

University of Alberta

Not India,
In Which Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston Finally Discover
America

by

Marco Katz

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

English and Film Studies

©Marco Katz

Spring 2011

Edmonton, Alberta

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Libraries to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only. Where the thesis is converted to, or otherwise made available in digital form, the University of Alberta will advise potential users of the thesis of these terms.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis and, except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

Dedicated to those ancestors who had to immigrate to make me an American. Typically American, I know few of their names and only ever knew two of them in person: my mother and my great-grandfather, Nosen Noteh a Coén, who spoke to me in several languages, none of them English, and connected me to a century ahead of my times.

Hijo Montiel, vente tras mí y sabrás mi aposento, y procura que esta noche nos veamos a solas en él, que yo dejaré abierta la puerta; y sabe que tengo muchas cosas que decirte de tu vida y para tu provecho.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra “El coloquio de los perros”

Abstract

This dissertation argues for the potential of an American politics built on identities, cultures, and faith. Works by two Caribbean authors, Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) and Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), provide central connections throughout these considerations while demonstrating how disparate people consider themselves American without losing their differences. Chapter one examines faith as enunciated in Carpentier's explanation of American Marvelous Realism and as practiced in Hurston's novels. According to these works, credence in America comes not from governmental attempts at continental unity, which too often leads to domination, but instead arises out of cultural endeavors that transcend political boundaries. Music in the second chapter exemplifies American cultural practice by boldly going where politicians fear to tread, resonating throughout the continent with sounds that typify specific regions while remaining strongly connected to one another. A backbeat, for example, that reveals musical connections between swing and *vallenato* does not negate the individuality of, respectively, Kansas City or Baranquilla. The third chapter considers Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's employment of Area Studies competencies in studies of Comparative Literature. In this case, specific applications of biology and music history apply to cultural studies of the Americas. Recent studies in genetics that trace similarities in all humans also reveal America as a site of greatest biological differentiation. Following ideas put forth by Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Néstor García Canclini, this deconstructive approach to cultural studies concludes in the fourth chapter with an American politics that does not merely reverse established patterns of domination but instead emulates American cultural practices with the potential to make hegemonic readings irrelevant.

Acknowledgements

You were never a stranger, although I had no idea who you were.
So don't go, but if you must, say hello to everybody.

William Saroyan *Letters from 74 rue Taitbout* (162)

Hegel never wrote prettier lines than those that appear in a short section of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Two people committed to living together, he writes, “give up their natural and individual personalities within this union. In this respect, their union is a self-limitation, but since they attain their substantial self-consciousness within it, it is in fact their liberation” (201). I begin as me with M. Elizabeth “Betsy” Boone, *mi jeva, mi vida, mi amor*, all of which is to say a freedom found by losing myself in this new consciousness of self.

For Betsy, one of the hardest parts of this entire project may have consisted in not reading any of the chapters that follow until the professors on my committee had seen them and offered their comments. She knew that this project was, in the first place, a discourse between me and them. Mark Simpson and Odile Cisneros are the toughest readers I have ever come across; their comments made me sad and made me angry and eventually made me better. Much better. A teacher has to profoundly believe in a student to make him or her work this hard.

All of this work took place under the supervision of Michael O’Driscoll, who amazes me with his continual interest in my work and his willingness to help me deal with any obstacles, academic or otherwise, to getting that work done. No barriers of time or distance have ever prevented him from dispensing useful advice when I needed to know something in a hurry or from listening to me when the complexities of academic life seemed daunting. Like the rare music producer capable of placing considerable musical skills in the service of achieving another’s vision-, Mike divines my thoughts and the feelings behind them in order to help me find my voice on the page. Meanwhile, his publications and lectures, like those of Mark and Odile, continually inspire me, and I have enjoyed times when we have been able to put aside my project in order to engage in discussions of a wider intellectual world.

Richard Young is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Alberta so I was fortunate to catch him on campus one day. After our conversation, he let me have his archive of material on Alejo Carpentier, which has saved me a great deal of time and effort and provided several texts I would not have likely found anywhere else. Our conversations have continued, providing me with valuable insights from a scholar whose name I constantly encounter while reading critical works on Carpentier and, more recently, on Latino narratives in Canada.

Almost at the other end of my bibliography — alphabetically, at least — I have several works by Timothy Brennan. When I first read “World Music Does Not Exist,” I felt I had met a kindred spirit. Tim’s article possessed much-needed venom with which I identified but, more importantly, an intelligent manner of building an effective case against an enduring academic shibboleth that I admired and hoped to emulate. When he took an interest in my work, I felt hopeful that I could someday achieve something worthwhile.

At the time, I hardly imagined writing these hundreds of pages much less that he would ever read them. *¡Vaya Tim! En las letras de Rubén Blades, “La vida te da sorpresas, sorpresas te da la vida.”*

Other people at the University of Alberta have offered useful comments, suggestions, advice, and encouragement. Stephen Slemon brought energy and enthusiasm to my examining committee that lasts to this day. Cecily Devereux, who chaired that committee, made that anxious day feel comfortable and happy just as she has smoothed anxieties for so many graduate students in our department. During my coursework, Daphne Read and Victoria Ruétalo encouraged my studies and helped me make connections between my classes and what would become my dissertation. Passionate discussions in Victoria’s class helped me understand the urgency of critical views, which guided me as I turned my final paper for her class into an article, “Tiras, timbres y estereotipos: el negro Memín Pinguín y la manipulación de la cultura popular con representaciones étnicas.” Steven Harris spent a great deal of time discussing surrealism with me. Throughout my studies, Kim Brown has answered questions about the program and made the process comprehensible. Meanwhile, Mary Marshall Durrell has addressed teaching concerns and solved seemingly insolvable problems. Kris Calhoun’s scheduling helped make the teaching load seem light. After one of the written comprehensive examinations, when I felt like bursting into tears, Linda Thompson brought me a chocolate bar as she came to close up the room. Carolyn Preshing has helped me with everything else in the department, including the delivery of this dissertation.

My colleagues at the University of Alberta have participated in peer reviews that improve my work and have also remained friends who I lean on through thick and thin. Katayoun Toossi and I regularly share essays, ideas for the classes we teach, and just idle chitchat when we need it. Younghoon Kim and I have sat on opposite ends of the table at coffee shops so often that I feel entirely comfortable writing when we’re together. In Olumide Ogundipe I have found a friend to share *boricua* slang. Lucas Crawford and I have read each other’s work, played trombone and baritone duets, and performed at a couple of local events; he or she (I enjoy his or her abhorrence of gendered pronouns) has finally taught me how to write an abstract. On my first day of classes, I met Nduka Otiono and we have remained friends — and, on one occasion, fellow performers — ever since. Students from previous cohorts generously shared information. Sheila Christie, my office mate for two years, answered lots of questions and offered useful advice. Paul Ugor constantly urged me to stay at it and get it done, even when the whole thing seems crazy. My work with Argelia González Hurtado began with us reading each other’s class papers; later, she continued to deal with the *disparates* I submitted to her as editor of Edmonton’s most fascinating cultural journal in any language, *La Guagua*.

Beyond my department, Stan, Dave, Steve, Mickey, and everyone else at La Pasta have kept me going with the best *cafecito* in town, a miracle in the fast-food environs of our campus HUB Mall. My friends know that La Pasta serves as my real office, the place where I work and meet colleagues and students.

Substantial financial support for this dissertation came from a Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship, the Sarah Nettie Christie Travel Bursary, a Faculty of

Arts Travel Award, a Graduate Student Association Travel Award, a William Rea Scholarship, an Andrew Stewart Memorial Graduate Prize, and a Provost Doctoral Entrance Award.

Fortunately, I got good funding but never too much to make me stop teaching. My students keep me thinking in new ways. Class discussions often start my mind off in directions useful for my own work. Ryan Antonello, Prabhjot Bedi, Maité Cruz Tleugabulova, Mecca Fayad, Mario García, Andrea Kuczynski, Anna Moore, Samantha Semchuk, Mi Tian stand out in a crowded field of those who have contributed productive thoughts to my own projects and, in some cases, have returned to help teach my classes.

Before I ever dreamed of working on a doctorate, I had teachers who opened these new worlds for me. Most of them became friends with whom I still correspond and occasionally get to see. At the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Cándido Pérez Gállego urged me to go on to the best universities possible. Whenever I disagreed with anything he said, he would have me present it to the class so that we could all argue about it. Estefanía Villalba tried to get me into one of her doctoral courses even though I had only just finished my first year of undergraduate work. Like me, she had gone to the university late in life, so I felt inspired by her *vocación tardía*. While taking a Spanish literature survey with Álvaro Alonso Miguel, I discovered that I could find him in the cafeteria before our early morning class, and so enjoyed many delightful conversations about novels, including detective stories, an interest it turned out we had in common. Isabel Colón taught a course on *El Quijote* and, like Álvaro, had no aversion to continuing the discussion outside of the classroom. Whenever I get to Madrid, Álvaro, Isabel, and I continue them still.

Other friends made my year at the Complutense a pleasure. Bill Little, *el director*, and Valle Espeso, *la subdirectora*, of the California program became lasting friends. Jesús Tejada Giménez offered friendship, a place to stay in the country, and the example of another musician with a *vocación tardía*. Isabel Vilaplana Sempere went to see every new non-Hollywood movie with us on Sunday afternoons and then joined us for *tapas, copas y conversación sobre la peli*. We still stay in touch with Isabel, her daughter Sandra Martín Vilaplana, and her sister Carmen Vilaplana Sempere. Our longtime friend Silvia Tenenbaum, a *porteña* turned *madrileña*, put us up until we found an apartment, showed us hidden corners of Spain's capital, and made sure I never started thinking that I was altogether too smart. Zora Neale Hurston would have loved Silvia.

Barbara Brinson Curiel, poet, scholar, and Director of Ethnic Studies at Humboldt State University in California, supervised my work on a required final essay for a BA, which became "Salsa Criticism at the Turn of the Century," and later on an MA project, "Forgive Me for Staining this Sacred Land with My Blood: Nikkei Writing from the United States, Canada, and Peru." Her willingness to read untranslated citations in early drafts smoothed my initial efforts. She continued to have many helpful thoughts to share as I put together my proposals for this dissertation. Barry Dalsant, another professor in Humboldt's English Department, taught me a great deal about teaching and helped me obtain my first position teaching Introduction to Literature. In the Spanish Department, Martha Manier, Francisco de la Cabada, and Lilianet Brintrup taught me a great deal about Latin American poetry, novels, and cinema. Francisco and Lilianet also had me take over their

classes when they traveled to conferences. Larry and Ana María Romo Mease, professors at College of the Redwoods, also encouraged and continue to cheer on my efforts. Larry helped me get into the Complutense de Madrid with a letter explaining that I could function in Spanish even though I had never taken any Spanish classes.

Víctor García, a guitar player from the Dominican Republic, spoke Spanish with me while we traveled together in a band playing the “chitlin’ circuit.” I continued to learn on a “cuchifrito circuit” that encompassed the world in clubs extending from Brooklyn to *El Bronx*, with occasional trips to Philadelphia, Boston, and Puerto Rico. Along the way, I had many lessons from singer and dancer Elba Luz Mercado, *cuyos tonos jíbaros aún una maestría de filología no pudiera sacar de mi boca*. I fervently hope that my employment of Spanish always bears some reminders of trips on *la guagua*, hanging out with *los broders y los moninas*, and times that remain for me *inolvidablemente chévere*.

I wish I had learned Spanish quickly enough to communicate more effectively with Mon Rivera, a singer, composer, and multi-instrumentalist who understood my trombone playing better than anyone with whom I performed in salsa bands. Mon featured my plunger work during moments of concerts that still give me chills when I think of them. None of this ever got recorded, a good thing, perhaps, as it validates some of John Philip Sousa’s thoughts that will appear later on. Unlike Mon, Charlie Palmieri had the power to choose his side-musicians for recording dates, and hired me for a disc that earned me an award nomination and fleeting moments of fame in the *charco pequeñito* that made up the salsa scene in those days. Charlie was kind enough to tell me that I played well and would go far. I also recorded with other artists, including Willie “El Baby” Rodríguez, who later sang in my short-lived ensemble — imagine that! a singer from La Sonora Matancera performing with me!

My first gigs, in a time when many young white people only wanted to hear guitars and drums, came from black band leaders. I have always hoped that black musicians will be treated as well by white musicians as I was by most of the black people with whom I performed. After playing trombone with James Brown, Frank Davenport took this sixteen-year-old aspiring musician to his local gigs, where the audiences thought me very pale and therefore kind of cute. My first steady work as a trombonist took place in former Joe Tex saxophonist Mack Williams’ Majesty of Soul. Byron Morris saw past my skin and got me the gig. Byron and his wife Betty let me sleep on their couch on countless occasions when I needed a place to stay, and they have remained friends to this day.

While playing in salsa, cumbia, merengue, soul, R&B, and disco ensembles, a group of us realized that these were what we might call “jazz” forms like traditional, swing, and bop, meaning that they had the mixtures of styles and inclusion of improvisation that made music worthwhile to us. Long after the end of a musical evening, we would stay up and talk about the connections we heard in the music. Several of us — Jesús José “JJ” Silva, Dale Turk, and I — created the Secondhand Band, first on the streets of New York City and later in public schools, to showcase our “Music of the Americas,” a phrase that made little sense to educators at the time but has since become a buzzword. We turned the old stereotypical jazz history show

on its head with our pairings of clave, Bo Diddley, and ragtime later followed by cumbia and Kansas City two-beat. Even if America still draws cultural lines in sand, I'll bet some of those kids who heard us think differently. Dale still looks over my academic articles; in addition to his meticulous reading, he helps make sure I don't lose my musician's voice.

Mon passed on while I was in his band. Charlie followed. Blanca, my beautiful black cat who kept me company during hours of writing, made it with me almost all the way to this moment. Others who have gone before include Greg Smith, who made me the founding music director at Music Theatre International, a gig that allowed me to work with Broadway luminaries such as Stephen Sondheim, Robert Wright and George Forrest, and Stephen Schwartz, who took an interest in my orchestrations and arrangements. One of my oldest friends, Al Schoonmaker, recently passed on at the age of ninety. Marcela Martínez, a Colombian classmate at the Complutense, perished in an auto accident after living for little more than two decades. Later that year, my friend Santiago García Alba passed on suddenly in his fourth decade. Santiago — uncharacteristically protestant and, as he told me, *el español más gordo* — knew his country better than anyone I met, and taught me a great deal about living in Spain and about potentially useful meanings of nationalism as well. During that same year, Eva Maria Grundgeiger, who believed in my capacity for thinking long before I dared consider it possible, found life impossible to endure. “*Un niño que nace muerto o que se muere recién nacido y un suicido,*” writes Miguel de Unamuno in *San Manuel Bueno, mártir*, which I was reading at the time, “*son para mí de los más terribles misterios*” (70).

Eva Maria bore a child that she raised with Betsy and me. No one who has ever had a child will be surprised to learn that Nathalia Holt changed my life in many ways; she also preceded me at Humboldt State University and taught me basic lessons in attendance, punctuality, study habits, and seeing the course through. Nathalia stayed ahead of her Pop throughout her studies, and continues to inspire me with her examples of energy, creativity, and just plain fun.

During brief attempts at a BA, I began to think that classes could be worthwhile. Edward Goldman at Hunter College, City University of New York, and Hugh Kennemer at Humboldt State University, made music history exciting. At Rockland Community College (RCC), Haim Elisha taught a music theory class I attended and treated me as a colleague with kind words matched by the actions of hiring me to perform with him in Gloucester, Massachusetts and at a couple of performances at Lincoln Center in New York City. Samuel Draper at RCC urged me to consider graduate studies in literature, a dream I knew would never happen. My first-year English instructor at RCC ran a course that started at 1:00pm, a bit too early after late-gigs; in spite of desperately needing more coffee and cigarettes, I began to realize that Mr. Grey was someone quite a bit more important than the grey-suited, pale-skinned figure tossing out the jargon of his profession. Mr. Grey connected repetitions, rhymes, and alliteration to everyday media deployments that demonstrated the ways in which businesses directed our thinking. Years before Mike had our class read Jerome McGann, Mr. Grey showed us that “many text producers neither want nor expect anything more than a purely responsive act of reading—an act which will decode the transmission in precisely the way

that the sender desires” (127). Standing in front of first-year classes at the University of Alberta, I think often of Mr. Grey.

Reaching back into my own childhood, I still make good use of lessons learned from my father. Well before popular culture studies became current in academia, he had his eighth graders making movies and video productions. Responding to surveys studying adolescent television habits, he decided that if his students spent more time in front of the screen than in the classroom they would need to become literate viewers. Sometimes his colleagues would ask, “What about books?” My father would then point out that his students read and reported on a book every single month of the school year. Even if not yet invented, popular culture studies did not cause his students to work less; instead, they worked more than others.

My childhood teachers gave me far more than I deserved. Harry Huffnagle taught me to arrange music at the Amherst Summer Music Center. At the Preparatory Division of the Manhattan School of Music, Fred Braverman taught me trombone through years of high school, which I rarely attended, and drug problems that I attended to all too well. After much struggle, I gave up narcotics and learned to play the trombone. Others valiantly attempted to pierce that fog, including a grade twelve English teacher I should remember who somehow added credits to my records so that I could — most improbably — graduate from high school and go on and play music like she knew I should.

Mr. Cozart and Ms. Coleman deserve special mention. He taught biology and she taught geometry at Ramapo Senior High School. For the silly reason that they were African American, I felt thrilled when they supported my ambition to play jazz. In those days when many judged whites soulless, their approbation meant a great deal to me. More importantly, however, they taught biology and geometry; if black people excelled in math and science, I figured, then perhaps a white guy like me could improvise something worth hearing.

Except for my studies at the Manhattan School of Music and a yearlong Performing-Arts-in-the-Schools certification program at Columbia Teachers College, most of my studies have taken place in public institutions. Along the way, I have met many hard-working citizens of Canada, Spain, and the United States, and have never heard a single one object to my use of their taxes to pursue my studies. I can only show my gratitude by dedicating my future efforts to them, the people.

For me, the saddest part of Carpentier’s “Viaje a la semilla” occurs as the protagonist, moving backwards in time, is no longer married. “*Al fin la Marquesa sopló las lámparas. Sólo él habló en la oscuridad*” (17). This reminds me to stop heading into the past so that I can keep going forward with Betsy, who I hope is always in the end just as she is always in the beginning.

Edmonton, Alberta
October 31, 2010

**Not India,
In Which Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston Finally Discover America**

Table of Contents

--

Introduction	2
Chapter One — Marvelous Realism and Faith in the Americas: Hemispheric Credence in Novels by Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston	13
<i>Alejo Carpentier and Marvelous Realism</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Alejo Carpentier and “Our America”</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Faith in Moses as Seen by Hurston</i>	<i>49</i>
Chapter Two — Marvelous American Music.....	80
<i>Differences in American Listening.....</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Defining Our American Music.....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Sounds from Nowhere.....</i>	<i>134</i>
Chapter Three — Standing on the Rock: American Identity in Carpentier and Hurston	163
<i>Colorful Shades of Grey</i>	<i>171</i>
<i>Everyone Has an Accent.....</i>	<i>193</i>
<i>Hurston on the Rock.....</i>	<i>221</i>
Chapter Four — Artistic Conviction: The Guilty Politics of Carpentier and Hurston..	237
<i>Shades of Black and White</i>	<i>239</i>
<i>Cultural Politics ;Cha-cha-chá!.....</i>	<i>250</i>
<i>Another National Anthem</i>	<i>271</i>
OK, So Let’s Suppose You’re from the United States and Would Like to Become an American.....	304
Works Cited	323

Introduction

continent, *n.***I.** A containing agent or space.**1. a.** That which contains or holds. Now *rare* or *arch*.**b. fig.** That which comprises or sums up; summary, sum and substance (sometimes not distinguishable from *content*, that which is contained). Now *rare* or *arch*.*Oxford English Dictionary*

Christopher Columbus had good reasons to deny his discovery of America. Aside from the fact that he had planned to go elsewhere, he confronted people likely to have already had some inkling of their land's existence. Beyond that, geneticists and historians now offer increasing evidence of earlier travelers from Asia, Europe, and possibly Africa. None of this prevents celebrations of Columbus' achievement as far north as Canada, which observes the October landing date as Thanksgiving Day, or as far south as Argentina, which calls the same day *Día de la Raza*. The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco promoted the holiday as *Día de la Hispanidad* in a partially successful bid to create an Iberian-American alliance in opposition to a United States trade embargo, and other countries continue to celebrate Discovery Day, *Día de las Culturas*, *Día de la Resistencia Indígena*, or simply Columbus Day.

Whether along the fjords of Tierra del Fuego or amidst the Arctic Zephyrs of Nunavut, Americans celebrate, denounce, or resist Columbus because what he did not discover did, in fact, turn out to be America; his landing in the Caribbean inaugurated a process that transformed separate areas into a continent occupying an entire hemisphere. Unlike the geographical entities known as Africa, Asia, and Europe, whose names evoke unitary features in spite of their disparate elements, the New World not discovered by Columbus has been continually redivided into Americas called North, Central,

South, Caribbean, Latin, Anglo, and Francophone, none conforming neatly to the geographical, historical, linguistic, or cultural features of the hemisphere.¹

Given that Columbus did not discover America, it appears as though many others have similarly failed to do so. Two years after Columbus' Caribbean landing, Spain and Portugal failed hilariously with the Treaty of Tordesillas that established a border between Africa and America that placed present-day Brazil in the Old World. Others enjoyed partial success. President James Monroe formulated a policy of hemispheric unity in 1823 by declaring, "as a principle in which and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." The Monroe Doctrine, as this address to Congress became known, overturned a prevailing hierarchy but did not dismantle the hierarchical concept of imperialism in America. While calling the political systems practiced by the European powers waging war among themselves "essentially different in this respect from that of America," Monroe presided over a slaveholding power that, as Sara E. Johnson points out, collaborated with an axis of Spanish, French, and British armed forces intent on "subduing nonwhite enemy combatants" (67). Other American nations that separated from their European colonizers had the same interest in

¹ America currently has 858 million people residing on 42,549,000 km², Africa one billion people residing on 30.2 million km², Asia almost four billion people residing on 44,579,000 km², and Europe 727 million people residing on 10,180,000 km² (Data from the "UNSD Statistical Databases"). The United Nations also includes statistics for Oceania; however, since that continent presents a different set of problems fit for a discussion in another setting and remains loosely defined — with parts sometimes consigned to Asia or, in the case of Hawaii, North America — it does not take part in the present text. This text also skips over another anomaly — the inclusion of parts of Oceania, Russia, and West Africa in the Western Hemisphere, depending on the meridians used to denominate opposite sides of the planet — by limiting the hemisphere to the relatively narrow bounds commonly known as the Americas.

privileging those regarded as the pure descendants of Europeans. Rather than develop a politics to serve all Americans, observes Benedict Anderson, the initial impetus driving independence movements “in such important cases as Venezuela, Mexico, and Peru, was the *fear* of ‘lower-class’ political mobilizations: to wit, Indian or Negro or Negro-slave uprisings” (48 emphasis in the original). By the end of its first full century, the United States affirmed its pretensions to the upper classes by spurning José Martí’s invitation into a reformed America.

A reformed America needs a useful politics. Just as Africa, Asia, and Europe have turned to organizations charged with promoting common interests among their diverse peoples, the Organization of American States (OAS) seeks a measure of cohesion among the peoples of America; its first article calls upon member nations to create “an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence” (“Who We Are”). Unlike the other continents, however, our individual nations struggle with their own basic identities. Nations on those other continents certainly struggle with national identities, especially in Africa, where many borders conform to European districts rather than previously existing countries; even in these places, however, local identities, whether considered tribal or national, relate to continental structures in ways still foreign to the American experience. As seen in the privileging of elite groups, many in the New World reject the Old World even while clinging to it as a natural source of traditions; Anderson has noted, for example, the “doubleness of the Americas” (191) apparent in such early place names as New London, Nieuw Amsterdam,

Nouvelle-Orléans, and Nuevo León. Conversely, during phases of Old World rejection, some have embraced autochthonous cultures, obvious sources of separate identity, while eradicating living vestiges of their daily practice.

Without an American identity, we will not have an American politics. Necessarily vague and continually open to reinterpretations, an American identity would allow Americans to sometimes speak of themselves collectively in the way that Africans, Asians, and Europeans sometimes speak of themselves while simultaneously maintaining and overcoming differences of language, history, religion, and culture. Daniel Webster attempted to create the basis of an American language with a book of words, but he missed at least one crucial definition. Possibly without intending to do so, the United States has successfully hijacked America as a noun and American as an adjective. Unlike Spanish and Portuguese, which respectively employ the terms *estadounidense* and *estadunidense*, English only contains clumsy or generally unknown synonyms for American as a description of someone or something from the United States.² Since this use of the term confuses the very issues discussed here, the word American will only appear in reference to people, places, and things continental. Employment of this general term should not, of course, mean that recognized national and ethnic groups within the continent must surrender their different identities.

Even as Americans maintain cultural differences, they will require common cultural referents. A useful politics of the Americas based on Americans who identify as Americans must take place in a setting that allows them to sit at the same table even though some switch the hand that holds the

² Frank Lloyd Wright proposed a felicitous neologism, Usonian, which might resurface to a more favorable response. I gratefully acknowledge Prof. Timothy Brennan at Minnesota University for pointing this out and urging its employment.

fork, some keep the fork in the same hand, and others use no fork at all. Artists continually rediscover an America that politicians rarely see. Argentine author and later president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento called for an American literature modeled on the approach of James Fenimore Cooper. This dissertation follows Sarmiento's literary approach³ to the extent that it focuses on truths found in fiction, keeping in mind how Roberto González Echevarría's *Myth and Archive* sets out the "hypothesis that the novel, having no fixed form of its own, often assumes that of a given kind of document endowed with truth-bearing power by society at specific moments in time" (8). Correspondingly, he adds, "It would be aseptically formalistic not to recognize that the law, nineteenth-century science and anthropology are powerful *cultural*, not merely narrative constructs" (40). Similarly, Ramón Saldívar "investigates the enabling conditions of narrative fiction and the various ways in which modern narrative seeks to create an epistemological ground upon which coherent versions of the world may be produced...Every novel in its own way attempts to answer this question by creating figures and narrative stances that will allow the truth of the story to shine forth" (xii).

In addition to considering novels, the pages that follow will examine music. Perhaps because their media provided abstract possibilities more easily attainable than those made possible by written words, painters and performers consciously cultivated American ways of creating; music exemplifies such an American cultural practice with rhythms and melodies that boldly go where

³ Although this does not follow Sarmiento's view of *civilización versus barbarie*. Several critics have noted how Alejo Carpentier breaks with Sarmiento's views. Ludmila Kapschutschenko, for example, writes, "In contrast to the average novel, Carpentier's work shows *civilización* as destructive and *barbarie* in nature as cruel but just" (107). (En contraste con la novela típica, la obra de *Carpentier* muestra la *civilización* como destructora; la *barbarie* — cruel, pero justa — es la naturaleza.) This and all subsequent translations my own unless otherwise specified.

politicians fear to tread, resonating throughout the continent with sounds that typify specific regions while remaining strongly connected to one another. American music in all of its multifarious manifestations employs elements from Africa, Asia, and Europe even as it rejects their formal prescriptions. In ways that have only begun to receive sufficient attention, American music has also incorporated autochthonous styles. Notably, a significant alliance of African-Americans and Natchez lived and worked together in the lower Mississippi Valley, an area that would become musically important. “Some of these blacks may have been fugitives from the European settlement,” writes Ira Berlin, “but their presence early in the eighteenth century suggests they migrated from Spanish Mexico” (79). Thus the groups eventually called African American, Indian, and Latino converge on New Orleans long before it becomes known as the cradle of jazz.

A new awakening in American politics, identity, and culture must begin with faith. Along with politics, identity, and culture, however, this faith requires reformulation. As seen in battles for the abolition of slavery and community organizing efforts in Chicago and Brazil, fundamentalist religious movements in the Americas have effected tremendous social accomplishments. Even so, this differs from faith in America, which need not have a basis in one common set of beliefs. “*Distinctions are required,*” writes Jacques Derrida in “Faith and Knowledge,” “*faith has not always been and will not always be identifiable with religion, nor, another point, with theology. All sacredness and all holiness are not necessarily, in the strict sense of the term, if there is one, religious*” (48 italics in original). American faith need not have more strict guidelines than American identity or culture, but it must

firmly retain credence in the existence of America and a belief in those who populate the continent as Americans.⁴

America came into being as a place that was not India. It grew as a place that was not Europe. In the process of becoming not Asia, not Europe, or, in a different manner, not Africa, America has always partly been those places, and thus in a sempiternal state of tension between embracing and rejecting them. As a result, America exists as an impossibility. “The temptation of knowing, the temptation of knowledge,” observes Derrida in “Faith and Knowledge,” “is to believe not only that one knows what one knows (which wouldn’t be too serious), but also that one knows what knowledge is, that is, free, structurally, of belief or of **faith** — of the fiduciary or of trustworthiness” (68 emphasis in original). Without faith in the impossibility of discovering America, we are left with possible Americas, most of which have proved disappointing when not downright harmful. Possible Americas involve attempts to set up hegemonic centers — nationalist, political, religious, or utopian — that negate any possibility of a desirable America. Any hope of discovering America, then, must come not just in the faith that it exists but also with the knowledge that it will only prove discoverable from within an American place yet to be revealed.

In four chapters, this dissertation pursues a politics of the Americas built on faith, cultures, and identities centered in the area of Columbus’ first American landings that initiated the conditions of American consciousness. Two coevally Caribbean authors, Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) and Zora

4 “Europeans regard America as just one continent,” reports Karl Lennartz in a history of the Olympic rings, whose five rings Baron Pierre de Coubertin interpreted as “*les cinq parties du monde*,” meaning “the five continents Africa, America, Asia, Australia and Europe” (32). I gratefully acknowledge my student Ryan Antonello who pointed out the meaning of these rings.

Neale Hurston (1891-1960), provide connections through these considerations. Carpentier, the son of a French father and a Russian mother, drew his first breath in Havana, Cuba. He spent many years in France, wrote some of his early works in French, and passed away in Paris. The Caribbean claims him, however, just as he finally claims the Caribbean. During his final years, he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Havana and formal recognition for his work from the National Assembly of Cuba as well as from President Fidel Castro Ruz. At the time of his death, he served as a cultural attaché for the Cuban embassy in Paris. Like Carpentier, Hurston began life in a state that borders the Gulf of Mexico. Her family's early move from Notasulga, Alabama to Eatonville, Florida brings Zora's childhood within 617 kilometers of Carpentier's hometown. Unlike Carpentier, Hurston never seems to doubt the centrality of American culture, especially that of the Caribbean. Like Carpentier, Hurston traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean in search of the roots of American culture and, by extension, the meaning of American identity. Both authors produced works that focused on the African-American culture of Haiti; Hurston's *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* came out in 1938 and Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* in 1949. After these works, both authors turned away from obviously African sources to find American culture in other places. Carpentier wrote *Los pasos perdidos* while searching along Venezuela's Orinoco River for originary musical instruments while Hurston composed *Seraph on the Suwanee* as she searched Honduras for a lost civilization.

Chapter one examines faith through Carpentier's 1948 exposition of American Marvelous Realism in his prologue to *El reino de este mundo*.

Although the strikingly similar constitutions written by American nations provide legal connections, these tend to unify male property owners of clearly European descent. The sense of America defined by Carpentier depends on a cultural credence already seen in Hurston's 1939 publication of *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. Without merely overturning constitutional hierarchies, both authors employ cultural support to deconstruct the privileged position set out in official documents. An American sense of wonder pervades the continent more completely than found in declarations pronounced in Washington DC, Buenos Aires, Caracas, or any other national capital.

Music forms the basis of discussion in chapter two. An examination of American rhythms, harmonies, and melodies demonstrates that such seemingly disparate styles as ragtime, traditional jazz, rumba, mambo, and tango do not have insular histories. In fact, these musics have common roots that, for obvious reasons of trade, armed intervention, and strategic centrality, intersect in the Caribbean. Understandings of the musical bases of American culture suffer from problems in musical education in the Americas, where children are taught that European music must be learned while the acquisition of American music depends on intangible alignments of talent and intuition. Close readings of Carpentier's *Concierto barroco* and Hurston's *Seraph on the Suwanee* reveal new understandings that Americans can achieve through serious studies of their own culture.

Following the second chapter's insistence on the need for serious studies of American music, the third chapter takes up perils and potential of American identity with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's call for disciplinary moves that would bring some of the rigor of Area Studies, a field she

considers more connected with official documents that privilege elites, to cultural studies, such as this one, that strive for the inclusion of people from all backgrounds in American institutions and corridors of power. Since groups of people continue to fall into categories established by recently repudiated scientific theories, this chapter will examine how recent thinking in genetics offers new approaches to human identity. Contemporary biology supports a complex view of human groups as having both separate features and inextricable connections. In America, the most far-flung genetic permutations come together in sharper contrast than they do on any other continent. Thus, Americans share a recognition of difference that creates connections based less on shared ancestry and nationality than on their rejections of previous ancestries and nationalities. Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* (1953) and *El arpa y la sombra* (1978) provide a means of going back to Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939) to reconsider her handling of simultaneously connected and disparate identity.

From this foundation based on faith, music, and identity, the concluding section offers a means of developing an American politics. Commencing with an American view of Americans, this finale then considers Carpentier's politics as seen in his works, especially *El siglo de las luces* (1962) and through the works of other Cuban writers. Carpentier forms a basis for a political reading of Hurston's *Seraph on the Suwanee* within the context of the novel's 1948 publication. Hurston not only saw through the propaganda of her times, but also foresaw ways in which disparate people could consider themselves American without losing their differences.

We know that America is not India. In fact, it started being America at

precisely the moment it became not-India. As twentieth-century cultural theorists focused on the American continent, Carpentier and Hurston can tell us more about what America is, and about the ways in which we can continue to go about learning more...

Chapter One — Marvelous Realism and Faith in the Americas: Hemispheric
 Credence in Novels by Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston

Con fe, siembra y siembra y tú verás.
 Con fe, siembra y siembra y tú va ve.¹

“Siembra” Rubén Blades

Bands with low budgets like to find unusual places where they can work on music without disturbing neighbors. Once I rehearsed with a salsa band in a Brooklyn *botánica*, a shop specializing in items utilized during religious ceremonies that resemble the “hoodoo” described in Haiti and Louisiana by Zora Neale Hurston. Respectfully, I complimented the young Puerto Rican storeowner on the charms of his inventory. His response surprised me. “These stupid Puerto Ricans really believe in this bullshit!” he exclaimed. With a rehearsal about to commence, the conversation did not continue, a shame since I would have liked to know how he came to dedicate his time and investments to a religion he mocked. Since then, I have also wondered if he was putting me on or perhaps hiding beliefs from my inquisitive eyes. Well before that encounter, I had seen things that made me hesitate to scoff. At an outdoor concert, I saw the legendary singer and *santo* Mon Rivera gesture at a rain cloud that immediately moved away, possibly pushed by the wind at just that moment. The music and dance at a *santería* circle outside of another concert hypnotically drew me in, leaving me perplexed and vaguely anxious. During a staged version of *santería* practices at a rehearsal in New York City’s experimental Joseph Papp Theater, I saw the principal actor injured in an odd accident. I have known women who light four candles and place one in each corner when they want a man. None of this

¹ With faith, sow and sow and you will see. / With faith, sow and sow and you gonna see.

makes me an initiate; as the grandson of holy men with opposed convictions,² however, I have learned to take seriously the convictions of others even as my own ceaselessly shift. Perhaps in this spirit, I find myself heeding the cautions offered in a familiar verse by Cuban songwriter Ignacio Piñeiro: “*Mayeya, no juegues con los santos...*”

Faith suffuses American marvelous realism. In order to understand this connection between credence and Alejo Carpentier’s view of “la maravillosa realidad americana,” this chapter plays with multiple meanings of the phrase ‘faith in the Americas’ with faith considered both as an entity located in the Western Hemisphere and as a credence in the possibilities offered by the New World. Some of that confident assurance of melioration appears in political movements suffused with American variations of Christianity that include Black Baptism and Caribbean Catholicism as well as American religious fusions such as *Santería*, *Vodun*, *Candomblé*, *Lucumi*, and *Macumba* that overlay Christian icons on African figures, often as a resisting and even subversive force. As a corollary, these pages also pose an underlying question: Should literary scholars read the Anglo American and Latin American sites of these religions as necessarily separate places? Well-reasoned arguments make strong cases for more than two answers. In some cases, a critique may simultaneously hold, intentionally or otherwise, multiple positions; a recent article by Esther Sánchez-Pardo, a professor of American literature at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, in the *European Journal of English Studies* initially brings together authors from each of those two American

² My maternal grandparents spent decades as Christian missionaries in the Hausa country of the land now known as Nigeria. As a member of the tribe of KAhan TZedek (Katz), reputedly descendants of Moses’ brother Aaron, my paternal grandfather endeavored the model behavior appropriate among Judaism’s priestly caste.

places, Zora Neale Hurston and Alejo Carpentier respectively, but then reinforces a divisive view with a text that posits the former as an Africanist and the latter as a Latin Americanist (291). After examining pertinent issues surrounding the underlying question of the Americas, this chapter considers the possibility of reading both authors as Americanists by reframing Carpentier's theory of an American marvelous realism in the context of Hurston's American practice of realism in a marvelous manner.

In three segments, this examination focuses on Carpentier's announcement of American marvelous realism, his view of America as a site that includes the United States, and how his views inform a reading of Hurston as an American marvelous realist. The first section considers the Cuban author's 1948 Prologue to *El reino de este mundo* (*The Kingdom of this World*), in which he first proclaims *lo real maravilloso* — dependent on faith in the Americas — in the context of surrealist history and as a response to the arrival of French intellectuals in Mexico and other parts of the Americas. As a means of locating and contextualizing Carpentier's declaration of American marvelous realism, this study then moves to a close reading of his earlier *Carteles* articles, especially the series "El ocaso de Europa" (1941), which clearly show how the author imagines an America that includes the United States, in his response to a perceived collapse of European intellectuality. Ultimately, however, Carpentier's reconsideration of his theories relies less on the trans-Atlantic movement of European concepts he initially describes than on his subsequently expanded view of marvelous realism as always already applicable in America. Following the material related to Carpentier and his views, a consideration of problems currently confronting cultural and ethnic

studies, along with some proposed solutions, provides a basis for the retrospective review of Hurston's anthropological essays, early stories, and *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939) through Carpentier's articles, Prologue, and *El reino de este mundo*. This concludes with a discussion of faith that both authors develop in their works and an articulation of faith in America that does not depend on specific beliefs.

Hurston and Carpentier often distinguish their faith from their beliefs, particularly when espousing political views. The final chapter of this dissertation will take up a more extended consideration of those views; for now it will suffice to note that the authors alter, contradict, and prevaricate when expressing belief in their respective countries, the United States and Cuba. At the same time, their faith in the Americas as a place offering cultural possibilities unobtainable in the rest of the world remains constant. Their faith makes it possible for them to recognize cultural connections in the unusually disparate social, linguistic, and theological elements that form communities and nationalities in the Western Hemisphere. Although Carpentier has made these connections in his famous formulation of "la maravillosa realidad americana," some readers insist on applying them exclusively to selected places in the Americas; understanding how Hurston also created marvelously real works — in some cases, before Carpentier's articulation of the concept — offers a means of apprehending the United States as part of America without providing excuses for the ways in which its government and corporations continue to dominate the hemisphere.

The new understandings of literature of the Americas proposed here contradict basic 'common-sensical' approaches currently enshrined in separate

disciplines; the “General preface” to *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* provides just one of many examples of current thinking with its assumption of “the very existence of Latin American literature as such” (xiii). The seemingly straightforward proposition in *The Cambridge History* begins to unravel as editors Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker explain their reasons for including some nations while leaving out others. Acknowledging differences between countries included in the series, they claim unity among descendants of black Africans in the Caribbean, white gauchos in the Southern Cone, and Indians in places as widely dispersed as Peru and Mexico through “a certain homology in the way these figures appear in their respective national or regional literatures” (xiii). Although such a correspondence arguably exists among the employment of disparate literary figures in widely-separated Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries, an attentive reader can make a case, as well, for similarly homologous appearances as well as cultural relationships between the *bozal* defined in Carpentier’s *Écúe-yamba-ó* as a Black slave, born in the country of origin” (185) and the “Bossal” in Hurston’s *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, found “in the neighborhood of the place where all of the slaves were disembarked from the ships” (223). The pairings of Arvey Henson/Jeff Kelsey in Hurston’s *Seraph on the Suwanee* and Vera/Gaspar in Carpentier’s *La consagración de la primavera* — in both cases white women who understand culture more thoroughly through artistic collaborations and verbal interactions with black men — provide another example of these literarily homologous appearances.

