press, 1999) on Achebe and traditional culture, pp. 21-44.

<sup>494</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 21, and see also p. 12. See also Achebe's third novel, *Arrow of God*, which forms part of a trilogy with *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*. In *Arrow*, the central protagonist, Ezeulu, is unable to give the word to start The Feast of the New Yam, with disastrous consequences for the community, in Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (Heinemann, 1964), pp. 203 and 215.

<sup>495</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 80.

<sup>496</sup> See Lorena Allam, "Right Fire for Right Future: How Cultural Burning Can Protect Australia from Catastrophic Blazes", *The Guardian*, 18 January 2020 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jan/19/right-fire-for-right-future-how-cultural-burning-can-protect-australia-from-catastrophic-blazes>> [accessed 8 April 2020].

<sup>497</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 42.

<sup>498</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 101.

more famous for the petroleum industry, another oil, which as Jennifer Wenzel notes, is not actually the one referred to in the name bestowed on “Nigeria’s Oil Rivers region”:

The European trade in palm oil and palm kernel in West Africa dates as far back as the 1480s and was worth a million pounds by 1840. Nigeria’s Oil Rivers region was named for palm oil, not petroleum, and palm oil was perhaps as indispensable for nineteenth-century industry as petroleum was for twentieth-century industry: palm oil was used as an industrial lubricant, an edible oil, and in the making of soap, tin, and candles. Beyond their significance as exportable commodities, palm oil and palm kernel have been used locally for edible oil, food, and lighting, and the African oil palm can also be tapped for palm wine; the tree itself yields materials for building, roofing, and other household uses. Within the riverine economy of the Oil Rivers region, jars of palm oil even functioned as currency. [...] Nigeria’s petroleum economy has literally been superimposed over (or excavated under) the palm belt of the Niger Delta<sup>499</sup>

The exploitation of Nigerian natural resources from palm oil in *Things* to petroleum in Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* (2011) – examined below in the second section of this chapter – shows the perpetuation and continuation of extractive exploitation in the continent. This exploitation enriches western companies and countries along with their collaborators in the Nigerian business class and depletes the resources and lives of ‘the colony’. Especially in terms of how colonial relationality unmakes kin throughout the extractiono(s)cene. Achebe’s novel title *Things Fall Apart* specifically notes this dissolution within the community following the arrival of the British colonial official and Christian missionaries, and the latter’s spread of their religion. For example, Okonkwo’s son Nwoye leaves his family to follow the missionaries. Twice the title is quoted in the narrative in relation to the dissolution of the clan following the imposition of the British colonial rule and the spread of Christianity:

“Does the white man understand our custom about land?”

“How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused by his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act as one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart”<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Jennifer Wenzel, “Petro-Magic-Realism: Toward a Political Ecology of Nigerian Literature”, *Postcolonial Studies*, 9.4 (2006), 449–64, pp. 452-453.

<sup>500</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 100, see also p. 104.

Here the dialogue challenges the usual conception of the white man's intrusion by stating that the clans have "allowed" him to stay being "amused by his foolishness", hence inverting and deconstructing the usual dichotomy between civilisers-primitives promoted in western discourse and historiography. However, it also describes the real social crises the tribes are experiencing, which are shown to facilitate the establishment of the British colonial officials and the spread of Christian religion and philosophy. Indeed, the latter specifically creates a space for those who have been excluded from or marginalised within the 'traditional' culture, such as Okonkwo's son Nwoye, as mentioned above. This also emphasises the dezombification of 'the colony' in the novel since as it avoids idealising traditional culture and risking a simple inversion of the colonial binary, as noted by Christopher Wise:

Achebe does not hesitate to dramatize the very real socio-historical crises and contradictions among the Igbo people, many that exist long before the arrival of the British, and that later create opportunities for the spread of Christianity. In fact, it is by now commonplace to assert that post-colonial African writers like Achebe, in recreating the pre-colonial past, wish to demonstrate that the era before the arrival of Europeans was neither idyllic nor savage, but was instead "composed of real and vulnerable people, their ancestors, not the figments of missionary and colonialist imaginations"<sup>501</sup>

The Igbo people's participation to their own downfall in the novel is illustrated by the titular and epigraphic reference to Yeats, as it has been argued by Derek Wright for instance:

It is a standard feature of Yeats's system that things collapse from within before they are overwhelmed from without and that one process is continuous with the other. [...] It is here that the Yeatsian pattern comes into play, for it is a hallmark of that pattern that the misfits and rejects of one civilization become the ready converts for the conquering faith of another one. It is significant that the sect joined by Nwoye has established itself in the Evil Forest, the place where the Umuofians deposit everything they have no use for and therefore either abominate or devalue: tabooed slaves, albinos, twins, victims of the swelling-sickness, the diseased and defective, and, ironically, Okonkwo himself, whose suicide, like his father's shameful sickness, denies him an honourable burial.<sup>502</sup>

References to Yeats as an Irish poet echo those to the Yorkshire semi-periphery in *JE* and *WH*, as discussed in Chapter Two above. By considering the English colonial relation to Ireland and

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<sup>501</sup> Christopher Wise, "Excavating the New Republic: Post-Colonial Subjectivity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*", *Callaloo*, 1054-1070, 22.4 (1999), p. 1057.

<sup>502</sup> Derek Wright, "Things Standing Together: A Retrospect on *Things Fall Apart*", *Kunapipi*, 12.2 (1990), 76-82, pp. 79-80.

the ensuing religious and political strife through Yeats's reference in *Things*, one can see different layers in respect to English expansionism. Here the African continent and Ireland are also connected through their depiction as savage places where cannibals, among other monstrous creatures, abound. Edmund Spenser is known for having written about the supposed cannibalism of the Irish, both fictionally in his *Faerie Queene* (1590-1596) and 'anthropologically' in his political treatise entitled *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596).<sup>503</sup> Often compared to Amerindian accounts of cannibalism, as Robert Viking O'Brien argues, "Spenser's descriptions of Irish cannibalism show his difficulties of having to see the Irish as at once other and yet also European".<sup>504</sup>

The zombification of the Irish and their customs as man-eaters is destabilised a century later by Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (1729), first published anonymously. The satirical essay proposes that poor Irish people sell their children to richer lords, hence directly tackling the rise of pauperisation in Ireland. Scholars have commonly interpreted it as a critique of British policies of colonial landlordism in Ireland. However, as Sean Moore argues, new evidence "intimated that the Irish Parliament, [...] may have been the pamphlet's intended target" because some of the Parliament's members "received interest on their investment in Ireland's first "Debt of the Nation" from the taxes they had the political power to levy on the native poor, but the famine of the late 1720s had decimated the usual revenues, forcing Parliament to consider additional ones".<sup>505</sup> Here, the metaphor of cannibalism and Irish supposed barbarism is used to describe both British and Irish exploitation of poorer Irish people, the ones initially described as savage cannibals a century earlier by Spenser. This reversal not only considers the British as metaphorical cannibals, but also considers the internal split in Ireland, emphasising politicians' exploitation of their people. As Moore argues,

This motif's "ironic reversal" of blame for Ireland's barbarism from the natives to the Anglo-Irish, documented by Claude Rawson, is now apparent as a condemnation of the latter's predatory loans and schemes for taxpayer financing, not their exorbitant rents. If landlords had "devoured most of the Parents" and had "best Title to the Children," as the *Proposal* asserted (12:112), it was probably because they had exhausted the

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<sup>503</sup> See Brian Lockey, "Spenser's Legalization of the Irish Conquest in "A View" and "Faerie Queene VI"", *English Literary Renaissance*, 31.3 (2001), 365-91 and Richard A. McCabe, *Spenser's Monstrous Regiment: Elizabethan Ireland and the Poetics of Difference* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>504</sup> Robert Viking O'Brien, "Cannibalism in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Ireland, and the Americas", in *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity* (State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 35-56, p. 36.

<sup>505</sup> Sean D. Moore, *Swift, the Book, and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), p. 168.

resources of their tenant farmers and were tempted to perpetually tax Irish progeny, to whom they had more of a right than had the crown.<sup>506</sup>

The reference to Yeats permits connecting *Things* and the Nigerian context to the Irish one, not only in terms of the colonial relation with Britain but also considering the internal relation within Ireland and Nigerian under this colonial pressure. The split that begins in *Things* because of internal crises, which facilitates the spread of British colonial policy, is continued in the consideration of Habila's novel *Oil on Water* studied below, in which Nigerian politicians and oil moguls participate with occidental Big Oil corporations to the exploitation of the Niger Delta and its peoples.

The internal split noted in *Things* is also present in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o novel's *The River Between* (1965). If Achebe's novel aims to dezombify 'the colony' by focusing on a description of the complex sociological organisation of pre-colonial Igboland, *The River Between* focuses on how the internal crises of the Gikuyu people similarly facilitate the establishment of British colonial rule and of Christian missionaries. This is shown particularly through the emphasis placed on circumcision in the novel. The ritual is described as drawing the community together: "Circumcision was an important ritual to the tribe. It kept people together, bound the tribe. It was at the core of social structure, and a something that gave meaning to a man's life. End the custom and the spiritual basis of the tribe's cohesion and integration would be no more".<sup>507</sup> It is also said to bind the Gikuyu people to the earth: "The surgeon had done his work. Blood trickled freely on the ground, sinking into the soil. Henceforth a religious bond linked Waiyaki to the earth, as if his blood was an offering".<sup>508</sup>

However, while the circumcision of boys and young men is standard practice in many cultures and religions, clitoridectomy and its instrumentalisation by both the Christian missionaries and converts and the Gikuyu people points to critical internal tribal crises as well as the continued use and abuse of women and their bodies as pawns in nationalistic and colonial discourses.<sup>509</sup> This echoes discussions raised in Chapter Three above with respect to Moraga's play and the Mexican and Chicano *machista* culture and abuse and marginalisation of women and queer people. In *The River Between*, circumcision is linked to the Honia river due to the fact that the ritual takes place there, as does Muthoni's decision to be circumcised. Her

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<sup>506</sup> Moore, *Swift the Book, and the Irish Financial Revolution*, p. 180.

<sup>507</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *The River Between* (Heinemann, 1965), p. 68.

<sup>508</sup> Ngũgĩ, *The River*, p. 45.

<sup>509</sup> See Hope Lewis, "Between Irua and Female Genital Mutilation: Feminist Human Rights Discourse and the Cultural Divide", *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 8 (1995), 1–55 and Brendon Nicholls, "Clitoridectomy and Gikuyu Nationalism in Ngugi Wa Thiong' *The River Between*", *Kunapipi*, 25.2 (2003), 40–55.

circumcision and death are instrumentalised in the tribal rift in the novel and as Keguro Macharia argues, the setting and language of her decision illustrate this internal split:

When we first encounter Muthoni in *The River Between*, she utters two important statements to her sister Nyambura. The first is “I want to be circumcised.” The second is “I—I want to be a woman. I want to be a real girl, a real woman, knowing all the ways of the hills and ridges” (26). The stuttered “I” reminds us that Muthoni is speaking at the river Honia, which flows in the valley that cleaves the Kamenos traditionalists and the Makuyu Christians. Muthoni’s “I,” an echo effect, enhanced by the visual dash that also separates and joins the two “I”s, suggests the opposing forces that shape her existence: her allegiance to her father’s brand of Christianity and her desire to be part of the ritually recognized Gikuyu. Simultaneously, this split, echo “I” registers the implicit distinction Muthoni draws between “real” and unreal girls and women.<sup>510</sup>

While at the beginning of the novel the river Honia appears as a bridge between the communities, as the split worsens, it reconfigures into as a separating line, materialising the tribal rift between the people of Kamenos and Makuyu geographically. Space plays a crucial role in considering the split within the Gikuyu people and the external pressure of settler colonialism. The novel considers the colonial encroaching on the land and the financial materialisation of this colonial relation through the imposition of taxes.<sup>511</sup> Interestingly, the Gikuyu people begin to notice geological changes taking place: “In the past few years things were changing; the pattern of seasons was broken. It no longer rained regularly. The sun seemed to shine for months and the grass dried. And when it fell, the rainwater carried away the soil. The soil no longer answered the call and prayers of the peoples. Perhaps it had to do with the white men and the blaspheming men of Makuyu”.<sup>512</sup> This quote hints at the environmental degradation, which is consequential to the colonial exploitation of land, as Peter O Ndege argues:

Colonial commodity production, because of inappropriate practice, led to widespread environmental degradation. Forest concessions, which were granted to individuals and companies led to massive deforestation. Colonial enterprises destroyed local industries. Generally the colonial economic policies in Kenya were instrumental in incorporating

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<sup>510</sup> Keguro Macharia, ““How Does a Girl Grow into a Woman?” Girlhood in Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between*”, *Research in African Literatures*, 43.2 (2012), 1–17, p. 2

<sup>511</sup> Ngũgĩ, *The River*, p. 62, p. 65, and pp. 93-94.

<sup>512</sup> Ngũgĩ, *The River*, p. 80.

the pre-capitalist communities into the colonial and international economic systems.