In fairness to González Echevarría and Pupo-Walker, one could argue that acceptance of black Africans, along with protagonists identified with other marginalized groups, as national figures has taken more time in the United States than it has in countries they identify as Latin America, but this would depend on the nation specified; literature in Brazil and Cuba, for example, has taken much more notice of African descendants than has the literature of Mexico or Peru even as *los indios* appear as iconic figures more often in the latter than in the former. When viewed emblematically in the northern countries of America, the family portrayed in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, a novel by Canadian Cree author Tomson Highway, represents national or regional figuration in ways not unlike the ephemeral ancestors found in Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* or the community that apathetically witnesses a human's destruction in Gabriel García Márquez' *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*.

Although Brazil, a nation whose language and history — consider, for example, the tardy arrival of printing presses in 1808 and that American nation's unique rule of a European colony from 1815-1822 — differs markedly from those of the former colonies of Spain, finds its way into *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, the “General preface” implicitly excludes all English-speaking places, including Guyana, several Caribbean islands, and the United States and Canada. In spite of these efforts, America and Latin America do not separate so neatly. Just as the United States and Cuba, to name famously opposed nations from North and Latin America, have different literary traditions, so do Cuba and Argentina, Brazil and Haiti, or any other pair of American nations. Few anthology editors, to consider a literary example, would skip directly from the white supremacist urgings of

Argentinean writer and president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento to the Afro-Cuban poetry of Nicolás Guillén. With texts continuing to appear in Creole, Dutch, and Nahuatl³ as well as in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, readers could reasonably view the Western Hemisphere as culturally fragmented; connecting elements exist, however, and few doubt the relationship of Brazil and Uruguay, Haiti and Cuba, or Surinam and Guyana in spite of the linguistic differences between all of these paired national entities.

Even so, the line in the sand hardens not so much at the juncture of English, which some consider Latin in non-white places such as Antigua, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad, but instead at the borders of so-called developed ‘white’ countries, specifically Canada and the United States. And specific exclusions of Canada and the United States do not only take place in literary anthologies. A Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), established in 1973, includes Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands, The Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago as member nations and Anguilla, The Cayman Islands, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Aruba, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Bermuda, Dominican Republic, and the Netherlands Antilles as observers (CARICOM 1-2). As this list shows, the organization, which works for “the eventual integration of its members and economies, and the creation of a common market” and the coordination of

³ As an official language of Haiti, Creole (also known as Kreyòl) appears in official documents as well as literature from that country. Dutch continues to appear in legal documents, literature, and musical compositions created in the Netherlands Antilles. Nahuatl claims one and a half million native speakers in Mexico. In hopes of hearing some Spanish while traveling in Hong Kong, I attended a film showing of a full-length feature produced by the Mexican government and filmed entirely in Nahuatl.

“foreign policies of the independent Member States and in Functional Cooperation, especially in relation to various areas of social and human endeavour,” includes, with one notable exception, lands bordering the Caribbean as well as those confined to islands. Carlos Wharton, a Senior Trade Policy Advisor with the Caribbean Export Development Agency, argues for strategies that would, economically at least, tie CARICOM more closely to the United States and Canada.

Constructed barriers of Anglo and Latin American cultures not only fail to hold between nations; they also fall apart within countries, where internal divisions also demonstrate the fallacy of generalizing. Cuban musicologists argued for decades over the relative influence and importance of Afro-Cubanismo, guajiro, and trovador. As Walt Whitman pointed out in the 1870s, Spanish elements exerted far more influence over the Southwestern states — and, according to Whitman, much of the rest of the country, as well — than Anglocentric citizens cared to recognize. Current territorial disputes between Spanish speaking ‘criollos’ and quechua speaking ‘indios’ in Bolivia provide just one example of intramural disputes found throughout Latin as well as Anglo America. Dr. George Priestley, at Columbia University, along with Juan Flores and Miriam Jiménez Román, coordinators of the Afro Latino Research and Resource Project, currently investigate ignored descendants of Africans in nations throughout the hemisphere. Meanwhile, Timothy Brennan’s *Secular Devotion: Afro-Latin Music and Imperial Jazz* finds in the culture of those same descendants connections that run throughout the hemisphere, making “it possible to say that the ethical core of civic life in the Americas is inseparable from the African presence” (7). The fact that

anthologies have sometimes constructed a recorded history of predominantly white literature in the United States and Canada does not make that always and forever the dominant representative mode; movements operating as ethnic literature have not merely offered expected alternative readings but have also made strong cases for considering those alternatives as mainstreams from which others, such as white, might diverge. Such movements within countries contradict the separations between nations.

Just as people have multiple identities that cross various boundaries, depending on their birth, formation, sexuality, and place in societal structures, peoples have identities that cross borders, including those of Anglo and Latin America. With Canada and the United States by most estimates having greater ethnic diversity than Argentina, even the so-called developed countries turn out to be not so 'white.' Mexican citizens who became residents of the United States in 1849 no longer had a firm footing in either Anglo or Latin America, and neither did the Haitians who arrived in Havana or New Orleans after the revolutions of the 1790s and later became citizens of Cuba or the state of Louisiana. Descendants of slaves in the former Spanish colony of Florida who escaped to Canada also occupied this interstitial American space. Twentieth-century Chicanos and Nuyorricans, groups considered Latino even though their members often speak more English than Spanish, represent more recent phenomena amidst these inter-American developments.

None of the preceding should induce scholars into precipitously yoking Latin America to the United States. Aside from possible concerns about upholding the boundaries of academic disciplines, a history of aggression directed from Washington DC offers reasonable grounds for proceeding

cautiously. The declaration of the paternalistic Monroe Doctrine a mere twenty-six years after the ratification of the constitution of the United States, the occupation of Mexican territory during the 1840s, the colonization of Puerto Rico in 1898, the supposed liberation of Colombia's northern province in order to build the Panama canal, the 1901 imposition of the Platt Amendment (still displayed under glass in Havana), and an embargo on Cuba opposed by every other nation in the hemisphere⁴ all inspire reasonably-held suspicion. Concurrently, as both Carpentier and Hurston point out, the United States government has allowed and sometimes actively aided corporate interventions in the economies and even the political workings of nations to the south.

More current US territory came from Spanish than English colonies, an on-the-ground fact that by itself would cause neighbors to tremble; it also, however, provides solid evidence of cultural commonalities that should not remain ignored. Simply hoping that Latin America can discover a separate path into the future not only ignores political realities; the willful adoption of such blinders distorts cultural, and thus societal, understandings and disconnects people within the separated societies who could offer mutual comprehension, inspiration, and solidarity. After all, in *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*, scholars such as John Beverley, José Oviedo, and Michael Aronna have already set out “to deconstruct the traditional opposition between Latin America and the United States” (16), which they see as having:

...served elite interests in both regions and [recognize], at the

⁴ Many US citizens oppose the embargo, as well. The nation's infamous Electoral College — which, as seen in the 2000 presidential election, gives states such as Florida outsized influence on electoral outcomes — has allowed Jorge Mas Canosa and his followers in Miami to maintain a firmer stance against the Cuban government than most non-Cubans in the US would advocate.

same time, the partial unraveling of the hegemony of economic neo-liberalism with the appearance of new political and social possibilities in the Americas. The United States itself, with a Spanish-surnamed population of some twenty-five million, has now become the fifth-largest nation of the Hispanic world (out of twenty) and by the millennium will be the third or fourth.

(14)

Furthermore, assertions of Latin American identity cannot escape the contradictions of bifurcating bases; just as Néstor García Canclini, in a work whose title would translate as *Latin Americans Searching for a Place in this Century* (*Latinoamericanos buscando lugar en este siglo*), observes how, while he and others from the South have “configured our heterogeneous identity with experiences in various countries, even in Europe and the United States, many Europeans and people from the United States find pieces of what they are in an America that is Latin”⁵ (28). While respecting the occasions when differentiations between Anglo and Latin America make political sense, we need not always observe groundless barriers that demarcate absolute divisions and create misunderstandings of cultural production throughout the Americas.

“Novels by Fuentes can be used to read James and those by Lezama Lima to read Joyce,” advises González Echeverría. “Again, the question will not be how these works agree but how they differ, how the reading and

⁵ “[...] así como los latinoamericanos hemos ido configurado nuestra identidad heterogénea con vivencias de varios países, aun de Europa y Estados Unidos, muchos europeos y estadounidenses tienen pedazos de lo que son en América latina.” Prof. García’s use of the lower case l in “América latina” differentiates the phrase from the geographical América Latina, which would scan as Latin America rather than the America that is Latin, with its attendant alteration of meaning, as I have translated it here.

rewriting practiced from the margins mobilizes elements in the hegemonic text that were previously inert, beyond the reach of criticism and theory. This is criticism by fiction and friction” (“Latin American and Comparative Literatures” 57). This looks fine as far as it goes, but readers may also find that such pairings uncover agreements as well as differences, especially when they employ literature from peripheries to read marginalized literature created in centers. Although writing from peripheral places such as Cuba and Venezuela, Carpentier generally lived a less marginalized existence than did Hurston in New York City. Keeping in mind these various possibilities, I do not intend this dissertation as a call for dismantling Latin American studies; cultural studies needs more categories, not fewer. As scholars focus on literature from individual countries and even specific regions within countries as well as regions made up of groups of countries, I add a continental category that — sometimes, at least — includes all of America. As an *estadounidense* who speaks English and Spanish, two languages native to my country (neither one officially), I remain painfully aware of the mediocre options offered to our children as part of our impoverished cultural formation: 1) historically taught as inheritors of Great Britain, 2) pretentiously taught as continental aspirants, 3) inanely taught as an exception, something completely new in the world, or 4) defensively, and more recently, taught as a collection of separate communities with arguments about the extent to which they should melt or stay in separate pots. So far, the United States has done little to teach its children how to exist in America.

Rereading Hurston through Carpentier turns the discussion of both authors from exclusively ethnic, cultural, African American, or Latin

American studies to some combination of these, as advocated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in conjunction with Area Studies. In this case, apprehending the United States as an entity of the Americas re-forms literary approaches to works by Zora Neale Hurston in ways that facilitate a re-view of her often misunderstood or neglected social views and political statements. While maintaining an appropriate deference to difference — still needed, as acknowledged in preceding paragraphs — this reformation of Cuba and the United States as parts of a Caribbean literary region, reviewed here as literary criticism at the same time that Barack Obama and Raúl Castro seek to re-view that relationship by authoring new treaties and other literary documents, will reveal the utility of Hurston's newly-understood views in discussions of the Americas and the place of the United States within a newly-understood America.

Alejo Carpentier and Marvelous Realism

It is faith that moves mountains, because it gives
the illusion that mountains move. Illusion is
perhaps the only reality in life.

Benito Mussolini (qtd. in Falasca-Zamponi 43)

Alejo Carpentier's American response to European surrealism offers an inter-American vision that usefully intervenes in bifurcated approaches, such as those found in Sánchez-Pardo's article, that artificially separate the Americas. Although critics typically constrain Carpentier's concept of marvelous reality to Latin American literature, especially when recalled as a foundational moment of magical realism, they rarely take advantage of the possibilities available when placing Carpentier's vision into dialogue with works produced in Canada and the United States; even when invoked in relationship to North American authors, magical realism has only been used to compare Spanish-language works with such obvious, although still potentially useful, examples as Tomson Highway or William Faulkner. This neglect occurs in spite of the fact that Carpentier specifically applies his concept to literature, music, and plastic arts in ways that could aid hemispheric understandings without upholding hegemonic forces. Non-hegemonic connections between nations of the Americas would discover places of mutual interest or similar activity without insisting that these links remain permanent or that they apply in every case; they would, in short, maintain the tension of an American continent simultaneously connected and disconnected. Without violating the cultural integrity — or political aspirations — of Latin American nations, a Carpentierian reading of Anglo America provides a comprehension of cultures of the United States and its ever-connected politics made more useful by coming from outside its borders. Going down the road not taken by

Sánchez-Pardo, the trajectory of marvelous realism leads to more productive readings of writers throughout the Americas, including the English-speaking Hurston.

“But what is the history of the Americas other than a chronicle of the marvelously real?”⁶ asks Carpentier in his prologue to *El reino de este mundo* (8). Having set the time and place of his epiphany, the final days of 1943 amidst the poetic ruins of Haiti’s Sans-Souci, Carpentier explains how “this enduring presence of the marvelously real was not an exclusive privilege of Haiti, but instead the patrimony of all of America, where, for example, no one has yet completed the establishment of an accounting of cosmologies”⁷ (4). He then contextualizes marvels in European literary traditions seen in Brocéliande, the magical Paimpont forest in France; Merlin, King Arthur, and the Knights of the Roundtable in England; Victor Hugo; and Miguel de Unamuno, who had only recently passed away on the eve of the Spanish Civil War. “There is a moment,” adds Carpentier, “in the sixth *Song of Maldoror* in which the hero, pursued by police from all over the world, escapes from ‘an army of agents and spies’ by adopting the guise of diverse animals and making use of a talent for transporting himself instantly to Peking, Madrid, or Saint Petersburg. Clearly, this is ‘marvelous literature’”⁸ (7). Having established these and other antecedents, Carpentier turns to America, where even though “nothing similar has been written, there existed a Macandal⁹ endowed with the

⁶ “¿Pero qué es la historia de América toda sino una crónica de lo real-maravilloso?”

⁷ “Pero pensaba, además, que esa presencia y vigencia de lo ‘real-maravilloso’ no era privilegio único de Haití, sino patrimonio de la América entera, donde todavía no se había terminado de establecer, por ejemplo, un recuento de cosmogonías.”

⁸ “Hay un momento en el sexto Canto de Maldoror, en que el héroe, perseguido por toda la policía del mundo, escapa a ‘un ejército de agentes y espías’ adoptado el aspecto de animales diversos y haciendo uso de su don de transportarse instantáneamente a Pekín, Madrid o San Petersburgo. Esto es ‘literatura maravillosa’ en pleno.”

⁹ Rendered as Mackandal in Carpentier’s Spanish text.

same powers through the faith of his contemporaries, and where was encouraged, with this magic, one of history's most dramatic and strange rebellions"¹⁰ (7).

More than a political phenomenon, the independence of Haiti leads — as Carpentier demonstrates in *La música en Cuba*, a history of music written contemporaneously with *El reino de este mundo* — to an unleashing of cultural forces that will go on to influence artistic and intellectual activity from New Orleans to Buenos Aires. “Our entire continent,” Carpentier had written over a decade earlier, “is characterized by unlimited faith in itself”¹¹ (*Carteles* 36). In his Prologue to *El reino de este mundo*, this conviction reappears as a first principle: “To begin, the sensation of the marvelous presupposes faith. Those who do not believe in saints cannot be cured by the miracles of saints, nor can those who are not Quixotes enter, in body, soul, and belongings, the world of *Amadis of Gaul* or *Tirante el Blanco*”¹² (3). Carpentier adds to this the belief in wolf men during the time of Cervantes, the flight from Tuscany to Norway on a witch's shawl described by Cervantes in *Persiles y Sigismunda*, Marco Polo's description of birds carrying elephants in their talons, Victor Hugo's affirmation of conversations with ghosts, and Vincent Van Gogh's simple faith in sunflowers.

As in all of the literary connections mentioned by Carpentier, faith in Macandal's story receives support from an apt choice of the terms — in this case as applicable in English as in Spanish — marvelous and real. The *Oxford*

¹⁰ “Pero en América, donde no se ha escrito nada semejante, existió un Mackandal dotado de los mismos poderes por la fe de sus contemporáneos, y que alentó, con esa magia, una de las sublevaciones más dramáticas y extrañas de la Historia.”

¹¹ “Nuestro continente entero se caracteriza por una fe ilimitada en sí mismo.”

¹² “Para empezar, la sensación de lo maravilloso presupone una fe. Los que no creen en santos no pueden curarse con milagros de santos, ni los que no son Quijotes pueden meterse, en cuerpo, alma y bienes, en el mundo de *Amadis de Gaula* o *Tirante el Blanco*.”

English Dictionary entry on marvelous is worth citing here: “Such as to excite wonder or astonishment (chiefly in a positive sense); wonderful, astonishing, surprising; worthy of admiration. Also (esp. from the later ME. period until 16th cent.): having remarkable or extraordinary (and as if supernatural) properties.” As this definition suggests, the marvelous requires some degree of credence in persons or events that surpass expected limits; in this sense, the term marvelous applies more appropriately to the literary reality under discussion than the word magical, which, in place of belief, requires either prestidigitatorial deception or acceptance — “as if supernatural” — of a fictive action. When the marvelous becomes magical in Latin American literature, it does so in a distinctly non-European fashion. “What is ‘magical’ in the African elements here,” observes Brennan, a literary scholar who has spent a great deal of time studying Cuban music, in a discussion of surrealism and Cuban *son*, “is precisely not transcendent or sublime, but hard, solid, earthly, human, and even plebeian” (*Secular Devotion* 64). In addition to marvelous, belief hinges on Carpentier’s use of the word “real.” To posit these examples from the Prologue along with those in the novel that follows as real, Carpentier might have chosen *la verdad*, a more commonly used signifier for reality; beginning with the title, however, the book signals its involvement with a kingdom (*reino*) in which the Spanish word *real* has much the same etymology and carries the same double significance as its Gallic-based English cognate (*real* in French). By employing *la realidad*, similarly connected to reality, Carpentier endows Macandal with Aristotelian heroic qualities that lend credibility not only to his vanquishment of a fading nobility but also to his emergence as a suitably important protagonist of a chronicle of this kingdom.

As an example of marvelous reality, the narrative of *El reino de este mundo* explains how a leader accomplishes great deeds as a result of the faith of those who follow. To understand “marvelous reality” then, we must recall that the significance of both “marvelous” and “reality” depend on context and thus, in this case, degree. What seems marvelous to one observer may appear ordinary to another. Similarly, although perhaps more difficult to grasp, perceptions of reality may sharply differ. A “marvelous reality” then functions as conjunction of the two terms in the consciousness of a people.

In the first chapter of *El reino de este mundo*, Carpentier immediately sets the scene with this combination of marvels perceived as faithful manifestations of existing phenomena as Ti Noël, an “average person” figure who connects a series of leaders throughout the Haitian Revolution, passes adjacent shop windows featuring wigs perched on realistic heads and the heads of calves presented as if in sleep. “Only a wooden wall separated the two counters, and it amused Ti Noël to think that alongside the pale calves’ heads, heads of white men were served on the same tablecloth”¹³ (10). Although an ordinary street to most of its pedestrians, it takes on a fantastic aspect for the slave as he passes further along the street and finds the morning “rampant with heads, for next to the tripe-shop the bookseller had hung on a wire with clothespins the latest prints received from Paris. At least four of them displayed the face of the King of France in a border of suns, swords, and laurel” (10). As Richard Young points out in *Carpentier: El reino de este mundo*, “this series of images parallels the combination of disparate elements characteristic of the history of Haiti. The heads in Carpentier’s description are

¹³ Except for the Prologue, which was not included in the first English editions, all quotes from *El reino de este mundo* come from Harriet de Onís’ translation, *The Kingdom of this World*.

not intrinsically related, but relationships among them are plausibly created by Ti Noël's observations" (40).

In a later novel, Carpentier will pursue this connection between severed heads, emancipation, and the rise of a new order in which a protagonist based on the historical Victor Hughes brings his version of the French Revolution to the Americas. "With Liberty," he writes in *El siglo de las lucas*, "came the first guillotine to the New World"¹⁴ (148). But before bringing in the point of view of the French revolutionaries in that subsequent work, *El reino de este mundo* sets out a specifically American point of view in which faith, passing to different figures through successive movements, sustains consistency by endowing the emergent with marvelous powers.¹⁵ In the first part of the the novel, Ti Noël becomes a follower of Macandal, a mysterious figure who carefully teaches his followers about remedies employed by their powerful African forbears to defeat enemies. Macandal's escape from a fire set by his executioners, as his followers see it, serves to foment the slave rebellion narrated in the second part of the novel. As if in punishment for the mob violence unthinkingly directed against all white people, a new black leadership suppresses almost the entire citizenry. Ti Noël, recently returned from Cuba, finds this worse than the enslavement by whites. "It was as though, in the same family, the children were to beat the parents, the grandson the grandmother, the daughters-in-law the mother who cooked for them. Besides, in other days, the colonists — except when they lost their heads — has been careful not to kill their slaves, for dead slaves were money out of their pockets. Whereas here the death of a slave was no drain on the public

¹⁴ "Con la Libertad, llegaba la primera guillotina al Nuevo Mundo."

¹⁵ My use of emergence in these passages owes a great deal to Homi Bhabha's observation: "And the state of emergency is also always a state of *emergence*" (41).

funds” (74).

By the end of *El reino de este mundo*, “Ti Noël was astonished at how easy it is to turn into an animal when one has the necessary powers” (108).

Having moved from faith in a leader to the generalized mob faithlessness that corrupts the Revolution, resulting in oppression under Henri Christophe, Ti Noël finally discovers a faith based on Macandal’s American deployment of African Traditions:

In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no grandeur to be won, inasmuch as there all is an established hierarchy, the unknown is revealed, existence is infinite, there is no possibility of sacrifice, all is rest and joy. For this reason, bowed down by suffering and duties, beautiful in the midst of his misery, capable of loving in the face of afflictions and trials, man finds his greatness, his fullest measure, only in the Kingdom of This World. (112)

A holy person, or the most faithful follower of that holy person, suggests the narrator, might discover enough faith to achieve that greatness.

In the novel’s Prologue, Carpentier also recognizes creators of art as possessors of these marvelous powers. Ángel Rama, among others, points out that with marvelous realism the writer revitalized a theory formulated by Franz Roh in his 1924 volume *Nach Expressionism* (230). Placing the Prologue to *El reino de este mundo* in this historical context begins to explain how Carpentier developed a philosophy of America while studying and working with European philosophers. “Franz Roh spoke of the ‘magical

realism' of post-expressionist painting,"¹⁶ writes Selena Millares (1013). In fact, the Prologue marks some of its most impressive differentiations between Europe and America with a discussion of painting; when André Masson came from France to paint the jungles of Martinique, observes Carpentier,

...the marvelous truth of the matter devoured the painter, leaving him something less than impotent in the face of a blank page. And it had to be a painter from America, the Cuban Wifredo Lam, who would show us the magic of tropical vegetation, the uninhibited Creation found here in nature — with all of its metamorphosis and symbioses — , in monumental works of expression unique in contemporary painting.¹⁷ (2)

Lam had recently painted *La jungla*, a work still lauded as an initial “remaking of European avant-garde-style in painting through vernacular Afro-Cuban content and symbolism” (Kaup 165). Although uniquely a work of Wifredo Lam, the painting in the prologue clearly does not mark the beginning of American marvels. Carpentier’s discovery comes shortly after his 1939 return to America, but he makes no claim that marvelous realism itself begins at that time. Examples of the American marvelous in plastic arts flourished even at the time of Carpentier’s first return from France in 1921, when an already celebrated Diego Rivera extravagantly turned from European models to themes adapted from autochthonous American art; even as cubism still

¹⁶ “Franz Roh hablaba del «realismo mágico» de la pintura postexpresionista.”

¹⁷ “...la maravillosa verdad del asunto devoró al pintor, dejándolo poco menos que impotente frente al papel en blanco. Y tuvo que ser un pintor de América, el cubano Wifredo Lam, quien nos enseñara la magia de la vegetación tropical, la desenfrenada Creación de Formas de nuestra naturaleza — con todas sus metamorfosis y simbiosis —, en cuadros monumentales una expresión única en la pintura contemporánea.”

informed works such as Rivera's *Zapatista Landscape* and its references to the Mexican Revolution, a newly formed American consciousness pervades his later paintings such as *Flower Day* and subsequent murals employing Aztec sculpture, *corrido* lyrics, and American flora and fauna.

As this reference to pre-Columbian Aztec sculpture implies, Carpentier eventually expresses a *maravillosa realidad toujours déjà*. Almost twenty years later, Carpentier would amplify the always already nature of the views expressed in that Prologue. His later article, "De lo real maravilloso americano," concludes by reprinting the earlier prologue because it expounds a concept he still considers, "save for a few details, as applicable as then"¹⁸ (74). The later essay does more, however, than simply reiterate the author's prior claims; it also considers how marvelous realism and the later development of magical realism would color perceptions of Latin American writing for the next generation. As magical realism develops into a body of literature known as the Latin boom, Carpentier carefully differentiates both marvelous and magical from the surreal, explicitly rejecting a conception of the marvelous as a latter development of European "over-realism" or something more-than-real, by crediting the former with a "very different character, increasingly more palpable and discernable, that has begun to proliferate in the works of some young novelists from our continent"¹⁹ (74). As with his "concept of the baroque as a transhistorical type — a human spirit that recurs throughout history" (Kaup 159), the marvelously real transcends the temporal confines of surrealism and, in fact, all of European history.

¹⁸ "...salvo en algunos detalles, tan vigente como entonces."

¹⁹ "Pero nos queda lo *real maravilloso* de índole muy distinta, cada vez más palpable y discernible, que empieza a proliferar en la novelística de algunos novelistas jóvenes de nuestro continente."

Ultimately, Carpentier's explication of the difference would require the establishment of marvelous realism as a much earlier phenomenon.

“De lo real maravilloso americano” begins in the Summer Palace of Beijing, making special note of the site's “*nonfigurative notion of art*, ignored by the declarations of principle from nonfigurative western artists”²⁰ (66 emphasis in original). For Carpentier, this nonfigurative aspect, combined with natural elements of the palace's setting — in other words, not the handiwork of the artists and artisans — create beauty both original and universal. These artistic themes continue as the essay views artistic production in the Islamic world, at one point considering theoretical connections between Central Asia and a pre-Columbian Zapotec temple in Mitla. “Real art for them continues to be rigorously *nonfigurative*, maintaining a haughty distance from which to polemicize on the issue of hackneyed *realisms*”²¹ (68 emphasis in original). In the Soviet Union, continues Carpentier, “the sensation of *inability to understand* brought me great relief, in spite of not knowing the language”²² (69 emphasis in original). From a vantage point facing the magnificent architecture of Leningrad, the author relates how the sites please even before their sighting, due to their place in a pantheon of established European works and American counterparts. This idea of a priori acceptance through established cultural practice, a concept explored further in the second chapter of this dissertation, develops even further in a *convivencia* discovered in a

²⁰ “...Palacio de Verano: afirmación en hechos y presencia de una noción *no figurativa del arte*, ignorada por las declaraciones de principio de los artistas occidentales no figurativos...”

²¹ “Para ellos el arte verdadero sigue siendo rigurosamente *no figurativa*, mintiendo a una altanera distancia de donde se polemiza en torno a *realismo* hartamente manoseados...”

²² “Cuando, al regreso del largo viaje, me hallé en la Unión Soviética, la sensación de *incapacidad de entendimiento* se me alivió en grado sumo, a pesar de desconocer el idioma.”

Prague cemetery that brings together Jewish stelæ, the narrow theater that hosted the 1787 opening night of Mozart's operatic version of *Don Juan*, and dancing bronze bishops in the Church of Clementine (71). Returning to the Americas and the Zapotec temple, "De lo real maravilloso americano" contemplates a Caribbean Mediterranean where Rubén Darío, perhaps the first writer called modernist, "entirely transforms poetry expressed in Castilian" in the same cultural basin that boasts "the abstract beauty — absolutely abstract — of the temple of Mitla, with its variations on plastic themes unrelated to any figurative efforts"²³ (73). Now repeating his Haitian discovery of 1943, Carpentier returns to demonstrate that marvelous realism — like the Baroque or Deconstruction, one which the author touches on often and the other he sometimes appears to advocate *avant la lettre* — is not something new; marvels have always already morphed blatantly abstract elements into realities accepted around the world. Hurston and Carpentier needed the experiences of America to discover this ancient phenomenon just as the Americas needed them to formulate an understanding of constant rejection of Old World exigencies, be they African or European, that ultimately makes marvelous realism peculiarly American.

Having taken marvelous reality back to a place beyond origins, Carpentier declares, in an interview with Javier Soler Serrano broadcast in 1976 on Spanish television, that fear of the Baroque kept American authors from discovering it until the twentieth century. He specifically marks the year 1921, a year in which the end of the Mexican Revolution coincides with his own first return to the Americas after studies in France, as a moment of

²³ "Rubén Darío — que transforma toda la poesía de expresión castellana... la belleza abstracta — absolutamente abstracta — del templo Mitla, con sus variaciones sobre temas plásticos ajenos a todo empeño figurativo."

generational change in Latin America that facilitates the discovery of an American marvelous realism. “Suddenly in ’21,” he recalls in his interview with Soler Serrano, “a completely new university movement existed simultaneously from Argentina to Mexico.”²⁴ This new movement led to the rise in prominence of writers such as José Carlos Mariátegui and the painters Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco. Although not mentioned as part of that list, Jorge Luis Borges, another multilingual, European-educated writer, returned to Argentina in 1921.

Artists and intellectuals from America who returned between 1921 and 1939 were later accompanied by many Europeans who to the Western Hemisphere for the first time, a movement that demonstrates, according to Jean Franco in *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*, the extent to which “the axis of culture was shifting from its Eurocentric base, encouraged by a widespread belief in the decadence of Europe and the originality and dynamism of the Americas” (161-62). Invoking James Clifford, Franco declares the surrealist twenties responsible for the end of linear reality and nineteenth-century perceptions of scientific method. “Both the American ‘lost generation’ and the Latin American émigré writers benefited from this turn,” she adds. “The Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias and the Cuban Alejo Carpentier, both of whom lived in Paris during the 1920s and early 1930s, became ethnographic surrealists themselves, ‘representing’ Afro-America and Indo-America for Europeans” (162). Like Carpentier, Asturias begins writing about a marginalized ethnic group in his country to which he has no direct familial ties, revises the book in Paris, publishes in Spain, and returns to the

²⁴ “Súbitamente en 21 se existe simultáneamente al movimiento universitario completamente nuevo desde Argentina a México.”

Americas during the 1930s. Franco views Asturias' *Leyendas de Guatemala* as well as Carpentier's *Écue-yamba-ó* as "early symptoms of this anthropological phase out of which both authors later developed a more complex ethnopoetics" (166). Unlike those found in the literatures of nations or communities that comprehend themselves as formations against which American authors alternately identify or rebel, any useful poetics of the Americas must include an ethnopoetics defining a recently formed or, at least, newly recognized group of people from whose midst the literature described arises. In this sense, and perhaps only in this sense, can one consider either Asturias or Carpentier typically Latin American.

Although placed in a particular American setting by Franco, Carpentier's works do not establish him as a typical Latin American or as particularly Cuban, even assuming the possible existence of a commonly agreed upon prototype. As Roberto González Echevarría observes in *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home*, the author might, in other circumstances, have remained in Paris and made a career as a French intellectual. After his second return in 1939, however, recognition of his status as a European heightened his interest for readers at home while simultaneously distancing him in subtle ways from that same audience. "Such an ambivalent position," adds González Echevarría, "has been undoubtedly a source of anxiety and has left a mark on his work; it has been at once a strength and a weakness" (37-38). Whoever might write as a typically Latin American author — and entire volumes could take up this theme — Carpentier clearly will not serve in this capacity. Like Frida Kahlo, a proudly Mexican painter with a distinctly European father, Carpentier seems to need continuous assertions of

Americanness, partly as a means of counteracting a European paternity imprinted by a non-Hispanic surname. Born in the Americas, specifically in Havana, he “prepared himself,” as González Echevarría points out, “to become an American writer in Europe” (38). This preparatory work included extensive studies on *afrocubanismo* before leaving Cuba, research on Latin American culture while residing in France, and a long engagement with European surrealism that would lead him to an American point of view.

When Carpentier returns to the Americas at the beginning of World War II, he consciously distinguishes the New World from the Old. Without glossing over the many problems remaining in Cuba and the United States, he observes important differences with the European continent almost entirely controlled at this moment by Franco, Salazar, Hitler, and Mussolini, especially since the last two were chosen by the citizens of Germany and Italy in elections internationally regarded as free and honest, meaning that the voters in those countries selected fascist leaders. In faith, Carpentier finds similarities with European traditions that he will continue to rely on in his writing, but his employments lead him to simultaneously discover differences that cause him to break with those traditions. In Europe, Benito Mussolini’s beautifully-phrased explanation of illusion as life’s only reality might hold sway, but in America it can only convince as a contradiction; if true, there can be no truth. Meanwhile, Mussolini’s practical use of faith must have felt very real to the victims of those peripatetic mountains. Whether or not engaged in truthful endeavors, Carpentier — through his implied authors, in Wayne Booth’s felicitous phrase — presents substantially less cynical formulations of faith that presumed a potential for people in the Caribbean not existent in a Mediterranean increasingly encircled by the iron fist of Fascism.

Alejo Carpentier and “Our America”

Our Greece is preferable to the Greece that is not ours.²⁵

José Martí “Nuestra América”

In a conference paper later published as “Sobre el surrealismo,” Carpentier discusses European surrealism’s influence on his own ethnopoetics, mentioning the publication of approximately a dozen of his own surrealist stories (29). In his work, Carpentier eventually found surrealist elements in the Americas. Referring to the idea of “ready-made” art, he calls the concept something of

a mania among my generation that has currently turned into something of a mania for everyone. I, for example, without going further, heading up the Orinoco in Venezuela noted that the water brought with it roots with strange forms that came from the high jungles of the Orinoco and that the waters took them slowly towards the sea, and I acquired a collection of these roots and plan to show three of them that, isolated from their context and considered art in a certain manner, take on an extraordinary beauty.²⁶ (19)

With a great deal of enthusiasm and admiration for the movement, Carpentier recites a history of surrealism that begins with the disillusionment among intellectuals unable to exert their powers to forestall the Great War of 1914-1918, turns to Dadaism as a rejection of artistic and intellectual ineffectiveness

²⁵ “Nuestra Grecia es preferible a la Grecia que no es nuestra.”

²⁶ “Puedo decir que la búsqueda del *ready-made* fue un poco una manía de mi generación y se ha vuelto actualmente un poco una manía de todos. Yo, por ejemplo, sin ir más lejos, remontando el Orinoco en Venezuela me di cuenta de que el agua traía consigo unas raíces de unas formas muy extrañas que procedían de las altas selvas de Orinoco y que las aguas llevaban lentamente hacia el mar, y me hice de una colección de esas raíces y les voy a enseñar tres de ellas que, aisladas de su contexto y consideradas en cierto modo como obras de arte, cobran una belleza extraordinaria.”

in the face of horrors, and becomes an explicit movement with the dissemination of surrealist manifestos in the magazine *La Révolution surréaliste*. Carpentier concludes with an assessment that with surrealism French literature provided “humanity with one of the most enriching plastic arts, poetics, and literary movements of all times”²⁷ (42). At several points during his talk, Carpentier mentions André Breton as surrealism’s most notable literary exponent, and speaks highly of his automatic writing “that at a certain point, now trained in the subconscious practices of surrealism, freed him to write the most sumptuous prose written in France during the twentieth century”²⁸ (40). Still, none of this approbation prevents Carpentier from offering a couple of pointed critiques directed at Breton. Explaining that surrealist guidelines rejected all endeavors that might contaminate one’s mind with success, artificiality, or any other association with bourgeois or plutocratic expression, “in order to maintain a species of absolute purity against oneself,” Carpentier sarcastically declares that this was a “purity that Breton took to the most absolute extremes”²⁹ (32-33). More sharply, “Sobre el surrealismo,” written after the Cuban Revolution, questions Breton’s politics, with Carpentier recalling his surrealist colleague as interested in the

²⁷ “...puede decirse que con ese movimiento la literatura francesa ha enriquecido — vuelvo a decirlo — a la humanidad con uno de los movimientos plásticos, poéticos y literarios más ricos de todos los tiempos.”

²⁸ “...que a partir de cierto momento, ya adiestrado a las prácticas subconscientes del surrealismo, ya se libera de ello para escribir la prosa más suntuosa que de ha escrito en Francia en el siglo XX.”

²⁹ Los surrealistas rehusaron “cualquier trabajo que pudiera significar mancharse mentalmente” (32). “Es decir, el surrealista debía únicamente, si tenía que vivir de algo, vivir de algo que en ningún momento manchara su mundo interior no su probidad, debía rehuir el éxito, no buscarlo en nada, rehuir el gran mundo, rehuir las recepciones, rehuir todo aquello que fuera artificial, mundano, burgués, plutocrático, para conservar una especie de pureza absoluta frente a sí mismo, pureza que Breton llevó a los extremos más absolutos” (33).

Communist Party's ideals, but "a man too egocentric"³⁰ to offer useful assistance (37).

Over three decades earlier, Carpentier offered a more sustained, although equally ambiguous critique of Breton, whose tone he compares to that of Robespierre. "In a reactionary fervor against a tendency of standardization," he wrote in *Carteles* in 1930, "some surrealist men began to collaborate on magazines more or less distant from the group's spirit. This led to acerbic discussions. André Breton, the movement's animating force, launched abominations against his dearest friends" (*Crónicas* 431). Here, Carpentier refers to his own participation in this reaction, reminding his readers that he, along with eleven other authors, signed "a violent manifesto titled *Un cadáver* against Breton and his dictatorial spirit, which is becoming as unbearable as that of a Mussolini"³¹ (*Crónicas* 432). The tone of Carpentier's delivery lends a humorous ambiguity to these assertions, however; responding to an attack by a group that included Breton and Louis Aragon on the Maldoror, a Parisian nightclub named after a poem by Isidore Ducasse, he passes off the incident as having little importance and insists, "Two hours later, you can be sure that they rested tranquilly in their beds!"³² (433). This jocular mode continues with an assertion that the violence committed at the Maldoror served as wonderful publicity for all involved (434). As González Echevarría points out, Carpentier had relatively little

³⁰ "un hombre muy egocentrista"

³¹ "Por espíritu de reacción contra algo que tendía a estandarizarse, algunos hombres del suprarrealismo comenzaron a colaborar en revistas más o menos ajenas al espíritu del grupo. Esto dio lugar a discusiones acerbadas. André Breton, animador del movimiento, lanzó algunos anatemas contra sus más caros amigos." Note the use of the Spanish word *suprarrealismo* here instead of the more French-sounding term Carpentier employs later: *surrealismo*. "...un violentísimo manifiesto titulado *Un cadáver*, contra Bretón y su espíritu dictatorial, que se iba volviendo tan insoportable como el de un Mussolini"

³² "¡Dos horas después, tenga usted por seguro que descansaban tranquilamente en sus lechos!"

contact with Breton's coterie and remained only "marginally involved in the disputes that erupted among them" (*Pilgrim* 35). In a 1930 "Deposition," written in French and included amongst a collection of tracts and declarations regarding André Breton, Carpentier maintains his sense of humor. Recalling an encounter with Breton, Carpentier remembers telling "him that Surrealism was best known in Latin America due to the poems of Paul Éluard. He responded that if things were like that Surrealism was 'screwed' (he repeated this word several times). He further stated that, for him, the poems of Éluard were 'the opposite of poetry,' and that he comprehended absolutely none of it"³³ ("Témoignage" 148). In addition to the ironic tone evident in his writings, any consideration of Carpentier's own words must take into account Jean Franco's recollection of him as "anything but a reliable source" (295). In a conversation that she graciously allowed me to consider as on the record, Franco told me that Carpentier constantly made up stories. González Echevarría, who interviewed the Cuban author much more exhaustively than Franco, puts this more politely in *The Pilgrim at Home*, noting, "the possibility of writing a rigorous, conventional biography of Carpentier is not near at hand" (31).

Whatever relationship Carpentier sustained with Breton in Paris, the French surrealist became more interesting to the Cuban author as one of many European surrealists who suddenly discovered America. "When Breton went to Mexico," according to Carpentier, "he declared that Mexico was the surrealism's chosen land because he had gone on the first or second of

³³ "Je lui ai dit que le Surréalisme était surtout connu en Amérique latine par les poèmes de Paul Éluard. Il m'a répondu que si les choses se passaient ainsi le Surréalisme était «foutu» (il répéta plusieurs fois ce mot). Il m'a déclaré de plus que, pour lui, les poèmes d'Éluard étaient « l'opposé de la poésie », et qu'il n'y comprenait absolument rien." I gratefully acknowledge Steven Harris, an art history professor at the University of Alberta, who brought this document to my attention along with many other useful thoughts on interactions between Alejo Carpentier and his surrealist acquaintances.

November to a village cemetery and had seen the people eating crispy and colorful sugared skulls³⁴ with the name of the one eaten written on the skull.” In this and other situations, Breton “constantly ran into things typically surrealistic”³⁵ (26). Breton was not the only surrealist who found validation in the Americas. Fascism forced many European thinkers into an American exile that included cities in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Combined with Diego Rivera and other artists from the Western Hemisphere already busy with their own rediscoveries of America, they not only created new works but also developed new philosophies about their work.

Carpentier felt by no means sanguine in the throes of this new European invasion of surrealists. In “El ocaso de Europa,”³⁶ a series of articles written for *Carteles*, he offers, as González Echevarría accurately reports, “a diatribe against the Old Continent and a vehement defense of the New. Carpentier’s assesment of the state of Europe in 1941,” adds González Echevarría, “is combined with personal reminiscences of his years in Paris and, surprisingly, an acrimonious critique of European art” (*Pilgrim* 39). In fact, the first article of the series angrily recalls the cruelty with which “those same superior souls, who now long for the chance to find themselves on our continent, knew how to throw our ‘indigenuity,’ our ‘lack of race,’ and our

³⁴ Calavera: literally a representation of a skull, but also used as a word for a representation of the entire skeleton.

³⁵ “Cuando Breton fue a México, declaró que México era la tierra de elección del surrealismo, porque había ido un Día de Muertos, primero o dos de noviembre, a un cementerio de aldea y había visto a la gente comiéndose unas calaveras de azúcar de colores y de crocantes con el nombre del que se lo comía escrito sobre la calavera. . . Y en esto constantemente encontraban cosas típicamente surrealistas.”

³⁶ Given the multiple possibilities of the word *ocaso*, references to this series scan the title with variations such as “The Decline and Fall of Europe” or “The Dusk of Europe.” In this case, I would translate “El ocaso de Europa” as “The Sun Sets on Europe.”

extreme youth in our faces”³⁷ (74). This was not, however, an entirely new attitude in Carpentier; the aforementioned article, “El escándalo de *Maldoror*,” reveals that his later acrimonious critique of European artists and intellectuals was neither unprecedented nor surprising. “El escándalo de *Maldoror*” commences with a Latin American acquaintance named Martínez who enters the author’s rooms declaring, “This Paris! After telling horrible stories about us Latin Americans!... And then they stir up such a scandal!”³⁸ (*Crónicas* 428). After filling in the narrator on violent events he witnessed the previous evening at the Maldoror nightclub, Martínez adds, “And these things happen in a European capital? In Parisian dancehalls? And they want to give lessons to those of us from America?... Now I will write an article for my country’s main daily paper, narrating last night’s events! If these are civilized peoples!”³⁹ (*Crónicas* 429). Although placed in another’s mouth here, the emotional wounds inflicted by Europeans seem clearly felt by Carpentier well before 1941.

“El ocaso de Europa” does more than settle personal scores. It also sets out a Carpenterian view of America that requires more careful attention than it has so far received. “A moment of bifurcation, of profound divergence,” has arrived, he writes, “in which all that signifies civilization seems to have taken the path of our young continent”⁴⁰ (*Carteles* 37). While separating America from Europe, Carpentier clearly demonstrates no intention of separating

³⁷ “¡Con cuánta crueldad supieron echarnos en cara nuestro ‘indigenismo,’ nuestra ‘falta de raza,’ nuestra extrema juventud, aquellos mismos espíritus superiores que hoy suspiran por verse en nuestro continente...”

³⁸ “¡Qué París éste! Después dicen horrores de nosotros los latinoamericanos!... ¡Y arman cada escándalo!”

³⁹ “¡Y esas cosas acontecen en una capital europea? ¿En los *dancings* de París? Y nos quieren dar lecciones a nosotros los de América?... ¡Ya escribiré un artículo para el diario principal de mi país, narrando lo de anoche! ¡Si ésas son las gentes civilizadas!...”

⁴⁰ “Momento de bifurcación, de divergencia profunda, en que todo lo que significa civilización haya tomado el camino de nuestro joven continente.”

American nations from each other or even Latin America from any other part of America. To the contrary, Carpentier finds much to admire throughout the Americas, where, he declares, groundbreaking European as well as American musicians “find opportunities in the United States that have never been offered in Europe. Pictorially,” he adds, “New York has turned out to be the most propitious city for artists”⁴¹ (*Carteles* 36). In this manner, Manhattan shares a cultural affinity with Mexico City and Buenos Aires, all of which “offer the public symphonic musical programs much superior to those I have been able to listen to these past years in Europe... How many times, while leaving the Chatelet after hearing a heavy-handed interpretation of the *Pastoral Symphony*, did I read with envy Mexican magazines in which I found out that Carlos Chávez had directed Alban Berg’s *Wozzek* or other works that we longed to know in Paris!”⁴² (*Carteles* 36). And Carpentier connects the differences in these cultural offerings to geopolitical imperialism; Paris, he finds, is a terribly provincial city that spent years rejecting artists from the Americas with an attitude that had serious political consequences. “Those who believe, as many believed when I arrived in France, that ‘Latin America was a continent that still had not produced anything worthwhile,’ leave the field free for their sworn enemies so that they can impose on this continent their shipping lanes, their aircraft, their manufactured objects, and their

⁴¹ “Músicos como Kurt Weill, Korngold, Ernst Toch, Virgil Thompson encuentran en los Estados Unidos posibilidades que nunca se les había brindado en Europa. Pictóricamente, New York ha pasado a ser la ciudad más propicia para los artistas.”

⁴² “En México y en Buenos Aires se ofrecen al público programas de música sinfónica muy superiores a los que he podido escuchar en Europa en estos últimos años... ¡Cuántas veces, al salir del Chatelet después de oír una pésima interpretación de la *Sinfonía Pastoral*, leía yo con envidia periódicos de México, enterándome de que Carlos Chávez había dirigido el *Wozzek* de Alban Berg u otras obras que suspirábamos por conocer en París!”

propaganda”⁴³ (*Carteles* 44). Rethinking this position and calling on Americans for help, observes Carpentier, comes a bit late once the Germans invaded their territory.

From the first article, “El ocaso de Europa” lauds the United States as a healthy coeval nation of America, as opposed to the terminally ill powers of Europe, “because democracy has flourished, clear, efficient, admirable, adapted to its goals, in the United States of America. Accordingly, the pitiful fall of democracy in France signals not a sickness of the regime but instead a sickness of peoples”⁴⁴ (*Carteles* 75). Since a desire to read the Cuban author as a strict leftist might cloud a reader’s understanding of the United States as a part, rather than a controller, of the Americas, I specifically point to the differences in health signaled in the previous sentence; the United States runs a system that works within its own context, one “adapted to its goals,” but those goals will not always meet the approval of other nations and may even work against their interests. Carpentier differentiates here between a reading of the United States as an American nation with possibly healthy people and a nation whose not always healthy regime has, according to views he has repeatedly expressed in earlier works, caused it to adopt invasive foreign policies. Eight years before the appearance of “El ocaso de Europa,” he notes his own rejection of US foreign policy in “El escándalo de *Maldoror*,” referring to his imprisonment by the Washington-dominated government of Gerardo Machado “for having signed a manifesto in which I declared ‘to

⁴³ “Quien cree, como creían muchos cuando llegué a Francia, que ‘América latina era continente que aun no había producido cosa alguna que valiera la pena,’ deja campo libre que éstos impongan a ese continente sus líneas de navegación, sus aviones, sus objetos manufacturados y su propaganda.”

⁴⁴ “Porque la democracia ha florecido, plena, eficiente, admirable, adaptada a sus fines en los Estados Unidos de América. Por lo tanto, la caída lastimosa de la democracia en Francia no señala un mal de régimen, sino un mal de pueblos.”

prefer the *son* over the Charleston' and the Cuban over the foreign!"⁴⁵
(*Crónicas* 433). Put simply, Carpentier differentiates between the leadership of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and that of Adolph Hitler. Even so, none of Carpentier's work, and certainly none of his service as the Cuban Revolution's privileged cultural attaché in Paris, marks him as an apologist for policies developed by the government of the United States, just as he expressed no support for ill-formed regimes and policies formulated by military dictatorships in Buenos Aires, Guatemala City, or Santiago de Chile. The working relationship between Fidel Castro and Francisco Franco, Europe's most enduring Fascist dictator against whom Carpentier had written forcibly, certainly never caused the author to expel his own country from the continent. Political positions do not make an overwhelmingly powerful country like the United States any less of an American locale, culturally as well as geographically, than substantially less powerful nations such as Argentina, Guatemala, or Chile.

⁴⁵ "...por haber firmado un manifiesto en que declaraba 'preferir el son al charleston' ¡y lo cubano a lo extranjero!"

Faith in Moses as Seen by Hurston

Well, said the religious man, you stop trying to figure things out and you *believe*.

Believe, I said. Believe *what*?

Why, everything, he said. Everything you can think of, left, right, north, east, south, west, upstairs, downstairs and all around, inside, out, visible, invisible, good and bad and neither and both. That's the little secret. Took me fifty years to find out.

William Saroyan *My Name is Aram* (152)

Comprehending the literature of Hurston through that of Carpentier requires disciplinary transformations on the order of those Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes in *Death of a Discipline* as she delineates the “moving frontier of Area Studies/Comparative Literature that is always a ‘discipline to come,’ through a type of language learning that fosters access to textuality” (15). Obviously, acquiring languages makes texts more accessible; less noticed, however, are the cases in which the development of code switching capabilities, needed for the works of both Carpentier and Hurston, makes writing more comprehensible. In the case of Hurston’s work, the language learning and access to textuality also allows readers from the outside to understand the often-deprecated speech associated with the southern United States as an intellectual form of expression. Although I argue that the combination of Carpentier and Hurston represents precisely the opposite of Comparative Literature, at least as that discipline fashioned itself during the Cold War, Spivak’s proposed injection of a transformed version of Area Studies into Ethnic/Cultural Studies offers a methodology applicable to the two authors under discussion here. “Area Studies related to foreign ‘areas,’” she observes, and “Comparative Literature was made up of Western European ‘nations.’ This distinction, between ‘areas’ and ‘nations,’ infected Comparative

Literature from the start” (8). In addition to the close readings Spivak advocates, my reading of her proposals would fuse the political cunning, excellent language learning, and useful data processing she finds in Area Studies with the presumably radical political engagement of Cultural Studies while subtracting the conservative politics of power of the former along with the “visibly foregone conclusions,” “delexicalized and fun mother tongues,” and “lack of rigor” she laments in the latter (7-8). “Reading these texts with attention to language and idiom, Comparative Literature supplements the apparitions of Cultural and Ethnic Studies as well as the arrogance of Area Studies where it retains the imprints of the Cold War” (70). Such a development in literary studies would ultimately challenge comfortable niches preserved by humanities departments, and create new readings of numerous textual relationships.

Spivak does not merely challenge our comfortable niches; she proposes a great deal of discomfort. Academics associated with humanities disciplines would need to forego the trappings of power provided by a righteous sense of being on the correct side of contemporary versions of the political left and right. “Area Studies were established to secure U.S. power in the Cold War,” recalls Spivak. “Comparative Literature was a result of European intellectuals fleeing ‘totalitarian’ regimes” (3). Thus the left and right in academia were made, however unwillingly, to depend upon each other even as both sides made claims to providing assistance to impoverished places. Although new critical styles can provide fresh readings, the fundamental problem remains; in post-colonialism, for example, Spivak fears the potential for new versions of U.S. exceptionalism; as seen in famous

critiques of *Heart of Darkness* criticism, we may end up reading about others only to discover ourselves. “Just as socialism at its best would persistently and repeatedly wrench capital away from capitalism,” she insists, “so must the new Comparative Literature persistently and repeatedly undermine and undo the definitive tendency of the dominant to appropriate the emergent. It must not let itself be constituted by the demands of liberal multiculturalism alone” (100). Spivak began this work well before *Death of a Discipline*; in “Translation as Culture,” she objected to “the kind of silencing that is operated when the transcoding of diasporic cultures mingling becomes in itself a radical gesture” (17). This easy way out, she observes, has not only maintained patterns of cultural hegemony, but has also maintained illusions among seemingly privileged observers even as oppressed groups achieve greater awareness of continuing cultural conflict (16).

The kind of silencing Spivak objects to causes seemingly privileged observers to avoid understanding a variety of situations because of a priori interpretations that superficially criminalize or victimize those they see as oppressed. In addition to cautioning against existing modes of operation, “Translation as Culture” reads a text from one of Spivak’s Bengali students, a brief note composed in “Bangla tribal Creole” (23), as a means of apprehending literature and conceiving of ethical behavior within literary studies. Spivak employs the term translation in a catachrestical manner to signify the constant human practice of “transfer from one to the other. In Bangla,” she explains, “as in most North Indian languages, it is *anu-vada* — speaking after, *translation* as *imitation*. This relating to the other as the source of one’s utterance *is* the ethical as being-for. All great literature as all

specifically good action — any definition would beg the question here — celebrates this” (21 emphasis in original). Spivak specifically warns against the urge to help, even when that assistance comes wrapped in such seemingly subtle garments as lobbying in foreign legislatures or advocating on behalf of others. Instead, she looks for human translations based on “listening with care and patience, in the normality of the other, enough to notice that the other has already silently made that effort” (22). In the case of her student’s short message, Spivak concludes, “This subaltern gave me the gift of speech, already on the way to translation, because I had attended to his idiom, not because I helped him in distress” (23).

González Echevarría addresses similar concerns in “Latin American and Comparative Literatures,” in which he points out how “We, the ‘colonized,’ are cultural polyglots” (48). Scholars who study Latin American literatures, he adds, generally know English and French and will have read much of the canon in those languages while their colleagues in those areas do not know Spanish or Portuguese and actually mangle the few names with which they are familiar, and “have only the vaguest notions, if any, about Lope de Vega, let alone Bello or Sarmiento” (48). I have seen this in academic works, including Benedict Anderson’s otherwise useful *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. “Unable to read Spanish in 1983,” acknowledges Anderson in the “Preface to the Second Edition,” he discovered “two serious errors of translation” (xii). Even so, his subsequent edition remains plagued by problems that include an unquestioning acceptance of the usual scan of José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi’s title, *El periquillo sarniento*, as “The Itching Parrot” (29); among possible translations,

I would have opted for *The Mangy Little Parrot*. More importantly, Anderson persists in discussing Lizardi's picaresque novel as an emulation of British works such as Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. Without reference to the 1554 publication of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and numerous sixteenth-century successors, such as Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, studied to this day as part of the Spanish literary canon or even to Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, published in 1605 and 1610 and still one of the bestselling books of all times, Anderson emphasizes "two forms of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper" (24-25). "They don't know our literatures for the very same reason that we know theirs," argues González Echevarría. "Theirs are important, canonical, the core of the core curriculum; ours are marginal, exotic, frilly, not part of anyone's cultural literacy program" ("Latin American" 48).

In his penultimate novel, published in 1978, *La consagración de la primavera* (The Rite of Spring), Carpentier explores this attitude in a Russian ballet dancer who comes to realize how much she has hurt the feelings of a Cuban intellectual by suggesting that he would know nothing about a great artist such as Anna Pavlova. The Cuban has, in fact, seen her perform in Havana. During a subsequent conversation, after both have fled to Cuba to escape the approach of Fascism, she refers to Chagall's brides, an image that makes him think of poetry written in Mexico by Ramón López Velarde. "But I knew Chagall and she did not know López Velarde," he recalls, "and perhaps due to this glimpse of shortcomings, since I knew her world and she ignored mine, I began to come to a little better understanding of this America that I had

only dimly perceived for so long...”⁴⁶ (210).

Europeans may want to help people in other places, including America, or even speak up for them, but they seldom want to hear them. This has not necessarily changed very much since the 1978 publication of *La consagración de la primavera*. “One should not be fooled into thinking that recent critical theory, even when allied to seemingly radical political agendas, has strayed from the canon,” insists González Echeverría (49). In 2008, Horace Engdahl, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, the organization that awards the Nobel Prize in Literature, declared, “Europe is still the center of the literary world” (McGrath). As seen in these discourses of González Echeverría, Carpentier, and Engdahl, some Europeans, including intellectuals with enormous powers of persuasion at their command, still find it easier to view non-Europeans as criminals of greater or lesser magnitude or victims. As Spivak shows, those who insist on criminalizing or victimizing the peripheries can gain much by deciding to listen instead of interfering or, even worse in some cases, offering assistance. This close attention to other voices as opposed to assumptions of victimization will prove useful in the following readings of Hurston’s work.

Considering Hurston’s stories, anthropological studies, and novel *Moses, Man of the Mountain* in the ‘area’ inhabited by Carpentier, one realizes that even though neither author employs marvelous realism in every work, she had already begun to practice it by the time of his revelation at Sans-Souci. A close reading of her works, particularly *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, reveals

⁴⁶ “Pero yo conocía a Chagall y ella no conocía a López Velarde, y acaso por esa vislumbre de carencias, puesto que yo conocía a su mundo y ella ignoraba el mío, empezaba a entender un poco mejor a esta América que un poco opaca, un poco nebulosa, hubiese sido para mí durante mucho tiempo...”

how Hurston's marvelous reality, her evocation of marvelous realism, requires faith, specifically the same credence necessary for the African American religious practices described in *El reino de este mundo*. "Mother Catherine," for example, offers an explanatory vignette of a religious figure who strictly practices neither African American spirituality nor mainstream Christianity. In Mother Catherine's house of worship, Hurston observes the presence of animals and colorful murals with snake designs, neither of which one would expect to find in Methodist or Baptist churches. Even though her title figure comes from the United States, Hurston notes how "the African loves to depict the grace of reptiles" (*Complete Stories* 100). This narrative both compares and contrasts with "Uncle Monday," the tale of a religious figure considerably less sympathetically portrayed than Mother Catherine. Uncle Monday exercises powers that terrify his neighbors, and "when they would hear the great bull 'gator, that everybody knows lives in Lake Belle, bellowing on cloudy nights, some will point the thumb in the general direction of Uncle Monday's house and whisper, 'The Old Boy is visiting the home folks tonight'" (*Complete Stories* 116). Whether seeking sublime revelations from Mother Catherine or fearful revenge from Uncle Monday, adherents must subscribe to their powers. The most powerful leaders combine characteristics found in each of these two examples.

Magic making protagonists in Hurston's stories possess credibility by their display of elements the author learned from various *houngan*,⁴⁷ practitioners of African American religions in Louisiana, Jamaica, and Haiti. In "Hoodoo," the second part of *Mules and Men*, Hurston clearly connects the

⁴⁷ Hurston uses *houngan*, the same term employed by Carpentier, in a variety of settings, including *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (245).

culture she finds in Louisiana to Caribbean practices she discusses later in *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, and explains how this connection leads both places back to Africa. “All over the South and in the Bahamas the spirits of the dead have great power,” she writes while introducing the propitiation of spirits in *Mules and Men*. These practices have roots across the Atlantic, where “Ewe-speaking peoples of the west coast of Africa all make offerings of food and drink — particularly libations of palm wine and banana beer upon the graves of the ancestor” (227). While studying with a Hoodoo practitioner in New Orleans, Hurston mentions the African dances “held in Congo Square, now Beauregard Square. Those were held for social purposes and were of the same type as the fire dances and jumping dances of the present in the Bahamas” (239). Hurston does not confine her comparisons to the Bahamas; New Orleans, she observes, has always “been the hoodoo capital of America. Great names in rites that vie with those of Hayti [Haiti] in deeds that keep alive the powers of Africa” (183).

As she clearly shows in these phrases from *Mules and Men*, Hurston sees religion as an important element connecting the Caribbean and the Southern United States with Africa. “Hoodoo, or Voodoo, as pronounced by the whites, is burning with a flame in America, with all the intensity of a suppressed religion,” she insists. “It has thousands of secret adherents” (183). Not all of these adherents have dark skin, she points out, as her investigations in the Caribbean increasingly move her away from black and white formulations of cultural practices. She mentions a practitioner named Dr. Samuel Jenkins, for example, who mostly attends to “white and upper-class people” (227). Expanding the possible scope of worshippers even further

during her research in Haiti, “Hurston encountered a major voodoo deity named Damballah Ouedo, whose symbol was the serpent and whom the Haitians identified as Moses” (Johnson 18). In *Mules and Men*, Hurston introduces this figure as a great African hero. “Moses was the first man who ever learned God’s power-compelling words and it took him forty years to learn ten words” (184). Paul Gilroy reminds us that African American music and literature instilled confidence among many that a God of Israel would deliver them from slavery and oppression. The biblical book of *Exodus* played an obvious part in this view, and the “heroic figure of Moses proved especially resonant for slaves and their descendants” (207).

In the short story “The Fire and the Cloud,” Hurston again turns to Moses, the most powerful religious figure in her cast of characters. A lizard greets Moses, who has already led the Hebrews out of Egypt. Now, having left his followers behind, Moses declares, “I am alone, O lizard, because I am alone” (*Complete Stories* 117). After further conversation and a demonstration of small feats of prestidigitation, Moses shows the lizard where he has created his tomb. If the people believe that his remains lie there, explains the hero of *Exodus*, they will continue to obey his laws. “People value monuments above men,” he concludes, “and signs above works” (120). For Hurston, Moses represents a powerful figure useful both as a fictive protagonist and as an embodiment of very real, but frustrated, desires in the African American community for basic civil rights. Presented as a lone voice of wisdom harried by short-sighted masses constantly working against their own best interests, the Moses that appears in Hurston’s novel has powers, based on those learned in the author’s research, designed not only to fight Pharaoh but, perhaps more

tellingly, to maintain conviction, and thus discipline, among his intended followers.

Moses, Man of the Mountain shares this understanding of faith with *El reino de este mundo*. In both novels, enslaved and often self-destructive people only move towards freedom and self-sufficiency — goals never fully realized in either narrative — through a faith in their leader's ability to exercise marvelous powers. The first novel presents Moses, a scion of the Egyptian royal family whose only connection to the enslaved tribes was invented by a young Hebrew woman who fell asleep while minding her younger brother. Moses first learns the powers of religion from Mentu, an aged court ostler. This interest leads the young man to the royal priests who unwillingly and unwittingly teach him “to feed the sacred snakes and handle the altar fires without hurt to himself” (61). The curiosity, intelligence, and bravery of the young prince facilitate his martial exploits as a successful general, leading to a meteoric rise in his popularity among the Egyptian people. Things proceed less agreeably in his personal life, however; after enduring palace intrigues launched by his uncle, arguing with his wife, and killing an overseer, Moses leaves Memphis, eventually making the acquaintance of Jethro, a fallen Prince of Midian, who becomes his friend and father-in-law as well as his religious teacher and advisor. Jethro worships the spirit of a nearby majestic mountain and wishes to share his faith with the world but, in spite of his own great powers, he comes to understand that this mission has not been designated for him; instead, he must pass it on to his initially unwilling son-in-law. “No, Moses,” he explains: “You are a hundred times my superior. The great I AM took the soul of the world and wrapped some flesh around it and that made

you. You are the one being waited for on this mountain. You have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. You are the son of the mountain. The mountain has waited for the man” (137).

To prepare Moses for this great, albeit still unknown, religious calling, Jethro ostentatiously trains him in useful arts of prestidigitation. During the course of these studies, a plague of frogs curtails an unwanted visit by Jethro’s cousin. “I’ll bound you all them frogs was the work of that son-in-law of yours, Moses,” writes the cousin from the safety of his home. “Nobody else could have done it.” Realizing the value of such perceptions amongst potential enemies, Jethro replies, “Yes, my son Moses is the finest hoodoo man in the world...Have you ever seen his sendings of snakes and lice?” (147).

Eventually, the people in Midian come “to believe that the hand of Moses held all of the powers of the supernatural in its grasp...So when Moses lifted his hand the smoke of the incense ceased to be smoke. It became the Presence. If it was not the actual Presence, then it enclosed and clothed the Presence. Finally the smoke itself was deified. It was not understood so it became divine” (150-51). In another display of his abilities, Moses figures out how to “make the excrescence that he called Manna appear on a certain plant” (151); in other words, he develops a new agricultural practice. As the reputation of his son-in-law’s powers grows, Jethro finds that people treat his family more fairly, men stop attacking his daughters at the communal wells, previously unwilling workers eagerly apply to serve his growing family, and business dealings — now operating on an equitable basis enforced by respect for Moses — flourish. The first results of faith in Moses’ marvelous abilities restore the father-in-law’s wealth and power.

In *El reino de este mundo*, the African-born Macandal inspires similar faith among the slaves of Haiti. “In his portrayal of the principal historical figures and events,” writes Young in *Carpentier: El reino de este mundo*, the author

has adhered strictly to his sources. Relatively little is known about Mackandal.⁴⁸ He was brought to Saint-Domingue from West Africa as a slave and was owned by a M. Lenormand de Mezy. Maimed in an accident and incapacitated for manual labour, he was assigned to tend cattle. He escaped, became a leader among the maroons (fugitive slaves), and, after an unsuccessful attempt to poison the white population, was eventually captured, tried, and executed by burning. (23)

Carpentier adds some background to Macandal’s personal story. As a captive taken from “the invincible empire of the Mandingues,”⁴⁹ Macandal, like Aphra Behn’s Orinooko, has royal family connections that counteract his current status as a slave. Further, as an African noble, he commands more esteem than that enjoyed by European royalty among the descendants of Africans:

In Africa the king was warrior, hunter, judge, and priest; his precious seed distended hundreds of bellies with a mighty strain of heroes. In France, in Spain, the king sent his generals to fight in his stead; he was incompetent to decide legal problems, he allowed himself to be scolded by any trumpery friar. And when it came to a question of virility, the best he

⁴⁸ Working from the original Spanish text, Young retains the author’s spelling as Mackandal.

⁴⁹ *Los mandingas* in Carpentier’s Spanish

could do was engender some puling prince who could not bring down a deer without the help of stalkers, and who, with unconscious irony bore the name of as harmless and silly a fish as the dolphin. Whereas Back There there were princes as hard as anvils, and princes who were leopards, and princes who knew the language of the forest, and princes who ruled the four points of the compass, lords of the clouds, of the seed, of bronze, of fire. (12-13)

With these presuppositions intact, masses of people, white as well as black, have no trouble believing Macandal responsible for an outbreak of disease that first kills off livestock and then infects the white population. Under threats of torture, a slave named Fulah reveals the secret:

Macandal, the one-armed, now a *houngan* of the Rada rite, invested with superhuman powers as the result of his possession by the major gods on several occasions, was the Lord of Poison. Endowed with supreme authority by the Rulers of the Other Shore, he has proclaimed the crusade of extermination, chosen as he was to wipe out the whites and create a great empire of free Negroes in Santo Domingo. Thousands of slaves obeyed him blindly. Nobody could halt the march of the poison. (23-24)

This leads to a search by the French colonists, who do not know that, as part of his cycle of metamorphoses, Macandal had often entered the mysterious world of insects... When the moment [of his capture] came, the bonds of the Mandingue, no longer

possessing a body to bind, would trace the shape of a man in the air for a second before they slipped down the post. And Macandal, transformed into a buzzing mosquito, would light on the very tricorne of the commander of the troops to laugh at the dismay of the whites. (31)

After burning Macandal, the whites, unaware of this reality, are puzzled when their slaves return “to their plantation laughing all the way.” For them, “Macandal had kept his word, remaining in the Kingdom of This World. Once more the whites had been outwitted by the Mighty Powers of the Other Shore” (32).

“It is largely on account of the relationship between history and fiction that *El reino de este mundo* differs from the conventional historical novel,” writes Young, who adds that historical novels traditionally employ historical information as background in which to set a scene. In contrast, “Carpentier’s novel is the product of a different and more complex process... The basis of Carpentier’s method of composition, therefore, is not that he exploits history in order to produce fiction, but rather that his fiction is written as if it were history” (*Carpentier* 33). Young also highlights the importance of the American context of this text, pointing out that even though “the events narrated in this novel occurred during the Age of Reason, and belong to the same historical context as the French Revolution, they are beyond the frame of reference of rationalism. Mackandal’s rebellion was fomented by class and racial oppression,” he notes, “but was inspired by Voodoo” (*Carpentier* 36). In Carpentier’s telling, the marvelous, coupled with the faith of people who lived in Haiti and now live in the book, becomes real.

Moses, Man of the Mountain presents a protagonist who fulfills similar myths in order to inspire faith among the people. As a general, Moses wins unparalleled victories as head of Pharaoh's army, and later instructs the young Joshua, who will fight many battles before storming the Walls of Jericho. In this vein, Moses lives as a man in a man's world. Following the Hebrews' initial military success over the Amalekites, Moses supervises the division of the battle's spoils: "Horses, cows, mules, camels, *women*, wine and jewelry, and household vessels of gold and silver" (261 emphasis added). Like the Egyptian and Hebrew men with whom he associates, Moses does not prove his love through monogamy; in fact, he takes Zipporah as his second wife, having earlier married an often-mentioned although never-named Ethiopian princess in order to secure a treaty for his grandfather, the Pharaoh. Although he never stops loving Zipporah, he takes little notice of her aspirations, eventually causing her to "feel that tears and pleas were no good" (145). Zipporah's father Jethro has already dismissed what he terms female desire for prestige and power and tells her to stop bothering Moses since her wishes only make her "just like all the rest of the women — ready to upset the whole world to make an opportunity to dress yourself up in ornaments" (142). Years later, still jealous of the time Moses spends with his daughter, Jethro reminds him to avoid distractions that might interfere with his sacred task. "Did the Voice say give up my wife, too?" the son-in-law responds. "I hope not." "But, Moses," replies the father-in-law, "you have to consecrate yourself for work that you got to do. Women pull men aside, you know" (272). Even so, Jethro need not have worried; in spite of his feelings for the daughter, Moses cares more for the father-in-law. "He meant more to me than anybody else in my whole life,"

recalls Moses after the passing of Jethro.

When Moses attends his first organizing meetings with the Hebrew community, the presence of a woman surprises him. Even though she is Miriam and introduced as a highly respected “two-headed woman with power” (a hoodoo adept) and, according to her earlier account, his own sister, Moses demands, “But what is she doing here? I have called the Elders to me on serious business” (171). Later in the story, when Miriam jealously attacks the prestige and power accorded Zipporah, Moses calls her “pitiful. The trouble with you,” he adds, “is that nobody ever married you. And when a woman ain’t got no man to look after, she takes on the world in place of the man she missed” (300). Moses continually finds Miriam an obstacle, and finally reduces her stature by inflicting a case of leprosy upon her.

Hurston develops Moses’ misogyny in this text not to abase women but as another way of reinforcing popular faith in his power.⁵⁰ “The problematic nature of the rhetoric of universality is made particularly visible if one looks at the question of gender,” observes Barbara Johnson in a discussion of Hurston’s novel and Sigmund Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism*. In this sense, she adds, what “one sees is not a difference but an astonishing *similarity* between Freud and Hurston. Both histories of monotheism are stories of male homosocial bonding” (26 emphasis in original). To properly understand Hurston, it helps to consider the relationship of gender and ethnicity at play here. “As a man,” Johnson points out,

⁵⁰ Hurston, more assiduously than her Moses, sacrificed spouses and other lovers to the pursuit of her own literary achievement. Much has been written about her possible feminist or anti-feminist attitudes and, I suspect, more should follow, but I have little to add here; like Carpentier, whose work calls out for a great deal more attention from specialists in gender and queer studies, Hurston merely reports. Neither author dismisses monogamy, although currently available biographies suggest that Hurston may easily have been more polyandrous than Carpentier was polygamous.

Freud “fits” the mold that takes itself as universal, but as a Jew, he is in his own eyes a *marked* man, a circumcised man, in some sense a castrated man. If normative maleness is defined as that which is not marked or self-divided, then Freud’s insights into maleness as a locus of denied self difference (which he calls the castration complex) were very much enabled by his ethnicity, through which he could see that masculinity was *never* something that could simply be taken for granted. It has often been remarked that Freud took maleness as a normative, but in fact his originality was to open that normativity itself up to question. (28 emphasis in original)

The separate spheres and even the outright machismo delineated in *El reino de este mundo* and *Moses, Man of the Mountain* reinforce a situational condition of faith in the virility, necessarily sexual as well as martial, in the one chosen to lead against seemingly overwhelming odds.⁵¹ Moses’ attitudes towards women, therefore, only contribute an element to the basis of credence required by Carpentier’s formulation of the American marvelous; the success of the narrative depends on creating a reasonable expectation of faith among the populace in the protagonist. For Hurston, this also requires some reasons for her own convictions since her reliance on religion seems as scanty as her faith in monogamy. During the anthropological studies reported on in *Mules and Men*, for example, Hurston becomes an initiate in sects led by several different *houngan*, unprompted by her own beliefs but instead because she has come to understand this as a widespread African American — and ultimately

⁵¹ Readers hoping to place this attitude in the past might ponder the popularity of Bill Clinton, Silvio Berlusconi, and Nicolas Sarkozy, just to name a few. George W. Bush, alas, may have actually remained as chaste as he was unpopular.

American — religious movement. Even so, the texts recalling each of her re-initiations suggest a degree of scholarly distance. Her skepticism appears clearly in *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, in which Hurston initially strengthens faith in Moses among the Hebrews by discounting the hoodoo practices of Miriam. “Hmm!” responds Moses to the suggestion that Miriam’s concoctions can ward off all harm. “It’s a wonder every Hebrew in Egypt wouldn’t have one of them. Pharaoh and his overseers wouldn’t be a bit of trouble then. Why haven’t you and Miriam done that on a large plan and freed Israel long ago?”⁵² (172). Faith, as mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation, does not always mean religion.

The theatrical qualities Hurston admires in the *houngan* resemble those that fascinate her most amongst her father and other Christian preachers. A chapter on religion included in her autobiographical *Dust Tracks on a Road* describes an early and continual movement away from the beliefs and practices of the congregation led by her father that only interest Hurston when they involve music and literature; at one point in her account, she recalls a conversion and how she “liked that part because it was high drama” (199). Hurston’s summation of all religion in *Dust Tracks on a Road* asserts a fervent agnosticism revealed in a crucially placed if. “As for me,” she avows, “I do not pretend to read God’s mind. If He has a plan of the universe worked out to the smallest detail, it would be folly for me to presume to get down on my knees and attempt to revise it. That, to me, seems the highest form of sacrilege. So I do not pray.” As seen throughout her works, this choice signifies a rejection of “weakness” in favor of “the challenge of responsibility”

⁵² Almost exactly what doubters in New York City’s Puerto Rican communities said about *Santería*.

(202). The question thus becomes one of how to reconcile the creator's uneasy faithlessness with the firm faith needed among her literary creations.

Hurston resolves this question of faith in *Moses, Man of the Mountain* with strategies subsequently explained in *El reino de este mundo*. As in the weakening of European image seen in the first pages of Carpentier's novel, Hurston has Moses commence negotiations by directly challenging Pharaoh's gods. The Hebrews will prevail, declares their leader, because "a new and a stronger god has called them through me to his service. Your gods never were anything more than a deification of the forty-two judges of the forty-two Nomes of Egypt, and they are still servants to be ordered. The god I represent is one who commands" (179). At each subsequent encounter, Pharaoh continues to emphasize the power of his civilized society. "I can't allow the welfare of Egypt to be destroyed by your superstitions," he tells Moses (215). And each time, before providing any demonstration of power, Moses reminds his adversary that the god he represents "is stronger than thrones" (214). That the narrator may or may not share Moses' belief in his god remains a question when, near the end of the story, the text announces, "No *man* on earth had ever wielded so much power" (345 emphasis added).

Throughout her description of Moses' exploits, Hurston emphasizes the need for textually internal faith, the faith of the novel's characters in the powers of the protagonist, over the need for readers to believe in an author's account of the action. As Robert Hemenway observes in his literary biography, "Hurston gives no indication of whether Moses' power derives from the lessons of Jethro, from the Koptic snake he has commanded to meet him anywhere in the world, or from an all-powerful God who identifies himself as

‘I AM WHAT I AM’” (263). Although he does not directly address Hurston’s strategy, Hemenway’s comment helps demonstrate how Hurston employs faith to make the marvelous real for the book’s characters. Two revealing examples of how this faith takes root in the characters occur near the end of the story as Moses disposes of his supposed siblings. First Miriam comes to Moses, believing in his ability to tinker with life itself, and asks him to allow her to die. Moses, apparently unaware of possessing such power, only expresses befuddlement and finally relief as she feels — somehow — that he has silently complied with her request (320-22). In a more direct revelation of possibly powerful non-powers, Moses, finding it necessary to do away with Aaron, calls down no plagues, hail, or other divine intervention but simply slips a knife into his gut (335-36).

Like my childhood Hebrew School teachers, eager to provide some reasonable basis with which to nourish belief among our Hebraically skeptical cohort, Hurston leaves open the possibility of reading some marvelous episodes as coincidental or the result of advanced knowledge of meteorology and astronomy. After Moses promises to bring hail down upon Egypt, he puts Pharaoh off by declaring himself, “Not quite ready yet. I’ll let you know in a little while” (211). Allowing Pharaoh’s priests time to perform some prestidigitation for the assembled public, Moses suddenly raises his hands and, not unlike Mon Rivera waving off threatening clouds, seemingly delivers dramatic lightening effects followed by ice falling on the Tropic of Cancer. Later, the calling of darkness over Egypt reminds one of a similar stunt played on the English nobles in Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (Hurston 217 and Twain 34-39). If three days seems rather long for a

full eclipse of the sun, a reader might readily chalk it up to those temporal debates perennially dogging Old Testament stories. Those of us who have lived on boats in tidal basins will have no trouble believing the Red Sea capable of deceiving Pharaoh's army. "The retreating tidal waters did not creep on as was their habit," writes Hurston, who may, like us, know that only fools place total confidence in supposedly habitual customs of tides (236). The subsequent distress of horses stuck in mud causes no surprise to the Hebrew observers on the shore until Moses once again lifts his hand. "The gripping east wind loosed its mighty fingers and the sea water came rushing back to its bed" (238). Hurston has placed Moses in these waters during earlier wanderings, and specifically recorded the moment when a young boy takes him to a place along the Red Sea's shore where if "a man started at the hour when the tide is lowest, before it rushes back he could be on the other side — if the man was right peart in his walking" (103).

As Moses burnishes his image among his Hebrew followers, Hurston does not entirely neglect the potential complicity of her readers. In part, she develops this by having the Hebrews waver so inanely that it forces the reader to feel frustration in such obviously misplaced disbelief. Just after Moses has freed the Hebrews with demonstrations of plagues, hail, and the killing of firstborn Egyptians, some of the former slaves decide they would prefer to go fishing than follow their leader's directive to pack quickly and prepare to mobilize. When Joshua remonstrates, reminding them that Moses made their liberty possible, one responds, "Oh, I don't know about that. This God that done chose us would have got us free anyhow. I never did much care for this Moses like some of you all" (224). These moments reappear throughout the

narrative. As Pharaoh's chariots have them hemmed in against the sea, one woman sobs that she had always told her "husband not to bother with this mess" (232). Several others start cursing Moses for getting them out of slavery only to have them slaughtered. "Didn't I always say we was better off in slavery than we would be wandering all over the wilderness following after some stray man that nobody don't know nothing about?" demands one of the men. "Tell the truth, didn't I always say that?" (233). Even relatively minor setbacks cause the people to doubt; a group complaining of bad tasting water in the wells of an oasis confronts Moses accusing, "What you mean by tolling us off from all that good water for, to drag us out here to die wanting water?" (244). Each incident requires a new demonstration of power in order for the masses to keep the faith, but somehow the accumulation of marvels never sinks in for the former slaves. Even after an awe-inspiring display of Moses' connection to his God at the foot of Mount Sinai, the Hebrew people lose hope when he tarries too long at the summit. Aaron, always looking for an opportunity to reduce Moses' stature, constructs a golden calf in the style of the Egyptian god more familiar to the crowd and prays, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. We don't know anything about no Lord in no mountain at all. Moses made Him up so let Moses keep him" (284).

Finally, when Moses, after overcoming hardships and winning battles along the way, calls the people to battle against the Canaanites for the Promised Land, their flagging faith causes them to do more than lose their nerve; led by Aaron they decide to remove their leader. "Let's go on back to Egypt where we belong," demands one, "but first thing let's kill him for

bringing us off” (314). In one of his greatest demonstrations of power, Moses performs a feat accomplishable by any toddler; he falls “on his face in the door.” The response comes immediately: “A great gasp went up from the Princes and the people outside crowded back from the door in some nameless fear. The figure of Moses on the ground did not look helpless somehow. It inspired more terror than it would have even with the uplifted hand. Everybody shrunk away as far as they could” (314-14). Their treason finishes them at this point, however, as Moses tells God that he cannot stand any more of their cowardly lack of faith. Since they refuse to believe in his god or even in themselves, Moses decides, “none of these slave-minded cowards shall enter the land You promised them. They shall wander in this wilderness until they are all dead. That is, all those who are grown enough to know what they are talking about. Their carcasses shall rot in this wilderness” (315). Faith can only come with the next generation. “I can make something out of their children, but not out of them. They [the children] have the essence of greatness in them and I shall fight them and fight myself and the world, and even god for them. They shall not refuse their destiny” (316). Thus commences the famous forty years of wandering in the desert.