This persisted into the post-colonial period.<sup>513</sup>

This has created irreversible geological changes, which continue to be affected not only through neo-imperial exploitation of ‘the colony’ but also because these changes have the consequence of precipitating and exacerbating climate change in formerly colonial spaces. Also, as Martin S. Shanguhya notes, in the case of Kenya, the “establishment of the colonial state also altered the local indigenous power structure, a development that helped shape colonial relations over the land”.<sup>514</sup> Hence, here it is also important to consider how decolonising relations to extra-human nature plays a crucial role. Let us return briefly to the earlier discussion concerning the importance of water and the comparison between the Thames and the Congo rivers in *HoD*. The river Honia plays a crucial role in Ngũgĩ’s novel:

A river flowed through the valley of life. [... The river] gracefully, and without any apparent haste, wound its way down to the valley, like a snake. The river was called Honia, which meant cure, or bring-back-to-life. Honia river never dried: it seemed to possess a strong will to live scorning droughts and weather changes. And it went on in the same way, never hurrying, never hesitating. People saw this and were happy. Honia was the soul of Kameno and Makuyu. It joined them. And men, cattle, wild beasts and trees, were all united by this life-stream.<sup>515</sup>

The river Honia here is bridging the populations on its banks rather than being described as a territorial demarcation, something bodies of waters are often enlisted to represent in mapping. This is further critical in considering the construction and invention of rivers in terms of colonialism. Like the Congo in *HoD*, the Honia in *The River Between* is also compared to a snake, yet one that is life-giving one rather than a threatening one. The snake imagery also echoes an important symbol in Achebe’s novel. As the split between the clans worsens in *Things*, one of the characters converted to Christianity decides to kill the royal python, “the most revered animal in Mbanta and all the surrounding clans. It was addressed as ‘Our Father’, and was allowed to go wherever it chose [...]. No punishment was prescribed for a man who killed the python knowingly. Nobody thought that such a thing could ever happen”.<sup>516</sup> The royal python is also seen as “the emanation of the god of water”; this association between the

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<sup>513</sup> Peter O. Ndege, “Colonialism and Its Legacies in Kenya” (Fulbright Lecture presented at the Hays Group project abroad program, Moi University Main Campus, 2009) <<http://africanphilanthropy.issuelab.org/resources/19699/19699.pdf>> [accessed 25 April 2020], p. 3

<sup>514</sup> Martin S. Shanguhya, *Population, Tradition, and Environmental Control in Colonial Kenya* (Boydell & Brewer, 2015), p. 29.

<sup>515</sup> Ngũgĩ, *The River*, p. 1.

<sup>516</sup> Achebe, *Things*, p. 91.

python and water also speaks to the clans' relation with waterways in general, which unrestricted by westernised mapping were also be allowed to go wherever they chose, since floods and other regular cycles would not be regulated, but integrated into indigenous practices.

Dilip Da Cunha's *The Invention of Rivers* "is about the art, science, and infrastructure it takes to materialize and naturalize a river on the earth's surface and the role this design project has played and to continues to play in colonizing places of rain".<sup>517</sup> As Da Cunha notes in his preface, "the line separating water from land exists by choice, a choice not in where it is seen in a shifting and dynamic terrain but in fact that it is seen at all. [... Also] people need to be taught to see this line, draw it, and respect it".<sup>518</sup> This line which regulates and essentially puts the river to work is often a consequence of western cartographic practices, but indigenous relations to land on the African and American continents often have different understandings of riverways, in which they are seen more often as uniting rather than separating, as above in *The River Between*. Crucially, these indigenous epistemologies of water also include alternative interpretations of natural hydraulic phenomena like floods and tides. They are part of life cycles that relate to sustenance agriculture or social organisation, or both, in many of these indigenous groups. Though waterways might be used to represent natural boundaries, around which communities build themselves, they are not necessarily articulated and limited by how these communities shape them. In other words, while these communities are attuned with the natural rhythm and flows of these waterways, they do not attempt to 'write' them according to western cartographic practices. In these instances, the linear demarcations undertaken by colonial mapping thus entail "a gradual erosion of indigenous wisdom and replication of intellectual dependency perfected during the colonial times".<sup>519</sup> Decolonising both waterways and relations to them is critical not just in terms of the intellectual and cultural independence of former colonies but also in terms of our current climate crisis, since, as Da Cunha argues, polluted waters are consequences of exploitation underpinned by extractive capitalism, which hierarchises water in relation to land:

Inscribing the line of separation on the earth's surface also demands a particular material appreciation, one that constitutes water as a substance separate from land [...]. Water, however, is lesser in this difference, positioned to be in the service of land. Thus rivers as "flows of water" are readily appreciated for draining land and providing it

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<sup>517</sup> Dilip Da Cunha, *The Invention of Rivers: Alexander's Eye and Ganga's Descent* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p. 17.

<sup>518</sup> Da Cunha, pp. ix-x.

<sup>519</sup> Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, "Imagining Rivers", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35.27 (2000), 2395-2397+2399-2400, p. 2400.

with transportation corridors, energy, water supply, waste disposal routes, and popularly today, a riverfront for real-estate development and consumption. As such, if rivers are polluted, exploited, and endangered today, it is not just because they are violated; it is because water is set up by a material literacy to be dominated by land.<sup>520</sup>

This hierarchisation of and within the natural world, itself is a part of the binary separating people and land, or ‘human and non-human nature’ as it is often called, is an additional ontological and epistemological complication on which our climate crisis rests. The naming and commodification of the land, water and people, permits the overworking of these entities in our productive system. By rehumanising ‘the colony’, the works in this chapter reveal their connections across the extractiono(s)cene.

One can see the crucial role played by waterways, seas and rivers, as repositories of erased histories, even in the titles works investigated throughout this chapter such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o *The River Between* (1965), Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), V.S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* (1979), and Helon Habiba’s *Oil on Water* (2011). Sometimes, the histories implicated provide counter-narratives of the pre-history of ‘the colony’. As Angela Smith notes with respect to Rhys’s novel, for instance, the “identification and naming of the Sargasso Sea are inextricably linked with the history of colonialism. [...] One of the myths about it was that ships could become entangled in the weed and be unable to escape”.<sup>521</sup> An interesting connection can be drawn between the Sargassum weed, which became entangled with the rudders of slave ships and brought them to a halt and which as a pervasive species often overruns Caribbean beaches, and the water hyacinths in V.S. Naipaul’s *A Bend*. In the latter novel, this “new thing in the river” witnesses different types of violence, just as the sargassum weed beholds the arrival of slave ships; like the weed, it also obstructs journeys through the river, as I will discuss below.<sup>522</sup>

Additionally, waterways also play a role in terms of setting and characterisation, as these titles indicate. In Caryl Phillips *The Lost Child* (2015) the setting of the Liverpool docks to tell Healthcliff’s origin story solidifies the connection between the character and the slave trade, while in Ana Lydia Vega’s short story “El baúl de Miss Florence” (1991) “the sea plays an essential part in the process of the characters’ identity formation”.<sup>523</sup> By challenging the material and epistemological enclosure of water, the works here also point to the tensions

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<sup>520</sup> Da Cunha, pp. 9-10.

<sup>521</sup> Angela Smith, “General Notes”, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, ed. by Angela Smith (Penguin Books, 1997), p. 131.

<sup>522</sup> V.S. Naipaul, *A Bend in the River* (Picador, 1979), p. 52.

<sup>523</sup> Virginia Adán-Lifante, “Rewriting History and Culture: “El baúl de Miss Florence” by Ana Lydia Vega”, *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos*, 10 (2004), 9–20, p. 17.

present in shaping and fashioning water. Water, as argued in the previous chapter through the use of the Mami Wata figure, is both a life-giving and a life-taking force, explaining attempts to regulate it. This is further emphasised in the conception of water as necessary for our survival and the ensuing attempt to domesticate it to ensure such survival, as Rohan D'Souza notes:

Formerly wild cascading flows are now put to work – running turbines, marching as orderly cusecs in irrigation canals, providing the measured electric hum for industrial machines, and winding their way diligently through drinking water pipes or simply contained as silent volumes in immense reservoirs. *The river has been put on tap*. Yet, a dammed river [...] profoundly plays out the irreconcilable tensions and intense contradictions between capitalism and nature.<sup>524</sup>

*Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* provide a pre-history to and another version of the history of European evangelisation and colonial exploitation of Nigeria and Kenya and display the slow process of zombifying and erasing 'the colony', which is also present in *JE*. Indeed, the relation between Bertha Mason and Edward Rochester in *JE* is an embodiment of colonial relationality. Bertha epitomises the zombified 'colony' lurking beneath the surface, as Rochester, the quintessential coloniser, attempts to erase her by locking her in the attic, yet still profiting and living on the wealth extracted from 'the colony' through their legal union. Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* provides a clear description of how Bertha Mason becomes Bertha Mason in *JE* by depicting Antoinette Cosway's zombification by Rochester when they first marry:<sup>525</sup> "To gain control over her – as masters gained control over slaves – Rochester "zombifies" Antoinette: covering her face with a sheet as though she were dead, renaming her, defining her as mad, transporting her overseas, keeping her under lock".<sup>526</sup> Here the theme of (re-)naming also resurfaces: Rochester essentially 'creates' Bertha as the 'madwoman in the attic' through his abuse, which is comparable to the zombification of 'the colony' by colonisers for their exploitation:<sup>527</sup> "The intertextual activity of *Wide Sargasso Sea* has made available a kind of historical knowledge that *solves* the mystery of Bertha Mason's madness".<sup>528</sup> Rochester begins by denying Antoinette her name, after discovering it is her mother's.<sup>529</sup> In *JE*, Rochester

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<sup>524</sup> D'Souza, p. 115, my emphasis.

<sup>525</sup> For more on the zombification of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* see Thomas Loe, "Patterns of the Zombie in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*", *World Literature Written in English*, 31.1 (1991), 34–42 and Romita Choudhury, "'Is There a Ghost, a Zombie There?'" Postcolonial Intertextuality and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*", *Textual Practice*, 10.2 (1996), 315–27.

<sup>526</sup> Edna Aizenberg, "'I Walked with a Zombie': The Pleasures and Perils of Postcolonial Hybridity", *World Literature Today: A Literary Quarterly of the University of Oklahoma*, 73.3 (1999), 461–6, p. 464.

<sup>527</sup> Here the concept is more often that of (re-)naming rather than naming because we are told what the original name is, while in the previous chapter, often the original name of Caliban, Friday, etc. is lost in erased histories.

<sup>528</sup> Choudhury, p. 318, emphasis in original.

<sup>529</sup> Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, ed. by Angela Smith, (Penguin Books, 2000), p. 71.

explains Bertha's madness via genetic inheritance: "My bride's mother I had never seen: I understood that she was dead. The honeymoon over, I learned my mistake; she was only mad, and shut up in a lunatic asylum".<sup>530</sup> By renaming Antoinette, Rochester in Rhys's rewriting is trying to separate her from not only her mother but also from her *motherland*. Rochester's aim is to 'civilise' her by imposing a code of behaviour acceptable to his own mores and to impose it through the epistemic violence inherent in her renaming:

'Don't laugh like that, Bertha.'

'My name is not Bertha; why do you call me Bertha?'

'Because it is a name I'm particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha.' [...]

'Not Bertha tonight,' she said.

'Of course, on this of all nights, you must be Bertha.'

'As you wish,' she said.<sup>531</sup>

The act of naming here echoes the designation of the Caribbean and its indigenous people as 'cannibals' by Columbus and of Friday and Caliban by the iterations of the Columbian figure in *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Tempest*. In Rhys's novel, Antoinette notices Rochester's zombification: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that's obeah too".<sup>532</sup> Here Antoinette reverses the accusations deployed against 'the colony' of using indigenous spiritual practices, practices demonised by the colonisers, by directing them against Rochester. While she knows that Obeah can be both healing and dangerous, Rochester, who embodies the coloniser, conceives of Obeah as a monstrous practice, just as he sees Roseau, and by extension all the former colonies as horrendous spaces. Indeed, Antoinette remarks in reference to his demeaning of her home: "But I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate. I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it".<sup>533</sup>

Similarly, in Erna Brodber's novel *Myal* (1988) – which I argue here can be seen as a rewriting of *JE* adapted to the context of American expansionism – the character of Selwyn Langley, the American husband of Ella O'Grady, Bertha Mason in this novel, is associated with zombification and magic. Indeed, as Shalini Puri argues, "Selwyn's particular brand of drug renders the distinction between disease and cure somewhat ambiguous: he engages in the task of exorcising Ella's hybridity, and appropriates her account of Jamaica to his own ends".<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Wordsworth Classics, 1999), p. 270.

<sup>531</sup> Rhys, pp. 86-87.

<sup>532</sup> Rhys, p. 94.

<sup>533</sup> Rhys, pp. 94-95.