After falling down in an apparent death following Aaron’s planned assassination, a new Moses emerges. The transformed leader develops a warmer relationship with his younger generation of followers. Moses’ decision to reserve the Promised Land for the next generation also brings to a culmination his initial strategy of delaying faith. After dominating Pharaoh in their initial contests for power, Moses had actually hoped that he would not prevail too quickly. As explained to Aaron, “we have come and demanded the

people in the name of a god that neither Pharaoh nor the Hebrews ever heard about before. He has got to prove himself before them all to make folks believe” (184). The reasons for this delay involve more than emancipation. “It ain’t just to get you all out of Egypt,” Moses had continued, “it’s to make something out of you afterwards. That’s the main idea. If Pharaoh lets the Hebrews go peaceably it won’t be six months before they will be back here ready to serve him again. If I’m to make a nation of you, you’ve got to be cut loose forever” (185). Wars along the way to Canaan are also needed to make the Hebrews into a new people. “Once they win a battle it will tend to lift up their heads,” Moses tells Joshua as part of his instruction in military maneuvers. “Now they are scared of everything and they think nothing is scared of them. They need to win something” (255-56). Jethro explains to Moses how his godlike appearance should eventually inspire the people to cohere as a greater community. “You appoint men to fight and men to judge, and men to wear the robes of priests and servants around the gathering place of the spirit. You have to be the something bigger and better than the robes and the outward signs. You have to stand between the people and God” (275). Like Macandal, Moses expects freedom to lead to nationhood. “All the great classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central,” observes Anderson, “through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of power” (13). The purpose is not to have faith; the faith must have a purpose.

Whatever a leader’s purpose, people’s doubts constantly ensure that the final resolution remains always in times to come. Even when this would seem to negate a leader’s will, this continual deferral of conclusion keeps a people,

and that people's hopes, alive. "If, in the wandering civilization, the end of an individual's journey is equivalent to his death," writes Michel Butor,

the settling of an entire people — even if it permits the enjoyment of an economic affluence immeasurably greater than that to which it was accustomed or the attainment of an incomparably more solid and efficient language — is always lived (in a certain fashion) rather like a death, an overcome death, ostentatious; a sort of life beyond death. We each keep, more or less hidden within us, a nostalgia for wandering. To travel is to live again. (58)

Like *El reino de este mundo*, which accurately records the chaos of post-revolutionary Haiti, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* leaves Moses watching Joshua lead a host working on nationhood. Neither narrative concludes with the ultimate conversion of a "nomadic war machine," as envisioned by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, into the State — an obviously undesirable conclusion in a world of States run by Mussolini, Hitler, Salazar, and Franco — but only with the elusive hope of somehow conserving both states of being.

The storyteller, the shaman, and popular mythology became ports of access to a sacred world as well as being identified with American originality, even as destruction of traditional societies seemed imminent. It is in this ambiguous terrain that *magical realism* and *lo real maravilloso* need to be situated as a form of reenchancement, as a challenge to European cultural hegemony, as a cultural resolution of racial difference but always in the threatening shadow of the imminent dissolution

of their base. (Franco 166)

The penultimate page of *Moses, Man of the Mountain* brings the narrative back to the lizard first seen in Hurston's short story, "The Fire and the Cloud." Unlike *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, brilliantly dashed off as an emotional reaction to a breakup with a younger man, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* represents the author's life work, developed out of research and subsequent essays and stories. Her preparation has included courses with Franz Boas, numerous readings, years of field work, and thousands of interviews as well as the aforementioned initiations into different African American religious sects in Louisiana and Haiti. Without revealing the extent of her belief in the *houngans* who teach her, she avoids an academic pose of utter disbelief. Most importantly, she has shown how belief in the rituals she studies lives among the people who practice them and even among many who hear of them, a popular faith and acceptance with which she infuses *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. Like other novels that continue to attract readers, this one tells a good story in a compelling manner; along the way, it also reveals Hurston's views of how identity and politics function in extended communities and the faith that makes any useful deployment of those elements possible.

Perhaps most marvelously, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* shares the thesis of a non-Hebrew Moses with Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, which appeared in print in the same year, 1939. Unlike Frida Kahlo's 1945 painting *Moses* — which, as Jane Burton notes, "was inspired by an essay by Sigmund Freud that made a link between Ancient Egyptian beliefs, Moses and the origins of monotheistic religion" — Hurston's volume makes no reference to the famous psychologist. In fact, a search of Hurston's letters and writings

by and about her have turned up no mention whatsoever of Freud, a detail somewhat surprising in the life of a woman who had studied anthropology at Barnard. It seems unlikely, in any case, that she would have read Freud's preliminary essays on Moses as these were only published in German in 1937. News of Freud's central point might well have reached Hurston as she wrote about Moses, but this would explain none of the detailed coincidences found in the narratives published by these two authors. Also, Hurston had been working with these aspects of Moses for many years. And it is not altogether inconceivable that the famous psychologist had heard of, or even read, works by a famous author of the Harlem Renaissance. "It seems uncanny," writes Johnson, "that two such different writers — one an Austrian Jew, the other an African American; one a man the other a woman — should set out to rewrite the story of Moses at the very same moment that, in Europe, a fanatical theorist of race and nationhood was attempting to put a definitive end to the history of the Jews that Moses began" (15).

In addition to the coincidence of theme and details, Johnson offers some questions pertinent to a subsequent consideration of identity in chapter three in this dissertation as well as to the present discussion of leadership and faith. Thinking "it even more uncanny to find both Freud and Hurston choosing to suggest that Moses was *not* in fact a Hebrew but an Egyptian," Johnson asks, "How is this to be understood? Why would either Freud or Hurston *want* Moses to be an Egyptian? If Moses is the object of cultural idealizing transference both for Jews and for blacks, what is the significance of this separation between the idealized leader and the people he liberates?" (15 emphasis in original). Johnson takes note of a difference in Hurston's

novel, which “is slightly less clear about its depiction of Moses as an Egyptian” (16). As Johnson explains:

Hurston has here calculated a maximum of narrative ambiguity: although every scene that takes place in the royal palace presumes that Moses is the legitimate son of the princess and an Assyrian prince, the dark oval object, misinterpreted by Miriam, stands as what might be called a floating signifier a warning against certainty about the Egyptian birth that the rest of the novel takes for granted. But whatever the case, the biblical account as we know it would be derived from a little girl’s lie. (17)

What brings Freud and Hurston together for Johnson is the common question of inter-generational transmission; the former explores how peoples teach hate and the latter how they teach culture. “In both cases,” she decides, it is a matter of *undocumented* transmission, an *unrecognized* tradition, something that might perhaps be called a process of *unconscious intertextuality*. What becomes clear in both writers is that the questions of hatred and the question of culture are, at bottom, the same question” (19 emphasis in original).

Freud explains that Jewish traditions comprise more than those archived in the Torah and other writings considered sacred. “The Jews possess a rich extra-Biblical literature in which are to be found the myths and superstitions that in the course of centuries were woven around the gigantic figure of their first leaders and the founder of their religion and that have both hallowed and obscured that figure” (36). In *Tell My Horse*, Hurston also notes these supplementary texts with

the hard-to-explain fact that wherever the Negro is found, there are traditional tales of Moses and his supernatural powers that are not in the Bible, nor can they be found in any written life of Moses...All over the Southern United States, the British West Indies and Haiti there are reverent tales of Moses and his magic. It is hardly possible that all of them sprang up spontaneously in these widely separated areas on the blacks coming into contact with Christianity after coming to the Americas. It is more probable that there is a tradition of Moses as the great father of magic scattered over Africa and Asia.

(116)

Freud presents an equally charismatic Moses with “many character traits the Jews incorporated into their early conceptions of God when they made him jealous, stern, and implacable were taken essentially from their memory of Moses, for in truth it was not an invisible god, but the man Moses, who led them out of Egypt” (37). Thus, the entire belief-systems of neither group are contained in their official writings.

Mysteriously, authorized Jewish texts offer no clear expectations of what will follow life. In contrast to the death-denying measures taken by the Pharaohs, Freud posits the *laissez-faire* attitude towards death that appears in early Judaism, which “had entirely relinquished immortality; the possibility of an existence after death was never mentioned in any place” (20). Although Freud places this theological divergence in times gone by, my childhood Hebrew School instructors continued to teach this view in the twentieth century. People do not know what happens after death, they would tell us,

adding that the only visible reward for living a good life was the satisfaction one might take in doing so and that the only manner in which one could be sure to live on was in one's enduring works and in the memories of those to come.⁵³ This continues a tradition that Freud places at least as early as the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, later known as Iknaton, who in *Moses and Monotheism* instills Moses with a theology that “resisted all the temptations of magical thought and discarded the illusion, dear particularly to the Egyptians, of a life after death” (73). Given that other religions profess an afterlife, generally accompanied by detailed explanation, Freud's interpretation of this history suggests a faith separated from belief. Death remains as illusory, and as scary, as the Promised Land. This absence of a sacred after-death narrative concerns African Americans at least as much as Jews. Without the promise — or, more accurately, the excuse — of an afterlife, the horrors of slavery and post-slavery exclusion in this life offer no redemption; something must be done immediately. As Walter Benjamin concluded, “The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight. Then we shall clearly realize that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against Fascism” (257). This faith in emergency — in the never-to-be-known *porvenir* (or in the French *l'avenir*; as Derrida explains in a film that bears his name, English contains no suitable term for this continuous state of what will come) noted in Carpentier's continent “characterized by unlimited

⁵³ Such beliefs might account for the driven nature associated with our people, and certainly helps explain naming customs and other familial archiving practices; my Hebrew name, for example, encompasses five generations with further family lore extending our patrimony through several millennia.

faith in itself' and through Carpentier observed in Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain* — offers little in the way of promise for this or any other world.

In the end, Hurston's novel, having advocated credence, leaves us with nothing more — and, perhaps, nothing less! — than the possibility of faith in this *porvenir*.

Chapter Two — Marvelous American Music

‘Señora, where there’s music there can’t be mischief.’

‘Nor where there are lights and it is bright,’ said the duchess; to which Sancho replied,

‘Fire gives light, and it’s bright where there are bonfires, as we see by those that are all round us and perhaps may burn us; but music is a sign of mirth and merrymaking.’

‘That remains to be seen,’ said Don Quixote, who was listening to all that passed; and he was right, as is shown in the following chapter.¹

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

Nothing better demonstrates Alejo Carpentier’s conception of Marvelous Realism than his incorporation of music into his radio broadcasts. With this twentieth-century medium he develops fictive sounds that create reality, prefiguring by a decade and a half his own explication of Marvelous Realism. Referring to his use of sonic arts in “La radio y sus nuevas posibilidades,” published in 1933, he takes pride in their “marvelous” effects. “One should avoid the use of *real sounds* on radio,” he explains,

...because all broadcasting is subject to acoustic laws, and the microphone deforms many sounds, destroying their true evocative character. A door that closes does not sound like a closing door and water falling in front of the microphone does not produce an aquatic sound. At best, one might employ those *wind disks* pressed in Germany to produce a storm. But when it comes to thunder, for example, nothing imitates it better than a

¹ —Señora, donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala.

—Tampoco donde hay luces y claridad —respondió la duquesa. A lo que replicó Sancho:

—Luz da el fuego, y claridad las hogueras, como lo vemos en las que nos cercan, y bien podría ser que nos abrasasen; pero la música siempre es indicio de regocijos y de fiestas.

—Ello dirá —dijo don Quijote, que todo lo escuchaba.

Y dijo bien, como se muestra en el capítulo siguiente. (Chapter 34, translation by John Ormsby)

few rim shots on tightened orchestral drumheads... For this reason I emphasize the necessity of using *musical sounds*. For example: a body of falling water is represented by means of a rapid arpeggio played on the harp, the sound of rain with strings played pizzicato while tissue paper is crinkled a certain distance from the microphone, etc. These sounds should accompany the text, creating the propitious atmosphere for facilitating *evocation*.² (*Crónicas* 551-52 emphasis in original)

Carpentier does not limit his use of music to sound effects, however; well-known works also serve to “fix an idea, immediately, in the mind of the listener.” As examples, he notes, “The opening theme of *Fingal’s Cave* by Mendelssohn can always represent the sea, the beginning of *In the Steppes of Central Asia* by Borodine recreates the desert or plains, *Scheherazade* the Orient, *un jazz hot* could synthesize Harlem, the song of Lorelei could evoke the Rhine”³ (*Crónicas* 552). In order to bring cultures together, Carpentier suggests a reading of Walt Whitman accompanied by a Parisian orchestra performing Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*, a “prototype of universal music” (*Crónicas* 552). Whether through sound effects, associations, or the incitement

² Los ruidos reales deben evitarse en el radio. Deben evitarse, porque toda emisión está sometida a leyes de acústica, y el micrófono deforma muchos sonidos, destruyendo su verdadero carácter evocador. Una puerta que se cierra, no suena como puerta que se cierra; el agua que cae ante el micrófono no produce un sonido acuático. A lo sumo pueden emplearse aquellos discos de viento impresos en Alemania, para figurar una tempestad. Pero en lo que se refiere al trueno, por ejemplo, nada lo imitará mejor que unos cuantos perdigones rodando sobre la piel tensa de un timbal de orquesta... Por ello insisto en la necesidad de recurrir a los ruidos musicales. Por ejemplo: un cuerpo que cae al agua, se representa por medio de un rápido arpegio descendente, en el arpa; el ruido de la lluvia, con pizzicatti de cuerda, mientras se estruja un papel de seda a cierta distancia del micrófono, etc. Estos ruidos deben acompañar el texto, creando la atmósfera propicia que facilita la *evocación*.

³ “Fragmentos de obras conocidas, que fijan una idea, inmediatamente, en el cerebro del oyente. El tema inicial de *Las grutas de Fingal*, de Mendelssohn, representará siempre el mar; el principio de *Las estepas del Asia Central*, de Borodine, figurará el desierto, la llanura; *Scherazada*, el oriente; un *jazz hot*, será la síntesis de Harlem; el canto de la Lorelei evocará el Rhin.”

of supposedly universal emotions, Carpentier employs the abstractions of music to create realities for his radio audience.

Beethoven's music does not, of course, offer the universally comprehensible experience described in "La radio y sus nuevas posibilidades." Such an experience will probably happen for listeners described by Richard Taruskin as imbued with "the Germanic, nationalistic roots of what we reflexively — and, if pressed, angrily — proclaim to be our 'universal' musical values" (73). Others, educated in different places and according to different systems, may have widely varied responses to Beethoven. Although Carpentier writes this in a column destined for a general audience, his invocation of a mass experience can only apply to listeners trained in the sonata form as the basis of Classical symphonies and chamber works or, at a minimum, listeners raised in a society that familiarizes its young people with diatonic scales and modes of concert attendance. Carpentier's explanation of how music creates reality leaves open obvious questions raised by the reception of those effects, associations, and universal emotions. The harp's arpeggio, so evocative of falling water for some listeners, may mean something completely different to others and the associations created by European Romantic composers and American jazz artists depend on a great deal of formation. Does Rimsky Korsakov's *Scheherazade* sound oriental to an Asian? And if so, does that carry a positive connotation? Can even as emblematic a work as Earl Hagen's "Harlem Nocturne" evoke that African American neighborhood for a Kenyan who has never been there?

We must ask these questions and acknowledge issues of formation and cultural context not addressed in Carpentier's article before dealing with the

possibilities it raises. Music has meanings universally, but it doesn't have universal meanings. When applied to generally agreed upon contexts in cultural settings based on communal education, Carpentier's elucidation of his methods demonstrates how music can provide the condition of faith necessary for encountering the marvelously real. When harps sound wetter than water and drums more thunderous than thunder, listeners are brought into the presence of realities not made possible by the merely real. As Carpentier eventually concludes, however, these realities are not over and above some other reality; instead of European surreality, he defines an American marvelous reality that, as discussed in the previous chapter, causes a spectator to give credence to something that he or she considers impossible or at least improbable.

In response to Carpentier's deployment of music as both an analogy for and a means of creating marvelous realism, the first part of this chapter considers how his music criticism sets up the possibility of a distinctly American view of culture. American marvelous realism is not only not European surrealism, it also meets specific American conditions, elaborated in chapter one, that Carpentier sets out in the Prologue to *El reino de este mundo*. In order to develop a more thorough understanding of a Carpenterian America, the second section reconsiders an overturning of high/low art that has so far merely succeeded in reversing, but not actually subverting, existing cultural hierarchies. Carpentier forces readers to reconsider — once again — the supposed highs and lows of American culture, and demonstrates how expectations of a culture of the Americas do not need to be lowered, however benignly, in order for the culture to be taken seriously. In this case, reversals

that continue to bifurcate high/low also maintain Manichean divisions of white/black and American/Latin American, categories fixed further by the electronic enhancement of recording and broadcast technologies. Videos, disks, radio, and television that enthuse over exotic ethnicities spread as much harm as those that disparage the Other. Finally, Carpentier's employment of music in his writing serves as a guide to comprehending the appearances of music in works by an often-misunderstood American author, Zora Neale Hurston. Without discounting differences as clear as black and white, readers can discern imbricated areas inhabited by both authors and understand the ways in which these areas reveal a larger American portrait. Specifically, the final section of this chapter considers the relationship between Carpentier's music criticism, including *La música en Cuba* and the essays collected in *Ese músico que llevo dentro*, and Hurston's popular anthropological studies in *Mules and Men* and *Tell My Horse*, and then focuses on the former's most overtly musical novel, *Concierto barroco*, and the latter's final novel, the more subtly musical *Seraph on the Suwanee*. Often misinterpreted and denounced, *Seraph on the Suwanee*, understood in a Caribbean context exemplified by Carpentier, provides keys to potentially useful understandings of culture in the Americas and political possibilities in the United States. Releasing Carpentier and Hurston from their ill-fitting suits of, respectively, *afrocubanismo* and Harlem Renaissance serves not as a means of overturning hegemonic formulations of culture as much as deconstructing them, showing how the perspectives of ethnic disparagers on one side and exotic enthusiasts on the other unravel under scrutiny.

Differences in American Listening

“Music. Reality. Sometimes it’s hard to tell a difference.”
 “When the Music Stops” Eminem⁴

In order to discover what makes Carpentier’s view of music American, this section begins with his method of fusing European vanguardist thinking with modes of cultural production in the Americas. His extensive formation in the cultural practices of both hemispheres makes it possible for him to consider where these usefully meet. When, upon his return to Cuba at the outbreak of the Second World War, Carpentier angrily proposes a break with Europe, especially notable in the already examined “Ocaso de Europa” series, music plays a large part not only in his new vision of American Marvelous Realism but also in his rejection of Bretonian surrealism. Carpentier’s perception of marvelous realism lays a foundation from which twenty-first-century observers can understand musical connections of the Americas found in commonalities between Cuba and the United States, both of which struggle in similar ways to understand their syntheses of African and European musical styles.

The American realism Carpentier describes after his 1939 return to the Western Hemisphere builds on his 1933 depictions of musical creations of reality. While “Ocaso de Europa,” as we have already seen, rejects European governments and intellectual groups as socially and politically decadent, its author only partially renounces Old World culture, and that more as a Dadaist complaint of its failure to inspire people to live up to its promises than as an indictment of any particular cultural production. With a focus on music, this

⁴ I have taken this quote from the recording rather than the liner notes, which differ slightly: “Music. Reality. Sometimes it’s hard to tell the difference.”

chapter considers how American musical styles both break with and make use of past practices. Because Carpentier spends more time struggling with disparate elements that Hurston more often accepts, his explanations reveal not only his process of development but also illuminate her already developed concepts. Carpentier's creation of an American response to his own largely European formation creates an enduring inner tension between his avowed Modernism, evident from his involvement in the Cuban *minorismo* literary movement, and his identification with American practices discussed in the Prologue to *El reino de este mundo* that will, decades later, become part of the discourses collected around Postmodernism. "Among the fundamental inconsistencies of the *minorismo* movement can be recognized a desire on the part of members to unite with the international avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s while simultaneously addressing issues relevant to the Cuban people," observes Robin Moore. "Their work is self-defeating in this sense." As we will see in Carpentier's critique of avant-garde elements in his own first novel, his move away from the *minorismo* movement marks one of his first reappraisals of European culture's place in emerging American views of society and politics.

In particular, Moore notes the uneasy relationship of the *minorismo* movement with popular culture, in which "conflicting goals of universalism and populism problematized the relevance and the acceptance of Minorista artists; while hailed in Paris, New York, and Madrid as visionary, their work inspired less favorable commentary at home" (213). In fact, "this group baptized itself as 'Minorista' in a moment of whimsy," observe Francisco J. Díaz de Castro and María Payeras Grau, "since anything artistic or intellectual

in Cuba at that time was considered a priori in the minority”⁵ (31). Carpentier continued to struggle with distinctions between high and low art and issues of literacy and accessibility, observes Jean Franco, even after the Cuban Revolution. “Many Cuban writers inside and outside Cuba — among them Cabrera Infante, Alejo Carpentier, José Lezama Lima, and Severo Sarduy — never held an egalitarian view of literature,” she writes. “On the contrary, they delighted in recondite literary and cultural allusions, in the privilege that literature afforded them” (100). Since artistic distinctions tend to become markers of class, readers must decide if Carpentier ultimately upholds elitist views that not only maintain well-worn, and by now outdated, high/low distinctions in art that would, if carried to the conclusions of their own inner logic, view American artistic production as inferior to that produced in Europe. As a reader who sees Carpentier disrupting high/low, I find his analyses of culture as not only supportive of American culture, but also more useful than mere overturning in the development of a cultural politics with the power to subvert oppressive class distinctions.

For Ángel Rama, “it is not in the world of ideas, philosophies, or politics but rather in the well-tuned appreciation of art that we encounter the best of Carpentier”⁶ (234). Carpentier’s greatest periods of productivity, according to Rama, take place when the Cuban author employs Latin American syncretism as a means of reconciling internal contradictions of the European vanguardist perspective. Carpentier manages this reconciliation, adds Rama, as the American he definitively becomes after spending time in

⁵ “...ese grupo que se bautizó como ‘minorista’ en un rasgo de humor (pues todo lo que fuera artístico o intelectual en la Cuba de entonces se consideraba *a priori* minoritario)”

⁶ “...no es en el mundo de las ideas, filosóficas o políticas, sino en el de la afinada apreciación del arte...”

Paris as part of the “Lost Generation” of writers, and because his theories of America depend “on a reality that would permit the integration of the European intellectual perspective forging a rich, complex, and ambiguous cultural bridge”⁷ (225). Surrealism, an element noted more often in Carpentier’s work than in Hurston’s, provides clues to the ways in which Carpentier attempts to deal with the tensions arising from an uneasy coexistence of intellectual ambition and a desire to comprehend demotic discourse. As Carpentier turns away from surrealism to identify “la maravillosa realidad,” the prologue to *El reino de este mundo* begins to formulate a method of reading works created in the New World that I find useful in the interpretation of difficult texts by authors in the United States in much the same manner as other critics have found it helpful as a guide to reading authors of other American nations. After returning to Havana, Carpentier began to see surrealism as an American creation in references that clearly invoke the entire hemisphere, or what some critics have subsequently denominated the inter-American.

Even in his earliest years as a writer involved in the Minorista movement, note Díaz de Castro and Payeras Grau, Carpentier, along with American contemporaries such as César Vallejo and Miguel Ángel Asturias, formed part of “a generation of creators that come after, and against, *modernismo*, whose lives coincide with a troubled period in the political and economic organization of their countries, still mired in military and feudal dictatorships, and are contemporaries of both the great artistic effervescence that promoted European vanguards and the great impact of the Bolshevik

⁷ “...siempre y cuando esa realidad permitiera la integración de la perspectiva intelectual europea forjando un puente cultural, rico, complejo, y ambiguo.”

Revolution”⁸ (32). Looking back on this period in a Prologue to the reprinted version of his first novel, *Écue-Yamba-Ó* (which would translate as *Praise the Lord* in Cuban versions of the Yóruba language as recorded by Carpentier), his only novel published before his extended European writings, Carpentier laments the “‘vanguardism’ that too often sticks in the ear in certain chapters, most of all the first!”⁹ (27). Rethinking the story in light of this tension between the Cuban popular culture that inspired the first draft and the European vanguardism that informed the final revisions causes Carpentier to think that, in spite of his childhood connection to the characters of his story, he had missed the real subversive power possible in the beliefs and practices of his Afro-Cuban protagonists.

The history of the story told in *Écue-Yamba-Ó* and its posterior prologue encapsulates the alternating attractions of Havana and Paris for Carpentier during the author’s early years. Throughout this novel, Carpentier’s erudite vocabulary draws on academic terms as well as slang from the slums he describes, his mythologies refer to Mediterranean as well as West African sources, and his linear narrative connects complicated story lines; these elements demonstrate techniques that the author continues to develop throughout his later novels. In *Écue-Yamba-Ó*, Cubans of all classes leave the letters D and S off of word endings and often substitute an L sound for the rolled R. Black Cubans mix Spanish with numerous surviving words and phrases from Yoruba, making the attached Glossary a necessity for readers not

⁸ “...una generación de creadores que vienen después del modernismo, contra él, cuyas vidas coinciden con un período revuelto en la organización político-económico de sus países — las dictaduras militares y feudales —, que son contemporáneos de la gran efervescencia artística que promueven las vanguardias y al mismo tiempo de la gran repercusión de la Revolución bolchevique.”

⁹ “...‘vanguardismo’ que demasiado a menudo asoma la oreja en algunos capítulos — el primero, sobre todo!”

fluent in the languages of Afro-Cuban cultures. As in early Victorian novels, three parts make up the story: *Infancia*, *Adolescencia*, and *La Ciudad* (The City). The narrative follows the story of Menegildo Cué, a black Cuban who falls in love with Longina, who has been sold for twenty pesos to a Haitian named Napolión. The latter discovers the couple's surreptitious affair and beats his young rival. After his recovery from the beating, Menegildo returns to knife Napolión. When the police arrive to arrest Menegildo, Carpentier, writing as a political prisoner, observes that they did not accuse him "of creating Communist propaganda or attacking the state. It was simply that Napolión the Haitian had been found in a ditch by the roadside, practically bled dry, with an open knife wound in his thigh"¹⁰ (116). Upon discovering a sense of manhood and self-importance in prison, Menegildo forms new social connections and joins a *ñáñigo*, one of the mutual protection associations formed in Cuba by slaves from Africa. After thoroughly described rituals, violent clashes, and other social functions, Menegildo dies from wounds received in a battle with members of a rival *ñáñigo*. In the final chapter, Longina goes to live with Menegildo's family, which accepts her following a harsh initial rejection. At the end of the story, she gives birth to a son named Menegildo.

From the beginning of the story, Carpentier fuses Christian and Afro-Cuban religious meanings by making Menegildo the son of Salomé and Juan Mandinga, a *bozal* (African born) from Guinea. In addition to its religious significance, the name Salomé evokes a musical event that Carpentier would consider important, the relatively recent premiere of Richard Strauss' opera

¹⁰ "...de hacer propaganda comunista ni de atentar contra la seguridad del estado. Era sencillamente que el haitiano Napolión había sido hallado en una cuneta de la carretera, casi desangrado, con un muslo abierto por una cuchillada."

(1905) and thus the very cusp of the nineteenth-century European Romantic polytonal musical movement into atonal modernism. *Mandinga*, also familiar as the title of an often-played Cuban song, has a long history of national, religious, and musical meanings in Cuba. In addition to the Afro-Cuban protagonists and Afro-Haitian antagonists, Carpentier populates his novel with *gallegos* (literally Galicians but often applied to all Spaniards in the Americas just as some Canadians loosely apply the same term to all Central European immigrants), Jamaican laborers, Jewish vendors, tourists from the United States, Japanese and Norwegian sailors, and Cuban Chinese store owners. Just as Hurston's anthropological study, *Mules and Men*, employs local language to describe daily life and religious practices in Florida and Louisiana, *Écue-Yamba-Ó* uses the language of the people to describe the quotidian and sacred portions of life in a small Cuban sugar mill town and an urban ghetto. Also like Hurston in *Mules and Men*, Carpentier claims to return to childhood sources in the creation of this novel. "Without a doubt, I knew Menegildo Cué well," he recalls in the novel's prologue, "the companion of childhood games"¹¹ (26). Carpentier adds to this personal friendship a connection with the Afro-Cuban community. "Old man Luis, Usebio, Salomé — and also Longina, whose name I did not even change — knew how to accept me, me a white guy whose father scandalized family friends by 'letting him play with little black kids'"¹² (26).

Contrasting with the aforementioned European formation, those "little black kids" and their families suffuse Carpentier's early works. "Cinco

¹¹ "Mucho había conocido a Menegildo Cué, ciertamente, compañero mío de juegos infantiles."

¹² "El viejo Luis, Usebio y Salomé — y también Longina, a quien ni siquiera cambié el nombre — supieron recibirme, a mí, muchacho blanco a quien su padre, para escándalo de las familias amigas, 'dejaba jugar con negritos'..."

poemas afrocubanos,” written in the years preceding his incarceration, offers a liturgy of *ñáñigo* rituals with frequent interjections of “¡Yamba-Ó!” (211-13). The final poem in this series refers to how “a *ñáñigo* shirt / hangs like a vanquished standard”¹³ and then recites the lyrics of “El manisero” (The Peanut Vendor), a Cuban song that would enjoy international popularity over a decade later (217). Other early works include his collaboration with composer Alejandro García Caturla on the one act opera *Manita en el suelo* and collaborations with composer Amadeo Roldán on the two Afro-Cuban ballets *La Rebambaramba* and *El milagro de Anaquillé*. Writing in French, Carpentier develops these themes in another story from that period, “Histoire de lunes.”

In none of these early works does the reader encounter an implied author who feels the need to disdain European intellectual attainments in order to appreciate Afro-Cuban cultural achievements. In articles that appear after the passing of García Caturla, Carpentier mentions the Cuban composer’s studies with Nadia Boulanger, the renowned teacher of twentieth-century composers, and his interest in European composers such as Erik Satie, Darius Milhaud, and Igor Stravinsky as well as Americans Aaron Copland and Heitor Villa-Lobos. Carpentier also discusses Silvestre Revueñas and Caturla, both of whom — “one as a Mexican, the other as a Cuban — were guided, without ever knowing each other, by similar aesthetic purposes. Not by mere coincidence did both work, at different times, on poems by Nicolás Guillén, and come to decide on using the same texts”¹⁴ (*Ese músico* 1 26). Little did Carpentier know that one day I would write similarly about the ways he and

¹³ “una camisa ñáñiga / cuelga como un estandarte vencido”

¹⁴ “Ambos — el uno dentro de lo mexicano; el otro dentro de lo cubano — estaban guiados, sin conocerse siquiera, por parecidos propósitos estéticos. No por mera casualidad ambos trabajaron, en distintas épocas, sobre poemas de Nicolás Guillén, y llegaron a coincidir en la elección de los mismos textos.”

Hurston reveal many similar purposes and methodologies in spite of never knowing each other.

Unlike García Caturla and Revueltas, Carpentier and Hurston do not call themselves musicians. Both of them study music in black communities, however, and become widely acknowledged as experts on the music of African descendants in the Americas. Each brings knowledge of European classical music to these engagements with American music. “I learned music at the age of eleven, coming to play the piano with astonishing rapidity,” recalls Carpentier in a selection of autobiographical sketches and interviews edited by Paco Tovar. “At twelve, I played selections by Bach and Chopin with a certain authority. But in no way did I try to be one of those called an ‘interpreter’ [commonly referred to as a performer]. I used the piano as a medium for understanding music, nothing more”¹⁵ (48). Hurston discusses some of her training in a chapter of *Dust Tracks on a Road* that details her work as a maid for a Gilbert and Sullivan repertory company. During this stint, the lead tenor, “a Harvard man who had traveled on the Continent,” shares and discusses books with the young Hurston. Additionally, she had extensive exposure to the company’s repertoire

...and the best parts of the light-opera field. Grand opera too, for all of the leads had backgrounds of private classical instruction as well as conservatory training. Even the bit performers and the chorus had some kind of formal training in voice, and most of them played the piano. It was not unusual

¹⁵ “Aprendí música a los once años, llegando a tocar el piano con pasmosa rapidez. A los doce tocaba páginas de Bach, de Chopin, con cierta autoridad. Pero en modo alguno pretendía ser eso que llaman un ‘intérprete.’ Utilizaba el piano como medio de conocimiento de la música. Nada más.”

for some of the principals to drop down at the piano after a matinee performance and begin to sing arias from grand opera...Others, dressed for the street, would drift over and ease into the singing. Thus I would hear solos, duets, quartets, and sextets from the best-known operas. They would eagerly explain to me what they were when I asked. They would go on to say how Caruso, Farrar, Mary Garden, Trentini, Schumann-Heink, Matzenhauer and so forth had interpreted this or that piece, and demonstrate it by singing. (102-103)

The background she acquired in the musical and theatrical traditions of Africa, Europe, and America helped Hurston succeed as a writer and producer of performances of *The Great Day*, *From Sun to Sun*, *Singing Steel*, and other musical theater shows based on folklore from the United States and the Bahamas. And, as Hemenway notes, “Hurston went to great lengths to show that Afro-American folk expression was not subordinate to Anglo-American high art. She pointed out that Shakespeare depended heavily on English tradition, that the midsummer-night observances were just as much a part of English folklore and folkways as the hoodoo practices and Brer Rabbit are part of Afro-American folkways” (206). As a reader of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Uncle Remus*, Hurston could appreciate their connections while elaborating on their differences.

As Carpentier and Hurston bring together their knowledge of different although sometimes connected fields of study, they develop uncommon abilities of making music come alive in their books. Carpentier’s “entire life involved a history of prolonged activity in favor of music and the interaction

between the art of literature and the art of music,” recall Díaz de Castro and Payeras Grau, who add that the author “reveals a musical passion in his writing”¹⁶ (39). Adding depth to the musical scenes in *Mules and Men*, Hurston provides an extended appendix called “Negro Songs with Music” that, like Carpentier’s *La música en Cuba*, presents musical selections not as simple lead sheets with melody and lyric but scored for piano with full harmony. Notably, both authors illustrate these musical examples with notations that differ little from those developed in Italy by Guido d’Arezzo in the tenth century and further systemized with score pages printed by Ottaviano Petrucci at the dawn of the sixteenth century. The “Negro Songs with Music” contains many references to African American daily life but Hurston does not disdain connections to European as well as African traditions. An explanation of “Mule on de Mount,” which she calls the “most widely distributed and best known of all Negro work songs,” ends with the observation, “It is something like the Odyssey, or the Iliad” (269). Musically and literarily, neither author disdains discussions that bring together European, African, and American influences. African American work songs can have Homeric influences just as *Écue-Yamba-Ó* can refer to biblical sources.

According to his own account, Carpentier wrote the first draft of *Écue-Yamba-Ó* while locked up in Havana’s Prado prison as a suspected Communist. After his release, Carpentier prevailed on his friends Robert Desnos and Mariano Brull to help him flee the country and make his way to Paris without a passport or other documents (Díaz de Castro 34). In his journalism from Paris, Carpentier quickly made use of the African traditions

¹⁶ “Toda la vida del escritor fue también una historia de larga actividad en pro de la música y de interacción entre el arte literario y el arte musical...que revela en sus escritos la pasión musical”

still flourishing in his native land; with articles written in French for periodicals such as *Cahiers du Sud*, he sought to satisfy a portion of the seemingly insatiable appetite of Parisians for all things African. At the same time, he wrote about Parisian modes for *Carteles*, a Havana magazine founded in 1919. In addition to creating printed texts, Carpentier embraced new methods of dissemination by scripting, producing and occasionally performing programs for a Parisian radio station operated by Paul Deharme, an associate of their mutual friend Robert Desnos, and for Radio Luxemburg, where he once performed a comedy sketch with his friend Josephine Baker¹⁷ (Carpentier *Crónicas* 548, 565). In a recitation of possibilities that reads like contemporary reviews of digital capabilities, Carpentier uses his article, “La radio y sus nuevas posibilidades,” to call for an “*Arte radiofónico*, principles for radio in the same manner as exists an *Arte poético* and literary principles”¹⁸ (*Crónicas* 548 emphasis in original). Carpentier goes on to set down several precepts that would establish useful programming involving sounds not heard every day, “a *spectacle* for the ear,”¹⁹ and an upbeat production style that avoids silence (549 emphasis in original). He makes clear his subversive intent by sharing a short script featuring “the richest man in the United States... Mr. Andrés W. Mellon,”²⁰ whose fortune provokes a cymbal crash and whose annual earnings are heard over a soundtrack playing the first measures of “The International” (553). In radio, Carpentier’s skeptical view of authority leads him to question prevailing grand narratives of European haute culture and capitalist inevitability in the United States and eventually — as seen in his prologue to

¹⁷ As fluent speakers of French, they communicated easily.

¹⁸ “*Arte radiofónico*, una preceptiva del radio, del mismo modo que existe un *Arte poético* y una preceptiva literaria”

¹⁹ “un *espectáculo* para el oído”

²⁰ “Se nos anuncia que el hombre más rico de los Estados Unidos es Mr. Andrés W. Mellon.”

Écue-Yamba-Ó — even leads him to question his own early writing.

Carpentier's questioning of Europe begins early, and becomes obvious from his uneasy relationship with Surrealist thinkers. In an extended critique of André Breton, he centers on the French author's misunderstanding of music:

Breton was an anti-musician; Breton did not understand music; he was completely closed to music. As a consequence: He declared music a dissolvent and that it was not surrealist, and that there was no way to make music surrealist. In this, he was completely mistaken since he was a contemporary of a composer named Edgar Varèse, a friend of Duchamp, who, having made music that escaped all the laws of traditional composition, was making sonorous surrealism in readiness for the arrival of aleatory music, which is sonorous surrealism in the most absolute sense of the word, and all of the possibilities of electronic music, etc.²¹ (*Conferencias* 40)

Carpentier does not merely reject Breton's particular European analysis of culture, however; the development of his theories relies, as well, on the American formation acquired during his early years. In addition to listening to Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Twentieth Century compositions and studying the bases of their musical theories, he investigates, and in his writings

²¹ “Breton era antimúsico, Breton no entendía la música, era un hombre completamente tapiado para la música. Consecuencia: declaró que la música era disolvente y que no era surrealista, y que no había manera de hacer música surrealista, con lo cual estaba completamente equivocado, porque él era contemporáneo de un compositor llamado Edgar Varèse, amigo de Duchamp, que haciendo una música que escapaba a todas leyes de la composición tradicional, estaba haciendo surrealismo sonoro, en espera de que llegara la música aleatoria, que es surrealismo sonoro en el sentido absoluto de la palabra, y todas las posibilidades de las músicas electrónicas, etc.”

promotes, performers and composers working in all parts of the Americas, and continually discerns connections suggested by sounds rather than limits imposed by political boundary lines.

In one notable essay published in 1952, “El *jazz* y la literatura,” Carpentier pulls up the curtain on a scene in which famous white jazz musicians mix easily with Afro-Cuban poets and notable figures of the Harlem Renaissance. After setting the stage with the influence of jazz on works by Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, and E.E. Cummings, Carpentier connects the rhythms of the Anglo-American poet T.S. Eliot and Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén. Carl Sandburg and others, he observes, “did not hesitate to inscribe their verses with banjo rhythms, often accompanying their recitations with syncopated music. Mexican [painter Miguel] Covarrubias became famous with his visual interpretations of Harlem scenes. And, in 1926, Langston Hughes would open up an era of black poetry inspired by jazz, now written by authentic black poets”²² (*Ese músico* 2 173). As in numerous other Carpentierian moments, the mixtures of colors, genres, and nationalities would seem bewildering if they did not, under the direction of this author’s pen, make so much sense.

Many of the mixtures noted by Carpentier remain obscured to this day. When I played trombone at Roseland, New York City’s famous ballroom dancehall, during its twilight years in the final decades of the twentieth century, the “American” band played foxtrots, two-steps, swing, and waltzes, alternating with the “Latin” band, which performed rhumba, cha-cha, and

²² “...no vacilaban en imprimir a sus estrofas un ritmo de banjo, acompañando sus recitaciones, a menudo, con músicas sincopadas. El mexicano Covarrubias se hacía famoso con sus interpretaciones plásticas de escenas de Harlem. Y, en 1926, Langston Hughes abría la era de una poesía negra inspirada en el *jazz*, escrita ahora por auténticos poetas negros.”

samba. Further afield, “Latin” musical styles — as opposed to “American” popular music — include sonically disparate pairs such as tango and bossa nova, *merengue* and *corrido*, and *plena* and *paso doble*. Observing the continuation of this separation in the twenty-first century, Timothy Brennan notes how “accounts of jazz (for example) still tend to be based on the thesis that the Caribbean and the United States exist in different musical zones — a position that seems to run up against everything we know about artistic exiles, maritime traffic, and what has lately been called ‘trans-border cultures’ ... Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be segregated from U.S. cultural reality” (*Secular Devotion* 8). For listeners conforming to very different contemporary demographics, frivolous crossover stars such as Ricky Martin or the Buena Vista Social Club tend to emphasize separate audiences rather than connect American musical forms.

In spite of artificial boundaries established by the conquest of armies or media conglomerates, some musical forms demonstrate connections that clearly cross national or linguistic frontiers; Scott Joplin’s ragtime compositions employ rhythms developed in *danzas* by Juan Morel Campos, the clave so prevalent in Cuban *son* also forms the basis of John Handy’s “St. Louis Blues,” and the backbeat of Kansas City swing unmistakably appears in Colombian *cumbia* and *vallenato*. Indeed backbeats, with their strong emphasis on the second and fourth pulses of each measure, do not appear as prominently in any other part of the world as they do in these geographically separated American styles. Most importantly, Carpentier profoundly comprehends the complications within these styles. Music of the Americas differs from that of other places in its conscious use of three elements.