<sup>534</sup> Shalini Puri, "An "Other" Realism: Erna Brodber's "Myal"", *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 24.3 (1993), 95-115, p. 103.

In Brodber's novel, the coloniser-colonised relationship between Britain and Jamaica, perpetuated in the United States' imperial relations with their Southern neighbours, is portrayed in Ella's relationship with Selwyn:

If Selwyn Langley had been born in eighteenth or nineteenth century Britain and of upper-class parentage, he would have been called a black sheep. He would have been sent off to Jamaica and would have met Ella O'Grady and chosen her from among his stock to be his housekeeper. He would have given her two children, made his fortune and returned to England as an ordinary sheep ready for his rightful place in the fold there and she would have been left with a small consideration, and her children, with what she could make of it, along with their very profitable skin colour. But this chap was American and not even upper class. He was from a long line – long for America – of chemists, manufacturers of herbal medicines and today doctors and travelling medical lecturers.<sup>535</sup>

Several issues are raised in this quotation. Though Selwyn is not British, his description here, and the zombification and treatment of Ella during their marriage, can be seen as direct references to *JE*'s characters Rochester and Bertha. Rochester, too, had been the "black sheep" of his family: he is sent to 'the colony' to marry a rich heiress of a plantation family. In Brodber's 'americanised' version of Rochester, Selwyn still profits from his wedding with the 'native' woman, though in a different way, and he zombifies her metaphorically as Rochester had zombified Bertha.

The insistence on Selwyn's nationality emphasises the continuation of colonial relations under US occupation and interventionism in several countries of the Caribbean, Central and South America. It also points to the United States' soft power and economic hegemony. Here, Selwyn's character embodies the exploitation and exoticising of Caribbean culture for profit and as a symptom of national, racial and sexual anxieties. This speaks to the larger history of the United States' practice of neo-imperialism, which is often seen as a continuation of the colonial past of European countries. This is evident in the novel, when Ella appears, as a child "reciting Kipling's "The White Man's Burden." It is quite literally the colonizer's voice that speaks through her. At the time, she is unaware of the implications of a colonial text that describes her people, a colonized people, as "half devil, half child"<sup>536</sup>. Furthermore, Selwyn's belonging to a family "not even upper class" and "manufacturers of herbal medicines" indicates the replacement of the British aristocracy during colonial time by

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<sup>535</sup> Erna Brodber, *Myal* (New Beacon Books, 1988), p. 42.

<sup>536</sup> Puri, p. 99.

the rising bourgeois mercantile class during the neo-colonial, US-led era. This also inverts the accusation of malicious black magic usage onto Selwyn, as Antoinette's in *WSS* does above in accusing Rochester of practicing Obeah. This allows for a medicalised understanding of colonialism and (neo-)imperialism in terms of infection. One thinks of Aimé Césaire's *Une tempête*, which likens colonialism to a terminal illness, as I discussed above in Chapter Three. The infectiousness of colonialism is illustrated through Ella's psychological domination, her zombification and her resulting split consciousness, which can only be cured through myalism.

The novel understands zombification through colonial relationality which then bleeds through gender relations within colonised communities. This is shown in the paralleling of the stories of Anita and Ella, both of whom are zombified. While Anita is bewitched by Mass Levi from within the community, who aims to steal her sexual energy and "psychically rape her", Ella O'Grady is zombified by her American husband who steals her essence and life story to create a racist coon show and capitalise on her life and Jamaican origins.<sup>537</sup> This refers back to the idea, mentioned in Chapter Two above, that Haiti and its cultural fare, such as the zombie figure, provide fertile terrain for colonial and imperial powers to both negotiate their anxieties about identity, race and gender and to further exploit the country's cultural capital. Illustrating this dynamic, in the novel Selwyn takes over Ella's story for profit:

*Caribbean Nights and Days* on which Ella's husband was working, six years after that Miss Gatha day and nearly a year after he had made Ella the happiest little wife on earth, [...] Selwyn was [...] overjoyed. That which Ella had given him was for him purest gold. He had only to refine it. He was going to put on the biggest coon show ever. He was going to travel west with it. And there were the movies. Somebody sure would back it. Father could. Or could get someone to.<sup>538</sup>

The title of Selwyn's narrative, emphasising night over day and putting the former before the latter, already sets the Caribbean island as a place of leisure and pleasure from the western perspective. While the enslaved, later indentured, labourers work during the day, the night is the time of exoticism and mysticism, of pleasure and danger. It represents a time during which the western voyeur and visitor can take advantage of the islands and its people; a view from the exploitation of colonial times to one similar in contemporary tourism industries. This exoticism is furthered by sexual tourism in particular, which Polly Pattullo argues "flourishes in the region and is subliminally promoted through the sort of advertising which associates the

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<sup>537</sup> Catherine Nelson-McDermott, "Myal-Ing Criticism: Beyond Colonizing Dialectics", *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 24.4 (1993), 53–67, p. 54.

<sup>538</sup> Brodber, pp. 79-80.

Caribbean with ‘letting your hair down’ and hedonism. The tourist industry condones, if not colludes, in this image”.<sup>539</sup> The Caribbean remains a space revered either for its “pristine physical beauty” or exploited to play out western anxieties and fantasies.<sup>540</sup> This dynamic can be extended to other former colonies including Central and South America and the African continent, as Mbembe notes:

Le continent est en effet devenu, depuis le début de la traite atlantique, un intarissable puits aux fantasmes, la matière d’un gigantesque travail de l’imagination. [...] Il y a d’abord une face diurne – un lieu géographique et une région du monde dont on ne sait presque rien, mais que l’on décrit avec une apparente autorité, l’autorité de la fiction. [...] Ainsi l’Afrique est tantôt une terre étrange, merveilleuse et aveuglante, tantôt une zone torride et inhabitable. [...] Elle est aussi, bien souvent, le nom de quelque chose d’autre, quelque chose de colossal et d’impénétrable, dont l’énormité se confond avec toutes les figures du monstrueux et de la licence absolue – licence parfois poétique, parfois carnavalesque, trop souvent cynique et ténébreuse, un affreux mélange de fétichisme et de cannibalisme. Mais, quelles que soient la beauté ou la laideur de son visage, le destin de l’Afrique est d’être possédée.<sup>541</sup>

It is worth noting that night can also represent a time of resistance during which enslaved labourers are free from plantation work and can plot rebellions and escapes, as is portrayed, for instance, in Marlon James’s novel *The Book of Night Women* (2009). In considering night’s duality, then, an interesting connection can be drawn between plantation economy and labour and the contemporary tourism industry as a successor of similar exploitation and extraction, though the details of this fall outside the purview of this thesis. Just like ‘the colony’, Ella must

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<sup>539</sup> Polly Pattullo, *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (Monthly Review Press, 2005), p. 108. This is a critical element to consider in relation to former colonies and the tourism industry, which in many cases can be considered a continuation of colonial and imperial practices. Moreover, the exoticism of the ‘beautiful tropical island’ is also crucially treated in DeLoughrey and Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Island*: “What a beautiful island Antigua is – more beautiful than any of the other islands you have seen, and they were very beautiful, in their way, but they were much too green, much too lush in vegetation, which indicated to you, the tourist, that they got quite a bit of rainfall, and rain is the very thing that you, just now, do not want, for you are thinking of the hard and cold and dark and long days you spent working in North America (or, worse, Europe), earning some money so that you could stay in this place (Antigua) where the sun always shines and where the climate is deliciously hot and dry for the four to ten days you are going to be staying there; and since you are on your holiday, since you are a tourist, the thought of what it might be like for someone who had to live day in, day out in a place that suffers constantly from drought, and so has to watch carefully every drop of fresh water used (while at the same time surrounded by a sea and an ocean – the Caribbean Sea on one side, the Atlantic Ocean on the other), must never cross your mind” in Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Island* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1988), pp. 3-4. Here another fundamental issue in the commodification of the island for tourism is raised: the disassociation between weather and primal necessities, such as agriculture and ecosystem health, since warmth is only seen as a reward for deserving hard-working tourists, rather than understood as the deadly reality of a drought, especially in our time of climate crisis. This also points to the fact that tourists, in an island experiencing a drought, would never have to worry about freshwater use, while islanders would be left to face the consequences daily.

<sup>540</sup> Pattullo, p. 129.

<sup>541</sup> Mbembe, *Critique*, pp. 109-110.

be owned by Selwyn and the “purest gold” that she has given him is mined and refined by the American to create a highly racist and stereotyped coon show. His evocation of the precious metal refers back to Columbus’s mercantile mission, followed by the *Conquistadores* looking for *El Dorado* and ransacking and destroying the places they reached.<sup>542</sup> This also reinforces the idea that colonial and (neo-)imperial relations aim to extract *all* natural resources from ‘the colony’, including the intellectual and cultural. Here the extraction of Ella’s life is equated to that of gold, or the wealth the coon show will produce, and other resources mentioned below in the study of the other novels investigated in this chapter. Selwyn’s show exploits Ella’s life and the image of Jamaica by appropriating a culture he does not understand and perpetuating dangerous, ignorant and insulting stereotypes:

Selwyn knew nothing about Easter as star-apple time; mid-summer for mangoes and the end of summer, the breadfruit season. Nothing at all, it was unnatural and it shook Ella but all her obsessed soul could register was to become: “Everything is a fruit except me”. Months later it was to become: “He has given a fruit to everyone except me.” Tonight she watched his play. They were all there. [...] The black of their skins shone on stage, relieved only by the white of their eyes and the white of the chalk around their mouths. Everybody’s hair was in plaits and stood on end and everybody’s clothes were the strips of cloth she had told him Ole African wore. Ella groaned. Where was Mammy Mary’s cool tan-tuddy-potato skin? The major character was a white-skinned girl. Ella was the star. He had given her flowing blond hair. Our heroin was chased by outstretched black hands grabbing at her and sliding, and being forced into somersaults as they missed their target throughout the *Caribbean Nights and Days*. “It didn’t go so”, she said under her breath.<sup>543</sup>

Ella’s anxiety about not bearing Selwyn’s child becomes entangled with the symbolical status of this play as the product of their relationship, which subsequently moves to take the place of the child they do not have. Ella is shocked by the multiple inaccuracies and the problematic portrayal of her town, its landscape and its people in Selwyn’s play. In addition, both Ella’s and her mother’s skin colour are the sign of their hybridity since both are born of interracial relationships. The ‘in-between’ *métis* skin colour is whitened or darkened in

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<sup>542</sup> As Joel Simon argues in relation to Mexico City: “If Mexicans want to assign blame for their current water woes, they might as well look to Hernán Cortés. Cortés marveled at Tenochtitlan’s beauty but what he inherited at the end of the two-year campaign was a pile of rubble. Tenochtitlan was sacked, burned annihilated. The Spanish siege specifically targeted the hydraulic infrastructure. The dikes were dismantled to make room for the Spanish brigantines; the aqueducts were destroyed in order to deprive the city of fresh water; the canals were filled in to allow passage for the Spanish cavalry. [...] After three centuries of abuse, the valley’s hydrology had been permanently and irreparably damaged” in Joel Simon, *Endangered Mexico: An Environment on the Edge* (Latin American Bureau, 1997), pp. 64-69.

<sup>543</sup> Brodber, pp. 83-84.

Selwyn's play, signifying western demonisation of hybridity and its anxieties surrounding miscegenation. Contrasted with Ella's whitened skin in the show are the "outstretched black hands" threateningly seizing and controlling her, which illustrate this fear. This imagery keeps both non-white men and women, in inferior places, the former as threatening monsters and the latter as victims to be saved. Selwyn's rejection of miscegenation and racism are seen in his use of "prophylactics" when he has sexual relations with Ella; she "had given and was giving all she had but he would want more. In-laws with real pedigree for instance, who could appear in the flesh".<sup>544</sup>

Ella is thus enclosed in a relationship of double inferiority with Selwyn, being both a woman and a mulatto, and the play is a signifier for their relationship given that "Selwyn occupied himself with one production: the making of Ella O'Grady".<sup>545</sup> After seeing the play, Ella is miraculously impregnated, "she was carrying the baby Jesus", despite the fact that Selwyn does not even touch her anymore and when he does, he wears protection.<sup>546</sup> This 'fruit' that Ella finally bears from their relationship represents the zombification he has enacted upon her, as she is told telepathically by the White Hen (representing Mrs Brassington, Ella's 'adoptive' and second mother) that "spirit thievery comes in so many forms".<sup>547</sup>

After Ella sees the play, she realises that Selwyn is draining her of her life-story, and life-force, for profit: "When the mysterious grey mass forms inside her, the villagers know that this is no normal illness; it is the manifestation of the poisons with which foreigners have filled her, and as the community herbalist Cyrus discerns, it has to be expelled by spiritual means".<sup>548</sup> Selwyn's psychological zombification of Ella occurs over a long time span during which the "creator loved his creature" and "he wanted to be in that room alone with her, to light a fire and have her take him into a tropical December and have her show him its jungle and tell him its strangest tales".<sup>549</sup> After seeing the play and after years of psychological abuse, Ella's split consciousness clashes in the following dialogue:

long conversations between her selves took place in her head. Mostly accusations. –  
He took everything I had away. Made what he wanted of it and gave me back nothing.  
[...] – It was you who let him take everything. You gave him everything. – To which  
she replied in her defence: – But I didn't even know when I was giving it, that it was

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<sup>544</sup> Brodber, p. 80.