Throughout the hemisphere, musicians include ensemble improvisation or at least an appearance of spontaneity, incorporate extra-continental forms, and deliberately create fusions that allow listeners to hear the disparate elements even as they work in combination. From this, no one should wonder that music of the Americas seems most American when it sounds like a collection of sounds from other places.

In his writings on music, as in those dealing with plastic arts and literature, Carpentier does not forget the concepts and information he has learned through studies of culture in Europe any more than he abandons those of the Americas; after returning to Cuba in 1939, he brings these together to form new comprehensions of America. By the 1940s, writes Roberto González Echevarría, Carpentier has begun to seek

...the foundation of an autonomous American consciousness serving as the basis for a literature faithful to the New World. Like an American Ulysses, Carpentier sets forth in search of this goal through the winding roads and the turbulent rivers of the continent, but also through the labyrinthine filigrees of worm-eaten texts eroded by time and oblivion. The *décalage* in the itineraries of those two routes would eventually lead to a new kind of writing, but it is from their clash that Carpentierian literature of the forties is forged. What remains of all those travels is the texts, with their contradictions and ambiguities, their enigmatic repetitions and concealments. But in those texts the fate of Latin American literature was at stake, suspended between lost origins and history, between fable and chronicle,

between the true presence of man in the kingdom of this world and the inscription of that presence in a writing that tenaciously resists all simplification. For in recovering history by in a sense allowing the texts that contain it to repeat themselves in his writing, Carpentier is reaching for that elusive Golden Age when fable and history were one. (*Pilgrim* 107)

As will become apparent in subsequent pages, Carpentier's literary journeys intertwine with music at every step; for now, I only add that not only was the fate of Latin American literature, and thus culture, at stake, but that of all of the Americas.

Carpentier appears to have no doubts about these cultural connections, and seems undeterred by linguistic or national boundaries put in place by various European conquerors. Even in *La música en Cuba*, which its author declared — and other critics have affirmed as — the first comprehensive study of the island's musical history, Carpentier hears the music of his country influenced by and influencing other nations. In a notable example, Carpentier takes a great deal of space to trace the trajectory of a key rhythm of the connecting music of the Americas. He picks up the path of the *contradanza* in the English country-dance, which traveled to Holland and France. By the end of the seventeenth century French middle classes had taken the form to Haiti, where it flourished until the violent overturning of the plantation system sent refugees to New Orleans and Havana. In the latter capital, the *contradanza* turns into the *habanera*, which influences the development of Cuban *danzón*,

US ragtime, and — quite a bit further off — Argentinean tango.²³ Through all of these variations and international connections, the developing musical forms manage to maintain specifically local sonorities. As Carpentier sums up, the English country-dance, passing through France, taken to Santo Domingo, introduced in Santiago, re-baptized and developed in [the famously Afrocuban city of] Matanzas, and enriched in Havana with additional mulatto, black, and Chinese elements had attained a vertiginous level of *mestizaje*. And in the *danzón*, however, it maintained its character and unity, staying faithful to its origins as to form and type of writing.²⁴

(240)

As described by Carpentier, the music shows how England, Holland, France, Haiti, Cuba, and the United States exist as different places with varying degrees of musical commonality. And in these sometimes-common locations, readers can clearly see Caribbean connections between the United States and Cuba that — because of the wide variety of Europeans and Africans who take part — create an American style.

“Cuban music,” writes Moore,

is especially interesting to me as a North American because its history is also the history of my own country’s music...Both countries have demonstrated a marked interest in the expressive

²³ Nowadays, one of the few places where listeners will probably not hear a *habanera* is in Havana. Meanwhile, the style has enjoyed a popular comeback in Spain, where many embrace it as their own music. A Spanish friend once became very angry at me for suggesting that the roots of *habanera* had not grown in Iberian soil.

²⁴ “...la *country-dance* inglesa, pasada por Francia, llevada a Santo Domingo, introducida en Santiago, rebautizada y ampliada en Matanzas, enriquecida en La Habana con aportaciones mulatas, negras y chinas, había alcanzado un grado de mestizaje que daba el vértigo. Y, sin embargo, el *danzón* mantenía su carácter y su unidad, permaneciendo fiel a sus orígenes, en cuanto a forma y tipo de escritura.”

forms of black subculture for centuries and in recent years have adopted the music and dance of blacks as national expression. White Cubans and white Americans also share an unfortunate tendency to appropriate black street culture while doing little or nothing to rectify existing social inequalities between the races. As Cristóbal Díaz Ayala commented to me, ‘We buy the product, but abhor the producer’... As an art form consistently dominated by black innovations and performers, music deserves a special place in any investigation addressing issues of racial interaction in both nations. (217-18)

Increasingly, scholars acknowledge that the reasons for the abhorrence of the black producer include non-musical moments of history such as discrimination, subjugation, and segregation. Fewer admit that theories about music play a role, as well, when they validate narratives of origins or natural abilities that hinder listeners from following music’s path through time and space. The most elaborate praises of music often arise from what Jacques Derrida called “an ethnocentrism thinking itself as anti-ethnocentric, an ethnocentrism in the consciousness of a liberating progressivism” (*Of Grammatology* 120, emphasis in original). As I have understood this elsewhere,

the historic privileging of sounds, whether called speech or song, clarifies historic moments...when fevered longings for an original voice that exalt an idealized race lead to the oppression of living people...In this hierarchical round-robin, societies pretend to privilege the written, which they can then ignore in

order actually to privilege the sounds, whether spoken, played, or sung, that serve to privilege the listener over the performer of those sounds. Thus the French can justify oppressing denizens of the *mezzogiorno* while adoring their music even as the Spaniards pretend to exalt flamenco created by *gitanos*, the English party to the music of sub-Saharan Africans, and the Poles create organizations to celebrate the music of long absent Jews. (“Hearing through Our Eyes” 513)

In Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy: How Music Captures Our

Imagination, Robert Jourdain reports on the development of music throughout history and considers possibilities for the future. New sounds, he thinks, might come from an old site — Indonesia, a frequent destination for twentieth-century composers looking for inspiration — but in a new way. “Perhaps the next breakthrough will come not when another European composer affects the sounds of Indonesia,” he surmises, “but when an Indonesian composer embraces the sounds of Europe” (119). Jourdain, as we will see in the next section, has many useful thoughts on music. In this case, however, he has missed the mark by at least a century; African American composers and performers took up the challenges of European music early in the twentieth century, creating forms that critics and audiences around the world — including many in Europe — recognize as successors to the works of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras. In order to place music of the Americas — and, more to the point of this dissertation, the employments of American musical styles in the works of Carpentier and Hurston — we need to spend a little time here for a discussion about the ways in which people talk about music.

Defining Our American Music

All music is folk music. I ain't never heard a horse sing a song.
Louis Armstrong (qtd. in Galewitz 2)

Music travels well and shows up everywhere. Unlike plastic arts, which often require extensive paperwork to cross national borders, or written words, which may need a translation to be understood in another language, tunes and rhythms move easily, even among unformed listeners, and harmonies require only a little more baggage; a guitar, for example, will do nicely. Even without instruments, a choir, doo-wop ensemble, or barbershop quartet can provide plenty of chord changes along with melodies and rhythms. In spite of these complicated musical interactions, the temptation to sort out unique origins and delineate precise influences remains. In America, these instances of phonocentric insistence tend to parse musical trajectories as components of black and white or “Latin” America and “American” America. This section will use music to show how bifurcations of black/white and Latin/American make understanding America impossible. Necessarily, this involves a discussion of technologies that transform musical reception just as American styles step prominently onto the world stage. Following this, it will be easier to see how the nuanced uses of music in Carpentier and Hurston make understanding America possible.

As Louis Armstrong notes succinctly, the question of music becomes not one of assigning categories such as folk music but instead considering, case by case, which folk and which music. In the case of American music, this opens up the discussion considerably. “Black Americans were aware of and participated in the European art-music tradition,” reports Frank Tirro. “To deny this aspect of black American society in the nineteenth century in order

to emphasize the African origins of jazz would do a disservice to both the historical facts and the splendid talents of the black Americans who achieved a great deal in the realm of European art music” (20). Denying this participation, I add here, not only ignores classical achievements, but also distorts the development of styles that would become known as ragtime, jazz, swing, and bebop. Along with New Orleans’ famed Congo Square, the “1870s black musical societies,” Colored American Opera Company, numerous “black brass bands,” and 1871 founding of the Fisk Jubilee Singers recalled by Tirro played an important role in the development of American music (19). As this music reached wider audiences, it also altered the course of European art-music, with composers such as Claude Debussy, Erik Satie, Darius Milhaud, and Igor Stravinsky openly adopting the variations and new styles arising out of African American musical communities.

In the United States, the separation of musical and non-musical people begins in earnest when children reach the end of their first decade. At that point, elementary schools must deal with a material dilemma; most have instruments for no more than half of their students. In order to justify this deficiency, schools require their music teachers to administer an examination of student talent, an exercise that society would never tolerate for “important” subjects; imagine parents’ reaction to a test designed to decide which children have sufficient talent to receive books, computers, math manuals, or microscopes. For those students deemed “talented” and thus entitled to the use of instruments, an even more severe culling looms. “Children are expected to draw pictures and write stories when they’re sent off to school,” Jourdain laments. “But when it’s time for music education (and there isn’t much of it

these days), the emphasis is on playing music rather than making it up. The assumption seems to be that writing music ought to be the domain of a small elite, like astrophysics or Egyptology” (186). When I gave trombone lessons, I had my students compose small works, an exercise that would help them understand the music they played. As obvious as this assignment seemed to me, I never noticed any other teachers following this practice so it does not surprise me to see music composition abandoned to the realm of the mysterious, even by people who have enjoyed the luxury of private lessons. I also had my students learn the fundamentals of improvisation, another ability that, as Jourdain observes, is “not often cultivated” (195). These pedagogical approaches maintain illusions of talent; at the primary level, students cannot initiate musical studies without a demonstration of essential ability, and even then they cannot move on to actually creating musical compositions, written or improvised, without further manifestations of abilities that no one teaches them.²⁵ Some students learn through a combination of extensive practice, personal investigation, and private mentoring. After engaging in exhaustive practice and studies, many hesitate to reveal too much about their formation; for this reason the listening public often hears composers and performers insist that they have never really learned to read music or understand its theoretical components. From these personal instances of essentializing, societal views move easily to judging groups of people; some have musical talent and others do not, even though twenty-first century commentators generally decide

²⁵ Other pedagogical possibilities exist. In Gunung Petalu, where I studied gamelan, Balinese toddlers sat with musicians while they played. Older children had regular access to the village instruments when these were not being used by their elders. In the Hunts Point section of the Bronx, I learned to play percussion instruments in sessions that my Lebron Brothers bandmate, Tito Ocasio, ran in his apartment every week for local children. Oscar Hijuelos describes similar educational sessions in his novel, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*.

against actually giving voice to corollaries that might indicate, say, a lack of administrative or scientific ability in groups deemed musical.

Current attempts to privilege musical ability by ethnicity, which essentialize Africans, African Americans, and other groups deemed non-white, arise from a needed — even if overly simplistic — overturning of hierarchical constructions. During the nineteenth century, distinguished musicologists led readers to believe that white people were more inherently musical than blacks. François-Joseph Fétis, who presented his views at an 1867 conference of the Parisian Société d'Anthropologie in a paper titled “Sur un nouveau mode de classification des races humaines d'après leurs systèmes musicaux” employed music to support a polymorphous view of racial development (Fauser 155). “Fétis was neither the first nor the only author to formulate this kind of racist music theory,” observes Annegret Fauser, “but because they were integrated in a major and widely received nineteenth-century work of music theory, Fétis’s notions of music, culture, and race were the foundation on which the majority of his contemporaries and subsequent generations based their judgment of music both Western and non-Western” (153). While the Enlightenment led to some theories that included the possibility of developing musical abilities among darker-skinned people, the more fetid notions developed musical hierarchies based on a skin color continuum.

Since polymorphous evolution indicated separate genetic traits, Fétis concluded that musical ability could not only identify racial difference but also provide categorical assessments of human groups as separate — and conceivably unequal — species. “The darker the skin, Fétis claims, the lower the natural ability for music, which leads to his conclusion ‘that the creation of

the true art of music was limited to the white race, a mission which could not be fulfilled by the black or yellow races” (Fauser 151). In this, Fétis and like-minded anthropologists opposed the views of Félix Clément and other ethnographers who continued to hold Enlightenment views that included a belief in the universal capacity of humans to create music. Even so, Clément likewise considered serious music as a European-centered art; for the most part, he differed from Fétis only in believing that people from other cultures could overcome their backwardness in order to participate along with Europeans in these higher art forms (Fauser 154-55).

In “Black Bodies, White Science,” Brian Wallis demonstrates how theories based on polymorphous development created in France arrived in the United States. Louis Agassiz, “the most famous scientist in America,” created slave daguerreotypes in 1850 that equated African Americans with lower orders of animals (Wallis 40). As “the star student of the legendary Baron George Cuvier, the leading zoologist of his day and the founder of the modern science of comparative anatomy,” writes Wallis, Agassiz provided crucial support for those developing constructions of Africans and even their hybridous descendants as a separate species (41). “Indeed,” declares Eve Allegra Raimon in *The “Tragic Mulatta” Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction*, “the 1850s marked the precise moment of U.S. racial and national identity formation when the status of American nationalism and the nation’s racial composition were at once in crisis” (2). As Raimon also observes, this marked, as well, the first instance of US hesitation at purchasing or grabbing a Spanish-speaking territory. Black Cubans, whether enslaved or free, presented complications too numerous for

Washington, already embroiled in disputes over the issue that would lead to Civil War, to consider at that time. As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, black Cubans became the focus of national discussion in Havana as Enlightenment-inspired universalists provided an initial basis of *afrocubanismo*; like Clément, Fernando Ortiz, one of Carpentier's mentors, believed that Africans could be as good as Europeans if they were properly educated and weaned from their culture. As part of this project, Ortiz studied African traditions in Cuba in order to debunk them. As he learned about the African traditions that had developed in his own country, Ortiz found a culture that offered more than he had anticipated; although he did not completely change his views, he eventually saw more to admire than disdain in the creative output of Cubans of African descent.

By the time that Carpentier and Hurston began publishing in the 1920s, the complications — hybridous, cultural, and territorial — had become unavoidable even though some commentators on *afrocubanismo* and the Harlem Renaissance endeavored simplicity by isolating elements that reaffirmed exotic preconceptions of blacks as unalterably alien, reified blacks as primitives seen in a pre-civilized state, or, at the very least, legitimized the treatment of blacks as second class citizens. Musical demarcations in popular publications served simplistic purposes very well with widely disseminated depictions of popular musical artists possessing magnificent albeit uncontrollable capacities fit for nightclubs but unsuitable on concert stages. Today, this attitude continues to disadvantage musicians of African descent who work in orchestral and chamber situations even though African American and African Caribbean classical performers have centuries of still-

unacknowledged tradition behind them. This concept of native genius also impeded acceptance of blacks as creators of enduring plastic arts or literary texts.

In music as in no other area of artistic endeavor, the hierarchical opposition of white over black was overthrown by assertions of black over white. By the 1920s, observes Robin Moore, Paris “had established itself as the center of a Western artistic movement embracing ‘blackness’ and ‘primitivist’ art as fashionable entertainment” (171). In addition to manifestations of jazz in New York City, music played a leading role in Parisian Negritude during the 1920s; Sidney Bechet, the New Orleans jazz clarinetist who quoted Italian opera in his improvisations, played often in the City of Light and Josephine Baker, an African American dancer from St. Louis, became one of the city’s leading lights. United States army bands had already brought ragtime and jazz to Paris, observes Bennetta Jules-Rosette in *Josephine Baker in Art and Life*. “The city was infused with black culture in the form of African art, jazz music, and boxing, all of which became exotic sources of inspiration for the literati and artists of the day. Primitivism existed as a discourse at the moment when one culture encountered another” (60). The appeal of artists descended from antebellum United States slavery came about as part of a continuing Parisian interaction with blackness. In addition to ragtime and jazz musicians from the southern United States, performers came to Paris from Africa and the Caribbean. Publicity for their shows sometimes mixed or even changed identities to suit exotic fashions. Jules-Rosette writes that Baker appeared in different movies that presented her as “Antillean (Martinican and Haitian), Tunisian, and mixed black. In press clippings, she is

occasionally referred to as Spanish” (64). This nexus of Africa, Iberia, and the Caribbean, fused during centuries of slave trading, continued to find new expression in the latest styles from New York and Paris.

The cultural speculations that led to the rise of Negritude, whether Parisian or as part of *afrocubanismo* or the Harlem Renaissance, go back to the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade. “As the earliest European travel narratives to the Americas show, music was described from the start as writing’s other,” observes Brennan. This bifurcation, he notes, arises from an image of music, especially when created by non-Europeans, as “pre-intellectual and nebulous; one is supposed simply to absorb it, to like or dislike it, but (it is assumed) not as the result of a calculated judgment” (*Secular Devotion* 10). Widespread acceptance of jazz and other Caribbean styles of music, then, depended not on an elevation of African American composition to levels acceptable to Félix Clément and his scholarly coterie, but instead thrived on cultural “slumming,” in the parlance of the times, in which whites could find a type of emotional release in supposedly natural sounds from an assumed human past and then return home to their own sense of civilization and perceived reality.

Initially, Carpentier and Hurston participated in this separation of cultural origins, which may have seemed like a worthwhile attempt to comprehend the contributions made by Africans to the cultures of the Americas. Just as the Harlem Renaissance demonstrated the inseparability of African American music and the culture of the United States, Carpentier and his peers placed *afrocubanismo* at the heart of Cuban culture. In spite of seemingly laudable attempts to credit former slaves with important cultural

developments, however, *afrocubanismo* became as controversial in Havana's black Pogloti district as Marcus Garvey's call for a return to the motherland and other Afrocentric movements were in Harlem. Leading figures in Cuba's black community, observes Moore, denounced the demeaning images and other stereotypes they saw in Afro-Cuban artistic productions.

As individuals who had struggled for decades to overcome discrimination, they were outraged by poetry and songs that described blacks as drunken, lascivious, or worse. Many objected to the very term *afrocubano*, pointing out that the distinction between Cuban and Afrocuban implied that blacks had an identity different from other citizens. They did not view the new vogue of blackness as an attempt to redress the marginal status of Afrocuban culture historically, but rather as a means of further exoticizing and excluding them. (211-12)

“Black and mulatto Cubans,” he adds, “on the whole reject this term even today” (272).

Meanwhile, *afrocubanismo* came to signify Cuban culture among some Havana critics while others in New York insisted on Africanness as a condition of authenticity for all music created in the United States. Indeed, in twentieth-century readings whiteness serves as a synonym for a lack of musical capacity in discourses as diverse as Imamu Amiri Baraka's *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* and backstage conversations among working musicians. As Derrida suspected, critiques of earlier ethnocentrism often had “the sole function of constituting the other as a model of original and natural goodness, of accusing and humiliating oneself, of exhibiting its being-unacceptable in an

anti-ethnocentric mirror” (*Of Grammatology* 114). And this reversal does not significantly alter the life situation of those deemed non-white; much of the putative glorification of African-American and Latin American cultural production, for example, simply brings the discussion back to the positions advocated by Julien Tiersot, a follower of Fétis. “What Tiersot observes and transcribes for his audience is not only sonic ethnography but also — far more importantly for his Western readers — musical archaeology. According to this argument, black music has no intrinsic value, but is ennobled through its role as a living history of universal music” (Fauser 250). Simply put, black musicians had best keep that groove.

As a means of understanding the overturning of white/black and American/Latin in the context of burgeoning recording and broadcast technologies and their concomitant management and publicity industries, it helps to look at how Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno take on that groove in “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.” A central point of their critique demonstrates how style touches on the relationship between culture and identity. “The great artists were never those who embodied a wholly flawless and perfect style,” they write, “but those who used style as a way of hardening themselves against the chaotic expression of suffering, as a negative truth...As late as Schönberg and Picasso, the great artists have retained a mistrust of style, and at crucial points have subordinated it to the logic of the matter” (130). In this sense, style tends to make a work and its creator like others; subversion of style leads to individual expression. As identity markers, styles signify simplistically: jazz equals Black, mambo equals Latin, country equals white hillbilly, rock equals young, etc. The lack

of truth in these stereotypes does not diminish their power as societal markers. “To speak of culture was always contrary to culture,” observe Horkheimer and Adorno. “Culture as a common denominator already contains in embryo that schematization and process of cataloguing and classification which bring culture within the sphere of administration” (131).

In “The Complexity of Hegemony,” Raymond Williams speaks of dominant cultural practices, and refers to “the *selective tradition*: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as ‘*the tradition*’, ‘*the significant past*’. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded” (39 emphasis in original). These selections then become “universal.” As Richard Young points out in his Introduction to *Music, Popular Culture, Identities*, “the musical culture of North America...permeates the popular musics of the world. Indeed,” he adds in an observation that demonstrates the extent to which people in the United States are as colonized as those without, “the impact that U. S. popular culture has around the world is, in some respects, comparable with what takes place within the borders of the U. S. itself” (3). As seen by Horkheimer and Adorno, culture selected by corporate administrators facilitates a “central control” of culture that already manages “individual consciousness” (121). One need not see this as a single center; New York and Los Angeles function as two obvious centers in the United States, and even within these places, several distinct sources of control engage in Foucauldian competition. The common feature of all of these centers, however, lies in the goal of their competition: control of

individual consciousness as a means of increasing profit.

Once in a while, a voice from one of the centers allows evidence of this control to slip out. During the first widespread downturn in the history of record sales, music industry executives revealed a strategy of turning young listeners against their cultural traditions in order to increase sales. “We do a lot of audience mood-checking,” acknowledged MTV president Judy McGrath in a *New York Times* article written by Neil Strauss, “and the 17- to 24-year-olds we've been talking to are...not feeling that enraged. A huge percentage of them live at home and are happy to. They don't say, ‘My parents aren't cool and I don't want to live with them and I hate their music.’ The us-versus-them thing seems to be disappearing. People are more complacent.” The article adds that many record industry “executives say that when music fans are complacent, they don't seek out new bands and styles of music to listen to, thus forcing the industry to constrict.” In the parlance of the recording industry, control of culture facilitates the sale of product. Other effects such as the promotion of national superiorities and the maintenance of ethnic stereotypes, whether planned or coincidental, arise alongside this business plan.

As a method of selling recorded disks, observe Horkheimer and Adorno, the business plan relied on radio, which “turns all participants into listeners and authoritatively subjects them to broadcast programs which are exactly the same” (122). While accurately describing a contemporary situation, Horkheimer and Adorno's example separates their argument from a historical basis that would make it even more powerful; the new dangers they warn against become more ominous when seen in a context provided by a

more complete view of the past. Concert hall performances, for example, also turn a group of people into passive listeners of the same event; except for the scale of dissemination, levels of interactivity differ little between the type of “live” radio broadcast and a performance in front of an audience. At the time Horkheimer and Adorno wrote, music had not just recently fallen under the sway of powerful individuals; since at least the beginning of recorded history, religious and governmental leaders have employed the sonic arts and their creators as pillars of hegemony. Harmonic developments stagnated during the medieval era, observes Jourdain, “partly owing to periodic attacks from the church, which complained that polyphony made the prayers sung in chants unintelligible, and worse, that it threatened to incite church congregations to emotionalism and pleasure” (94). Even now, he adds, “harmonic depth is rare in popular music, even when rhythm and melody are reasonably well developed” (118). Instead of reacting to what seems like a radical new break, Horkheimer and Adorno could have made a stronger case by contextualizing the cultural practices of the twentieth century in a long history of control that would actually make more sense out of the central points in “The Culture Industry.”

For centuries, technological developments have changed the ways in which music reinforces power just as imperial movements and displacements of populations have shifted the centers from which that power is projected. Printing presses made composers more powerful, a development Ludwig Beethoven famously exploited as published scores allowed those who wrote music to receive money from a variety of performers rather than a single patron. A controversial new instrument, the pianoforte, brought the excitement

of hearing Beethoven's symphonies, published as condensed orchestrations, into bourgeois private premises. Metronomes gave the impression of commonly conceived time; initially embraced by Beethoven, who replaced Italian *tempi* markings with the new number system, these devices caused many famous composers to conduct their works at variance with their own markings (Jourdain 144). By the end of the nineteenth century, the harnessing of electricity would create another innovative link between music and power.

With electricity, mechanical reproductions — formerly the province of previously novel technologies such as windup music boxes and pedal-powered player pianos — proliferated, leading, as John Philip Sousa pointed out in the first years of the twentieth century, to “the menace in machine-made music.” As a result, Sousa wrote, “The child becomes indifferent to practice, for when music can be heard in the homes without the labor of study and close application, and without the slow process of acquiring a technic [technique], it will be simply a question of time when the amateur disappears entirely, and with him a host of vocal and instrumental teachers, who will be without field or calling” (280). Sousa listed several conditions that would lead to a recession of amateurism, “until there will be left only the mechanical device and the professional executant” (281). As Sousa foresaw, a decline in amateur involvement came to pass and did, in fact, lead to reduced audience appreciation of complex musical styles. Nineteenth-century audiences sufficiently knowledgeable to denounce the parallel fifths in Debussy could learn to accept Ravel fairly quickly, whereas twentieth-century listeners ignorant of diatonic practices could not even properly reject Schönberg's innovations. Rebuking any conception of diatonic music as naturally acquired

with atonality, quarter-tones, and other sonic possibilities cast as unnatural, Jean-Jacques Rousseau points out the necessity of acquiring a taste for harmony. “Being only conventionally beautiful,” he writes in *Essay on the Origin of Languages which Treats of Melody and Musical Imitation*, “it does not in any way please the completely unpracticed ear. Development of sensitivity and taste for it requires long exposure. To the uncultured ear, our consonances are merely noise. It is not surprising that when natural proportions are impaired, the corresponding natural pleasure is destroyed” (56).

As in the comprehension of poetry or novels, where the author expects the reader to have learned to write as well as read, listening to music calls for informed participation. “There are two musics,” writes Roland Barthes, “the music one listens to, the music one plays. These two musics are totally different arts, each with its own history, its own sociology, its own aesthetics, its own erotic; the same composer can be minor if you listen to him, tremendous if you play him (even badly)” (149). According to Barthes’ reading of music history, sound production moved from the “idle (aristocratic) class” to the middle classes that promoted ladies playing piano in their drawing rooms, to younger generations of vocal and guitar music. Barthes believes that playing has stopped in favor of a passive reception of music by means of performances and recordings in which the audience takes no active part (149). “In short, there was first the actor of music, then the interpreter (the Grand Romantic voice), then finally the technician, who relieves the listener of all activity, even by procuration, and abolishes in the sphere of music the very notion of *doing*” (150 emphasis in original). Changes in listening have

not only had an effect on listeners. Among those trained in musical techniques, Jourdain notes, “the invention of the phonograph has meant that few musicians develop the imagery skills necessary to ‘hear’ music by reading scores” (195).

By reducing the need for active involvement, mechanical reproduction has forced music into the background. Offering the possibility of a deferred listening, mechanical reproduction creates a different listening experience; the formerly rare opportunity has become a disk or a data document archived in a manner that promotes perpetual postponement, virtually ensuring that the music contained will have few, if any, listeners. In the presence of an ever-present archive, listening does not lead to hearing but instead the process of having a machine churn out sound while one reads, writes, copulates, takes a walk, or whatever. Hearing the music to which one listens requires not only a formation seldom granted to large numbers of people during any era but also a willingness to spend time in what has come to seem like a two-dimensional type of listening. Now people boast of multitasking.

In this environment, the decline of musical formation allows anyone to pose as an expert; consequently, readers expect little in the way of music criticism. In an online forum called “Talk to the Newsroom,” Ben Ratliff, Jazz and Pop Critic²⁶ for *The New York Times*, makes these limitations pretty clear. “How much musical knowledge and playing ability does a jazz critic need?” asks one participant. “Mostly, the job is about lots of listening, and seeing lots of performances. That’s where almost all my information comes from — not sheet music,” responds Ratliff, who allows that in critiquing “all kinds of music — not just jazz and classical music — it helps to know a little bit about

²⁶ Note the fusion of “America’s Classical Music” with pop, and imagine if the same periodical would have yoked Bela Bartok’s folk-inflected Classical compositions with such a label.

form and style, to compare and to anticipate.” One need only imagine the likely public reaction to the Times’ literary critics eschewing written pages and extended training in order to gauge a marked difference in comparative exigencies. Finally, Ratliff lets himself and his colleagues off by denying that they write much about music at all. “Pop critics,” he concludes, “are generally dealing with what you might call audience theory as much as (or more than) music theory.”

Alarming, this lack of understanding extends as far as works published by academic presses. Sadly, examples abound. A Routledge anthology of essays on salsa music disseminates incorrectly-rendered rhythms and offers astonishing comments on attitudes among musicians, including one writer’s assessment of how “older musicians tend to prefer the older *desafinado* (out-of-tune) sound while the younger ones are more accepting of the more polished conservatory sound. It is also important to note that many musicians who like the more polished, well-tempered sound were conservatory-trained, whereas the older ones learned their chops by listening to records and observing live performances” (Berrios-Miranda 43). “Well-tempered” normally refers to a method of tuning instruments that was last controversial during the Baroque era. More importantly, musicians often make jokes about playing out-of-tune but few actually develop this as a professional aspiration. The Puerto Rican and later Neoyorrican traditions that nurtured salsa included a long history of classical music and training brought to bear on *danzas* and other musical mixtures. “As reading musicians who were well-trained in Puerto Rico’s municipal bands,” observes Ruth Glasser in a discussion of Puerto Rican musicians in New York City during the decades

preceding salsa's rise, "Afro-Puerto Ricans were eagerly grabbed for black shows on Broadway and by some of the finest African-American ensembles of the day" (15).

In another example of academic misunderstanding, Frances Aparicio translates *descargas* as "jamming sessions" (83) and equates "professionalized" salsa as "whitened" music (73). "As in other forms of popular music," she claims in *Listening to Salsa*,

improvisation in salsa contests the institutionalizing process of musical education in the Western mind and world. Music educators have generally fostered and trained students to read music, insisting that such training is the only valid method for becoming a musician, but improvisation skills also require training and practice. This "differential" expertise, rarely valued and in fact repressed in conservatories and music programs, requires a different kind of training based on practice, ear, pitch, acuity in rhythm, and most important, a true sense of dialogue with other members of the group. (84-85)

Since she cites no sources for this information, one can only wonder which music educators made such extraordinary claims. When considered as folk styles or chart-topping music, most popular genres offer very little improvisation. The long Western tradition of classical music, however, fills the pages of music history with examples of renowned improvisers as early as Johann Sebastian Bach in a tradition that extends today to improvisations on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart during symphonic performances by Chick Corea and Bobby McFerrin. I sure would like to know who teaches at conservatories

while eschewing “training based on practice, ear, pitch, acuity in rhythm, and most important, a true sense of dialogue with other members of the group,” but I cannot imagine that it would include post-secondary institutions such as the Berklee College of Music, Juilliard School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, New York University (NYU), North Texas State, and the University of Southern California (USC) with academically recognized programs in American music styles that include improvisation.

Alumnae Juan Luis Guerra (Berklee), Tito Puente (Juilliard), Herbie Hancock (Manhattan), Wayne Shorter (NYU), Tom “Bones” Malone (North Texas), and Charles Lloyd (USC) make up a small fraction of the noted American musicians whose formation included studies in conservatories and universities. In fact, the continuing productive output of composers and performers in the Americas indicates that not all of Sousa’s fears came true. Although mechanical reproduction has created lazy listeners, newer technologies have, to some extent, reinvigorated amateur involvement. “Happily,” writes Jourdain, “there is no crisis of musicianship in our times as there is of composition. Talent and virtuosity abound” (234). With electronic keyboards, easily obtained computer programs for creating music, and a rapidly growing world population with increasing access to these technologies, the number of composers and performers could increase dramatically during the twenty-first century, hopefully leading to a wider body of informed listeners as well.

Hip-hop music exemplifies one trend away from apathy. As young people in cash-starved public schools create alternative musical instruments made out of the very mechanical devices designed as replacements, such as

the now outdated record turntables, not only have new sounds emerged but interspersed samples of previously recorded performances have led young audiences of this century to listen to a much wider variety of styles than did earlier generations that grew up in the last century. With a revised view of twentieth-century American music, a Golden Age of music history may emerge in the twenty-first century, especially if audiences revise their theories of high/low art. We gain nothing by replacing arrogance with ignorance. Just as an appreciation of ethnic American literatures requires more rather than less information — French, Spanish, and Portuguese influences, for example, as well as African American usages and literally thousands of autochthonous forms — studies of bachata, reggaetón, and other musical movements of the Americas must draw on a wide variety of form and analysis as well as on social history and theories of audience reception.

For three quarters of the twentieth century, music conservatories distorted music production by ignoring a great deal of music of the Americas and by attempting to guide reception through rigidly maintained channels. Before the 1970s, catalogues of most music conservatories offered few, if any, courses not associated with established European classical styles. Postmodernism provided a useful remedy for this, as one sees from changes in reception, criticism, and composition after 1975. At this juncture, critics had to abandon assessments based on categories deemed high and low; just as one might hear useless works among the supposedly high art creators, one could encounter powerful sounds made by practitioners once deemed low. Economic greed twisted the postmodern approach, however; the mid-seventies also saw drastic cuts to school music programs in the United States with corporate

funded arts programs, once considered an enhancement, now employing visiting artists in place of tenured teachers in regular studies of music and other forms of art.²⁷ Choosing worthwhile music, which had been as easy as picking high over low before postmodernism created difficulties, now becomes as easy as grooving to whatever background noise appeals. As Jourdain points out, “expert listening requires expert music... Music that is painstakingly invented is quite different from popular genres that make no attempt at relational depth and consist mostly of moment-to-moment variations on a simple theme. A brain cannot know the pleasures of deep relations when there are none to be observed” (266). When it comes to music, the idea of deep relations — to the extent that anyone cherished such thoughts — seems to have disappeared altogether. Students do not need to be told which music they should admire more than another, but they deserve tools that will help them decide for themselves.

Some defenses of ignorance depend on what ought to be recognized as nicely articulated ethnic²⁸ bigotry, the notion that different expectations of quality must apply to works created outside of a limited sphere of Western European influence. Such views confuse different standards with alternative methodologies in order to contend that non-European performers feel music instead of analyzing it, an assertion that essentializes the emotional capacities of one group and, by implication, denigrates their mental abilities. Explaining his motive for writing *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy discusses various ways

²⁷ As a performing artist in New York City public schools, I spoke out against the tendency to replace music teachers. Visiting artists should enhance rather than replace existing educational programs. More than any other factor, however, economics impelled change; anti-education policies practically forced administrators to favor artists on temporary contracts over tenured teachers.

²⁸ In this case I use ethnic in the sense provided by Shuhei Hosokawa, not as a marker of racial difference but instead as a cultural denomination.

that academia, especially in cultural studies, marginalizes black thinkers. In particular, he notes,

it is the struggle to have blacks perceived as agents, as people with cognitive capacities and even with an intellectual history — attributes denied by modern racism — that is for me the primary reason for writing this book. It provides a valuable warrant for questioning some of the ways in which ethnicity is appealed to in the English idioms of cultural theory and history, and in the scholarly productions of black America. (6)

One aspect of intellectual disdain surfaces in comparisons of societies that supposedly write or do not write. In music, it must be said, writing either exists everywhere or nowhere. Notation, observes Jourdain, “tends to discourage complex melodies and rhythms. The pitch glides and wavering voices that are the norm in most of the world’s music are nearly impossible to write down” (184). Since all but the most ridiculously rigid compositions contain more melodic and rhythmic complexity, including deviations from diatonic pitches, than many listeners realize, written music can only ever serve as a guide. I have performed with jazz and salsa bands that consciously used written parts as a type of “road map,” a term regularly employed by instrumentalists. In Borobudur, Java, I played with a gamelan orchestra by following a score notated with Arabic numerals; the directions differed little from the visible hand signals given by gamelan orchestra music directors I followed in Gunung Petulu, Bali. Even in brass quintets and symphony orchestras, I have had to regard the page as a source of indefinite information; otherwise, looking at other players or a conductor would have proved

superfluous.

In connection with the issue of respect for non-European intellectuality, studies of music history make it possible for readers to avoid idealizing the past or insisting on originary moments or locations. While writing specifically about Colombian *cumbia* in *Music, Race, & Nation*, Peter Wade makes an observation that applies to music throughout the Americas, which “is generally presented as a very old and traditional form. Specifics, however, are never presented, antiquity instead being evoked by adducing mixed indigenous and African origins, with frequent claims to an African origin for the name and some mention of European influences” (60). In these cases, Wade observes, music functions as part of national histories employed by governments to claim legitimacy through the invocation of *mestizaje*. Such grand narratives employ music, along with other cultural productions, as a unifying symbol “of the overcoming of difference, but the representation of that symbol involves the continual reiteration of difference. Hierarchy is also involved, although it is ambivalent: black and indigenous people are seen as the eventual repositories of true tradition (European popular traditions are rarely mentioned), but as a result they can be seen as both backward and authentic” (66). Wade concludes his volume with a discussion of the “powerful strands of continuity which make today’s cultural and political configurations new expressions of existing tensions and ambivalences, just as postmodernity, rather than being a radical rupture with the past, is an expression of the contradictions and dynamics existing within modernity” (230). Employing *costeño* music as an example, Wade locates the development of this form,

in complex exchanges between Europe and the Caribbean, between New York, the Caribbean, and Colombia, between La Costa and the interior, between town and country, and between working and middle classes. The exact interactions between directors and players of provincial wind bands and between them and other local untutored musicians in the late nineteenth century, or the exchanges that occurred when Camacho y Cano went to New York to record “porros” with Rafael Hernández’s band in 1929, or when Lucho Bermúdez drew around him a group of musicians from the interior in the 1940s — all these remain more or less hidden in their complexity. (235-36)

Each of the places identified in Wade’s text has its own forms of music that come from a variety of sources and lead to a new round of sonic developments. And, as one sees from Wade’s text, no place or group of people has a monopoly on a single element of music; the melodies, harmonies, and rhythms work together or not at all.

In Jourdain’s view, discussions of musical elements go awry as a result of “little general agreement on the meaning of the word” rhythm. Even though popular artists often claim rhythmic kinship with Africa, he observes, “recordings of actual African drumming sell few copies.” One reason that “people everywhere claim to be overwhelmed by the rhythm of the music they enjoy,” according to Jourdain, is “because they associate rhythm with drums, and the drumming in their music is very loud” (122). In fact, Jourdain reports that children have difficulty when asked to tap out the basic beat to a piece of music, often producing “a steady beat that has no relation to the music,

gleefully unaware of the mismatch. Other children constantly change tempo, sometimes attaining the proper beat for short periods, but quite by accident. Some tap faster when the music grows louder, slower when it softens” (147). When, as a visiting artist, I conducted music workshops in elementary schools, I would have students play cowbells slowly and softly, quickly and loudly, slowly and loudly, and finally quickly and softly. The second two pairs invariably proved more challenging. Even with grownup friends, I have recorded similar results that validate Jourdain’s connection of volume and rhythmic perception. As Jourdain observes, “it takes a lot of learning to produce a ‘primitive’ beat” (147).

Moreover, rhythms never stood alone. Jourdain points out just one of several studies in which archaeologists exploring caves have “discovered that the chambers with the most paintings were those that were the most resonant” and surmises that Cro-Magnon music “may have been as sophisticated as the surrounding artwork, accompanied by flutes and drums and whistles” (305). This inability to separate rhythm as a solitary element of music demonstrates that musicians cannot isolate melody, harmony, and rhythm. “Harmony is the originary supplement of melody,” writes Derrida in a statement of fact that my music teachers, perhaps thinking it too obvious to point out, never mentioned (*Of Grammatology* 214). A melody always conveys harmony; otherwise, listeners would never discern the relationship of the notes necessary to form a melody. Whether named or not, listeners will perceive a move from C to E as the foundation of a major chord and a C to an Eb (a half step lower than an E) as the foundation of a minor chord. For similar reasons, rhythmic elements, as well, must always form part of a melody.