<sup>545</sup> Brodber, p. 43.

<sup>546</sup> Brodber, p. 83, pp. 82-83, and p. 80.

<sup>547</sup> Brodber, p. 83.

<sup>548</sup> Michelene Adams, "The Half Has Never Been Told": Revisioning West Indian History in *Myal*, *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 18.2 (2010), 160–80, p. 166.

<sup>549</sup> Brodber, p. 43 and p. 46.

mine and my everything, – and the other got really angry with her: – How could you not have known? Mule. With blinders on. [...] – Now that – mule – was a bad thing to call Ella at this time and she really got very vexed [...] – Mule? Who you calling mule, you mulatto?<sup>550</sup>

Ella's interior dialogue between her split selves illustrates the internalisation of the racism of which she has been a victim, not only at Selwyn's hands, but also at the hands of some of the people from Grove Town who object to her 'in-betweenness': "You don't need to tell me that that child's colour makes her uncomfortable in a district like this. That much I can see".<sup>551</sup> This can be associated with the "épidermisation" Fanon describes in his *Peau noire, masques blancs*, in his discussion of the violent psychological impact of racist discrimination institutionalised during colonialism and still striving decades later when the French Antilles are assimilated to France in the process of *départementalisation*: "S'il y a un complexe d'infériorité, c'est à la suite d'une double processus: – économique d'abord; – par intériorisation ou, mieux, épidermisation de cette infériorité ensuite".<sup>552</sup>

Ella's and Anita's zombification can only be cured through myalism in the novel, demonstrating the healing powers of this traditional Afro-Caribbean practice which has been demonised from the time of colonialism to the (neo-)imperialist present.<sup>553</sup> The healing powers of myalism extend, significantly, to community building. As Shalini Puri writes:

[W]hile spirit possession functions in the text as a figure for domination, it also "doubles" as a figure for the survival of disallowed African-derived cultural practices. [...] Spirit possession in the novel thus represents not only domination and theft but also the possibility of connection with the half that has not been told: ancestral beliefs, oral traditions, religions, and healing practices.<sup>554</sup>

The novel's emblematic refrain "the half has never been told" promotes a reconsideration of the traditions and cultures that have been demonised by the colonisers.<sup>555</sup> Another half that has never been told in the novel is that of the Morant Bay rebellion.<sup>556</sup> The novel creates a parallel between the mistold history of the rebellion and of myalism, aiming to 'dezombify' both and

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<sup>550</sup> Brodber, p. 84.

<sup>551</sup> Brodber, p. 23.

<sup>552</sup> Fanon, *Peau noire*, p. 8.

<sup>553</sup> Adams, p. 167.

<sup>554</sup> Puri, p. 101.

<sup>555</sup> Brodber, pp. 34-35.

<sup>556</sup> "In 1865, the conviction of a young Jamaican in Morant Bay triggered a chain of events that resulted in an all-out rebellion of Blacks against the law. Several Whites were beaten and killed, causing panic, especially because it recalled the violence against Whites that erupted in Haiti after the slaves had won their freedom and declared independence. Thus, the Governor instituted martial law and additional troops were sent from Kingston" in Adams, p. 165.

rewriting their history: “Brodber takes the loaded figure of Morant Bay from the standard histories and reconfigures it; the sense of failure and of tragedy that it has generally borne in the texts is displaced here, futile violent resistance exchanged for productive resistance through spiritual”.<sup>557</sup> The focus on myalism particularly rehabilitates hybridity, which through colonialism and racism has been demonised and aims to reconstruct kinship, since

cooperation among different African peoples was unprecedented, “Myalism may actually have fostered pan-African cooperation where once only ethnic division had existed”. The religion became even more syncretic when, within fifty years of its appearance, it began incorporating Christian elements into its beliefs and practices. Thus, the word “myal” signifies some of the most crucial defining factors of West Indian society: Creolisation, struggle, and survival. [...] Brodber sets her story in a period when restrictive social structures based on the divisions bred by slavery and colonialism were being cemented, yet she insists on focusing on what occurs in a community when individuals refuse to remain in their designated spaces and choose instead to merge with various Others.<sup>558</sup>

The focus on indigenous epistemologies and practices, and on the figure of the zombie particularly, plays a crucial role in both literary works in dealing with the history of colonialism and resistance. Hence, the novel simultaneously dezombifies ‘the colony’ and rewrites history, as Michelene Adams argues:

In this narrative, Brodber rewrites a moment in West Indian history, inscribing the hope that syncretism carries, over the horror that the English patriarch injected into the text with his vision of the evil of miscegenation. [...] The Empire’s delineation of its own agenda and of West Indian history is erroneous, and Brodber addresses this violation by focusing on some of the most fundamental misrepresentations, then systematically subverting and inverting them.<sup>559</sup>

Critically, Antoinette’s criticism of Rochester’s violation and disfiguration of ‘the colony’ in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *Myal*’s subversion of the Euro-American-centric zombification of ‘the colony’, (within and without the novel), question *JE*’s Rochester’s description of the West Indies to Jane:

it was a fiery West Indian night; one of the description that frequently precede the hurricanes of those climates. Being unable to sleep in bed, I got up and opened the window. The air was like sulphur-steams – I could find no refreshment anywhere. Mosquitoes came buzzing in and hummed sullenly round the room; the sea, which I

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<sup>557</sup> Adams, p. 167.

<sup>558</sup> Adams, pp. 168-173.

<sup>559</sup> Adams, p. 174

could hear from thence, rumbled dull like an earthquake – black clouds were casting up over it; the moon was setting in the waves, broad and red, like a hot cannon-ball [...]. I was physically influenced by the atmosphere and scene [...]. “This life,” said I at last, “is hell”<sup>560</sup>

Hence, Rochester is ‘othering’ Bertha and the space from where she hails. ‘Othering’ ‘the colony’ is crucial in the construction and emergence of Jane’s identity as of Europe’s more generally: “Without Bertha’s barbaric, malignant, and treacherous capacities, Jane cannot activate and consolidate her ‘soul making’ process; Europe cannot render itself the ‘grave and quiet’ spectator of the ‘demonic gambols’ of its Other”.<sup>561</sup> This also points to the failure of *JE* to be a proto-feminist narrative due to its lack of intersectionality, as a I will discuss below in relation to V.S. Naipaul’s *Guerrillas* (1975).<sup>562</sup> This failure is also emphasised by the fact that the wealth that permits Jane’s independence and which re-balances the relationship between her and Rochester itself originates from colonial exploitation: “in *Jane Eyre* all the money comes from colonial exploitation. Jane Eyre herself gains her financial independence as a result of a legacy from an uncle in Madeira who is connected to the same firm which Mr Mason, Bertha’s brother, represents in Jamaica”.<sup>563</sup> Therefore, Jane’s independence can only be reached at the financial and physical expense of another woman – Bertha – and through the exploitation of ‘the colony’ more broadly, as is the case for most of what used to be Europe at the time.

Similarly, Phillip’s *The Lost Child* establishes the Earnshaw’s family ties to plantation economy in rewriting *WH*:

(Please, must you go, Father? Your ship is in Antigua, isn’t it? Are there problems at your sugarworks?) Old Joseph tended the roaring fire and said nothing, but neither son nor daughter could disguise their great frustration at the prospect of their father’s impending absence. Of course, the children had often been told that their father had little choice but to conduct dealings in Liverpool with men whose hearts were hard like stone, and whose Christian charity went no further than the looking glass: these men of commerce were his colleagues<sup>564</sup>

*The Lost Child* provides the story of Heathcliff’s early years in Liverpool before he is brought to the Heights in Yorkshire. This narrative is interwoven with another dealing with other ‘lost

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<sup>560</sup> Brontë, pp. 271-272.

<sup>561</sup> Choudhury, p. 322.

<sup>562</sup> I refer here to criticism that specifically has been describing Brontë’s novel as proto-feminist such as in Bette London, “The Pleasures of Submission: *Jane Eyre* and the Production of the Text”, *ELH*, 58.1 (1991), 195–213.

<sup>563</sup> Judie Newman, *The Ballistic Bard: Postcolonial Fictions* (Edward Arnold, 1995), p. 14.

<sup>564</sup> Caryl Phillips, *The Lost Child* (Oneworld, 2015), p. 243.

children' growing up in Britain whose ancestors hailed from former colonies. Marginalisation and dispossession through systemic and structural racism and inequality are present still in modern and contemporary England: "From its opening, *The Lost Child* calls attention to the lost children of the first encounter of eighteenth century northern England and the Black Atlantic, meaning formerly enslaved Caribbean people who, for various reasons, found themselves in Britain; it also tells the story of their lost children and their children's children".<sup>565</sup> The first section of the novel depicts the conception of Heathcliff by Mr Earnshaw and an unnamed black woman in Liverpool. Though, she resides now in the metropole she often recalls her life and work on the plantation and the violence and oppression there:

She remembers long days in the West Indian fields digging with a rod of pointed iron under the burning sky; she remembers restless nights as black as soot listening for the sound of footsteps approaching the door and wondering whether tonight it will be her turn to be covered. But Master never came to her. (A Congo woman, too dark.)<sup>566</sup>

This passage reiterates the connection between sexual violence and miscegenation as a central and initial point of contact during the Atlantic trade and colonial time. Indeed, the rape as initial contact on the ship or on the plantation is differentiated by the hierarchy in race relation that is installed on 'the colony' to ensure that supremacy of white settler colonialism, as I will also discuss below in relation to Maryse Condé's *La migration des cœurs* (1995). Phillips's novel's setting allows for a consideration of how racial hierarchy and sexual violence are framed and perpetuated in the metropolitan space. Indeed, in the novel, Heathcliff's mother's sexual interaction with Mr Earnshaw is reminiscent of her rape. This is crucial in indicating that though this affair in the metropole appears more consensual, the condition in which black and mixed-race women are maintained everywhere makes them constantly vulnerable to different types of abuse:

Although the considerate man took his time and let his fingers gently explore the soft curves of her body and whispered to her throughout, she was unable to prevent her mind from collapsing under the stress of memory. She found herself back on the ship with the captain stirring himself to quick, frenzied spasms, after which she was confined to her corner, where she prayed that he might now leave her alone.<sup>567</sup>

This quotation recounts how the ship represents a space of repeated violence and uncertainty for abducted African peoples – and especially women – where the rules of the metropolises and

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<sup>565</sup> Bénédicte Ledent and Evelyn O'Callaghan, "Caryl Phillips' *The Lost Child*: A Story of Loss and Connection", *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 48.3–4 (2017), 229–47, 230.

<sup>566</sup> Phillips, p. 4.

<sup>567</sup> Phillips, p. 10.

even of the plantations do not apply. Both a legal and historical vacuum, the ship represents the in-between, bridging point between the space of abduction, the space of labour and the space in which wealth is enjoyed by emerging European nation states and what will eventually become the United States.

Vega's short story emphasises this by displacing *JE* onto the colonial space to render the violent labour dynamics and erased history of 'the colony' central to the narrative. Florence Jane (Jane Eyre) is employed as a governess in Puerto Rico for Edward Lind (Edward Rochester) and his wife Susan Morse (Bertha Mason), to care for and teach to their child Charlie. The characters of Lind and Morse are based on actual people: Susan was the daughter of Samuel Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, who lived in Arroyo for four years; Lind was a plantation owner there. As Vega notes in the short preface to this tale: "La calle más larga de Arroyo se llamó una vez Isabel Segunda. Hoy lleva el nombre del inventor del telégrafo, Samuel Morse, cuya hija vivió unos cuarenta años, junto a su esposo, el hacendado esclavista Edward Lind, en la opulenta y hoy desaparecida casona de *La Enriqueta*. Don Samuel estuvo de visita allí en diciembre 1858".<sup>568</sup> Interestingly, the street that used to bear the name of the Spanish Monarch, recalling the first coloniser on the island – a legacy still present in the linguistic context of Puerto Rico – is now renamed to celebrate an American inventor. American imperialism succeeds and extends the earlier Spanish form of colonisation. The characters of Florence Jane/Jane Eyre (the British governess), the Francophone abolitionist Doctor Fouchard and two siblings from Haiti create connections to the entire European legacy of colonialism in the Caribbean, including the revolutionary upheaval and potential of the former Saint Domingue. In this respect Vega's short story foreshadows César Mba Abogo's *El porteador de Marlow. Canción negra sin color* (2007), which I examine below, and which also tries to consider the way in which all of Europe has profited from colonialism and is still profiting from its extension in various forms of imperialism today. Mba Abogo sets the short pieces in his collection in different invented places from the European and African continents.