With feeling displacing thinking, a common view of music of the Americas plays out in fantasies of non-melodic people of color, attributing innovative pitches to Europeans and interesting rhythms to Africans, leaving Aztecs, Incans, Quechuas, and other pre-Colombian American societies in an ambiguous, yet-to-be-defined place. Many examples could interfere with this simplistic view of American musical history; I favor the one that follows because it is, as far as I know, my own. Traditional jazz, which along with detective stories and comic books continues to loom as an authentically American form, employs swing eighth notes, a central rhythmic formulation that clearly did not come from anywhere in Africa.²⁹ After years of research, I have come across no document that places swing eighth notes in any African musical styles except those derived from America. More generally, as Carpentier points out, no one has located the roots of jazz. “Its spontaneous outbreak has yet to be explained, given that every attempt to link it with any African root has only served to muddle the case, without coming up with a solution. The African rhythms adopted by the urban folklore of Brazil and Cuba have nothing to do with the rhythmic fundamentals of North American jazz”³⁰ (*Ese músico* 2 164-65). While swing eighth notes involve playing the first of the pair for a greater duration than the second, individual performers and ensembles vary the amount of time spent on one note as compared to the other; some make the first note closer to the length of a dotted eighth (3/4 of a

²⁹ An eighth note plays for one half the time of a quarter note. In 4/4 time, so commonly used that musicians call it ‘common time,’ a quarter note takes up one pulse, or beat, in a measure. The eighth note, then, takes up one half of each beat. Musicians often count this out as “one and two and three and four and.” As explained in this text, the swing note changes the moment at which the division of half-beats occurs.

³⁰ “Su brote espontáneo es algo que aún no acaba de encontrar una explicación puesto que todos los intentos de vincularlo con alguna raíz africana han servido solamente para embrollar el caso, sin traer ninguna solución. Los ritmos africanos adoptados por los folklores urbanos del Brasil o de Cuba nada tienen que ver con los fundamentos del *jazz* norteamericano.”

beat), others strive for a three over two effect with the first note more like the first two notes of a triplet ($2/3$ of a beat), and most endeavor something in between these two possibilities. Although nothing like this occurs in classical music from Africa, it does happen in Romantic works composed by French and German composers during the nineteenth century, a period famous for continued employment of the dotted eighth and sixteenth pattern, with $3/4$ of a beat on the first note and $1/4$ on the second. Although wrongfully accused of making each performance sound the same, symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles also vary the relative difference between the first and second notes of the pair. Meanwhile, some of the most famous melodic and harmonic techniques incorporated by jazz musicians do not appear in earlier European music; flattened pitches that violate the prevailing diatonic scales employed in blues and AABA song forms came from Africa along with the dominant to subdominant (fifth to fourth) movement of the blues. As in the swing eighth patterns, alterations of pitch and harmony vary among performers, making relatively new instruments such as the trombone and the enormously controversial clarinet and saxophone more acceptable with the rising popularity of jazz. As in the most facile of European harmonic and African rhythmic formulations, one could just as rightfully claim that jazz used the rhythm of whites with the tonal sophistication of blacks. Neither reading of rhythm and tonality contains the truth, of course, but one could serve as well as the other for those who insist on ignoring American music's more complicated history.

Scholars willing to deal with the complications will find that the paths taken by musical themes reveal compelling narratives about the people who

carried them. Listening to the ways in which music has traveled breaks down notions of pure cultural creations. Nineteenth-century African American symphonic presentations, for example, subvert stereotypes of black people relentlessly pounding on drums. Robin Moore notes that Cuban *sociedades de color* promoted music influenced by European genres (39). A note to this further observes, “Early photographs in the archives of the Centro Odilio Urfé suggest that in both [of Havana’s orchestral] ensembles nearly half of all performers were Afrocuban. Relative to overall demographics, black and mulattos seem to be significantly overrepresented in the ‘high’ art work of the twentieth century, as in the colonial era” (247). In the United States, recalls Sarah Kate Gillespie, African American violinists played for both black and white audiences, and “held an elevated position in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rural society, both in and out of slave culture” (136). An article by Gillespie, “The Devil Went Down to Brooklyn,” looks at William Moore Davis’ paintings of a legend from the Dutch colonial period, in which an African American violinist named Joost wins a fiddling contest with the Devil.³¹ During the twentieth century, several Afrocuban composers achieved prominence, including Amadeo Roldán (1900-1939), Alejandro García Caturla (1906-1940), and Gilberto Valdés (1905-1971), who Alejo Carpentier called “a tropical Gershwin” (Moore 207). That Roldán, García Caturla, and Valdés did not isolate themselves in Cuba can be seen from their participation in the Pan American Association of Composers (PAAC) based in New York City and directed by Henry Cowell. Charles Ives and other prominent composers from the United States met their Cuban counterparts through this organization.

³¹ In *Las cien mejores canciones colombianas y sus autores*, Hernán Restrepo Duque relates a similar encounter between *vallenato* accordionist Francisco ‘El Hombre’ Moscote and the Devil (70-71).

In this cosmopolitan milieu made up of successive interactions between their countries, Carpentier and Hurston, respectively acknowledged as authorities on Caribbean and African American music, approach their research and criticism with an expansive formation that eventually enables them to move well beyond the local parameters into which stereotypes consign them; Carpentier considers the Afro-Cuban composer Amadeo Roldán y Gardes with the same degree of critical gravity afforded Igor Stravinsky; Hurston brings a technical knowledge of musical theory to bear on underperformed blues and gospel compositions, making it possible for listeners to understand their complexity and how they differ from easily performed songs known to a wider audience. The knowledge that both of these writers bring to their endeavors makes it possible for readers to appreciate how serious music — music heard seriously — continues to survive the overthrow of artificial high/low distinctions, and how the elevation of previously dismissed non-European forms need not depend on the subsumption of previously admired forms or the advocacy of common ignorance. Hurston and Carpentier provide ample evidence of music once considered low that appeals not as easy listening but instead calls upon an application of knowledge and effort. Individually, they offer excellent reasoning for the particular styles they study; combined they present a case for an American culture that deserves serious consideration.

Sounds from Nowhere

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

The final section of this chapter listens to the music of Zora Neale Hurston through the ears of Alejo Carpentier. In order to hear them as a duo, the paragraphs to follow will focus on Carpentier's overtly musical *Concierto barroco* and Zora Neale Hurston's subtly musical *Seraph on the Suwanee*. Although misinterpreted and sometimes even denounced for its social stance, *Seraph on the Suwanee* as read through Carpentier's work provides new keys to understanding culture in the Americas. In order to read these novels, this section also considers Jourdain's discussion of the relatively rare ability to create music in one's mind, a capacity evident in the protagonists of both of the novels under discussion. Brought together in this manner, Hurston and Carpentier make beautiful music.

In her later works, Zora Neale Hurston provides an expansive view of mid-twentieth-century America by offering perspectives starkly different from those of her contemporaries, black as well as white. Reading Hurston in the Caribbean context set up by Carpentier opens up a new set of possibilities with which to make sense of her meanings. For example, linguistic and musical fusions created by sustained interactions of Anglo-, African-, and Iberian-Americans in *Seraph on the Suwanee* offer a vision of American complexity unimaginable in Oprah Winfrey's televised dramatization of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which relies more on simple affirmation than the uncertainties of multiple literary possibilities. In *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Hurston arrives at a view of music much like the one Carpentier will present years later in

Concierto barroco. Her final novel offers inter-American musical production that depends little on color and greatly on formation. Moreover, the musicians in *Seraph on the Suwanee* perform in Florida, a part of America acculturated by both the English and Spanish colonizers. *Concierto barroco* and *Seraph on the Suwanee* both conclude with hopes for the future that depend on political direction attuned to changes in cultural reception. Reading Hurston through Caribbean writings also helps connect her research in Haiti and Honduras, overlooked in simple bifurcations of black and white, with her similar efforts along the coasts of Florida and Louisiana. After reading Carpentier, many who view the Latin Americanization of the United States as currently obvious will understand its longer, sustained history when seen through the eyes of Zora Neale Hurston.

As we have seen in this chapter, Carpentier wrote about music in periodical essays, newspaper articles, and a book, *La música en Cuba*. Music appears in his novels, as well; almost all mention music and, taken in aggregate, provide a means of following the development of his thoughts on the subject. His didactic pieces sometimes seem to serve as sketches of ideas later developed in novels, lending his fictional depictions of music and musicians a verisimilitude seen less often in his non-fictional observations. Searching for music in the Americas, Alejo Carpentier travels from the *Minorista* project of positing Afrocuban culture as an alternative national mode, evident in *Écue-Yamba-Ó*, through the inner conflicts displayed in *Los pasos perdidos*, and eventually arrives at an assured American view based on satisfyingly interstitial relationships presented in *Concierto barroco*.

As a figure standing in between Menegildo Cue of *Écue-Yamba-Ó* and

Filomeno and the criollo of *Concierto barroco*, the unnamed protagonist of *Los pasos perdidos* presents a struggle to comprehend — or, perhaps, merely to wish for — an American culture divorced from holocaustal horrors recently experienced in European cradles of civilization. Well before the action recounted in *Los pasos perdidos*, recalls the protagonist, his German Swiss father had come to the Antilles following the outbreak of the First World War, which had left him “outraged by the unexpected bellicosity of French and German Socialists” and ready to shake “the dust of the decaying Continent from his feet” (86). In spite of these feelings, the father passed to his son a rich tradition of European music and literature in which the elder, “for whom the affirmation of certain principles comprised civilization’s supreme achievement, made a special point of the sacred respect in which the life of a man was held there” (88). Once grown, the son travels to this Old World, persuaded that he will never return to his birthplace. Arriving in time to see the Spanish Civil War that preceded a continental rise of Fascism, the son witnesses a long list of atrocities. “I was astounded, outraged, wounded to the heart by the difference between the world my father had sighed for and the one whose acquaintance I was making,” he recalls (90).

As the first chapter opens, the protagonist presents himself as a denizen of New York City³² who has failed to live up to his ideals as a composer. Inspired by the wanderlust of Mouche, his French lover, as well as the continuous boredom he feels with Ruth, his wife from the United States, the protagonist deceitfully applies for a grant that will pay for a voyage to search

³² Since several commentators have expressed some doubt as to the location indicated by the first chapters of *Los pasos perdidos*, I point out not only the narrator’s standing in front of Brentano’s, which has a branch in Paris, but also Central Park (292) and the ferry to Hoboken (297).

for ancient musical instruments. A series of misadventures and his deteriorating relationship with Mouche direct him toward a trip up the Orinoco that, in unintended compliance with the terms of his grant, takes him back in time to the birth of music. Along the way he also establishes a type of common-law matrimony with Rosario, a mestiza (mixed European and autochthonous) he meets along the way, a lover well-suited to a literary tradition culminating in America.³³ Having found what he believes to be an authentic paradise, and in Rosario a seemingly more authentic lover, the protagonist decides to compose a work from the heart of America.

“I made a journey to the headwaters of the Orinoco and lived there for a month with the most primordial tribes of the New World,” Carpentier told César Leante a decade after the publication of the novel.

At that time, the idea of *Los pasos perdidos* first rose up in me. America is the only continent where different ages coexist, where a man of the twentieth century can shake hands with another of the Quaternary³⁴ or with another of the settlements without periodicals or communication that liken themselves to the Middle Ages or exist contemporaneously with another from provinces closer to the Romanticism of 1850 than to this era. Going up the Orinoco is like going back in time. My character of *Los pasos perdidos* travels along it up to the roots of life, but

³³ Spain, and some other Catholic countries, celebrate the seventh of October as the day of the Virgen del Rosario to commemorate the Battle of Lepanto, the same naval engagement in which Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra had his left arm injured, leading to his nickname “El Manco de Lepanto.” Regarding her thus as the protector of sailors, some parishes also revere Rosario as a patroness of America’s discovery.

³⁴ Carpentier’s use of this term, as infrequently employed in Spanish as in English, links his exchange of eras to the Fourth Day of Creation and to the commonly-used figures on four in music. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Prof. Jesús Tejada Giménez of the Universitat de València for explaining this term’s third meaning.

when he wants to reencounter it he cannot, having now lost the portal to his authentic existence. This is the thesis of the novel, which cost me no small effort to write.³⁵ (“Confesiones sencillas” 14-15)

Although this represents a great movement away from the Afrocuban ideals of the *Minoristas* expressed in *Écue-Yamba-Ó*, the protagonist — and presumably the author — of *Los pasos perdidos* still seeks origins and a certain amount of authenticity in the jungles of America. The protagonist’s own music, however, betrays the possibilities seemingly granted by those origins. *Los pasos perdidos* begins and ends with a work that the protagonist intends to compose. In the first chapter, the narrator looks into the display window at Brentano’s and chances upon an edition of *Prometheus Unbound*, which makes him forget about the rest of the books because of its relationship to his unfinished musical project. So far, this musical rendition of the Prometheus story has not gotten past “a prelude scored for a large brass choir”³⁶ (11). The novel’s penultimate chapter finds the narrator, having attended the birth of music, filled with enthusiasm as he prepares to resume work on his long-abandoned project.

As he begins to set pen to page, Rosario asks about the intended recipient of his letters as their jungle village has no post office. “This

³⁵ “Realicé un viaje al Alto Orinoco y allí conviví un mes con las tribus más elementales del Nuevo Mundo. Entonces surgió en mí la primera idea de *Los pasos perdidos*. América es el único continente donde distintas edades coexisten, donde un hombre del siglo veinte puede darse la mano con otro del Cuaternario o con otro de poblados sin periódicos ni comunicaciones que se asemeja al de la Edad Media o existir contemporáneamente con otro de la provincia más cerca del romanticismo de 1850 que de esta época. Remontar el Orinoco es como remontar el tiempo. Mi personaje de *Los pasos perdidos* viaja por él hasta las raíces de la vida, pero cuando quiere reencontrarla ya no puede, pues ha perdido la puerta de su existencia auténtica. Esta es la tesis de la novela que me costó no poco esfuerzo escribir.”

³⁶ “un gran coral de metales”

confusion,” realizes the narrator,

...the image of the letter made to travel that cannot travel, suddenly makes me think of the vanity of all that I have been doing since yesterday. An unexecuted score serves no purpose. A work of art, especially music, which has the means of reaching the vastest audience, destines itself to humanity. I have waited until the moment in which I have consummated my escape from the places where my work could be heard to really begin composing.³⁷ (254)

And even though he has witnessed the original music performed by a jungle sorcerer singing *a capella* (without instruments), the narrator, while preparing his score, mentally hears the “festive sonority of an organ: three oboes, three clarinets, a bassoon, two horns, trombone”³⁸ (254). His recreation of sounds he considers natural and ordinary will require elaborate musical instruments as well as ink for his pen and paper imprinted with regular groups of five evenly arranged stave lines.

At this moment, the narrator understands the conflict between his desire to escape the trappings — and trap — of cosmopolitanism and the exigencies imposed by an artistic vision only discoverable, he believes, in this peripheral space. What the narrator does not understand is that peripheral societies engaged in a nomadology described by Deleuze and Guattari need not reject technology. By failing to understand that out-of-State does not

³⁷ “Esta confusión, la imagen de la carta hecha para viajar y que no puede viajar, me hace pensar de súbito, en la vanidad de todo lo que estoy haciendo desde ayer. De nada sirve la partitura que no ha de ser ejecutada. La obra de arte se destina a los demás, y muy especialmente la música, que tiene los medios de alcanzar las más vastas audiencias. He esperado el momento en que se ha consumado mi evasión de los lugares en donde podría ser escuchada una obra mía, para empezar a componer realmente.”

³⁸ “festiva sonoridad de órgano: tres oboes, tres clarinetes, un fagot, dos cornos, trombón.”

require primitivity, *Los pasos perdidos* creates a unique space, the periphery, for the creation of music and another, just as unique center, for music's reception. Music, then, can neither be performed where it is heard nor heard where it is performed. This point of view, eventually seen internationally through the global promotion of "world music" and other commercial offerings of authenticity, creates an impossible situation in which those who compose cannot hear and those who hear cannot create. No wonder Carpentier's protagonist ends up so unhappily situated.

In an argument easily applied to the invention and production of the orchestral musical instruments listed above, Deleuze and Guattari ask why would one "say that crucible steel is necessarily the property of sedentaries or imperial subjects, when it is first of all the invention of metallurgists?" (405). Metallurgists and other innovators may exist within a state but do not, conclude Deleuze and Guattari, belong to it. As every brass instrumentalist knows, metallurgy has a great deal to do with music, which these authors have already placed among nomads. "If metallurgy has an essential relation with music," they write, "it is by virtue not only of the sounds of the forge but also of the tendency within both arts to bring into its own, beyond separate forms, a continuous variation of matter: a widened chromaticism sustains both music and metallurgy; the musical smith was the first 'transformer'" (411). By enforcing a separation of the peripherals from the cosmopolitans, evident in the reified separation between the location of composition and the instruments of performance, the narrator of *Los pasos perdidos* misses an opportunity, however chimerical, to seize this widened chromaticism, this expansion of notes in between notes, this escape route from state-sponsored tonalities.

Where *Los pasos perdidos* explores, *Concierto barroco* discovers.

Finally released from his longing to deliver the provenance of each chord and rhythmic structure, Carpentier composes a brief and relatively lighthearted version of music in the Americas in a work of fiction that provides as complete a statement of the complex relationship between music of Europe and the Americas as anything else he has written. “Don’t give me any fucking History when it comes to the subject of theater,” exclaims Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi in *Concierto barroco*. “What matters here is poetic illusion”³⁹ (193). One of Vivaldi’s interlocutors, the Afro-Cuban musician Filomeno, submits his own case for the utility of theatrical illusion and its capacity to take spectators to otherwise impossible destinations. “Thanks to theater we can go back in time and live, something impossible for our present embodiment, in times forever gone”⁴⁰ (198). As imaginative as Carpentier makes this seem, this move away from the chronological details of music history actually makes a convincing case for the author’s main point; although *Concierto barroco* takes readers back in time to an eighteenth-century jam session that at first glance seems impossible, the colonization of America influenced music, as well as literature and plastic arts, in Europe just as it did in the colonies.

Concierto barroco follows a Mexican criollo (a supposedly pure European born in the Americas) on a journey to his ancestral homeland on the Iberian peninsula. Along the way, the criollo’s servant and musical companion falls ill and dies in Havana, leading to the hire of Filomeno, a descendant of an illustrious Afro-Cuban family. Neither master nor servant find Spain to their

³⁹ “No me joda con la Historia en materia de teatro. Lo que cuenta aquí es la ilusión poética...”

⁴⁰ “Gracias al teatro podemos remontarnos en el tiempo y vivir, cosa imposible para nuestra carne presente, en épocas por siempre idas.”

liking so they decide to head to Italy, where they meet illustrious musicians. At the Ospedale della Pietà where Antonio Vivaldi teaches the illegitimate daughters of noblemen, the white criollo and his black servant spend an entire night playing music with not only the teacher and his young students but also Doménico Scarlatti and Jorge Federico Haendel⁴¹ (171-77). Vivaldi, Scarlatti, and Haendel express great admiration for the musical abilities — and, for them, novel styles — of Filomeno. All of these enduringly famous Baroque masters improvised well, according to regularly taught histories of music, and would have almost certainly appreciated fresh inspiration. Even though histories of music tend to isolate the European Baroque, and even later eras, from the rest of the world, one could reasonably assume that Europeans received musical influences from Africa, Asia, and the Americas along with slaves, spices, and other importations. While a great deal of study of these mutual influences remains undone, in *Caribbean Currents* Peter Manuel notes how “the *sarabanda* and *chacona* could take Spain by storm in the decades around 1600 and go on to enliven Baroque music and dance in Western Europe” (1). Jourdain places the beginning of modern harmony, in this case referring to the replacement of seven Greek modes with diatonic major and minor scales,

with the Baroque period, starting from roughly 1600...In contrast to the flowing, interwoven textures of the Renaissance, Baroque music is devoted to contrast, with rapid alternation between loud and soft passages, between different instrument groups, between fast and slow tempi, and between solo and

⁴¹ Carpentier mixes Spanish versions of Georg Frederick Händel’s Christian names with the commonly used French version of his surname. I also present Scarlatti’s name as it appears in Carpentier’s text.

orchestral sections. It is self-consciously high-tech music that was designed to dazzle. It still dazzles us today. (96)

However these changes came about, no one can reasonably sustain any proposition that music grew in isolation or that it traveled in only one direction across the Atlantic.

Shortly after the all-night Baroque jam session, the criollo and his servant attend the 1733 opening of Vivaldi's *Montezuma*. In Carpentier's account, the Baroque composer wrote this opera in collaboration with librettist Alvise (also known as Girolamo) Giusti after hearing the criollo's account of Mexican history. Although he has obviously read the libretto, Carpentier never heard the opera since, by the twentieth century, the score had disappeared. Twenty-eight years after the publication of *Concierto barroco*, however, Alan Riding reported the discovery by German musicologist Steffan Voss of "about 70 percent of the score when he was looking for lost Handel cantatas in the archives of the Sing-Akademie in Berlin." Riding did not specify a source of inspiration, but "Vivaldi's choice of the conquest of Mexico as his subject was unsurprising since exotic stories set in distant lands were all the rage in 18th-century Europe." Who can assuredly deny that a well-off Mexican criollo might have brought along a bit of colonial history to share with friends made while traveling through the Old World? Even with a libretto as disappointing as Carpentier represents it, the basic story could have come from one such pilgrim in search of his European roots. And who can know if an American Philemon similarly enriched the music and literature of Europe nearly two millennia after his namesake invigorated the poetry of Athens?

Concierto barroco ends with a Baroque concert that commences

almost two centuries later than Vivaldi's opening night. That time need not flow chronologically has already become clear as Filomeno discusses Igor Stravinsky with his new friends Vivaldi, Scarlatti, and Haendel. In this instance, Carpentier does not choose capriciously; the twentieth-century composer remains well-known for reviving early practices of the early Baroque and earlier Medieval periods, a fact that the late Baroque composers in *Concierto barroco* mock. "It's that these masters who they call advanced become tremendously preoccupied with knowing what musicians did in the past," asserts one, "even trying, at times, to renovate their styles. In this, we are more modern"⁴² (181). Carpentier makes appropriate use of Stravinsky not only as a foil for his Baroque composers but also as a figure artistically connected to the Americas. Stravinsky incorporated early twentieth-century developments in jazz, for example, as quickly as most bandleaders and improvisers in the United States. Deliberate anachronisms appear with increasing rapidity in the last section of Carpentier's novel as the criollo boards a train on the first leg of his journey home and Filomeno, who has decided to head for Paris, makes it known that he has no interest in visiting the Eiffel Tower (200). By the time that Filomeno has seen tourists cashing travelers checks and riding on motorboats in a city that suddenly looks much older, his attendance at a jazz concert seems by no means incongruous.

Carpentier's choice of Louis Armstrong for the concert's featured performer seals the inter-American connections of this novel. He might have chosen John Birks 'Dizzy' Gillespie, for example, or any of a number of other well-known jazz artists already associated with "Latin" fusions; the choice of

⁴² "Es que esos maestros que llaman avanzados se preocupen tremendamente por saber lo que hicieron los músicos del pasado — y hasta tratan, a veces, de remozar sus estilos. En eso, nosotros somos más modernos."

Armstrong demonstrates the author's understanding that jazz always had Caribbean connections. Two decades before *Concierto barroco*, Carpentier writes in "El jazz y los jóvenes" (Jazz and Young People) about the spread of jazz. "Speak of John Laporta, Duke Ellington, Buddy Shank, Gerry Mulligan to a young French person, young Argentinean, young Venezuelan," he suggests. "Immediately, you will have created an area of common understanding. They have heard records, understand the interpretive virtues of each one, know how to appreciate, as a matter of course, the qualities of an improvisation."⁴³ Some "brainy professors," he observes, fear that jazz will lead young people away from cultural roots. "It will take the young away from our folklore." Acknowledging this concern, Carpentier nevertheless points to himself as "among those who believe that young people generally make mistakes when they refute something, never when something interests them"⁴⁴ (*Ese músico* 2 163).

Further pursuing the topic of jazz, Carpentier emphasizes differences with European music. "We cannot follow these people," laments the first trumpeter of the Paris Symphony after hearing recordings by Louis Armstrong. "In order to attain a sound like that in every register of the instrument and even in the extreme high notes," he tells Carpentier, "we would need training that one cannot acquire in symphonic ensembles"⁴⁵ (*Ese músico* 2 165). Even so, jazz does connect to the symphonic tradition, as Carpentier

⁴³ "Hable usted de John Laporta, de Duke Ellington, de Buddy Shank, de Gerry Mulligan, a un joven francés, a un joven argentino, a un joven venezolano. En el acto habrá creado un plan de entendimiento común. Han escuchado sus discos; conocen las virtudes interpretativas de cada cual; saben apreciar, al paso, las calidades de una improvisación."

⁴⁴ "sesudos profesores...Aparta a los jóvenes de nuestro folklore...Pero soy de los que creen que los jóvenes suelen equivocarse cuando reniegan de algo; nunca cuando se interesan por algo."

⁴⁵ "Nosotros no podemos seguir a esta gente...Para lograr semejante sonoridad en todos los registros del instrumento y aun en el extremo agudo, necesitaríamos un adiestramiento que no se adquiere en los conjuntos sinfónicos."

notes in another article, “El *jazz* y la música culta” (Jazz and Classical Music), which discusses the “‘splicing’ of jazz and classical music” as “one of the most interesting artistic phenomena to have appeared in our times” (*Ese músico* 2 166). Carpentier adds a list of jazz’ influence on “serious” works by Stravinsky, Milhaud, Ravel, Weill, Hindemith, Krenek, Satie, Poulenc, and Berg. Retaining this view in the closing of *Concierto barroco*, as Filomeno enthusiastically listens to Armstrong’s renditions of “Go Down Moses,” “Jonah and the Whale,” “Ezekial and the Wheel,” and “Hallelujah, Hallelujah,” Carpentier places the world famous trumpeter in a history that includes works by “the Jorge Federico of *that night*”⁴⁶ and Henry Purcell as well as those developed in Cuba (203 emphasis in original). With “dazzling variations on the theme of ‘I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby,’” Armstrong creates a “new Baroque concerto”⁴⁷ (204).

Lest it seem that Carpentier has created a joyous multicultural utopia, the criollo explicitly rejects the lands of his forefathers at the same time that Filomeno offers sobering explanations for not returning to America. Several elements contribute to the criollo’s irritation with his European hosts, notably their idea that Europe has a “grand and respectable” history as opposed to that of America, where “everything is fable”⁴⁸ (193-94). This comes to head for the criollo during the performance of Vivaldi’s *Montezuma*, which the Mexican feels presents a false view of his country’s history. Surprised at his own

⁴⁶ “...el Jorge Federico de *aquella noche*...”

⁴⁷ “...deslumbrante variaciones sobre el tema de *I Can’t Give You Anything But Love, Baby* — nuevo concierto barroco...” The Spanish term *concierto* translates as the Italian *concerto* (a work that highlights a soloist or small ensemble, often performed with a symphonic or other accompaniment), also used as a musical term in English. Additionally, *concierto* can signify a concert, with the same dual meanings of musical presentation and working in agreement that pertain in English.

⁴⁸ “grande y respetable...todo es fábula”

patriotic reaction, the criollo, very much in the voice of his author, tells Filomeno how, “suddenly, I felt separated from the moment, exotic in this location, out of place, far from myself and what is really mine...*Sometimes it is necessary to get away from things, put an ocean in the middle, to see things up close*”⁴⁹ (198 emphasis in original). Even as he empathizes with the criollo’s *unheimlich* moment (the estrangement of supposedly familiar European roots), the servant knows that America will not offer him the same opportunities for expression as those granted to his employer. “In Paris they will call me *Monsieur Philomène*, like that, with P.H. and the beautiful accent grave on the ‘e.’ In Havana, I would only be ‘little black Filomeno.’” When the criollo declares, “This will change one day,” Filomeno replies, “It would require a revolution”⁵⁰ (200).

Hurston also waits for a revolution. Her revolution gradually emerges from the inexorable cultural mixtures that Carpentier describes so well. *Seraph on the Suwanee* lays out its author’s view of American culture. “Right here,” she wrote to Burroughs Mitchell in response to his compliments on her handling of southern white speech, “I think that it should be pointed out that what is known as Negro dialect in the South is no such thing. Bear in mind that the South is the purest Eng[l]ish section of the United States” (Kaplan 559 square brackets in Kaplan’s text). After explaining reasons for the South’s closer relationship to English culture, Hurston brings blacks and whites together. “They go for the simile and especially the metaphor. As in the bloom

⁴⁹ “Y, de pronto, me sentí como fuera de situación, exótico en este lugar, fuera de sitio, lejos de mí mismo y de cuanto es realmente mío... *A veces es necesario alejarse de las cosas, poner un mar de por medio, para ver las cosas de cerca.*”

⁵⁰ “En París me llamarán *Monsieur Philomène*, así, con P.H. y un hermoso acento grave en la ‘e.’ En La Habana, sólo sería ‘el negrito Filomeno.’” — “Eso cambiará un día.” — “Se necesitaría una revolución.”

of Elizabethan literature, they love speech for the sake of speech. This is common to white and black” (Kaplan 559). White people, Hurston claims, “did not get it from the Negroes. The Africans coming to America got it from them. If it were African, then why is it not in evidence among all Negroes in the western world?” (Kaplan 559 emphasis in original). Hurston makes this clear, as well, in the many tall tales told by white people in *Seraph on the Suwanee* (223 and other places) that resemble the lying sessions proudly engaged in by the African American interlocutors that appear in *Of Mules and Men*.

“Though no one to my knowledge has come right out and said it as yet,” wrote Hurston about an added chapter meant to explain Kenny Meserve’s success in New York,

...we have had a revolution in national expression in music that is equivalent to Chaucer’s use of the native idiom in England. Gershwin’s PORGY AND BESS brought to a head that which had been in the making for at least a decade. There is no more Negro music in the U.S. It has been fused and merged and become the national expression, and displaced the worship of European expression. In fact, it is now denied (and with some truth) that it ever was pure Negro music, but an adaptation of white music. That is as over-simplified as the former claim that it was something purely Negroid. But the fact remains that what has evolved here is something american [*sic*], and has come to be the national expression, and is as such influencing the music of the world. Kenny is only one of the thousands of

white artists who in one way [or] another work through the accepted medium, and is explained. (Kaplan 563)

The next chapter will take up further connections between Hurston's views of music and language and imbricated identities in the Americas with overlapping sites in which cultural transformations can take place without one group subsuming another. Preliminarily, this chapter will pursue the ways in which she employs music to show these ethnic interactions.

Kenny's mother — Arvay, the protagonist of *Seraph on the Suwanee* — proves her own musicality at an early age. As a musician, Arvay surpasses everyone in her family, especially her sister Lorraine, who outshines her in every other endeavor.

Arvay could play music and Lorraine just couldn't learn it.

Arvay had been asked to spend a summer with her mother's sister in Madison one time, and this aunt could play on the organ some. Arvay had shown great interest and a quick ability and had surprised the family on her return to Sawley in the fall, by being able to pick out melodies, and to play a few songs with full harmony all the way through. The Henson parlor organ, which had been bought years ago for style and had seldom been sounded, began to be used. Arvay was in there nearly every day practicing and practicing. She showed herself very apt with music. (9)

Hurston carefully connects these musical abilities with a southern environment in which her protagonist stands out as physically whiter but spiritually less white than her neighbors.

As she enters adolescence, Arvey's interests diverge from those of other white people. Her unrequited love for the pastor, who marries Lorraine, turns Arvey away from thoughts of marriage, family, or any type of what the town would consider normal life. "Such religious fervor was not unknown among white people, but it certainly was uncommon" (3). Hurston points out that black people kept the faith, mostly through exuberance, more than whites. "Excessive ceremonies were things that the Negroes went in for. White folks just didn't go on like that" (4). In her enthusiastic practice, Arvey is more like the former. "So it was something when Arvey Henson, now, took her stand. Arvey could have done so different" (4). To top it off, Arvey "planned to be a missionary and craved to be sent away off somewhere to take the Word to the heathens" (4). Meanwhile, Arvey hangs around the church a great deal, playing the organ.

At the same time, Hurston makes it clear that Arvey does not love music or do well at it out of any physical similarity to African Americans. As described by the author, her exaggerated white features also separate her from her peers. The men of the town consider Arvey "pretty if you liked delicate-made girls. Her shape was not exactly in style in those parts" (4). As a prospective bride, she was "lean-made in every way" and "her legs were long and slim-made" and she had "long light yellow hair," "Gulf-blue eyes," "a fine-made kind of nose and mouth," and "a faint spread of pink around her upper cheeks" (4). Lorraine, by contrast, "was robust, not to say a trifle lusty, and pretty in the ways that the community favored" (6). No one in her town or her family suspects "that the general preference for Lorraine, Arvey's more robust and aggressive sister, had done something to Arvey's soul across the

years” (9). As one consequence, Arvey develops musical skills as part of her relatively non-white religious fervor and in response to her unappreciated excessively white physical presence.

Oddly, the music almost seems hidden in a first reading of this novel. Once married, Arvey never appears to practice — or, at least, the text makes no mention of her practicing — but nevertheless keeps improving. As he makes more money, her husband Jim decides to buy her a new piano. “Arvey played much better than she did when he married her, but that second-hand organ was no help” (98). We see her thoughts on everything but the music that keeps popping up in and around her. Hurston never explains this; Arvey’s music does not work for good or ill; it just remains there, always a part of her. “The music outside did something strange and new to Arvey. The strains induced pictures before her eyes. They conjured up odors and tastes. Streams of colors played across the sky for her, and she tasted exotic fruits. Looking out into the white moonlight of the night, she saw trees and the woods for the first time from inside” (59). After hearing an African American woman sing an old ballad, “Arvey resolved that she would learn that song the very next day” (59). Her emotional response contrasts strongly with that of her husband, who enjoys parties and dances but shows little interest in the music that moves them.

In contrast to Jim, Arvey experiences the ways in which music accompanies her happiest moments and turns to silence when fears or sorrows arrive. One night “Arvey dreamed that she was in a beautiful forest of trees and very happy. Music and singing were coming to her from unseen voices. Suddenly the instruments and voices hushed as if in terrible fear. In the

silence, Lorraine came walking through the woods” (63). After a dreamed-up tiger kills Lorraine and walks away, leaving Arvay unharmed, “the music began again” (64). Even after giving birth to the deformed child, Earl, Arvay feels as though she and Jim sometimes “grabbed hands and mounted to Heaven together. They played music on the instrument of life. It was merely that two or three of the keys were out of fix, and there was a break in the tune when they were touched” (76). When Arvay contemplates taking her children and leaving Jim and making her own way, the first resource she counts on is her music. “As for support, Arvay figured that she could give music lessons, take in some plain sewing, and make enough to feed and clothe them anyway” (132). When in doubt, Arvay counts only on her music.

James Kenneth ‘Kenny’ Meserve carries on Arvay’s musical heritage. Kenny comes into the world just as Jim has Arvay’s new piano delivered. “When Arvay was able to be up and around, she found a new carpet in the hall, and there was a piano sitting where the old wheezy organ used to be” (106). Two pages later, “Arvay noticed that he [Kenny] would nag around the piano just as soon as he could walk” (108). Even non-musical activities connect music to Kenny, who “particularly liked trains. It was the rhythm of movement and sound that entranced him, but he did not know that then” (109). As her second son grows, Arvay does not always connect her music with his and so begins to resent his growing abilities. Kenny begins to study music with his father’s friend and business associate Joe Kelsey. At dinner one night, Jim ignores one of Arvay’s many complaints and instead encourages his son “to tell him all about a new tune that he had just learned from Joe, and how he had got it down perfect how to tune the box from the key of C into *Sebastopol*,

called ‘Vasterpool’ by Joe, and back again. Kenny asked for a quart whiskey bottle so he could break off the neck and keep it. Joe was going to start teaching him how to bottle-neck” (138). After his older brother returns from an extended stay with the boys’ grandmother, “Kenny poured out on the indifferent Earl all about how he was learning to make that weeping sound on the guitar with his bottle-neck. Gosh, but he was getting good! He had frammed [accompanied] *John Henry* behind Joe all the way. With Joe bottle-necking and carrying the tune, and him frammung out a mean bass, it was something” (139).

Joe helps Kenny expand his musical knowledge in every direction.

One evening:

Arvay looked at the clock. It was just before nine o’clock in the evening. She looked because she hoped that it was late enough to tell Kenny to leave that piano alone and go to bed. Kenny had somehow transferred what he learned on the guitar to the piano and could drum out quite a few pieces. But it was all what Arvay called rag-time stuff and reels. Now he was in there stomping and drumming out that tune on the piano called *Charleston!* and he and Angie were chanting it and dancing it off ‘Hey, hey! Charles-ton! Charles-ton!’ How Arvay had come to hate that tune. No matter which way she turned, she couldn’t hear nothing else, unless it was *Shake That Thing*. Some Ethel Waters, who Kenny and Angeline thought was great. (141)

Arvay, who consistently fails to deal well with change, dislikes this music not because of its African American roots, which also form much of the music she

likes, but instead because it comes from a new generation that she finds disconcerting. Also, instead of making a connection — a connection that many readers have missed, as well — Arvay continues to view music as a force that pulls her son away from her. Instead of playing sports or games he wants to know if he can “go over to Joe’s and practice some?” Realizing his mother’s resistance, he adds, “You ought to let me go this time, Mama. I haven’t been for a long time now. Maybe I’ll be done forgot all I used to know on that box” (159).

In high school, “Kenny was conducting the school band for the [graduation] exercises” (178). After high school, “Kenny was up at the University of Florida at Gainesville. He wrote frequent and enthusiastic letters home, mostly about his activities in the University band” (194). At the university, “Kenny was the drum major for the band” (206). After a football game, Jim tells Arvay, “Kenny is doing some special playing at the dance, and he would feel mighty hurt if we wouldn’t even wait to hear him” (210). At the dance, the band plays “Kenny’s specialty, *House That Jack Built*. The way they had heard it at home was nothing to what this band could do with it. It was really *something*. The students seemed to be familiar with the piece enough to jump in every time they got to the line, ‘That milked the cow with the crumpled horn’ — and they all shouted it out” (211 emphasis in original). When Kenny comes home to visit Arvay finds “the house rammed and crammed with his cronies a’whooping and a’hollering and banging on that pianner and everything else they can get their hands on... I don’t know what kind of a caper it is that Kenny cuts that makes folks act so crazy over his playing,” declares Arvay, “but it sure is something or other” (236).

While at the university, Kenny decides that he will “make his living with his box” (201). Although his parents have never imagined a child of theirs doing such a thing, Jim thinks he might know

what he’s talking about. He keeps up with that kind of a thing, and claims that white bands up North and in different places like New Orleans are taking over darky music and making more money at it than the darkies used to. Singers and musicians and all. You do hear it over the radio at times, Arvay. Kenny claims that it is just a matter of time when white artists will take it all over. Getting to it’s not considered just darky music and dancing nowadays. (202)

Even as *Seraph on the Suwanee* notes the economic benefits accruing to white players from the appropriation of African-American music, Kenny asserts that the art form is “American, and belongs to everybody” (202). When Kenny plays at a dance, his father declares, “Looks like Kenny knows what he’s talking about. Those white boys are playing that rag-time down to the bricks, and you saw that dancing didn’t you? I want to see as much as I can of it. You could almost think those were colored folks playing that music” (212).

In these conversations about the economics of the music business, Hurston relates a concern that has become a commonplace in discussions of popular music: the white musicians who profit from music created by blacks. The history of these exchanges is, of course, more complicated. When I spoke with “Tuxedo Junction” composer Erskine Hawkins, at the time a fellow musician at the Concord Hotel in New York’s Catskill resort area, he expressed gratitude for the recording of his song by Glenn Miller, a release

that generated royalty payments and opened up opportunities for performances and recordings by Hawkins. By relating this representative anecdote, I do not mean to deny either the unfair advantages afforded many white players or the nefarious treatment imposed on musicians of all colors; I only hope to point out that these transactions had winners and losers on all sides.

Far from merely repeating charges leveled for many decades, Hurston speaks to the centers of power mentioned by Horkheimer and Adorno, showing how a local businessman employs popular music in the pursuit of his own political power. Bradford Cary, known as Banker Cary by the people of Sawley, burnishes his reputation as a man of the people when his son plays music with Kenny Meserve. “His youngest boy was playing in that same band, and he went over there to hear it and come back bragging on Kenny” (278).

Arvay did not know that the urge to hold public office had been growing in Bradford Cary for the last two years. But he had to look like a man of the people and he was too well known as a monied aristocrat. The association of his youngest son with Kenny in the University band had given Cary an idea, and he had followed it up by cultivating [Kenny’s grandmother] Maria Henson. Months before her death it had spread around Sawley and the county in general of Cary’s kindness to her and his attachment for her. Her grandson, Kenny, was assumed to be his product and protégé. Poor people began to think mighty well of Bradford Cary II. (298-97)

As a result of Maria’s connection and Cary’s exploitation of that connection, “common people saw themselves glorified in Maria and they loved it” (297).

When, after using Arvay's son and mother to demonstrate a common touch, Bradford Cary II won the election as governor of Florida, Arvay, like others who have felt left out, "looked upon it as a personal triumph." In spite of her close connection to the parties involved, observes the narrator, Arvay "never realized the part she had played in Florida politics. She did not realize that she had helped to make a governor of the state" (298). Hurston has shown her readers not just a simple expropriation of popular music, but instead the trajectory of black to white that politicians as well as music companies can disseminate as seemingly authentic expressions of popular culture, a transformation as useful to populist ambitions in the United States as Wade has shown it to be in Colombia and other Spanish-speaking nations of the Americas.

Making a connection to Spanish-speaking nations of the Americas, Hurston has Kenny's first professional break come from an original song based on a common Cuban rhythm:

A famous leader of a famous New York band had been playing an engagement at a celebrated New Orleans hotel. The engagement ended the very day the Gator band had arrived at Tulane, but the bandleader had sent his men on ahead, and waited to scout the Gator band. He was there to hear Kenny play for three sessions. He liked Kenny's piece a lot. It was a rhumba and it went over swell. As soon as the concert was over that evening, he had managed to get Kenny to one side and make him an offer. Fifty dollars a week to start with, and double that in ninety days if Kenny took with the public in New

York. (238)

Obviously, one rhumba does not homology make. In this case, Hurston may have coincidentally credited Kenny with a Caribbean composition, an act that by itself need not identify the young musician as Latino. My interest in Kenny — and, indeed Arvay, Joe, and all the other musicians in this novel — lies in the way they fit Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker's homologous appearances referred to in the previous chapter of this dissertation. Hurston's multiple references to Florida's Spanish history, her addition of Latino characters, and her employment of Spanish terms — all of which will receive further attention in the next chapter of this dissertation — support connections found in mixtures and inter-American connections that flourished in the United States but rarely appeared positively in its literature. Without making direct comparisons of characters, readers can discover clear relationships between the musicians in *Seraph on the Suwanee* and those in *Concierto barroco* just as they can connect the leaders presented in *Moses*, *Man of the Mountain* and *El reino de este mundo*.

Part of the literary homology established in *Seraph on the Suwanee* comes from Hurston's rejection of an essentialism in which the establishment of authenticity in popular music depends on original black African roots. In her novel, Joe Kelsey, an African-American, brings out the music trapped inside of his white employers. Arvay feels jealousy because of the bond that her son has with a man she dislikes. Eventually she learns to leave that jealousy behind, finally realizing "why she had been so set against the music. It gave Joe a hold over her boy that made her feel excluded" (250). When Arvay finally accepts Joe and even acknowledges him for teaching her son the

guitar, he insists on sharing the credit. "Between me and you," he says,

we sure pulled that boy through, didn't us?

Arvay shook her head slowly. "You mean you did, Joe. You learnt Kenny all that your ownself. I don't know the first pick on a box."

"That's where you'se ever so wrong, Miss Arvay. 'Tain't everybody that can learn music like that. Kenny took to it because he brought that talent in the world with him. He got that part from you. He just naturally worried and pestered me to death to teach him. I knowed that he couldn't help hisself. What's bred in the bones'll be bound to come out in the flesh. Yeah, that boy come here full of music from you." (250)

Since Hurston has already laid the groundwork for a non-essentialist reading of the source of this music, I read the "talent" to which Joe Kelsey refers as Arvay's love of playing the organ, which makes her want to spend time developing musical proficiency. Kenny, hearing his mother sing and seeing her reaction to music, acquired sufficient interest to make him pester Joe for lessons. Although Arvay's music helps her begin to appreciate her own strength, she understands the limitations imposed by lack of sufficient formation:

Arvay thought a minute, then her face lightened. "You could be right at that, Joe. I ever loved to hear and to play music. I took to it just like Kenny did when I was a chap of a child. And just like you say, Larraine never could learn none. Only different from Kenny, I had small chance to learn much of it. I ever

wanted to learn more though. I know that I could of learnt a lot more than I know if I had of had a chance.” Arvay sat quietly for a minute and her face lighted timidly. “Yeah, I guess, I hope, that Kenny did take his music after me.”

“Couldn’t be nobody else, Miss Arvay,” said Joe positively. “And it sure is a noble gift to have. I learnt what I know by the hardest, but you and Kenny is just gifted to that. It’s a shame and a pity that you didn’t have more chance.” (251)

In this case, American music has moved from white to black to white. This may also imply a movement from white to black in the writing of novels or the study of anthropology at ivy-league universities. Instead of providing an easy conclusion based on either talent or color, Hurston’s fabulous narrative offers hope by speaking to possibilities.

As Arvay looks back over her life, she comes to what seems like “the Resurrection,” which mostly comes from the children she has borne. More importantly than any of the others, “Kenny had come bringing the music part inside her that she had never had a chance to show herself. It had to be there or it could never have come out as it did. He represented those beautiful sounds that she used to hear from nowhere as she played around with her doll under the mulberry tree” (350). Arvay has an ability that escaped me upon first reading Hurston’s novel. Until later, when I read *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy*, I thought that all people heard music in their minds. “Nonetheless,” writes Jourdain, “it’s clear that composers can do something with their brains that most of us can’t. True, we all covertly talk to ourselves, so we’re well acquainted with *verbal* auditory imagery. And using the same faculty we can

bring a tune to mind by silently singing it. But the ability to hear several voices at once, accurate in pitch and timbre, is rare” (161-62 emphasis in original). Responding to an old debate about whether a falling tree makes a sound in an uninhabited forest, Jourdain responds that the vibrations will be heard in the ears of non-human animals but “*sound* (as opposed to *vibration*) is something that a mind *does*” (xiv emphasis in original). For Arvey, memory really does serve, in Jourdain’s words, as “music’s canvas” (132). She can hear the sounds from nowhere. She can also comprehend the sounds she hears and the way that successive sounds alter those that precede them. And just as if she had been divining the sense of a musical introduction by the sounds that succeeded it, Arvey works out the sense of her earlier years by what happened later in her life.

As the protagonists go their separate ways in the last section of *Concierto barroco*, they begin to make the same sense out of their lives up to that point. Europe has taught them a difference that makes them reflect on their American displacement. Recalling how Vivaldi had termed the history of the Americas as all fable, the criollo tells Filomeno, “Great History feeds on fables, and never forget it. Our world appears as fable to the peoples *from here* because they have lost their feeling for the fabulous. They call *fabulous* anything faraway, irrational, situated in yesterday... They do not understand that the fabulous is in the future. All future is fabulous”⁵¹ (198 emphases in original). With this statement, Carpentier places mythical, or fabulous, people and places of America into a future that contrasts with a fabled European so

⁵¹ “De fábulas se alimenta la Gran Historia, no te olvides de ello. Fábula parece lo nuestro a las gentes *de acá* porque han perdido el sentido de lo fabuloso. Llamamos *fabuloso* cuanto es remoto, irracional, situado en el ayer... No entienden que lo fabuloso está en el futuro. Todo futuro es fabuloso.”

dated that denizens of the Old World have even forgotten it.

As the great-grandson of a Cuban war hero, Filomeno has inherited his freedom, but he knows that this does not put him on equal standing with whites. His need to invoke Shakespeare's *Othello* while arguing for the possibility of a black leading man in an opera has shown him that even the Europeans who do not live in a slave-owning society regard him as something inferior. As he told the criollo, it would require a revolution; his hopes, both for short-term advancement and long-term change, lie in the future. The criollo also hopes for a better future. As a white man born to money and power, he has found himself identifying as an indigenous Mexican, an odd position for the grandson of Spaniards who came from Extremadura to conquer previous generations of autochthonous peoples. Unlike Filomeno, he need not concern himself with power or position, but now left *unhomely*, in the apt scan provided by Homi Bhabha, his identity also lies somewhere in the future.

And so, too, do the hopes of Arvey Meserve lie in what will come. Her immediate future, much like that of other white women in America at the moment when the Jazz Age will soon turn into the Great Depression, may hold less promise than she realizes. Hope wore thin for Hurston when she published *Seraph on the Suwanee* during the years following World War II. Further along, however, the son and prospective daughter-in-law Hurston creates for Arvey offer possibilities for inter-cultural revolution only vaguely discernible on the American horizon. And the catalyst for that change comes from the music passed along by Arvey Henson. Fabulous

Chapter Three — Standing on the Rock:
American Identity in Carpentier and Hurston

If I could I surely would
Stand on the rock where Moses stood.

Traditional Gospel Song

As my students discuss *Wide Sargasso Sea*, we turn to issues of race and ethnicity raised by Jean Rhys' Creole protagonist. I ask the class if they see any indications in the text that Antoinette may have non-white ancestors. Since the students exhibit a grasp of cultural complexities, I wonder aloud if they understand a shift that has taken place in racial identity. At the time of Emancipation in which this novel takes place, I tell them, a Creole would have probably insisted on his or her whiteness, no matter how many black cousins or siblings claimed relationship. Later, as African, autochthonous, and Latino identities became not merely acceptable but occasionally celebrated in the late twentieth century, descendants of the same Creole families began to insist on the very relationships their forebears denied.

Reasons for this insistence include more than changing views of identity that grew out of civil rights movements between the 1950s and 1970s. As Amy Harmon observes in *The New York Times*, increasing numbers of people believe that a greater awareness of fractional ethnicities can help achieve acceptance at universities, receive financial awards, secure employment opportunities, attain citizenship, collect gambling profits, and ward off disease. "It may be only natural then," writes Harmon, "that ethnic ancestry tests, one of the first commercial products to emerge from the genetic revolution, are spurring a thorough exploration of the question, What is in it for me?" One testing company research director who spoke with Harmon coined the term "American Indian Princess Syndrome" to describe customers

angered when their results show no autochthonous origins. And white people are not the only ones seeking new identifications. Harmon reports on a Jamaican woman searching for Scottish DNA to enter into evidence in a civil suit seeking reparations from a family that once enslaved her ancestors. “Other slave descendants,” she adds,

known as the Freedmen, see DNA as bolstering their demand to be reinstated as members of the Indian tribes that once owned their ancestors. Under a treaty with the United States, the ‘Five Civilized Tribes’ — Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, Seminoles and Cherokees — freed their African slaves and in most cases made them citizens in the mid-1800’s. More recently, the tribes have sought to exclude the slaves’ descendants, depriving them of health benefits and other services.

Even as mainstream communities become more interested in African Americans, autochthonous peoples, and Latinos, people identified with these ethnicities do not always feel — or do not always admit to feeling — comfortable with their new fashionability. The 2009 CNN television special called *Latino in America*, which followed the 2008 *Black in America*, provoked mixed reactions in the Spanish language press. A *Washington Hispanic* op-ed column by María Elena Salinas expressed happiness with the attention given to the community but also lamented CNN public opinion poll results demonstrating continued ignorance among non-Hispanics. “How can they know,” asks Salinas, “that six out of ten Latinos were born in the United States and millions more are naturalized citizens when the images they see in their news reports are of Latinos rounded up in immigration raids and tattooed

members of gangs on the floor in handcuffs?”¹ (12A). Popular images of Latin music and dance do not seem to overcome such negative reports and may, in fact, help validate them as narratives persistently focused on Latinos as singers, dancers, and purveyors of exotic cuisine create an ambience that leaves little other space for those who do not fit the image of a criminal or a victim. And even when those who consider themselves part of the mainstream grant acceptance, those who have endured rejection are not consequently under an obligation to accept these new overtures.

While biologists argue over the veracity of test procedures, social scientists take various positions on either the legitimacy or liabilities of using the results as a corrective to past inequities, and journalists variously bemoan immigration or bemoan the moaning about perceptions of migration, readers of these reports can with some certainty determine that identity needs and desires have undergone a profound change. “Identity politics is neither smart nor good,” writes Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Death of a Discipline*, a volume that, in spite of this disclaimer, clearly speaks to a continuing need for examinations of cultural identities (92). Spivak makes this seemingly contradictory statement as part of her “gesture toward the two older minorities, the African American and the Hispanic” (87-88). As exemplars of the Hispanic and African American, she discusses José Martí (1853-1895) and W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), obvious predecessors to two authors under discussion here: Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston. Carpentier, along with many other American authors working in Spanish, often refers to Martí just as Hurston

¹ “¿Cómo podrían ellos saber que seis de 10 latinos son nacidos en Estados Unidos y millones más son ciudadanos naturalizados, cuando las imágenes que ven en sus noticieros son las de latinos acorralados en redadas migratorias y miembros de pandillas tatuados y esposados en el piso?”

sometimes does with Du Bois. Both of the earlier figures described the situation of marginalized groups, Latin Americans and African Americans respectively, and formulated visions for the future; both also retained their stature and credibility throughout the various political turns of the twentieth century.

This essay enters into the spirit of Spivak's American fin de siècle retrospective with a consideration of the necessity for as well as the dangers of identity politics in the Americas. The first section briefly considers the general employment of Area Studies competencies in studies of Comparative Literature, postulated in *Death of a Discipline*, in order to specifically justify applications of biology and music history to cultural studies of the Americas. As seen in the previous chapter, elisions of potentially difficult musical histories have skewed discussions of culture; as seen in the following paragraphs, similar gaps form following the avoidance of scientific investigations deemed problematic. Even if genetics demonstrates that race does not exist, the persistent influence, however unacknowledged, of minstrelsy means that we must continue to discuss race, which exists in cultures even though biology no longer recognizes it as describing actual physical differences. Meanwhile, shifting terms for racial groups, including the phrase "racial group," provide more comic relief than elucidation; presumably well-meaning commentators who try to stay one jump ahead of the latest term for racial or ethnic groups may care less about listening than about keeping their feet out of their mouths. This section concludes by challenging the essentialism — all the more pernicious since it denies essentializing — still found in cultural studies and by calling for greater

appreciation of dissonant factors (tensions) that provide the only hope of achieving moments of cultural consonance (harmony).

The second section of this essay begins with a discussion of Carpentier's accent as a method of reconsidering his literary output, specifically *Los pasos perdidos* (1953 *The Lost Steps*) and *El arpa y la sombra* (1978 *The Harp and the Shadow*), in the context of the Latin American 'boom' novels such as Jorge Amado's *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* (1958). As popularly accepted narratives of identity, these novels demonstrate that seemingly new mixtures of peoples have actually been in the works for centuries, and possibly millennia. Most crucially to the arguments offered here, these cultural fusions underscore formulations of Latin American identity as simultaneously overly general and overly focused; overlapping definitions more accurately describe locations in the Americas that coexist at the same time and in the same places. In the geographical as well as figurative center of these imbricated Americas, the Caribbean connects seemingly disparate parts of the hemisphere without erasing their differences. Although connected, different people in the Americas fit in by never truly belonging; unlike grand narratives from Africa, Asia, and Europe that embrace a continuity of ancient traditions, the past five hundred years of American culture, from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego, respond to rejection. A wide array of Americans identify as rejected people who, in turn, reject some other previously claimed or imposed identification.

Having read Carpentier, the final section of this essay considers Hurston — and, by extrapolation, a sizable portion of the United States population — as a Caribbean subject of the colonizing forces in the United

States with a new look at *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939) and *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948). The former demonstrates the author's vision of an unfixed America in which Americans must reside uncomfortably; the latter resonates with her stated identification as a Latin American. Just as Columbus becomes the Discoverer by never finding Paradise and Moses the Leader who cannot enter the Promised Land, Hurston and Carpentier exemplify America by searching for origins they know do not exist.

“We come from nowhere in particular,” writes Michel Butor, “we go nowhere in particular; carrying along all our belongings, we set up a tent or shelter of branches and leave no trace behind on departing” (57). And yet we still read traces. Both Martí and Du Bois attempt portrayals of American identities simultaneously delimitative and embracive in ways that clearly lead into the works of Carpentier and Hurston. Martí's “Our America” specifies American people who are not in the United States while leaving open the possibility of their admittance; Du Bois develops a similar place for Americans of African descent, one that leaves out white people until a time when black people will have the formation and power to deal with them adequately. Carpentier — building, in part, on the writings of Martí — develops an American identity at once Latino and hemispheric. In the light of Carpentier's writings, readers can usefully expand their view of Hurston's works by also regarding her not only as an inheritor of Du Bois but also as a successor to Martí; “Our America” must mean different things to different groups of people, but it can also provide hope for points of mutual understanding.

Bringing together the similarities and differences between Hurston and

Carpentier creates new material with which to consider African American, Latin American, and Anglo American identity as simultaneously entwined and unraveled strands of Inter-American cultures. Considerations arising out of these newly interwoven works subvert assumptions of English intellectual and political superiority by challenging continuing reifications of African Americans and Latin Americans as the heart and soul of the Americas, with cultures only really acceptable in the places where people sing and dance and occasionally cook exotic dishes. In 1995, Jean Franco bemoaned a tendency among North American intellectuals to view “Latin America as a place of experimentation or redemption, after having thought of it as exoticism or chaos. Stereotypes change,” she added, “but there continues to be a division that now puts Latin America in the position of the body while the North is the place of the head that thinks about it” (qtd. in Richard 20).² More recently, in “¿La modernidad dejó de ser una etapa histórica?”, Néstor García Canclini offers this nuanced view:

Today we conceive of America that is Latin [*América latina*] as a more complex articulation of traditions and modernities (diverse, unequal), a heterogeneous continent made up of countries in which coexist, in each case, multiple logics of development. In rethinking this heterogeneity, an anti-evolutionist reflection of postmodernism, more radical than any that came before, proved useful. Its critique of omnicomprehensive stories about history made it possible to

² “Latinoamérica como lugar de experimento o redención, después de haberla pensado como exotismo o como caos. Cambian los estereotipos, pero sigue habiendo una división que ahora pone a Latinoamérica en el lugar del cuerpo mientras el Norte es el lugar de la cabeza que la piensa.”

uncover the fundamental pretensions of traditionalism, ethnicism, and nationalism in order to understand the authoritarian derivations of liberalism and socialism.³ (31)

Brought together, Hurston and Carpentier provide an avenue for the postmodern rethinking proposed by García Canclini that applies to the unceasing evolution of stereotypes described by Franco. In addition to creating an opportunity for rethinking African American and Latin American identities, the pairing of these authors brings the whole idea of America into question. As noted in the Introduction to this dissertation, referring to the United States as “America” maintains the linguistic imperialism that grants disproportionate control of hemispheric culture and politics to one nation. America needs to mean all of the Americas so that all of its peoples can take their place in it, and so that people in the United States can finally learn not to exoticize and control it but instead to join the rest of the hemisphere as a member among members.

³ “Hoy concebimos a América latina como una articulación más compleja de tradiciones y modernidades (diversas, desiguales), un continente heterogéneo formado por países donde coexisten, en cada uno, múltiples lógicas de desarrollo. Para repensar esta heterogeneidad fue útil la reflexión antievolucionista del posmodernismo, más radical que cualquier otra anterior. Su crítica a los relatos omnicomprensivos sobre la historia sirvió para detectar las pretensiones fundamentalistas del tradicionalismo, el etnicismo y el nacionalismo, para entender las derivaciones autoritarias del liberalismo y el socialismo.”

Colorful Shades of Grey

For the wonders taught and shown within it, it has come to be called the Altarpiece of Marvels, which the wise Tontonello fabricated and composed with such latitudes, paths, celestial bodies, and stars, with such points, characters and observations that no one of a converted race, not begotten by legitimately married parents, or contaminated by these two common diseases can see the things it shows; these people can forget about seeing these things, wonders never before seen nor heard, in my altar.⁴

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (“El Retablo de las Maravillas” 171-72)

Following the death of her discipline, Spivak imagines a collaboration that would transform Area Studies, a proposition fraught with difficulties that include political differences that raise suspicions on all sides. If this scenario seems “odious,” she counters, “we will be back in Cultural Studies, monolingual, presentist, narcissistic, not practiced enough in close reading to understand that the mother tongue is actively divided” (20). Acknowledging that her proposed collaborations seem utopian and even universalistic, she nevertheless seeks a resurrection of Comparative Literature in the application of Area Studies capabilities to Cultural Studies. In the pursuit of recommendations suggested by Spivak, such as learning languages and history, moving out of our academic shells, and reading more closely, I propose, for the purposes of this chapter, specific applications of biology pertinent to issues of identification. I will briefly review current theories of genetics, not to exhaust the topic, since I do not bring the requisite formation in biology to this discussion, but instead to consider how an expansion of these

⁴ “Por las maravillosas cosas que en él se enseñan y muestran, viene a ser llamado Retablo de las Maravillas; el cual fabricó y compuso el sabio Tontonelo, debajo de tales paralelos, rumbos, astros y estrellas, con tales puntos, caracteres y observaciones, que ninguno puede ver las cosas que en él se muestran, que tenga alguna raza de confeso, no no sea habido y procreado de sus padres de legítimo matrimonio, y que fuere contagiado destas dos tan usadas enfermedades, despídase de ver las cosas, jamás vistas ni oídas, de mi retablo.” Tontonelo, the name given to the wise man here, plays on the Spanish term *tonto*, meaning someone very stupid.

scientific studies might inform issues of identity and culture.

Biology seems a particularly suitable companion to ethnic studies, where broad and often contradictory claims about race appear with regularity. “Does Race Exist?” ask Michael J. Bamshad and Steve E. Olson, the authors of an article by that name, which appears in the lay journal *Scientific American*.⁵ If it does, they conclude, the barriers between racial groups lack clear distinction. “Many studies have demonstrated that roughly 90 percent of human genetic variation occurs within a population living on a given continent,” they report. “In other words, individuals from different populations are, on average, just slightly more different from one another than are individuals from the same population” (80). In order to distinguish racial difference, then, Bamshad and Olson employed genetic polymorphisms, which they describe as tiny variations in DNA base pairs, “present in all the members of one group and absent in the members of all other groups” (80-81). The difficulty in this, they find, arises from the fact that humans formed separate groups relatively recently and then quickly intermingled. “The groups easiest to resolve were those that were widely separated from one another geographically,” observe Bamshad and Olson (82). Groups with little outside contact maintain genetic distinctions that the researchers found useful. In areas such as India with extensive ties to the outside world, people did not exhibit clusters of distinct genetic markers.

Seemingly commonsensical ideas about race tend to obstruct useful investigation. Self-reporting, for example, did not always provide accurate information concerning a person’s racial makeup. In the United States, report

⁵ One biologist I know, Dr. Nathalia Holt, considers *Scientific American* less as a journal for lay readers than a place where scientists can keep up on the activities of their colleagues in other areas of research. I am grateful that she pointed this one out to me.

Bamshad and Olson, “West African contribution to the genes of individual African-Americans averages about 80 percent, although it ranges from 20 to 100 percent.” Similar results appear among those who believe themselves entirely European; “approximately 30 percent of Americans who consider themselves ‘white’ have less than 90 percent European ancestry... Accordingly,” the authors conclude, “common notions of race do not always reflect a person’s genetic background” (83). According to their findings, the constant mixture of people throughout human history has ensured that no group of people displays physical traits that would make it essentially different than other groups. “Given this extensive history of mixing, the strength of racial prejudice in the United States can seem perplexing,” writes Olson in *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past through Our Genes*.

“Throughout the country’s history, Americans have drawn rigid distinctions between black and white, Indian and European, Asian and non-Asian, Latino and Anglo. Furthermore, these distinctions have been rooted in the belief that sharp genetic differences separate groups, differences that shape behavior as well as appearance” (55). In light of findings that contradict these genetic differences, Olson concludes that seemingly ingrained cultural behavior is not so much “a measure of our biological heritage; it is a measure of our history’s power to shape the collective consciousness of nations and peoples” (56).

Mapping Human History explicitly rejects all hypotheses indicating separate species or, indeed, any sub-grouping of *Homo sapiens*. While recognizing that “real differences” exist between different groups of people (49), Olson contradicts not only nineteenth-century theories of polymorphic evolution discussed in the previous chapter, which would involve genetically

distinct races, but also twentieth-century regionalism that divided *Homo sapiens* into separately evolving descendants of *Neandertal*, *Homo erectus*, or any other archaic ancestor. “It was not inevitable that human history would work out as it did,” he acknowledges.

Suppose an archaic species of human beings such as *Homo erectus* had become firmly established in the Americas during a time of lower sea level. As the sea rose, modern humans might have been unable or unwilling to leave the Old World. In that case, when Columbus came ashore in the West Indies, he would not have encountered humans who had separated from his own ancestors in the relatively recent past. He would have met people who were clearly different from modern humans — slope-browed, linguistically primitive people with a cranial capacity about two-thirds of ours. Only in such a situation would it be possible to say that human beings could be divided into distinct groups. (43-44)

Olson’s book offers a great deal of evidence to back up the idea that humans cannot be divided into these separate groups, and that Columbus did not discover new peoples but instead began a process that reunited, however violently, previously related groups. Olson’s comparison of the nucleotide sequences found in even one chromosome taken from two people would “be almost identical. But about once in every 1,000 nucleotides, on average, the two sequences would differ” (17). These nucleotides, notes Olson, make up the smallest known elements of our genetic makeup, planted in the core of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) molecules contained by chromosomes that

function in the nucleus of almost every human cell. In the midst of massive genetic data that firmly places all humans in the same species — and thus, observes Olson, able to reproduce new humans between any two groups, a capability that would not exist if any came from a separate species — these miniscule differences account for variations in physical appearance.

These variations in appearance invite a discussion of popular views of difference; no matter how superficial these appearances seem to geneticists, they have, among those without scientific formation, formed the basis for enduring racial prejudices. While considering how people perceive each other, for better or worse, it helps to consider another point, startling at first although seemingly obvious once considered: skin color does not reveal genetic makeup; white skin, for example, does not necessarily indicate the presence of an overwhelmingly European genetic structure but merely the presence of a gene for white skin. Skin color, facial features, and other physical characteristics influenced by natural selection in the presence of climactic and topographical conditions, write Bamshad and Olson, “are routinely used to divide people into races. But groups with similar physical characteristics as a result of selection can be quite different genetically” (83). Bamshad and Olson point out the similar pigmentation of sub-Saharan Africans and Australian Aborigines, a result of adapting to strong sunshine, even though the genes of these two groups have relatively little in common. “In contrast,” they note, “two groups that are genetically similar to each other might be exposed to different selective forces. In this case, natural selection can exaggerate some of the differences between groups, making them appear more dissimilar on the surface than they are underneath” (83). Current theories of genetics uphold the

postmodernist position that individuals and groups of people remain simultaneously similar and different.

Although scholars generally avoid employing terms such as “essential,” essentialism persists. For theorists engaged in cultural studies, the information provided by Bamshad and Olson provides a corrective — or, at the very least, a reason to pause — to investigators determined to discover essential predispositions that favor oral traditions over writing or the development of specific musical abilities. Further attention to developing biological research will directly benefit those of us who focus on areas such as cultural studies. As new biological theories move beyond preconceptions of racial discrimination, new criticisms of music — and the industry dedicated to the promotion of culture — can subvert equally destructive racial idealization.

Moving from beneath the skin to merely skin deep, the genetic findings reported by Bamshad and Olson provide useful background for the consideration of a cultural movement tightly bound to questions of race and identity: minstrelsy. In “Whitewashing Blackface Minstrelsy in American College Textbooks,” Joseph Byrd, a veteran rock performer and Hollywood film soundtrack composer engaged in historical studies of music in the United States, records minstrelsy’s mixed origins in eighteenth-century English performances by Charles Dibdin and “the formation in 1843 of the Virginia Minstrels, a quartet headed by Dan Emmett” (77-78). Since both Dibdin and Emmett were white, Byrd observes how these English roots belie the few available sources on minstrelsy, which resemble accounts of jazz by recycling many a “hoary myth about minstrelsy being created by blacks and commercialized by whites” (83). Minstrelsy has a long history that predates its

appearance in the Americas. Well before the fourteenth century, records Don Michael Randall's edition of *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Europeans used the term minstrel interchangeably with variations of joker or jongleur to refer to various types of wandering entertainers skilled in performance rather than music theory. Minstrels moved fluidly on the European continent, sometimes forming guilds and occasionally contracting themselves out to royal homes and civic municipalities. After arriving in the United States, minstrels specialized in "portraying members of the underclasses, especially blacks, as stereotypes with fictional or comically exaggerated racial features" (496). *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* credits some "Afro-American songs and dances, Celtic dances, and British sentimental songs" (496). As African American performers "entered the lucrative minstrel professions" following the Civil War, "the target of ridicule shifted toward Asian immigrants" (496). By the end of the nineteenth century, the dominance of minstrelsy gave way to vaudeville, burlesque, and the New York City theaters along Broadway.

Byrd observes the ways that elements of minstrelsy survived well into the twentieth century, noting that cultural commentators such as Spike Lee have called minstrelsy "the most popular form of entertainment in its time" (83). Musically, Byrd hears little direct African influence, maintaining that the music developed out of "familiar Irish and British folk songs" (78). Songs by Dan Emmett and other minstrel artists transformed these folk influences with "vernacular American idioms" and "vivid images," adds Byrd, who reports that these "would become the essence of American popular song, strong speech rhythms combined with exaggerated expression and emotion" (79).

During the early decades of the twentieth century, minstrelsy led almost directly to the tunes of Tin Pan Alley, leaving Byrd with “little doubt that minstrelsy played a major role in the evolution of American popular music and jazz” (83).⁶ Stephen Foster, probably the best-remembered antebellum American songwriter, received a great deal of recognition during his life for his minstrel songs, many of which have been ignored since his passing by glee clubs, textbooks, and musical anthologies that have resurrected and whitewashed versions of works less popular during his lifetime.

Understanding minstrelsy as not genetically essential can help cultural historians comprehend a century of apartheid and de facto slavery upheld by Jim Crow, a set of laws named after one of minstrelsy’s most enduring stage characterizations. It also makes it possible for scholars to consider cultural connections to other regions of the Americas that produced minstrel shows. “Most authors,” observes Robin Moore in *Nationalizing Blackness:*

Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940,

downplay or fail to mention entirely the influence of North American minstrelsy on the development of the Cuban comic theater, ascribing influence only to Spanish sources and occasionally the *bouffes parisiennes*. While the Spanish *tonadilla* does bear a strong similarity to the *teatro vernáculo*, especially in its presentation of recurring archetypal characters

⁶ I saw traces of this while visiting the offices of Carl Fischer Music in New York City. While speaking with staffer Marina Voyskun, now a Music Editor at Boosey & Hawkes, I asked about the deletion of references to African American stereotypes from newer versions of works associated with Henry Fillmore’s “Lassus Trombone.” When I mentioned another once-popular Brown and Henderson song, “Someone Had to Pick the Cotton,” notable for the line “that’s why darkies were born,” Voyskun typed the letters N-I-G into her computer and then astounded me with the thousands of resulting song titles that appeared on her screen. Although withdrawn from their sales catalogs, the firm maintained extensive archives of all of these pieces, including the original Fillmore scores I sought.

based on gender and race, such as the *gitana* or Gypsy woman, the failure to analyze North American influences seems a significant omission. The fact that minstrelsy developed in the United States during almost exactly the same period as the *teatro vernáculo* in Cuba seems too much of a coincidence to overlook...In the twentieth century, the influence of minstrelsy on comic theater productions is manifested in many ways, including the use of white gloves and other articles of clothing associated with minstrels by *negritos* and the use of jazz music beginning in the 1910s. (248)

Moore cites sources that recall an increase in minstrel troupes traveling to Cuba between 1860 and 1865 as a practical result of the American Civil War. And, Moore adds, "Blackface carnival traditions have been observed in many other parts of Latin America as well" (253). Such traces of minstrelsy include the continuing publication of the comic book series *Memín Pinguín*, which received official commemoration and enormous public approbation in Mexico with the 2005 release of a series of postage stamps (Camacho Servin).

Keeping these manifestations of minstrelsy in mind during discussions of cultural studies helps avoid simplistic recitations of contemporary culture and comfortable black and white cultural constructions in which music comes from some vaguely defined part of Africa with just enough European influence to make it somehow American. Although insisting on Africa as an originary cultural source may seem to add prestige to African American achievements, this strategy ultimately denigrates those same cultural productions by maintaining simplistic social divisions. Whether promulgated as racial

separation or adulated as multiculturalism, bifurcated distinctions serve as tools in the creation of political and economic power bases by adding the manipulation of cultural readings to the arsenals of the powerful.

Powerful interests in governments and corporations can wield perceived cultural differences as weapons even more effective than mobilizations of brute force or monopolization of resources employed to keep people out, admit groups in celebratory moments of inclusion, and — perhaps most importantly — maintain separations of communities likely to prosper in coalitions. In “Tiras, timbres y estereotipos: el negro Memín Pinguín y la manipulación de la cultura popular con representaciones étnicas,” I consider how the controversy surrounding the *Memín Pinguín* postage stamps served powerful interests in Mexico as well as in the United States, where political leaders

know, in fact, that African American neighborhoods vote for Democrats while the Mexican vote remains divided between the Democratic and Republican parties. The situation will improve — or deteriorate, depending on one’s point of view — as long as the former believe that Mexicans are fundamentally racist and as long as the latter believe that African Americans want to bring down their idols.⁷

Even with the best of intentions, artists and intellectuals find themselves contributing to these effectively wielded perceptions that uphold institutionally useful, but not always valid, cultural differences. “Popular

⁷ “...saben que, en efecto, los barrios afro-americanos votan por demócratas mientras que el voto mexicano queda dividido entre los partidos demócratas y republicanos. La situación mejorará —o empeorará, algo que depende de su punto de vista— siempre que creyeran aquéllos que los mexicanos son fundamentalmente racistas y siempre que creyeran estos que los afro-americanos quieren derrumbar sus ídolos.”

culture's meanings are created through an ongoing dialectic between the commercial object and various 'readings' of it by others," writes Robin Moore.

This is true regardless of whether the object originates from 'below' or 'above.' Popular culture serves as an important means of defining individual identity — ethnic, racial, or otherwise — and the position of that identity relative to others. Especially in the culture of repressed minorities, these constructions reflect an opposition between conformity to dominant views of themselves and an assertion of their own.

(8)

Moore goes on to point out how the discrediting of a previous era's biological support for racial hierarchies has led to "justifications of racial discrimination based on particular readings (or misreadings) of the cultural practices of so-called minority groups" (9). In this way, concludes Moore, cultural expression, whether in the arts or as statements of fashion, creates cognitive maps that observers can apply to members of a 'racial' group. Thus, a seemingly beneficial shift from rationalizations based on nature to formulations centered on nurture ends up reinforcing social stereotypes thought to have been left behind.

"Politically correct metropolitan multiculturalists want the world's others to be identitarians," writes Spivak. "To undo this binary demand is to suggest that peripheral literature may stage more surprising and unexpected maneuvers toward collectivity" (*Death* 55-56). Whether by nation, class, gender, or one of those ever-elusive racial categories, centers, no matter how

well intentioned, continue to reify peripheries with this insistence on identitarianism. Edward Said sees in identity a “process by which the stronger culture, and the more developed society, imposes itself violently upon those who, by the same identity process, are decreed to be a lesser people. Imperialism,” he declares, “is the export of identity” (85). Although they see racial mixtures inspiring “a properly nomad thought that sweeps up English literature and constitutes American literature,” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari “see the dangers, the profound ambiguities,” in examinations of the resulting identities. “For what can be done,” they ask, “to prevent the theme of a race from turning into a racism, a dominant and all-encompassing fascism, or into a sect and a folklore, microfascisms?” Deleuze and Guattari base their view of race on oppression; “there is no dominant race,” they point out; “a race is defined not by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination” (379). Deleuze and Guattari arrive at a conclusion consistent with the American literature they invoke: “Bastard and mixed-blood are the true names of race” (379). Accordingly, the true names of race in the Americas appear in the inscriptions of Black in uppercase since the term refers to a specific group while white in lowercase designates no particular group aside from those not relegated to Black. “As with the Jew,” declared Alain Locke, “persecution is making the Negro international” (7). Similarly, uppercase American Indian and Hispanic identities also form from lowercase white oppression.

These attempts to properly label those who are not white lead to the current comical situation in which those keen to avoid any appearance of bigotry drive themselves crazy trying to keep up with the latest correct name

that generalizes groups they do not wish to stereotype. As the people included in these identifications textually resist, the terms change even as the most up to date corrective replacements persistently reify those designated; Negroes, for example, become Black and then African American;⁸ American Indians, depending on their locale, turn into Native Americans, Aborigines, or First Nations; Spanish Americans, who might hail from any of some twenty-one countries, morph into Hispanics — a term promoted by, among others, Francisco Franco in an attempt to forge alliances with Iberian-American nations — and subsequently Latinos and, for the multi-lingually correct, Latino(a)s. As a result, conversations that distinguish the middleclass son of a Kenyan immigrant father and an Irish-American mother from the impoverished descendant of Alabama slaves remain nearly as impossible as any discussions that differentiate between Andean street musicians and Cuban entrepreneurs or Comanche warriors in the Texas Hill Country and Yurok salmon fishers along the Northern California coastline. Even so, writers could learn to expend the ink required to adequately describe the ethnicity of a partly-Sephardic half-Jew with Norwegian ancestors. Of course, my generalizations here by no means correct the problem, but their heightened specificity may perhaps point the way to a mode of speaking that leads to the naming of individual people with traits only partially accounted for by virtue of their truly-named bastard and mixed-blooded races.

Along with inconsistently concise labels, the persistent nostalgia that romantically insists on recognizing natural abilities pretends to create

⁸ As an undergraduate, I observed a hapless classmate stumble through a discussion of *Heart of Darkness*, finally referring to Conrad's portrayals of black people as "the African Americans in the book." I sometimes wonder if after enduring the class' laughter, she decided, as do other white graduates of humanities departments, to never talk about non-white people again.

meaningful cross-cultural conversation even as it reinforces continued isolation and prejudice. Just as the angel in the house has kept women in closely defined domestic spheres, the angelic voices of gospel choirs have relegated Black people to ghettos. Since pedestals constrain those who maintain them as well as those placed upon them, everyone can learn at least one useful lesson from the practitioners of minstrelsy who blackened their skin and whitened their lips: seemingly natural abilities turn out to be anything but innate. “Merely to sing ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb,’” writes Robert Jourdain, “a child’s brain needs to have absorbed much of its culture’s tonal system” (61). Singers and dancers who seem to perform so effortlessly have generally spent hours honing these skills, not just in schools but at home, often among family members who set an early example by regularly singing and dancing.

Jourdain makes much of this need for young people to learn the culture in which they find themselves, and points out ways that even educated people cling to notions of nature:

A good deal of nonsense about brain lateralization has appeared in the popular press in recent years, usually along the lines that the left brain is coldly analytical and the right brain mystically intuitive. Such descriptions typically extol vast untapped potential in the supposedly underutilized right brain. It’s suggested that if you are a ‘right-brain personality,’ untold genius may be lurking within. Such descriptions are naive in the extreme, being predicated on a misconception of what lateralization is all about. (279-80)

Although Jourdain only touches on specific issues of identity, I have seen

these lateralization theories at work in New York City and Northern California public schools where I presented musical concerts and workshops. On many occasions, teachers and administrators greeted me enthusiastically, and expressed a great deal of interest in how my work would help students develop their left brain or right brain or whichever was, at the moment, responsible for creativity. At the bottom of these discussions, the school personnel really wanted me to deal with students perceived as troubled in some way; these were almost always non-white boys, who teachers believed would respond most effectively to an administration of my mystical musical powers. Little José, I would hear, is really a delightful child, but he doesn't have an aptitude for math, English, or science; if only we could develop his left (or right) brain, we know that he would flourish and find his way in life. Although expressed with the best of intentions, I found it hard to believe, at the twilight of the twentieth century, that educators still tracked difficult non-white students — a redundancy in most of these public school settings — into music or art, sports, or any stereotypical field for those perceived as incapable of academic achievement. Over the years, I discovered that some so-called troubled kids performed music beautifully, which naturally helped me get more gigs, and others just had more troubles than I, not trained as a social worker, psychologist, or police officer, could deal with. Conversely, when given an opportunity, high achievers usually excelled at music just as they did in other areas. Just as public schools tend to push boys towards math and girls into writing,⁹ educators leaning on lateralization theories would have bad boys play percussion while good girls sweetly sing.

⁹ Although this is not directly connected to my thesis, as a parent I am all too prepared to back this up.

As in discussions of music, considerations of identity must incorporate the utility of dissonance necessary for the appreciation of consonance. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha discusses the

subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world. What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood — singular or communal — that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1-2)

Bhabha’s definition of society promises neither the hegemonic integration of melting pots nor the comfortable re-segregation of multiculturalism. Instead, he asks how “strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?” (2).

Subordinated people will not find answers in romantic yearnings for so-called roots in *The Location of Culture*; as an alternative, Bhabha offers the delights of “dwelling in a state of ‘incredulous terror’” and an “‘unhomeliness’ inherent in that rite of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation” (9) along

with “the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence” (11). In recompense, Bhabha posits “the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (4). In this case, the dissonant cadences of cultural confusion resolve — at times — into the consonance of egalitarianism, or at least a movement along the path to that state of being.

“No evolutionary process exists to substitute some theories with others,” writes Néstor García Canclini as if summing up Bhabha’s thoughts; “the problem is in figuring out how they coexist, bump up against or ignore culture as part of communities, culture as something different and culture.com”¹⁰ (*Diferentes* 14). In the wonderfully titled *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados: Mapas de la interculturalidad*, García Canclini warns against analyses that begin with theories of inequality, which can hide differentiations not based on distribution of resources, or those based on unique focus, which only permit critical views from within a group. He also avoids “theoretical explications of difference, or — what tends to be equivalent — resulting conceptualizations of historical experience that, by not allowing challenges through exchange or those viewing alterity from the opposite side, run the risk of turning into dogmatizing”¹¹ (46).