Vega's short story is "made up of fragments supposedly written by Miss Florence, an English nanny who came to Puerto Rico to take care of Samuel Morse's grandson. [...] What Vega does is imagine possible characters or enhance their voices and enable them to offer us the perspective of a participant, but one who has not been privileged or selected by the historians".<sup>569</sup> In rewriting historical events and merging them with *JE*, the short story

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<sup>568</sup> Ana Lydia Vega, *Falsas crónicas del sur* (La Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>569</sup> Mary Ann Gosser-Esquilín, "Ana Lydia Vega's *Falsas crónicas del sur*: Reconstruction and Revision of Puerto Rico's Past", in *A Twice-Told Tale: Reinventing the Encounter in Iberian/Iberian American Literature and Film*,

effectively decolonises historiography and provides a version of history that aims to uncover the erased and forgotten history of colonisation and enslaved labour on the plantation. Though Susan is not confined to the attic from the beginning of the narration, she is already described as spectral from the outset through Florence's diary entries: "ella ronda como un fantasma discreto por la casa, presa de un modorra sin final".<sup>570</sup> Lind's violence and intransigence toward her and their son, in addition to his extra-marital affairs with enslaved women on the plantation, lead to her isolation and descent into madness, a process exacerbated by Charlie's suicide: "Ya ni dormía más con el esposo ni casi se la veía caminar por la casa. A mí me daba pena verla así, tan solita, tan encerrada".<sup>571</sup> She eventually becomes *JE*'s 'madwoman in the attic', her walks to the sugarcane plantations at night reminding us that this is the prime site of extraction and exploitation in the plantation economy:

Al principio la señora no quería creer que Charlie ya no estaba. Se pasaba el día encerrada, llamándolo y conversando con las paredes. De noche, la veíamos andar por los jardines, buscando entre los árboles, llorando y gimiendo como un alma en pena. El señor me mandaba a seguirla, no fuera a darle con hacer cualquier locura. A veces nos cogía la madrugada caminando por los cañaverales. Tan pronto como salía el sol, se dejaba llevar otra vez a la habitación.<sup>572</sup>

Susan's madness is redolent of Antoinette's and Ella's zombification by their British and American Rochesters discussed above. While Susan is a white American woman and therefore represents the imperial power, the inversion operated in Vega's short story illuminates the zombification of the white woman by the white man, parodying early zombie movies in which North American anxieties are epitomised in the zombification of the white woman by black vaudou masters. While in *JE*, Bertha, the West Indian woman, is zombified in England by the white colonist Rochester, here the presence of the mad American woman on the plantation emphasises the multi-layered violence of colonialism and imperialism. The son, Charlie, native of Puerto Rico, though also wealthy, communicates to his governess that he feels imprisoned by his life. A life that is certainly of privilege, but a privilege based on enslaved labour, racism and violence against people who have helped raise him.<sup>573</sup> The abolitionist Fouchard, who becomes Florence's friend halfway through the narrative, attempts to show her the violence and suffering of enslaved labour on which *La Enriqueta* is built and

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ed. by Santiago Juan-Navarro and Theodore Robert Young (University of Delaware Press, 2001), pp. 193–209, p. 205.

<sup>570</sup> Vega, p. 10.

<sup>571</sup> Vega, p. 71.

<sup>572</sup> Vega, pp. 77-78.

<sup>573</sup> Vega p.8 and pp. 22-23.

which permits her livelihood: “Mi querida amiga: si tengo algún consejo que ofrecerle es que se salve, que abandone usted esa cárcel lujosa y placentera construida sobre los huesos de tantos seres”.<sup>574</sup> Besides pointing to the violence, Fouchard’s words describing the plantation as a cemetery vividly depicts the brutal realities of slavery, which echoes the discussion of Sharpe and Mbembe who see the ocean as a mortuary in which the remains of abducted African people continue to be today, biologically and historically speaking (see p. 14 in Chapter One above). Florence, like her Brontean homologue, refuses to see all the suffering and pain allowing her financial independence. Her denial remains steadfast despite Fouchard’s words since she decides to put an end to their friendship seeing abolitionism dangerous for herself and her employers: “¿Será el Doctor Fouchard uno de esos jóvenes idealistas que predicán la libertad de los negros? [...] ¿por qué arriesga nuestra amistad con un comportamiento que amenaza no sólo mi posición sino la de mis protectores? Mañana, cuando venga a procurarme, Bela habrá de decirle que no estoy”.<sup>575</sup>

If it proves possible for Brontë’s heroine to refuse to take cognisance of the violence of the plantation, in a novel set in the metropole, this violence simply cannot be erased from consciousness in a work like Vega’s, set on the plantation itself. As Persephone Braham argues, the brutal sociality of the plantation is constitutive of contemporary Puerto Rico: “el misterio central a menudo trata las opresivas relaciones de género y raza en el ambiente de la hacienda y el esfuerzo por ocultar la “mancha negra” en una familia. En *Miss Florence* Vega utiliza este modelo para criticar la supresión de la identidad negra en la historia oficial puertorriqueña”.<sup>576</sup> And as Virginia Adán-Lifante points out, the title of the collection of short stories in which ‘El baúl de Miss Florence’ appears, *Falsas crónicas del sur*, already gestures to erased and submerged histories: “throughout her book she questions the inevitable biased nature of the historiography enterprise, [...]. The term “falsas,” thus, can be interpreted not only as an adjective that describes the inaccuracy of Vega’s own “crónicas,” but also as an indictment of official (hi)stories that cannot be factual versions of particular events (as they pretend to be)”.<sup>577</sup> Violence and miscegenation play a central role in the development and constitution of Caribbean islands and other former colonies; for many in the ‘new world’, especially, rape is

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<sup>574</sup> Vega, p. 46.

<sup>575</sup> Vega, p. 33.

<sup>576</sup> Persephone Braham, “Ana Lydia Vega y el género negrogótico”, *Revista Iberoamericana*, 77.231 (2010), 443–57, p. 452.

<sup>577</sup> Adán-Lifante, p. 10. It is also worth noting that the title of the short story itself hints at the circumscribed nature of the colonial literary archive assembled by Florence since in her trunk she keeps different documents, letters, journal article clippings and her diaries, see Vega, pp. 5-6.

the ultimate originary horizon whose violence cannot be obscured in or gainsaid by any intellectual celebration of hybridity:

Frances Aparicio reminds us that “[t]he marginal relations between white males and mulatas, usually never made official, have indeed been the structural principal that maintained the growth of mestizaje in the Caribbean islands” (43). Interrogating that uncharted territory may thus serve as an instance of rewriting Puerto Rican history from a gendered point of view hitherto absent from the public discourse.<sup>578</sup>

Selenia is the one black enslaved woman with whom Lind sleeps whose identity is revealed to the reader, and she and her son, Andrés play a crucial role. At the end of the novel, after Florence returns to the island because she has heard of Susan’s death, Andrés is one of the last men standing in the decaying hacienda which embodies the ruins of Empire. Andrés represents many of the inhabitants of former colonies, who still live today the consequences of colonialism and (neo-)imperialism, especially on islands such as Puerto Rico or Guadeloupe, which continue to be imprisoned in uneven relations with western countries.

In a discussion of the situation in Martinique (like Guadeloupe, an overseas department of France), Édouard Glissant notes that “Pour nous, reconquérir le sens de notre histoire, c’est connaître le discontinu réel pour ne plus subir passivement [...]a « colonisation réussie »”.<sup>579</sup> Understanding *départementalisation* as a successful colonisation sheds light on the continued uneven economic, social and political relations between metropole and periphery. Maryse Condé’s *La migration des cœurs*, a rewriting of *WH*, aims to illustrate how these inequalities represent continuations of the plantation and slavery system in Guadeloupe. The novel is set after the abolition of slavery, but, as most characters notice, this does not change the uneven racial relations on the island which feed into social class status: “Parce que l’abolition de l’esclavage n’avait rien change à rien. C’était toujours les grands békés qui faisaient la loi et les nègres qui mangeaient la misère”.<sup>580</sup> Condé’s depiction of post-abolition life ranges across the Caribbean Sea, featuring Cuba and Dominica, revealing the connections across parts of the extractiono(s)cene. Like Phillips’s rewriting of *WH* in *The Lost Child*, *La migration* shows the continuing marginalisation and dispossession of enslaved indigenous and abducted African peoples on the Caribbean island, rather than being set in the metropole. One can see the perpetuation of the metropole’s power throughout the novel when, two-thirds through it,

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<sup>578</sup> Adán-Lifante, p. 13.

<sup>579</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Gallimard, 1997), p. 273.

<sup>580</sup> Maryse Condé, *La migration des cœurs* (Robert Laffont, 1995), p. 26.

Razyé's (Heathcliff's) son is given casualised work by a wealthy man born in Dominica but originally from Liverpool:

M. Sherbett était né à Roseau, mais sa famille prenait ses racines à Liverpool. Après avoir fructifié dans la canne, elle venait de vendre avec profit ses plantations et s'était reconvertie dans le commerce. [...] Il fit signe à Premier-né de s'approcher, fronça le nez en respirant son odeur et lui dit en créole :

- Ce week-end, je veux faire mon inventaire. Je paie un shilling la journée<sup>581</sup>

Sherbett's employment of Premier-né shows not only the fact that wealth distribution on the islands remains unequal, but also that the enrichment of white westerners in former colonies continues to be based on the precarious and meagrely paid labour of black and mixed-race peoples. Moreover, Sherbett's racism is also shown in this passage in his bodily reaction to Premier-né's supposed smell, curling his nose at the latter's approach. The perduring reality of racism is used in the narrative to explain Cathy's choice of Aymeric de Linsseuil (Edgar Linton) over Razyé (Heathcliff): "Mais de la façon dont Razyé est à présent, je ne pourrai jamais me marier avec lui. Ce serait une dégradation ! Ce serait comme s'il n'y avait plus qu'une seule Cathy, la bossale, la mécréante descendant tout droit de son négrier... Avec lui, je recommencerais à vivre comme si nous étions encore des sauvages d'Afrique. Tout pareil !" <sup>582</sup> Like other black and mixed-race characters in the novel, Cathy is aware that in order to rise through the ranks of society – or in her case to be able to maintain her status and live a comfortable life – one must whiten oneself as much as possible: "Les gens les plus noirs se vantent d'avoir des parents blancs, c'est une manière d'éclaircir leur couleur". <sup>583</sup>

Aymeric's family is strongly opposed to his and Cathy's union because even though she comes from a family of plantation owners, she is mixed-race, the issue of a relation between her father, the white plantation owner, and one of his enslaved workers: "Cathy s'est mariée avec Aymeric de Linsseuil le 13 avril 18... Évidemment, les Linsseuil ne voulaient pas d'elle. Les békés ne veulent jamais de nous. Ils n'entendent pas mélanger leur sang avec le nôtre. Ils veulent garder leurs plantations et tout le profit de la canne comme dans le temps quand ils fouettaient les nègres". <sup>584</sup> Linsseuil's children Aymeric and Irmine (Isabella) represent a new generation for whom race hierarchy appears less stable given their respective marriages to Cathy, who is mixed-race, and Razyé, who is black. The Linsseuil's last name homophony

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<sup>581</sup> Condé, *La migration*, p. 297.

<sup>582</sup> Condé, *La migration*, p. 48.

<sup>583</sup> Condé, *La migration*, p. 175, and "Alors, se marier à quelque mulâtresse richement dotée et prête à tout pour éclaircir son sang? Bien des békés se livraient à ce petit jeu-là à présent", p. 227.

<sup>584</sup> Condé, *La migration*, p. 54.

with the term for the burial shroud in French (*linceuil mortuaire*) hints at fact that the white *béké* class is itself has slowly lost power and supremacy on the island in the time since the abolition of slavery, though racism itself and consequent structural and systemic inequalities will take years to be overcome. The character of Irmine is interesting in this context in that she at first appears to be more sensitive to the plight of black people in Guadeloupe:

Avant même de connaître Razyé et de mettre au monde son enfant, je m'intéressais aux Noirs. Je suis née bien après l'abolition de l'esclavage, et *mabo* Julie m'en a toujours parlé comme un temps de l'enfer. Pourtant, je n'imaginai pas comment la condition des esclaves avait pu être pire que celle que je connaissais. Je voyais les Noirs partout subalternes, ombres soumises, allant et venant à travers l'habitation et satisfaisant aux moindres caprices.<sup>585</sup>

Irmine considers how despite the abolition of slavery on the island, little has changed. More interestingly, her description of subaltern black people as shadows, echoing *HoD*'s similar depictions of black people in the Congo, shows how the explicit racism in her family still seeps through her supposedly good sentiment: "Mon père soutenait qu'il fallait s'en méfier ; ma mère rappelait les devoirs des chrétiens à leur endroit".<sup>586</sup>

Similarly, Naipaul's *Guerrillas*, can also be seen to engage with elements from *HoD*. Indeed, while the novel overtly engages with *WH* and *JE*, it is my contention that it can also be seen as a rewriting of *HoD*: all of the characters appear to be trapped in the colonial discourses found in these novels. Naipaul's rewriting of *JE* and *WH* is not a formal adaptation, but rather an intertextuality exercise, which allows the discriminatory discourse and the uncanny 'colony' found in the Brontë's novels to surface and become central. The novel is set in an unnamed Caribbean island, which permits us to identify it with several former colonies in the extractiono(s)cene. Two of its central protagonists are a young woman, Jane, and her companion Peter Roche (Rochester). The former is a white English woman who, unlike to Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, does not grow to be an 'independent woman' but instead marries and divorces very young:

She had married young, seventeen or eighteen; she spoke of it as of an abduction. For reasons Roche couldn't follow she blamed her mother and an uncle for this early marriage (her father had died when she was very young); and she blamed her school for sending her out uneducated and ready to throw herself at the first man she met. She

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<sup>585</sup> Condé, *La migration*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>586</sup> Condé, *La migration*, p. 108.

had married a man twice her age, a politician, thought then to be rising. He had since fallen, become a businessman.<sup>587</sup>

In this description from Peter Roche's flashback to the first time they meet, one can see Jane's refusal to take on any responsibility for her life as she blames others for her own mistakes. This also highlights the importance of social status in her choice, which can be interpreted as a legacy of her education in a wealthy British family. After her failed marriage and several other failed relationships, she meets Peter Roche in London while doing publicity for the firm that publishes his memoirs about South Africa, where he had been tortured whilst fighting against discrimination and Apartheid. And, despite having just taken a new position with the publishing company, she decides to follow Roche to the Caribbean island where the novel is set. He is hired there by an American bauxite company and enjoys respect and celebrity due to his participation in anti-racist struggles in South Africa. Once on the island their relationship degrades because of Jane's aspirations and expectations:

She saw that Roche was a refugee on the island. He was as an employee of his firm; he belonged to a place like the Ridge; he was half colonial. He was less on the island than he had been in London, and she still wondered at the haste with which he had thrown up his life there. She doubted whether half a dozen people on the island had read his book. Of course he had a reputation, as someone who had suffered in South Africa. Without this reputation he would not have been employed by Sablich's, and he certainly would not have been given a work permit.<sup>588</sup>

The comment on Roche's status as "half colonial" because he and Jane live on the Ridge, which as Rao argues is "occupied by the elitist outsiders who represent the *ancient regime* of the colonial past", is even more ironic in the context of Roche's employment with Sablich's, as the bauxite company was once associated with the slave trade, hence denoting Roche's eventual failure as a political activist.<sup>589</sup> Jane's disillusionment with Roche pushes her into an affair with Jimmy Ahmed, a black-Chinese political and revolutionary leader who manages an agricultural commune called Thrushcross Grange. At the beginning of the novel, Jane and Roche drive there and ironically, Roche has to explain to Jane how to pronounce Thrushcross Grange, and inform her on the origin of the name:

"Trush-cross. That's how to pronounce it. It's from *Wuthering Heights*. Like 'furthering.'"

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<sup>587</sup> V.S. Naipaul, *Guerrillas* (Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 91-92.

<sup>588</sup> Naipaul, *Guerrillas*, p. 46.

<sup>589</sup> K.I. Madhusudana Rao, "V.S. Naipaul's *Guerrillas*: A Fable of Political Innocence and Experience", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 14.1 (1979), 90-99, pp. 90-91.

“I thought it sounded very English”

“I don’t think it means anything. I don’t think Jimmy sees himself as Heathcliff or anything like that. He took a writing course, and it was one of the books he had to read.

I think he just likes the name”<sup>590</sup>

Moreover, despite the end of colonialism on the island, space organisation is still dictated by old colonial dichotomies in the opposition between Jimmy Ahmed’s revolutionary commune and the Ridge. This is emphasised by the ironical naming of the commune, since in Brontë’s novel the grange represents the space of civilisation to be opposed to the Heights. By considering both the Ridge and the commune as vestiges of Empire, the novel established a dystopian scenery showing the decaying colonial rhetoric:

The half-neglected grange is a symbol of the pastoral dream gone to seed. On the other hand, the ideal City upon the Hill, represented by the Ridge, is equally exposed to decay, fragmentation, and collapse. The Ridge is a symbol of the society in a colonial culture destroyed and endangered perpetually by the inroads made by the forces of civilization. Thus, both poles of the utopian vision are reduced to their nightmarish actuality under the pressure of events, and the best of professed commitments are either retracted or sabotaged.<sup>591</sup>

Despite Roche’s belief that Jimmy does not see himself as Heathcliff, the latter is still enclosed in uneven and racialised conception of otherness generated by Eurocentric discourse, in which Heathcliff, or Caliban and Friday, are inferior. Indeed, after Jane and Roche’s departure from the commune, Jimmy produces a piece of writing which is supposed to narrate Jane’s attraction to him, her scheming to meeting him again and their second encounter. Jimmy’s suppositions about Jane’s thoughts about him and the boys of the commune show his assimilation of the hegemonic discriminatory discourse of the coloniser as well as his inability to overcome it because of his desire to embody it. Hence, his writing symptomatically shows an internalisation of racism as was the case of the speaker of Césaire’s *Cahier* discussed in Chapter Three above. One can see this in a passage in which he fantasises about what Jane might make of his presence at the commune amongst the abandoned slum boys that live there:

*I wonder how a man of those attainments can waste his life in a place like that with all those good-for-nothing natives for whom to speak in all candor I cannot have too high an opinion, seeing them shit everywhere just like that, just like animals, they don’t even shit in the high grass but on the path, because wait for it they’re afraid of snakes.*<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Naipaul, *Guerrillas*, p. 4.

<sup>591</sup> Rao, p. 91.

<sup>592</sup> Naipaul, *Guerrillas*, pp. 31-32, emphasis in original.

This internalised racism is also present in a passage in which Jimmy imagines that Jane's desire for him would be driven by the lightness of his skin tone: "So I scheme to see this man, [...] and when on the appointed day I make the journey to Thrushcross Grange and see this man with the naked torso, not black, but a lovely golden color, like some bronze god, I am amazed, my heart is in my mouth".<sup>593</sup> Also, Jimmy's internalised racism is coupled with an adoption of British mainstream culture and customs, deploying what appears to be a colonial education to seduce Jane in their imagined meetings: "'Ah," he said, breaking into my thoughts, "you are looking at that great work of the Brontës. What a gifted family, it makes you believe in heredity. Would you like some tea?"'.<sup>594</sup> Effectively, Jimmy's rewriting of Jane's thoughts does not challenge but reinforces discriminatory colonial discourses, which are reinforced by the claustrophobic atmosphere of the novel which seems to trap all its characters in a western hegemonic discourse, as Helen Tiffin argues:

Jimmy's wish to destroy Jane coupled paradoxically with the deep desire to be her – to be English and middle-class – is obviously not only self-defeating and frustrating of any revolutionary possibility; it emphasizes, like his naming of his commune, "Thrushcross Grange", the inescapability of English textuality. [...] And by the rules of continuing textual containment, Jimmy has in the end recast himself in the role of black rapist and murderer scripted for him centuries earlier by white fear and its attendant racism.<sup>595</sup>

In line with Tiffin's argument, at the end of the novel Jimmy and Bryant, one of the boys living in the commune whom the former abuses, murder Jane and bury her in the barren ground of the commune which neither allows agriculture nor revolutionary ideals to grow and take shape. However, I would argue that the rewriting of the colonial literary archive in *Guerrillas*, here functioning as an 'unwriting', bring up the problematic and discriminatory discourses contained in this archive in order to reject them. Hence, literary cannibalism as a mode of writing, rather than consuming the European canon through some form of dialectical subsumption, incorporating and transcending the colonial literary archive, discards the zombification of 'the colony' as an invention of the colonial discourse in the first place. This is done in *Guerrillas* by displacing the narrative to the colonial space of labour, setting the novel in an unnamed Caribbean island, which, as Bruce King argues, could be either Jamaica or Trinidad:

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<sup>593</sup> Naipaul, *Guerrillas*, p. 32, emphasis in original.

<sup>594</sup> Naipaul, *Guerrillas*, p. 34, emphasis in original.

<sup>595</sup> Helen Tiffin, "Travelling Texts: Intertextuality and Resistance in V.S. Naipaul's "Guerrillas" and Jean Rhys's "Wide Sargasso Sea"", *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 6.1 (1993), 58–66, p. 63.

*Guerrillas* takes place on a composite English-speaking Caribbean island resembling Trinidad and Jamaica. The Reggae, gangs, Rastafarians, Bauxite, and racial composition of the island (no Indians are mentioned in the novel) could be Jamaica. The way the killing of a black radical leader by the police turns into a black power uprising and the government begins to crumble until strengthened by foreign support recalls Trinidad's Black Power revolt of 1970. Naipaul has taken details and events from the region to create a representative place and situation in which his characters, themselves representative, act upon each other and find themselves trapped.<sup>596</sup>

The morphing of two islands sharing a similar colonial past (of plantation agriculture and contemporary past of extractivism, including the bauxite industry) emphasises the perpetuation of uneven relations, and dynamics of exploitation and wealth distribution.

### **“EL APOCALIPSIS DE LA ESTIRPE CONDENADA A CUATROCIENTOS AÑOS DE AGONÍA”: REWRITING ‘THE COLONY’’S PRESENT**

The Equatoguinean author César Mba Abogo is the author of a collection entitled *El porteador de Marlow. Canción negra sin color* (2007). In one of the short pieces in his collection, Dayo, a young man from an unnamed African country, recently moved to Europe to study, dreams that Africa stops existing after the receipt of humanitarian aid afflicts all Africans with a strange illness from which they cannot seem to recover. In Dayo’s dream, the main news broadcasting companies all show live “el Apocalipsis de la estirpe condenada a cuatrocientos años de agonía”.<sup>597</sup> Again, as we saw above in Chapter Two in analysing Junot Díaz’s short story “Monstro”, we are made to recognise that apocalyptic and other horror or sci-fi scenarios often speak to lived experiences of ‘the colony’.

In the story here, the aid received from Europe is responsible for yet another apocalypse on the African continent. The discourse of Dayo’s dream ironically parodies racist stereotypes: whiteness is rendered a blinding and hurtful “colour”: “un doctor escandinavo, con la piel tan blanca que daba pena mirarle, denunció que el mana lanzado a los negros, por un descuido que nadie sabia bien cómo, transmitía una enfermedad moral y contagiosa”.<sup>598</sup> This moral illness is presaged earlier in the story when Dayo walks in the streets of an unidentified European city in which the precarious lives of black immigrants are exposed for everyone to see, and he thinks

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<sup>596</sup> Bruce King, *V.S. Naipaul* (The Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 100.

<sup>597</sup> César Mba Abogo, *El porteador de Marlow. Canción negra sin color* (IAL Ediciones, 2007), p. 20.

<sup>598</sup> Mba Abogo, p. 20.

“¡El horror, el horror!”<sup>599</sup> Another inversion occurs here: a young black man utters Kurtz’s words from *HoD* about the existential situation in Europe. Throughout Mba Abogo’s collection different short pieces rewrite *HoD*, mostly displacing the heart of darkness to the metropolitan space to reinforce the connection between imperial exploitation and Europe. In the short story entitled “El sueño de Dayo”, the blurring of the boundaries between reality and dream emphasise the nightmarish nature of ‘the colony’’s situation, still echoing *HoD*’s surrealist narrative mode.

Wilson Harris’s novella *Palace of the Peacock* (1960) also plays on this blurring and moral illness. Here, *HoD* is rewritten in an Amazonian context, a novella narrating a journey down river through the Amazon forest in search of gold. The character of Donne appears to be Kurtz’s homologue and the narrator, called ‘the dreamer’ by other characters in the novel, appears to be Marlow’s. Donne, as an iteration of the Columbian figure, sees himself as epitomising the coloniser and as able to control everything, including floods and ‘nature’s forces’: “life here is tough. One has to be a devil to survive. I’m the last landlord. I tell you I fight everything in nature, flood, drought, chicken, hawk, rat, beast and woman. I’m everything. Midwife, yes, doctor, yes, gaoler, judge, hangman, every blasted thing to the labouring people. Look man, look outside again. Primitive. Every boundary line is a myth”.<sup>600</sup> As he tells the dreamer this, the latter “stared blindly through the window at an invisible population”, emphasising the spectral ‘colony’ in the Amazon surrounding them and attempting to de-anonymise these labourers. As Charlotte Rogers argues

As he seeks to dominate the land, Donne also dominates a native woman named Mariella. He beats her and uses her for sex, violating her as he penetrates the land. Harris underscores Mariella’s symbolic status as both womanhood and earth when he makes her simultaneously Donne’s mistress, their destination (named the Mission of Mariella), and an ancient Arawak woman kidnapped by the crew.<sup>601</sup>

The feminisation of the land in the novella echoes travel narrative practices discussed in Chapter Three above, and this is emphasised by the fact that Mariella’s name, a diminutive of ‘Maria’ and echoing the Virgin, also is cognate to the Spanish and French words for the sea. Donne’s attempts to control Mariella, who embodies both land and water, is a reflection of his colonialist and capitalist desire to manage and exploit the land for profit.

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<sup>599</sup> Mba Abogo, p. 20.

<sup>600</sup> Wilson Harris, *Palace of the Peacock* (Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 17.

<sup>601</sup> Charlotte Rogers, *Mourning El Dorado: Literature and Extractivism in the Contemporary American Tropics* (University of Virginia Press, 2019), p. 97.

This management is often done through mapping, which Donne views as illegitimate when it reflects the indigenous people's relation of the land. But as the dreamer notes, colonial mapping too is a constructed illusion: "The map of savannahs was a dream. The names Brazil and Guiana were colonial conventions I had known from childhood. [...] I saw this kingdom of man turned into a colony and battleground of spirit, a priceless tempting jewel I dreamed I possessed".<sup>602</sup> As Rogers notes, this jewel Palace can be seen as a version of El Dorado:<sup>603</sup>

Also like other twentieth-century fiction about El Dorado, *Palace* highlights the greed of Europeans and the suffering of native peoples that lie at the core of the myth. Harris traces this corrosive pattern established by the search of El Dorado into the contemporary era. In his essay "Tradition and the West Indian Novel," he compares the colonial seekers of wealth to contemporary Guyanese "pork-knockers," a local term for gold miners.<sup>604</sup>

This also establishes a filiation between gold mining and El Dorado and the extraction of other commodified natural resources such as ivory and petroleum, called white and black gold respectively. *The Palace* also parodies travel writing by echoing the type of mysticism present in works from the colonial literary archive that claim to arrive at the limits of the known world or to journey back to a primitive one, as with the journey into the interior of the continent in *HoD* exoticising 'the colony': "Going up river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. [...] We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet".<sup>605</sup>

In Harris's novella, the dreamer notes that he and the rest of the crew and himself "stood at the frontiers of the known world, and on the self-same threshold of the unknown".<sup>606</sup> The term "frontier" refers to both a geographical boundary as well as a colonial settlement of the "commodity frontier" as defined by Jason Moore.<sup>607</sup> This emphasises the role of exploitation and extraction of natural resources undertaken during the mapping process, observed again a few pages later when "Donne started unrolling his plan quickly. The country ahead was

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<sup>602</sup> Harris, *The Palace*, p. 20.

<sup>603</sup> See also Rogers, p. 96 and p. 98.

<sup>604</sup> Rogers, p. 99.

<sup>605</sup> Conrad, pp. 33-35. See Also

<sup>606</sup> Harris, *The Palace*, p. 92.

<sup>607</sup> See Jason Moore, "'The Modern World System' as Environmental History? Ecology and the Rise of Capitalism", *Theory and Society*, 32.3 (2003), 307-77, *Commodity Frontiers and Global Capitalist Expansion Social, Ecological and Political Implications from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day*, ed. by Sabrina Joseph (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), and Michael Niblett, *World Literature and Ecology: The Aesthetics of Commodity Frontiers, 1890-1950* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

mysterious and little known he said. A long series of dangerous rapids marked the map in his hands".<sup>608</sup> How can the country be unknown if it has been mapped? The discrepancy in this passage serves to highlight the mysticism and absurdity often present in travel writing. The disguise of exploration, repeatedly used by (proto-)European and other Western mercantilist and exploitative endeavours, is identified through the blurring of these two types of 'frontier'. Marlow in *HoD* similarly identifies the camouflaged mission of supposed explorers in a passage that constitutes an important criticism of colonial endeavour in Conrad's novel: "This devoted band called itself the Eldorado Exploring Expedition, and I believe they were sworn to secrecy. Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers. It was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage".<sup>609</sup>

In thinking about this family's history, Salim, the narrator of Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, identifies Europeans as the source of a very particular "lie". In doing so, he sums up much of what we have already discussed concerning the ideology of 'the civilising mission' and the compulsion that all the iterations of the Columbian figure feel to lie. Though the context is Africa rather than the 'new world', but the diagnosis is apt in both contexts: "If it was Europe that gave us on the coast some idea of our history, it was Europe, I feel, that also introduced us to the lie. Those of us who had been part of Africa before the Europeans had never lied about ourselves. [...] But the Europeans could do one thing and say something quite different".<sup>610</sup> The association between lies and history in this passage points to the problems contained in the writing of history in the west, especially when that writing is meant to describe the history of former colonies. As Lynda Prescott argues, in *HoD* "there is no sense of Africa having a history; there is only the sudden, violent confrontation between primeval wilderness on the one hand and the unprincipled greed of the European colonists on the other".<sup>611</sup> While *Things and The River Between* provide part of this missing history by focusing on specific tribes and groups in Nigeria and in Kenya, *A Bend* provides a sweeping historical contextualisation. Additionally,

One of the points [Naipaul] makes strongly, both in *A Bend in the River* and "A New King for the Congo," is that African history is too easily forgotten or oversimplified. To point up the difference between the straightforward, imperialist view of the Congo, which was sufficient for Conrad's day, and the complex reality of modern Zaire,

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<sup>608</sup> Harris, *The Palace*, p. 94.

<sup>609</sup> Conrad, pp. 30-31.

<sup>610</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 19.

<sup>611</sup> Lynda Prescott, "Past and Present Darkness: Sources for VS Naipaul's "A Bend in the River"", *Modern Fiction Studies*, 30.3 (1984), 547-59, p. 550.

Naipaul takes some of the features of *Heart of Darkness* over into *A Bend in the River* and reverses or even parodies them.<sup>612</sup>

Moreover, Salim's description of history as being told by "tides" echoes Brathwaite's notion of "tidalectics" discussed in Chapter Two above, and thus ironises the western understanding of history as linear: "One tide of history – forgotten by us, living only in books by Europeans that I was yet to read – had brought us here. [...] Now [...] another tide of history was coming to wash us away".<sup>613</sup> Here Salim is also paralleling European colonialism's displacing of South Asian people with what he sees as the upcoming threat that African nationalism represents for his people's precarious position.<sup>614</sup> He further considers how often their history is untold and forgotten in the colonial (and postcolonial) archive.

In the novel, the idea of archive is also present in Father Huismans's 'African museum'. Huismans is a Belgian priest in charge of the *lycée* in the city on the bend in the river, formerly the European trading post of Stanleyville and today the city of Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Naipaul's novel is set, though the city is never named. As Salim notes "to Father Huismans colonial relics were as precious as the things of Africa. True Africa he saw as dying or about to die. That was why it was so necessary, while that Africa still lived, to understand and collect and preserve its things".<sup>615</sup> Father Huismans's objectification of Africa echoes the European process of commodifying the continent for material exploitation, materially through colonisation and imperialism, but also intellectually and culturally through the writing and creation of Africa in academic discourse and museology. Huismans's small museum in the *lycée* continues the parallel I have been establishing throughout this thesis of the archive as a mortuary. This is further identified in the passage below in which the image of masks arranged in rows on slatted shelves recalls the design of slave ships, their hulls divided into holds and abducted African people pinned to floorboards in rows:

When Father Huismans first opened the door of that room for me, and I got the warm smell of grass and earth and old fat, and I had a confused impression of the masks lying in rows on slatted shelves, I thought: 'This is Zabeth's world. This is the world to which she returns when she leaves my shop.' But Zabeth's world was living and this was dead. That was the effect of those masks lying flat on the shelves. They were masks that had been laid low, in more than one way, and had lost their power.<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Prescott, p. 550.

<sup>613</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 22.

<sup>614</sup> See King, p. 118.

<sup>615</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 72.

<sup>616</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 73.

After Father Huismans's death, the collection is pillaged by an American visitor, who, along with other visitors, "behaved like discoverers of Africa", and who takes the artefacts to the United States, exemplifying the cultural pillaging and grand larceny of African and American artefacts currently still lying in western metropolitan museums and spaces, as discussed with respect to Rodolfo Usigli's *El gesticulador* in Chapter Two above.<sup>617</sup> Father Huismans's corpse is displayed to the other characters of the novel when it is put in a dugout and the boat gets caught in the water hyacinths that have begun to overrun the river.<sup>618</sup> As mentioned above, the aquatic plants can be compared to the sargassum weed because, in the novel, their role is to witness death and the violence caused by colonial and (neo-)imperial struggles. The water hyacinths repeatedly block the flow of the river throughout the novel and they play a critical role toward its end. As the dugout boats from riverbank villages are attempting to flee from the impending violence of the village by trying to attach themselves to the steamer, they "jammed and jostled against the sides of the steamer and the barge, and many were swamped. Water hyacinths pushed up in the narrow space between the steamer and the barge".<sup>619</sup> The hyacinth's witnessing of violence throughout the novel echoes the description of one of the indigenous people's description of blood in the water in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*:

When the blood of the dead ran in the rivers, and the water was so saturated with blood that the fishes died, and the dead bodies of warriors floated for miles on water, until they were snagged on mangrove branches on the banks, or got stuck in the muddy swamps, half in and half out of the water. It was a terrible time. The land was so polluted even the water in the wells turned red. That was when priests from different shrines got together and decided to build this shrine by the sea. The land needed to be cleansed of blood and pollution.<sup>620</sup>

Here the association between blood and pollution sheds light on the violence of oil extraction in the region of the Niger Delta. Habila's novel dramatises this violence throughout the journey undertaken by two journalists, Zaq and Rufus, as they look for Mrs Floode, a British woman kidnapped by a group of militants. While Zaq is looking for the headline that will re-start his failing career, Rufus, the narrator, is seeking a headline that will make his name in the first place.

The journey of the two journalists is halted throughout the novel by swamps and different twists and turns in the novel's narration, which involve the militants, the military and

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<sup>617</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 95.

<sup>618</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 92.

<sup>619</sup> Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 325.

<sup>620</sup> Helon Habila, *Oil on Water* (Penguin Books, 2011), pp. 129-130.

meetings with diverse indigenous groups on different islands in the Niger Delta. Throughout their journey death and decay surrounds them on water and land as they encounter “dead fish on the oil-polluted water”, “dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil”, and what “looked like the setting for a sci-fi movie: the meagre landscape was covered in pipelines flying in all directions, sprouting from the evil-smelling, oil-fecund earth”.<sup>621</sup> The ruins of drilling facilities remind one of the ruins of Empire in the former European trading post in Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*.<sup>622</sup> As Stephanie LeMenager points out, in Nigeria the wealth realised from extraction tends to line the pockets of the oil barons, leaving the people who actually live on the Delta in economic precarity and amid advancing environmental decay:

At approximately 75,000 square kilometers, the Niger Delta is the largest wetland in Africa. The vast coastal plain of southernmost Nigeria, where one of West Africa’s longest rivers empties into the Atlantic Ocean, has suffered more than fifty years of oil spillage, air and light pollution from oil extraction, and the most continuous gas flaring to afflict any oil producing region. Since Shell-BP discovered oil in commercial quantities in Oloibiri in the eastern Niger Delta in 1956, Nigeria achieved an independence from British colonial rule that was almost immediately compromised by state contracts with oil corporations that funneled wealth and power to a minority elite. As Rob Nixon asks, “Who could have dreamed in 1958 [when the first tanker bearing Nigerian crude left Port Harcourt] that four decades and \$600 billion of oil revenues later, some 90 million Nigerians would be surviving on less than a dollar a day?”<sup>623</sup>

As in Bessora’s novel *Petroleum*, discussed in Chapter Three above, Habila’s *Oil* uses the genre of the detective novel to uncover the social and environmental violence caused by oil extraction.<sup>624</sup> Habila’s novel emphasises the importance of journalism in exposing this violence while reminding us of the pitfalls into which journalists might fall, since they are repeatedly shown being “enlisted as pawns in a high-stakes game played by kidnappers and oil companies that want verification that their employees are still alive before shelling out a ransom”.<sup>625</sup> As LeMenager argues the “aptly named Mrs. Floode brings to the surface numerous other victims, mostly nonwhite or nonhuman and dead”.<sup>626</sup> In the novel, the narrator is presented watching

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<sup>621</sup> Habila, *Oil*, p. 5, p. 9 and p. 34.

<sup>622</sup> See Naipaul, *A Bend*, p. 4 and p. 8, for instance.

<sup>623</sup> Stephanie LeMenager, *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in The American Century* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 126.

<sup>624</sup> As Stephanie LeMenager notes: “Scenes of torture by an army major who douses militants with gasoline invoke the feverish sadism of Joseph Conrad’s Kurtz – within a newer extractive regime”, in LeMenager, p. 127.

<sup>625</sup> Jennifer Wenzel, “Behind the Headlines”, *American Book Review*, 33.3 (2012), 13–14, p. 13.

<sup>626</sup> LeMenager, p. 127.

the Hollywood movie *Waterworld*, whose fictional flooded landscape ironically illuminates the current situation in the Niger Delta, where

rivers rise in response to the subsidence caused by the intensive extraction of oil from the region since the 1960s. According to one source, “In combination with predicted sea level rise as a result of global warming, about a forty kilometers wide strip of the Niger Delta could be submerged in thirty years.” Villages, which are called by the watery appellation “creeks” when they are far from established cities, already have been wiped out by flooding.<sup>627</sup>

Here flooding does not appear as a natural hydraulic cycle since it is caused by oil extraction, showing how the overworking of ‘the colony’ deregulates natural rhythms and cycles. The emptied villages replaced by oil drilling facilities in the novel recall the emptied places Columbus is required to explain to his financiers, as discussed in Chapter One. The history of these places that have been submerged is erased along with the building and the community, just as in the Middle Passage the history of abducted people is negated and erased. Sule Emmanuel Egya identifies Habila’s *Oil on Water* as a work of “literary militancy”: he contrasts the failure of the militants in the novel, who appear to be only moved by greed, with that the novel itself undertakes:

Habila’s novel is a dramatization of the systematic denigration of the environment resulting in physical and human waste; a system of eco-human ruination caused by multinational oil corporations in connivance with the central government of Nigeria. In this system are also local self-styled freedom fighters, aggressive, terroristic in nature (their modus operandi being the destruction of oil companies’ equipment and abduction of oil experts or their relatives), who go with the nomenclature “militants.” [... T]he novel could further be seen as a form of action against institutional power in a society that, through economic activities, undermines the existence of its own people. In other words, Habila projects his views through his novel as a militant (given the novel’s metaphorical belligerence) against the environmental and human injustice being perpetrated in South-South Nigeria. Literary militancy is rooted in protest aesthetics in Africa.<sup>628</sup>

This connects Habila and his novel to the work that Ken Saro-Wiwa – activist, artist and one of the most outspoken Nigerians campaigning against the rapacious extraction of crude oil from the Niger Delta. Saro-Wiwa’s protests against Shell on behalf of the Ogoni people “brought

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<sup>627</sup> Stephanie LeMenager, p. 124.

<sup>628</sup> Sule Emmanuel Egya, “Literary Militancy and Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water*”, *Research in African Literatures*, 48.4 (2017), 94–104, p. 95.

the exploitation of Nigeria's so-called e.m. (ethnic minority) communities and ecosystems to international attention in the early 1990s – only to end, infamously, with Saro-Wiwa's death by hanging in 1995".<sup>629</sup> Along with eight other supposed co-conspirators executed with him, Saro-Wiwa is part of the "Ogoni Nine" who have "since become martyrs and international symbols" of indigenous people's struggle against Big Oil corporation in the Niger Delta.<sup>630</sup>

Mba Abogo dedicates one of the poems in his collection entitled *El porteador de Marlow. Canción negra sin color* to Saro-Wiwa. The poem entitled "Ken Saro-Wiwa" celebrates the Ogoni activist. The double quotation marks framing the last three lines of the first stanza appear to signal that the words are Saro-Wiwa's: "'No viviremos arrodillados / Con el rostro hundido / En los excrementos de su opulencia'".<sup>631</sup> The lines also refer to a refusal to live with one's face sunk in "the excrements of your opulence", referring directly to the environmental degradation caused by crude oil extraction in the Niger Delta and displaying the uneven power and economic dynamic it creates. They do so by identifying oil and the wealth it procures with scatological discourse, inverting the rhetoric of Empire which "includes an arsenal of debasement tropes that describe colonized populations as dirty bodies, linking them to filth, shit, and disorder".<sup>632</sup> This inversion illuminates how colonial rule, and its perpetuation in neo-imperial projects, are to be seen at the source of 'the colony's' dysfunctionality. Additionally, as Joshua Esty argues, the genealogy of this type of "excremental postcolonialism" can be seen in earlier scatological literature, including Swift's *Modest Proposal* considered above: "As a cultural intermediary or interpreter who links scatology to failed development, Swift stands as a distant precursor to the excremental writers of postcolonial Africa and Ireland".<sup>633</sup> These lines identify how while the Ogoni people and other indigenous Nigerian groups are mired in toxicity and pollution, Nigerian government officials and oil moguls colluding with multinational corporations from western countries live in opulence from the wealth produced through the fossil fuel industry. The poem closes on a stanza addressing Saro-Wiwa directly and referring to his execution:

Congregaron todas sus mentiras  
 Para facilitarnos la digestión de aquel latigazo  
 Cortaron nuestras venas, nos pincharon los ojos  
 Golpearon tu muerte en nuestros cráneos:

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<sup>629</sup> LeMenager, p. 126.

<sup>630</sup> LeMenager, p. 126.

<sup>631</sup> Mba Abogo, p. 117.

<sup>632</sup> Joshua D. Esty, "Excremental Postcolonialism", *Contemporary Literature*, 40.1 (1999), 22–59, p. 28.

<sup>633</sup> Esty, p. 28.

Intentaron desahuciarte de nuestro panteón<sup>634</sup>

The speaker tells him that “they attempted to evict you from our pantheon” indicating the status that Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni Eight have been assigned since their execution. The “they” can be understood to refer to all the powers that were responsible for the death of Saro-Wiwa and his companions – including the Nigerian government in collusion with Shell. The poem’s speaker refers to this collusion at the beginning of the stanza, mentioning that “they gathered all their lies”. By belatedly accusing the Ogoni Nine of plotting and organising the murder of pro-governmental Ogoni tribal chiefs, “they” attempt to besmirch Saro-Wiwa’s memory depicting the Ogoni activist as turning against his own people.

As mentioned above, Mba Agobo’s *El porteador* is a collection of different types of creative works divided into two sections, which in rewriting *HoD* refers back to two other iterations of the Columbian figure in Marlow and Kurtz. The collection is divided into two sections. The section entitled the *El porteador de Marlow* is composed of 24 short stories and two postfaces and the section entitled *Canción negra sin color* consists of 33 poems and other short texts divided into six subsections and concluded by a postface. The collection as a whole can be seen to decolonise language and genre nomenclature by proposing different forms of short pieces of writing and bringing them together. It engages with several intertexts by referring directly to important postcolonial authors and figures, such as Derek Walcott, Nelson Mandel, and Édouard Glissant, among others, and in each of the two main sections a short piece of prose fiction engages directly with *HoD*. As Julia Brost notes, the collection does not directly refer to Equatorial Guinea or Spain, but rather sets its writings in imaginary places referring to Africa and Europe more broadly:

The collection is soaked by the experience of migrating, and, correspondingly, the texts migrate equally between African realities and life in the diaspora in Europe. However, Mba Abogo does not explicitly refer to Equatorial Guinea or Spain but, instead, creates imaginary places in his fiction such as Karabumete, Puerto Fraga (both Equatoguinean/African cities), Franquicia (Equatorial Guinea/an African country) or Soladia (Spain/a European country). [...], Mba Abogo’s imaginary places can be read as place holders for a multitude of realities in both Africa and Black diasporas in Europe. Thus, they transcend particular national contexts and point to more abstract

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<sup>634</sup> Mba Abogo, p. 117.

geopolitical power structures determined by notions of “center” and “periphery,” of belonging and alienness, and by positionalities of privilege and exclusion<sup>635</sup>

In these terms it becomes clear that the collection attempts to give a voice to different diasporas across the European continent, and to re-centre the “Black subject” which has been marginalised in the literary colonial archive:

it is the Black subject – like Marlow’s mute helmsman, who, in Conrad’s novel, dies without uttering a sound – that speaks up [... .T]he author revisits the image of the silently dying colonized subject as a trope to narrate the invisibility of African migrants stranded in European societies and the failure of their dreams, for the story’s disillusioned protagonist Nzambi articulates his presentiment of possibly dying “de forma anónima y silenciosa, como el porteador de Marlow”<sup>636</sup>

The focus on diasporic navigation in the European space inverts the travel undertaken by Marlow and Kurtz in *HoD* and projects Europe’s heart of darkness by shedding light on the systemic and structural racism and inequalities to which the African diaspora is still subjected. In a short prose section entitled “El lamento de Walcott”, in the second section, the narrator explains that his tragedy is “ser negro en un país blanco, pasear con el traje social de la colonización en el corazón de una antigua potencia colonizadora”.<sup>637</sup> By indicating that he is strolling in the ‘heart of darkness’ of a former colonial space, the narrator here aligns the European space with *HoD* by displacing the ‘darkness’ onto the metropole, where colonial and (neo-)imperial practices are developed and where the wealth resulting from them is returned. It also points to the perpetuation of colonial and imperial relations in our current times both within and without the metropolitan space by considering the plight of the African diaspora throughout the west. Or, as Sharpe put it in the words with which I began this chapter: “Black peoples any and everywhere”.<sup>638</sup> All of the works investigated in this chapter whose settings remain unnamed, yet identifiable, reinforce the connection bridging the space of the extractiono(s)cene: wherever former colonies and their citizens might be located within this space, they share a common, violent history and are subjected to contemporary uneven relations. Hence, by rewriting the colonial literary archive that bequeaths to and imposes onto ‘the colony’ certain of these inequalities, literary cannibalism as a mode of writing permits the

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<sup>635</sup> Julia Borst, ““To Be Black in a ‘White’ Country”: On the Ambivalence of the Diasporic Experience in César A. Mba Abogo’s *El porteador de Marlow. Canción negra sin color* (2007)”, *Research in African Literatures*, 48.3 (2017), 33–54, p. 35.

<sup>636</sup> Borst, p. 36.

<sup>637</sup> Mba Abogo, p. 123.

<sup>638</sup> Sharpe, p. 13.

shaping of new histories (i.e. rewriting history and decolonising literatures), identities (i.e. fleshing out the ghost of and dezombifying 'the colony') and relations (i.e. making kin).

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis has been to develop a new methodological approach to postcolonial literatures emerging from former colonies on the American and the African continents. The thesis has attempted to do this by re-theorising ‘literary cannibalism’, an approach that first emerged in Brazil in the 1920s. The metaphor of cannibalism has been used repeatedly by authors from former colonies in these regions to theorise and articulate their creative and literary practice. Moreover, this thesis has also formulated and deployed the term ‘extractiono(s)cene’ to bring together a wide range of literatures from a geographical space that has been connected through a specific thread of historical changes and epistemic violations. The term aims to show that the corpus investigated in this thesis is also connected by specific environmental issues connected to this history.

There are many ways in which this thesis could have been expanded. First, there are a number of additional works that could have been considered in the methodological chapter, including Kamau Brathwaite’s *The Namsetoura Papers* (2003) and Haroldo and Augusto de Campos’ work. Some of the authors mentioned in the Second Chapter, could have also been studied in further details, for instance, a systematic and in-depth study of the two ‘dentições’ (dentitions) of the *Revista de Antropofagia*, the magazine in which de Andrade’s *Antropofagia Cultural* was first published, could have been undertaken. However, keeping in mind the word count limitation and to avoid unbalancing the thesis as a whole, it has seemed wiser to not engage with all these works.

Second (and similarly), the list of primary texts investigated as case studies in Chapters Three and Four could also have been expanded to include many other rewritings, indeed, as discussed in Chapter One, the corpus from these regions that can be defined as ‘rewritings’ is very large. It can be studied thematically as it has been done at time here with groups of works considering Homer’s *Odyssey*, Columbus’s *Diario de abordo*, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, and the Brontë sisters’ *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. My selection has excluded, on the one hand, other works which have also rewritten these canonical texts, both from within and without the continents I have considered. On the other hand, it has also excluded rewritings of other canonical texts, such as Sophocles’s *Antigone*, or other Shakespeare’s plays such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, or *Macbeth*, for instance. The reasoning behind this exclusion was to create a coherent corpus both in terms of canonical texts and with respect to the rewritings themselves. I saw that the specific groups of canonical texts that I addressed all engaged with iterations of the Columbian figure, often opposed by

another character representing ‘the colony’. Additionally, they all engaged with colonial and environmental questions through travel and different forms of resource extraction. All of the rewritings investigated as case studies explore similar topics and show a thematic thread across time and space.

In each of Chapters Three and Four, I adopted different rhythms and approaches to the testing of my methodology, because of the divergences in texts studied, in terms of both content and form. Contrarily to Chapter Three, Chapter Four engages almost exclusively with prose, especially novels and a short story, except for one collection of poetry, which itself includes short pieces of prose. This genre difference is also reflected in the types of canonical works rewritten, which include poetry, epic form, drama and novels in Chapter Three, and only novels in Chapter Four. Given more time and words, this thesis could include more literary case studies and this allowance would also permit me to study everything in greater depth. With additional capacity, this methodology could also be extended to further places that might reasonably be considered as part of the ‘extractiono(s)cene’ such as former colonies from the Asian continent, though that would be outside of my expertise. Hence, the research undertaken during the elaboration of this thesis and the development of this methodological approach could be expanded in many different ways. This is why the completion of this thesis marks a beginning rather than an end; the attempt and intellectual exercise to create a new approach, which can be further developed and rendered more sophisticated.

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