García Canclini offers “América latina” (explained in note 5 of the first chapter of this dissertation) as an example of the problems inherent in defining national identity in the early twenty-first century. Thirty-seven million Spanish

¹⁰ “No hay proceso evolucionista de sustitución de unas teorías por otras: el problema es averiguar cómo coexisten, chocan o se ignoran la cultura comunitaria, la cultura como distinción y la cultura.com.”

¹¹ “La tercera línea es la que propone explicaciones teóricas de la diferencia, o — lo que suele ser equivalente — conceptualizaciones resultantes de una experiencia histórica que, al no dejarse desafiar por los cambios o por quienes ven la alteridad desde el lugar opuesto, corren el riesgo de dogmatizarse.”

speakers have moved from Latin America to the United States, he observes, and thousands more have taken advantage of documented Spanish descent to acquire European passports (*Diferentes* 133). Other groups not as easily connected with Spanish language or the Iberian Peninsula further complicate this picture; in addition to autochthonous groups and African Americans, García Canclini notes the presence of “Arabs, Italians and Jews, and even the most varied Asian migrations (Japanese, Korean, and Chinese). This vast multiculturalism blurs what is supposedly distinct, be it indigenous or Latin, of our America.” This leaves him with the question of how to reach a more inclusive redefinition of Latin Americanness. “Or perhaps,” he acknowledges, “so much multi-ethnicity makes the task impossible”¹² (*Diferentes* 136-37). In the face of cultural variations that cannot fit into one another, *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados* metaphorizes with a visual equivalent of dissonance as seen in the employment of an artistic party game associated with the surrealists, in which participants independently write verses or draw a head, torso, and legs before reading the text or looking at the resulting image in its entirety:

Our cultural variations do not fit into each other. Like a *cadáver exquisito*, joining indigenous people, blacks, *criollos*, mestizos, European and Asian migrations, what has gone on in the countryside and cities constitutes a discontinuous story, with cracks, impossible to read as part of a single plan or image.

Hence the difficulty of moving from there to come up with

¹² “...los árabes, italianos y judíos, hasta las migraciones asiáticas más variadas (japoneses, coreanos y chinos). Esta vasta multiculturalidad desdibuja lo supuestamente distintivo, o sea lo indígena y también lo latino de nuestra América. Hay que preguntarse, entonces, cómo alcanzar una redefinición más inclusiva de lo latinoamericano. O si acaso tanta multietnicidad vuelve imposible la tarea.”

names that designate this set of scenarios: baroque, war to end the world, Latin love, magic realism, narcotraffic, 500 years, utopia, or postmodern warfare.¹³ (137)

Bringing us back to Spivak's proposed linkage with Area Studies, García Canclini calls for studies that "do not attempt to answer questions concerning Latin American identity but that instead understand intercultural alliances we call Caribbean or Andean or economic areas designated as North America or Mercosur"¹⁴ (*Diferentes* 138). In place of identities that serve national or corporate interests or academic disciplines, the intercultural areas suggested in *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados*, which must forever shift according to on-the-ground activity as well as scholarly interest, can usefully correspond to a wide variety of cultural activity.

Peter Wade, writing about specific places and activities in *Music, Race, & Nation: Música Tropical in Colombia*, offers generally useful observations on both the pitfalls of enforced national identity and the possibilities of moving beyond those limits. As seen in García Canclini's proffered *cadáver exquisito*, Wade points out "musical styles that developed in the working-class barrios of Latin American cities, often by adapting European styles and combining them with African-derived (and to a much lesser extent Amerindian) aesthetics and rhythms, and that were then fastened upon by the middle classes, 'cleaned up,' modernized, and made into acceptable national

¹³ "Nuestras variaciones culturales no encajan unas en otras. Como un cadáver exquisito, al sumarse indígenas, negros, criollos, mestizos, las migraciones europeas y asiáticas, lo que nos ha ido sucediendo en campos y ciudades constituye un relato discontinuo, con grietas, imposible de leer bajo un solo régimen o imagen. De ahí la dificultad de encontrar nombres que designen este juego de escenarios: barroco, guerra del fin del mundo, amor latino, realismo mágico, narcotráfico, 500 años, utopía, guerrilla posmoderna."

¹⁴ "Los estudios más productivos no pretenden responder a preguntas sobre la identidad latinoamericana, sino comprender las alianzas interculturales que llamamos Caribe o área andina, las áreas económicas que se denominan Norteamérica o Mercosur."

symbols” (7-8). Concerning musical trends in Latin America, Wade sees “a nationalist project not as simply the obliteration of difference by sameness, but as a mediating tension between these two” (13). As a practical matter, such tension seems preferable to the arrival of accepted conclusions. Said writes, “Both the nationalism in whose name France subjugated Algeria, and the nationalism in whose name the Algerians resisted France since 1830, rely to a very great extent upon a politics of identity” (82). This helps explain why Said goes on to praise Jean Genet’s celebration of “the ecstasy of betrayal” (84). Maintaining the tensions between difference and sameness, humans inevitably seek identity, in themselves and others, but can only comprehend it through rejection. Just as people forge identity out of conflict with other identities, they can comprehend identity — if they dare — by rejecting the identity thus imposed upon them. In the Americas, this begins with a rejection of Old World colonial orders and then a rejection of segregation inevitably followed by a rejection of integration. When presented with the demands of an upward mobility that denigrates their culture, people allowed into a society can remain as oppressed as those kept out; mutual interactions must continually allow for the possibility of rejection.

“The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line,” wrote W.E.B. Du Bois in 1903, “the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea” (23). As Du Bois foresaw, race rose to the fore during the hundred years that followed his statement. It is not clear, however, that anyone has been able to nail down precise color-lines. Even as genocidal maniacs sought to bifurcate Turks and Armenians, Japanese and Chinese, Germans and Jews, Europeans

and Romany, Hutus and Tutsis, and Serbians and Croatians, individuals failed to fit neatly into any of these groups. In the Americas, the situation becomes even more complicated. “The large scale emigration of Africans, Europeans, and, later in the nineteenth century, Asians to the Americas created a human medley unprecedented in history,” writes Olson in *Mapping Human History*.

In the Old World, skin color, facial features, and other physical characteristics have tended to vary continuously. As a result, people in Europe, Africa, and Asia generally interacted with people who were much like themselves physically... In the New World, the situation was the reverse. The three major groups of immigrants came from geographic extremes of their respective continents — western African, northwestern Europe, and eastern Asia. These groups were overlaid on a fourth group — Native Americans — that had Asian roots but differed substantially from Chinese and Japanese populations. A mischievous god moving groups of people around the globe would have a difficult time assembling a more disparate collection. (59)

Keeping in mind the biological relationship that connects all of these groups, Olson points out how they changed in appearance and developed different cultures while living apart. Americans, like all people, share common ancestors in Africa, but bring together the farthest-flung family members in relatively close spaces. To varying degrees, governments of the Americas have embraced these relatives rhetorically even though they rarely made willing efforts to follow through with any movement towards meaningful mestizaje,

multiculturalism, or hybridity. In the absence of this promised political support, cultural production remained for those seeking to comprehend identity in the Americas. American identities rely on traditions of cultural production but also turn on them, rejecting not only the cultural but also the multicultural. American identity exists in the interstices. While seeped in tradition, authors of American identity develop ecstasies of betrayal that identify not only through this rejection by the perceived mainstream but also by rejecting those who would control inclusion.

Everyone Has an Accent

What is the largest country in the world?
 Cuba, with its cemeteries in Angola, its
 population in Florida, and its food in China.
 Paco, an acquaintance in Havana¹⁵

The scene looks like so many black and white television interview settings. Joaquín Soler Serrano, the interviewer, sits next to an artfully disarranged table reading an introductory passage from *Concierto barroco*, a recent novel by the interviewee, Alejo Carpentier, who sits at the other end of the table. As the famous author responds to Soler's opening remarks, the interviewer delves not into the substance of the author's words but instead points out the manner in which he speaks:

Perhaps it surprises our viewers to hear a Cuban, in one sense very cosmopolitan, very much a world traveler but hardly an archetype of a pure Latin American. Here is a man one hundred percent American; in another era we would say he presents something of the European image of the intellectual American who lives in the Old World as the good savage. I say this to point out that it must sound strange to hear a great Cuban writer speaking with this accent that is not exactly an accent of the tropics.¹⁶

¹⁵ I have withheld the surnames of this resident of Havana who shared this anti-regime humor. Here is the original version of the joke cited in this text: "Cuál país es el más grande en el mundo? Cuba, con sus cementerios en Angola, su población en Florida y su comida en China." This joke plays on the use of China to designate the place of anything that does not exist.

¹⁶ "Acaso sorprendan nuestros espectadores escuchar a un cubano por otra parte muy cosmopolita, muy viajado por todo el mundo pero es acaso un arquetipo de un latinoamericano puro, es un hombre cien por cien, eh americano, diríamos que en otra época representaba un poco para los europeos la imagen del buen salvaje tradicional en Europa el intelectual americano que vive en el viejo mundo, digo que debe sonar raro escuchar a un gran escritor cubano hablando con este acento que no es exactamente un acento del trópico."

Carpentier betrays no surprise at these comments on his accent, which merely prompt him to respond with a rambling series of explanations that variously inculcate a childhood deformity so serious his parents called in a specialist, his situation as the son of immigrants, and his father's insistence on maintaining a Francophone household. Although grateful for the formation that made him bilingual, Carpentier points out that he stopped writing in French early in his career and considers Spanish not only a richer language but also one with which he identifies more closely. "My father did well by giving me a double instrument for comprehending culture and the world," he tells Soler, "but it had a double edge since it left me with this somewhat strange accent that I have, which is effectively neither very Caribbean nor very *criollo* even though, as you say, I take myself as completely Cuban and proud to be so."¹⁷

What makes this exchange between Soler and Carpentier seem stranger than one person's accent is the apparent need for any dialogue on the topic. At this moment, with an acclaimed novel just published and at least one more major work to follow before his death four years later, Carpentier would seem to exemplify a Cuban man of letters. He has, after all, prolifically created a series of short stories, novels, poetry, ballet scripts, essays, articles, and radio programs that have been disseminated and well received throughout the Spanish-speaking world. The first chapter of this dissertation noted how Carpentier has, in *El reino de este mundo*, formulated a theory of American Marvelous Realism that by the time of this interview with Soler clearly resonates in the Magical Realism made famous by Latin American "boom"

¹⁷ "Mi padre me hizo un bien dándome un doble instrumento de conocimiento del mundo y de la cultura pero esto forma un doble filo porque me dotó de este acento un poco extraño que tengo y que efectivamente no es ni muy caribe ni muy criollo aunque por lo que usted me dijo yo me tomo por un cubano integral y orgulloso de serlo."

literature. His early works have established him as a leading proponent of *afrocubanismo*, a cultural development that continues to influence Cuban politics in the early twenty-first century. Politically, Carpentier has stood out as a spokesperson for the *Minorista* movement and consequently languished in the political prison Machado set up for those who criticized US manipulation. At the time of this interview on Spanish television, Carpentier serves as Cuba's cultural attaché to the Parisian embassy. Taken altogether, it hardly seems necessary for him to insist on his Cuban identity.

Opponents of Carpentier — and these included fierce political as well as literary rivals — relished stories of his accent and supposed foreign birth, a phenomenon recently resurrected in useless discussions of Barack Obama's birthplace.¹⁸ The “Carpentier, Alejo” entry in the online *Encyclopædia Britannica* reports that Carpentier was “born in Lausanne [but] claimed throughout his life that he was Cuban-born. He was taken to Havana as an infant. The language that he spoke first was his father's, however, which left him with a French accent in Spanish.” In addition to this obvious contradiction of an infant developing a lifelong accent, this entry ignores other accounts that claim the author suffered from a physical defect or that his mother's family came from Russia, France, or Cuba; my favorite among these comes from González Echevarría, who diagnoses Carpentier with “a speech impediment that gives his Spanish a strong French accent” (30). More crucially, as a source for its information, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* cites *The Pilgrim at Home* by González Echevarría, which, while referring to Carpentier's French origins, actually states that “his parents had emigrated to Cuba in 1902, two years

¹⁸ ...an unimportant detail constitutionally since, as the son of an American citizen, he should have the same rights to serve as president regardless of his birthplace.

before his birth” (37).

Jorge Amado eloquently refutes those who continue to insist on the importance of an extra-American birthplace for Carpentier, Obama, or any other American. The parents of Nacib Saad, one of the lovers in Amado’s *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*,¹⁹ bring him from Syria to Brazil as a three-year-old toddler. “He remembered nothing at all about Syria,” writes Amado, “so thoroughly had he blended into his new environment and so completely had he become both a Brazilian and an Ilhéan. It was as if he had been born at the moment of the arrival of the ship in Bahia when he was being kissed by his weeping father” (36-37). With surprisingly little difficulty, Nacib’s parents manage to register their children almost immediately as citizens. Sometime later, the children become something more than naturalized Brazilians when, during

the fight for land...some men burned down the registry office in order to destroy certain deeds and records. All the registry books of birth and deaths were consumed in the flames.

Accordingly, hundreds of Ilhéans had to be re-registered.

Fortunately, there were qualified witnesses ready to swear that little Nacib and the timid Salma, the children of Aziz and Zoraia, had been born in the village of Ferradas and had been previously registered in the office, before the fire. (37)

The Brazilian notary involved in these transactions acts more out of practical concerns than any incipient multi-cultural tendency. In a frontier territory where forgeries and other fraudulent documents as well as violent

¹⁹ Unable to read *Gabriela, cravo e canela* in Portuguese, I turned to a beautifully rendered Spanish translation by Rosa Corgatelli and Cristina Barros. The citations in this chapter come from the English version by James L. Taylor and William L. Grossman.

confrontations serve to construct realities of land ownership, observes

Amado's narrator, the notary Segismundo

cheerfully registered all the children that appeared before him as having been born in the County of Ilhéus, State of Bahia, Brazil...How could one be bothered with such miserable legal details as the exact place and date of a child's birth when one was living dangerously in the midst of gunfights, armed bandits, and deadly ambushes? ... What did it matter, really, where the little Brazilian about to be registered was born — whether in Syria or Ferradas, the south of Italy or Pirangi, Portugal or Rio do Braço? (37-38)

In the end, Segismundo “believed, with the majority of the people, that what made a man a native was not his place of birth but his courage in entering the jungle and braving death, the cacao seedlings he planted, the shops and warehouses he opened — in short, his contribution to the development of the region” (38). In these cases, Americans create themselves.

Amado not only authorizes this space in which his protagonists can morph into Americans, he also builds on this transformation in their character development. Nacib's neighbors, for example, notice that he looks and speaks differently than most other immigrants to Ilhéus, giving rise to his nickname as “the Arab.” While he has no problem with this salutation, he dislikes it when friends call him “the Turk,” a nickname he despises since his family has told him that the Turks are enemies of the Syrians. Neither designation, however, makes him less a part of the white community, along with the descendents of Europeans who enjoy the privileges accorded to the classes not

deemed indigenous or black. In fact, Nacib even manages to become more European than the immigrants from Portugal and Spain when he breaks with the local tradition of killing unfaithful wives. Astonishingly, given the scene set by Amado's narrator, the men of Ilhéus admire Nacib for not slaughtering his wife Gabriela and his friend Tonico after discovering them in bed together. "At last Ilhéus has a civilized man," announces Nacib's friend Nhô-Galo (372). Mundinho Falcão, an important figure in the commerce and politics of Ilhéus, declares, "What you did was splendid. You behaved like a European — a man from London or Paris" (379). Falcão's choice of cities clearly sets Nacib apart and makes him even more worthy than those who have come from Lisbon or Madrid. When Nacib begins his relationship with Gabriela, it seems like a lowering of class even though the white people in Ilhéus greatly admire her. Gabriela, on the other hand, has no papers with which to identify herself. In order to marry Nacib, the notary has to falsify a birth record. Since a maternal aunt and uncle raised her, she does not even know her own surname.

Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon adds a linguistic element to the rise of Nacib. At first, only Gabriela appreciates Nacib's unusual manner of speech. She loves hearing Nacib call her "bie" while making love to her in a gringo language.²⁰ Near the end of the novel, Nacib decides to follow his friend Mundinho Falcão into politics. Although unaccustomed to public speaking, in his first campaign speech he enjoys "an unprecedented success, perhaps because, having begun in Portuguese and then finding himself at a loss for fine words, he had switched to Arabic and let loose a stream of high-speed, unintelligible eloquence. The applause was prolonged and deafening." João

²⁰ Long before it entered the borderlands vocabulary between Mexico and the United States, gringo served as a South American term for anything foreign.

Fulgêncio declares it “the sincerest and most inspired speech of the whole campaign” (389). The very foreignness of his discourse makes his passion seem more authentic to his Brazilian audience. “As a partner of the exporter and an enemy of Tonico,” observes Amado, “the Arab (a native-born Brazilian and a registered voter) had jumped into the campaign” (389). With this switch to Nacib as “a native-born Brazilian,” the novel simultaneously presents this main character as Syrian and Brazilian; his form of speech and the precise details of his birthplace can hardly matter anymore.

Conversely, Gabriela, whom the narrator assumes was born in Brazil’s interior and has never left the country, will never enjoy the same rights of citizenship so easily assumed by Nacib; her gender, color, and slave ancestors keep this native insider on the outside of Ilhéus’ power structure, effectively demolishing facile assumptions of identity formation in the Americas. “The question concerning what it means to be Latin American is changing in the beginning of the twenty-first century, formerly convincing answers unravel and doubts arise about the utility of making continental commitments,” writes Néstor García Canclini in *Latinoamericanos buscando lugar en este siglo*. “Increasingly, other voices intervene in this discussion: indigenous and African American, country and suburban, feminine, and others from the margins” (18).²¹ Although García Canclini observes these changes in the twenty-first century, Amado’s novel effectively shows that these new voices are by no means new; a half century earlier Gabriela spoke and three centuries before that El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega spoke. Since the New World became a

²¹ “La pregunta sobre qué significa ser latinoamericano está cambiando a comienzos del siglo XXI, se desvanecen respuestas que antes convencían y surgen dudas sobre la utilidad de tomar compromisos continentales. Aumentaron las voces que intervienen en este debate: indígenas y afroamericanas, campesinas y suburbanas, femeninas y provenientes de otros márgenes.”

new world — and, of course, even earlier — autochthonous, enslaved, feminine, and other marginalized voices have spoken, sung, written, and otherwise made themselves heard to those who would listen. Doubts about continental commitments, whether American or Latin American, will always keep precise definitions of continents in flux.

As García Canclini adds up various factors, such as increasingly varied reasons for immigration — with wealthier migrants following their less well off compatriots in order to do business, create art, or study — and the residences established by Latin Americans in Europe and the United States, the entire concept of Latin America unravels as “many Europeans and people in the United States have pieces of their being in Latin America” (28).²² While *Latinoamericanos buscando lugar en este siglo* usefully describes new aspects of these longstanding human movements, especially as they relate to new communications technologies, it relates nothing fundamentally new. “With few exceptions, in matters of culture the local has always been irradiated, as it were, by the global,” observes Stephen Greenblatt (58). “Literary critics, busily making claims for cultural authenticity,” he adds, “have been far too prone to ignore the overwhelming evidence of cultural *métissage*, a global circulation, mutual influence, and cross-breeding deriving from the very substance of the objects we study” (59). And, in the end, García Canclini’s own text deconstructs the very idea of Latin America as an entirely separate entity. “Our understanding of the world,” he notes, “can come neither from a single center according to theories of imperialism nor from the fragmented

²² “...muchos europeos y estadounidenses tienen pedazos de lo que son en América Latina.”

dissemination of power imagined by postmodernism”²³ (66). As concepts of identity transform from spatial entities marked by geographical boundaries to shared images transmitted with increasing rapidity over the Internet, García Canclini describes a shift from “forced identities” to an “age of voluntary integration” in which he replaces identity with identification. “In transnational interactions the same individual can identify him or herself with various languages and ways of living...Symbolic maps change even though geopolitical borders remain the same, for example, when a significant portion of a nation lives, like the Cubans, the Mexicans, and the Salvadorians, outside of the country”²⁴ (41). Following this, the designation Latin American becomes at once too small and too large; it cannot usefully describe the numerous sites specified or alluded to in García Canclini’s text nor can it, without forever slighting crucial cultural movements, comprehend the hemisphere’s last half millennium.

No Latin America exists separately from any other America, just as no African America, Anglo America, or any other America functions or has ever functioned in isolation. “If this appears,” as Paul Gilroy concedes, “to be little more than a roundabout way of saying that the reflexive cultures and consciousness of the European settlers and those of the Africans they enslaved, the ‘Indians’ they slaughtered, and the Asians they indentured were not, even in situations of the most extreme brutality, sealed off hermetically from each

²³ “No podemos comprender el mundo ni desde un centro único, según se hacía en las teorías del imperialismo, ni desde la diseminación fragmentada del poder imaginada por el posmodernismo.”

²⁴ “...identidades forzadas...etapa de integraciones voluntaristas...Pero este mismo autor finalmente prefiere hablar, más que de identidad, de identificación...En las interacciones transnacionales un mismo individuo puede identificarse con varias lenguas y estilos de vida. . . Los mapas simbólicos se modifican, aunque las fronteras geopolíticas se mantengan: por ejemplo, cuando una porción significativa de una nación vive, como los cubanos, los mexicanos y los salvadoreños, en el extranjero.”

other, then so be it” (2). Gilroy only begins with this, however; his text goes on to challenge prevailing *ignore-ance* and the ways in which commentators across the political spectrum avoid complicated discussion that might reveal connections that leave white people out of the center. Acknowledging that continual cross-cultural interactions “ought to be an obvious and self-evident observation,” Gilroy notes how

its stark character has been systematically obscured by commentators from all sides of political opinion. Regardless of their affiliation to the right, left, or centre, groups have fallen back on the idea of cultural nationalism, on the overintegrated conceptions of culture which present immutable, ethnic differences as an absolute break in the histories and experiences of “black” and “white” people. Against this choice stands another, more difficult option: the theorisation of creolisation, *métissage*, *mestizaje*, and hybridity. From the viewpoint of ethnic absolutism, this would be a litany of pollution and impurity. These terms are rather unsatisfactory ways of naming the processes of cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse and avoid capture by its agents. (2)

Originary concepts of culture that create excuses for maintaining the Other as an Other come from all sides, observes Gilroy, who notes “that much of the precious intellectual legacy claimed by African-American intellectuals as the substance of their particularity is in fact only partly their absolute ethnic property” (15). Once again, the question of the Americas becomes one of

sorting out cultural elements that differentiate without reifying while identifying common features without universalizing.

Issues of differentiation, reification, identification, and universalization appear consistently in the Caribbean, an area never entirely associated with any other part of America and, as well, one that has no commonly identified borders. Authors who identify with the Caribbean not only have to deal with the colonizing Europeans, enslaved Africans, slaughtered Indians, and indentured Asians but also a linguistic Babel and a protean geography. Unlike North, Central, and South America, associated — however inaccurately — with English or Spanish, Caribbean people continue to speak Creole, Dutch, English, French, Spanish, and Yoruba. And although precise lines demarcate the continental regions of the Americas, at least on maps, scholars still contend over whether the Caribbean includes only island nations or also coastal areas of mainland countries and, if so, how far from the coast these areas extend.

Even though the Cuban literary essayist Roberto Fernández Retamar, President of *Casa de las Américas*, includes the Caribbean in a greater Latin America, he recognizes that others might legitimately reject this designation:

English-speaking Antilleans usually reject inclusion of their area within 'Latin America,' citing the limited role played by the Latin world in its formation. Their view would NOT lack reason if 'Latin America' were a scientific chemical definition, such as that of a chemical body, and not merely a name like that of a river or a person. But on this basis, I do not see why they prefer the denomination 'West Indies' since that, far from being

a definition, is the consecration of an error.²⁵ (120-21 emphasis in original)

In this reasoning, Fernández Retamar leaves out Yakis, Yoruba, and others who speak neither English nor Spanish as a native tongue and groups such as Celts, Jews, and Moslems whose ancestors adopted English under constraints of indenture or slavery or as a means of escaping those conditions. Even so, he touches on the complications of considering the Caribbean as Latin and in so doing opens up, whether he means to or not, the question of what places can be included in Latin America.

González Echevarría, living outside of his native Cuba while serving as the Sterling Professor of Hispanic and Comparative Literature at Yale, adds to these complications. In “Literature of the Hispanic Caribbean” he observes how the sugar industry formed an “intimate relationship between North American culture and that of the Hispanic Caribbean. At the same time,” he adds, “there is no question that the Hispanic Caribbean today includes New York, Miami and many other areas of the continental United States and that there is a strong Hispanic Caribbean influence on the culture of the United States” (3). As in my readings of García Canclini, I would only argue with the recent placement of these parts of the Caribbean; long before “today,” Miami formed part of the Spanish colony Florida, and as *El Diario-La Prensa* nears completion of its first century of daily publication, it has become one of New York City’s most enduring newspapers. More recently, writes González

²⁵ “Los antillanos de lengua inglesa suelen rechazar el que su área sea incluida dentro de la «América Latina», aduciendo el escaso papel desempeñado por el mundo latino en su formación. NO les faltaría razón en esto, si «América Latina» fuera una definición científica química, como la de un cuerpo químico, y no un mero nombre, como el de un río o una persona. Pero sobre esta base, no se ve por qué preferir la denominación «West Indies», ya que «Indias Occidentales», lejos de ser una definición, es la consagración de un error.”

Echevarría, “American culture is a factor in the Hispanic Caribbean, as important today as (and in some ways more so than) the region’s links to its Hispano-African past” (3). In this sense, the United States has become closer to the Hispanic Caribbean than any other part of Latin America for reasons that González Echevarría recognizes as having deep roots into the past:

The nineteenth century set the Caribbean apart from the rest of Latin America. The Continent gained its freedom from Spain, while the islands remained as part of her archaic, crumbling empire. Yet, while politically the islands had fallen behind, the fact is that they had already become neo-colonial states of European powers other than Spain, and were tied to the United States in a new form of economic dependence that simply took longer to arrive in other areas of Latin America. (3-4)

González Echevarría sees the impact of this economic dependence on culture in the way in which “the mass-media world, enveloping the characters in a new, powerful language, and threatening the very essence of Caribbean culture, paradoxically reveals that today’s Caribbean culture is, above all, the remains of various traditional cultures, recast in the language of mass-media” (16). He concludes by wondering, “Is it possible to say that there is a specifically Hispanic Caribbean literature?” (17) His answer:

Clearly not: the literature produced in the Hispanic Caribbean is part of Latin American literature, and ultimately of Western literature. But one can say that the literature written in the Hispanic Caribbean has some features of its own that allow us to speak, however loosely, of a literature of the Hispanic

Caribbean. To my mind, its most important characteristic is the conception of a syncretic social myth giving a sense of national and regional identity, a myth whose outward manifestation is popular music. The belief that popular music incarnates all the most autochthonous characteristics that unite Cuban, Dominican or Puerto Rican people, and that, beyond that, it unites the peoples of the Hispanic Caribbean, is an underlying assumption which Hispanic Caribbean literature has made since the twenties, but which has roots going back to the sixteenth century. (17)

Another Cuban-born professor who taught in the United States, Antonio Benítez Rojo, considers extending the Caribbean to include “a great part of the United States and Brazil, the coastal regions of Colombia and Venezuela, and the western strip of Ecuador and Peru, which faces the Pacific”²⁶ (388). In *La isla que se repite*, Benítez Rojo looks not only at geographical connections and population movements, but also at cultural production in order to make this case for a wider Caribbean. “For example,” he observes, “it would be difficult to deny that salsa is a Caribbean dance simply because it was born in New York”²⁷ (388). Musically, one could also include Rafael Hernández, who composed and recorded “Lamento Borincano” and “Linda Quisqueya” — songs strongly identified with, respectively, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic — in New York City. As these invocations of places in the United States make clear, Caribbean music — and, I argue,

²⁶ “...una gran parte de los Estados Unidos y el Brasil, las regiones costeras de Colombia y Venezuela y la frontera occidental de Ecuador y Perú, la cual mira el Pacífico.”

²⁷ “Por ejemplo, sería difícil negar que la salsa es un baile caribeño por el simple hecho de que nació en Nueva York.”

literature — has been created in them, if not as far back as the sixteenth century then certainly by the twentieth. If Hurston's accustomed stomping grounds do not encompass Latin America then neither would Havana, Carpentier's birthplace.

Making these connections between New York, Florida, and the rest of the Caribbean, which seem obvious upon consideration, sets the scene in which this chapter hopes to place Carpentier and ultimately Hurston. Within these places, Carpentier and Hurston discover the interstices necessary for the existence and formulation of an American culture. In *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*, González Echevarría turns to the insider position of an outsider within the novel. “The insistence on *being there* — to use Clifford Geertz' formula — and being able to convince the reader of what is being written, takes a peculiar form in the case of the Latin American author because his conceit consists in affecting to have always been there, given that he is a native of the culture” (156-57). This insider position alone will not suffice, however; at the same time that the Latin American author essays this construction of authenticity, the text must simultaneously establish the authority of an outsider “able to record it, to inscribe it. Anthropology,” explains González Echevarría, “furnishes the novelists with the methodological instruments, the rhetoric or discourse to be both there and outside” (157).

Like many of the other Latin American authors cited in *Myth and Archive*, Carpentier made ample use of the discourse of anthropology, even when rejecting the supposed certainties of anthropological objectivity. As Carpentier's narrator in *Los pasos perdidos* moves upriver searching for the

origins of music only discoverable in America, he ultimately finds them undiscoverable. “Just as the narrator-protagonist of the novel discovers that he is unable to wipe the slate clean to make a fresh start,” observes González Echevarría, “so the book, in searching for a new, original narrative, must contain all previous ones, and in becoming an Archive return to the most original of those modalities... Thus *Los pasos perdidos* dismantles the central enabling delusion of Latin American writing: the notion that in the New World a new start can be made, unfettered by history” (3-4). As related in the previous chapter, Carpentier begins this story in New York City, outside of Brentano’s bookstore on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue. After that, most of the novel takes place in Venezuela, which Carpentier declared “a compendium of the continent: there are its great rivers, its endless plains, its gigantic mountains, the jungle. For me,” he continued, “the land of Venezuela provided a point of contact with the soil of America, and placing myself into its jungles brought to life the fourth day of Creation” (“Confesiones sencillas” 14).²⁸ Carpentier’s reflective placement of the story in the context of Genesis brings together the introduction of light on the fourth day of creation with the four beat pulse in music, a meter so pervasive that, as noted in the previous chapter, musicians call it “common time.” In the same interview, the author even refers to the era as the *Cuaternario*, a musical as well as a geological term, thus granting to music the power of illumination.

In Venezuela, the narrator of *Los pasos perdidos* engages in extended musical anthropology, what specialists now refer to as ethnomusicology, as he travels up the Orinoco River to explore supposed origins of music. Finding

²⁸ “un compendio del Continente: allí están sus grandes ríos, sus llanos interminables, sus gigantescas montañas, la selva. La tierra venezolana fue para mí como un toma de contacto con el suelo de América, y meterme en sus selvas, conocer el cuarto día de la Creación.”

himself in a jungle paradise, even if only paradisiacal in comparison to his workaday point of departure, the narrator decides to complete a musical score for instruments and voices, a project that causes him to consider language and identity issues germane to the performability of the proposed work.

Composing a score on a Spanish text, he believes, creates special problems. “It had never entered my mind to compose the music for a poem written in this language,” recalls the narrator, “which of itself would constitute an obstacle to the performance of a choral work in any important artistic center” (218). After recognizing this artistic preference for recognized languages of operas and oratorios, the narrator acknowledges his own distance from what he comes to see as his maternal idiom by asking, “what was my real tongue? I knew German from my father. With Ruth I talked English, the language of my boyhood education; French, as a rule, with Mouche; the Spanish of my Abridged Grammar — *Estos, Fabio* — with Rosario. But this too, was the language of the *Lives of the Saints*, bound in purple velvet, from which my mother used to read to me” (218). This movement from the father to a cold wife, a deceitful lover, and then an idealized woman supposedly brings this narrator to his most authentic European language; at the end, however, this American character realizes that he has no language to call his own.

Can American writers, along with other artists and intellectuals, have a language of their own? Without a Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o returning to a linguistic equivalent of Gikũyũ, America has, at best, an Achebean adaption of European languages to pidgins, creoles, and other local usages in which, as Guillermo Cabrera Infante notes in a warning attached to the beginning of *Tres tristes tigres*, one can write a book “*en cubano*.” Tomson Highway’s inclusion of

Cree phrases need not deter an English-speaking reader from delving into *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Even El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega wrote his *Comentarios reales de los Incas* in Spanish rather than in his mother's tongue, and most of us who have read Mayan poetry or studied *Popul Vuh* did so in Spanish rather than in Quechua, Nahuatl, or any of the myriad languages spoken in America before the arrival of Columbus. Histories written in Navajo or Cree, for example, could provide a very different view of American origins. Although such narratives exist, a vast majority of American writers from all origins rely on American variations, those Achebean adaptations that make of us all Calibans speaking American versions of Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, European tongues transformed into those of another continent.

Carpentier credits an Italian source as initially inspiring his desire to journey into America's interior. *Los pasos perdidos*, he tells Soler Serrano, is the product of, is the result, I should say, of a voyage that I longed to make since childhood. Like all boys my age — I don't know if boys that age still continue to do so — we gorged ourselves on Emilio Salgari. (I do not know if boys still read Emilio Salgari. Emilio Salgari is marvelous, to my mind much more interesting than Jules Verne. The majority of boys detested Jules Verne; Emilio Salgari enchanted me.) And — during one of these childhood diseases, this scarlet fever that has been eradicated from the planet — I had in a fevered state read a novel called *El hombre de fuego*, which is a novel that takes place in the Amazon jungle, and had been left with a

childhood desire to penetrate the Amazon jungle.²⁹

I deliberately include Carpentier's parenthetical aside here to demonstrate his continuing appreciation of Salgari a half century after reading *El hombre de fuego*. Having read many critiques of *Los pasos perdidos*, I have not come across even one that connects the novel to these childhood readings of Carpentier; perhaps this is due, in part, to the manner in which *El hombre de fuego* plays on racial stereotypes in the same uncomfortable ways one sees in minstrelsy. This calls for intervention, however, since a look back at this work usefully illuminates some of the identity issues that Carpentier takes up in *Los pasos perdidos* and later in *El arpa y la sombra*, and provides some connections seen in Hurston's work, particularly *Moses, Man of the Mountain*.

Alvaro Viena, the Portuguese protagonist of *El hombre de fuego*, valiantly fights his way through violent clashes with *eimuros*, *cahetas*, and other native Brazilian tribes. Although Carpentier adapts his tone to mid-twentieth-century sensibilities, his view of American autochthonous people has a great deal in common with Salgari's fin de siècle depictions. Tribes all live primitively in these texts, only differing in degrees of savagery. In Salgari's novel, only the *Tupinambas* exhibit any redeeming features, and these because of their willingness to accept European guidance and leadership. On the other side, exceptional Europeans such as the Spaniard sailor, Señor Díaz, quickly learn native secrets of survival. In this, Díaz resembles Yannes,

²⁹ "...es el producto de, es el resultado, mejor dicho, de un viaje que anhelaba hacer desde la niñez. Como todos los niños de mi edad — no sé si siguen así los niños de mi edad de aquella época — nos alimentábamos de Emilio Salgari. Yo no sé si los niños siguen leyendo Emilio Salgari. Emilio Salgari es una maravilla, para mi juicio mucho más interesante que Julio Verne. La mayoría de los niños detestaba Julio Verne; me encantaba Emilio Salgari. Y había leído — una de esas enfermedades infantiles, esas escarlatinas que han sido caducados el mundo — había leído en un estado febril una novela titulada *El hombre de fuego*, que es una novela que ocurría en la selva amazónica, y me había quedado de un deseo infantil de penetrar la selva amazónica."

the intrepid Greek explorer encountered by the narrator of *Los pasos perdidos*. As depicted by Salgari, Díaz “like the Indians, knew how to orient himself and find the proper path in the densest jungle without needing a compass”³⁰ (47). Throughout the story, Díaz demonstrates his acquired familiarity with the strange names of herbs and flowers, some of which he uses to cure himself and others.

Unlike Díaz, the Indians that appear in *El hombre de fuego* hardly need to learn the layout of the land. While guiding his European masters through the jungle, the *Tupinamba* called Sapo Hinchado (Bloated Toad) demonstrates an uncanny ability to recognize everything he sees. “Guided by his marvelous instinct,” observes the narrator, “the Indian plunged once again into the jungle”³¹ (99). He can even distinguish members of different tribes by the songs they sing. Autochthonous people who appear here have focused their technological efforts exclusively on eating propinquitous tribes while avoiding being eaten by them. “Almost all of the Indians of Brazil,” reports the narrator, “who continuously go to war in order to provide themselves with prisoners to devour, construct their villages in a way that prevents them from being surprised by their enemies”³² (98). Throughout the novel, the narrator pauses for such didactic asides, with similar lessons on the history of the *caobo* tree, the habits of native animals, and the attributes of *mate*.

In spite of experiencing difficulties and witnessing horrific scenes of violence, the Europeans enjoy splendid moments during their jungle getaway.

³⁰ “...lo mismo que los indios, sabía orientarse y dirigirse sin necesidad de brújula en las selvas más intrincadas.”

³¹ “Guiado por su maravilloso instinto, el indio se internó otra vez en la selva.”

³² “Casi todos los indios de Brasil, que viven en continua guerra para proporcionarse prisioneros que devorar, construían sus aldeas de modo que no pudieran ser sorprendidos por sus enemigas.”

After eluding a band of *cahetas*, Alvaro, Díaz, and García the cabin boy camp on a deserted island in the middle of a large lagoon. “This is really paradise!”³³ enthusiastically exclaims Alvaro (57). Later, Alvaro again calls the jungle island a paradise, adding, “Blessed land, where bending down suffices to pick up everything necessary in life! And here I called it ungrateful!”³⁴ (61-62). This eventually leads Alvaro to make his life in Brazil. Upon the death of Díaz, Alvaro, who has escaped from several tribes of ferocious savages, becomes the cacique of the *Tupinambas*, the tribe that helped him escape, as a result of Díaz’ penultimate utterance, “The *Man of Fire*..., the chief of the *Tupinambas*..., the invincible!”³⁵ (151 emphasis in the original). Now known throughout the region as “el hombre de fuego,” the man of fire, because of his arquebus, Alvaro gains the admiration of the *Tupinamba* and matrimony with the “the daughters of various celebrated chiefs” who bear him “many descendents”³⁶ (151). Alvaro’s presence helps the tribe militarily and, the text suggests, technologically as well. Like the Adelantado of *Los pasos perdidos*, Alvaro founds a city on what, in fact, becomes the site of modern-day Bahia.

In an addendum to the story that begins to look like the dénouement of *Los pasos perdidos*, a Norman ship appears in the bay, tempting Alvaro to return with them and visit his own people in Europe. Not wanting to offend the European sensibilities of his shipboard hosts, Alvaro leaves most of his family behind, taking only his favorite wife, Paraguazu. The behavior of the other wives recalls Carpentier’s Rosario, who looks like a widow as soon as

³³ “¡Esto es una verdadero paraíso! —exclamó Alvaro entusiasmado”

³⁴ “¡Dichosa tierra, donde basta agacharse para recoger todo lo necesario para la vida! ¡Y yo que la llamaba ingrata!”

³⁵ “¡El hombre de fuego..., el cacique de los *tupinambas*..., el invencible!”

³⁶ “las hijas de varios caciques célebres... muchos descendientes”

the protagonist boards the plane that takes him away from her. “They say that upon seeing him leave Brazil, his other wives flung themselves into the water, begging him to take them with him, and that several of them preferred drowning to being abandoned by the *Man of Fire*, whom they regarded as a demigod”³⁷ (152 emphasis in the original). In spite of their promises to return Alvaro to his homeland, the Normans do not stop in Lisbon but instead deliver him to the French monarchs, Henry II and his mother, Catherine of Medici, who adore Paraguazu and serve as godparents for her baptism. In return for their affection, the monarchs hope that Alvaro will help them seize Brazil from Portugal.

With some difficulty, Alvaro manages to escape France and show up at the court of King John of Portugal, who sends him back to Brazil under the protection of Francisco Pereira Coutiño,³⁸ a land grantee of feudal property along the Bahian coast between the San Francisco River and Padram Point. Once they arrive in Brazil, Pereira Coutiño ignores Alvaro’s advice and treats all of the Brazilian-born inhabitants cruelly, even the *Tupinamba* who have proven loyalty to their beloved white cacique (152). While Pereira Coutiño keeps Alvaro prisoner on a ship, Paraguazu raises an insurrection among the *Tupinambas* and their allies, the *Tamayos*. The rebels burn Portuguese villages and sugar mills and kill colonists, including Pereira Coutiño’s son. Pereira Coutiño and the other Portuguese survivors escape to the colonial city of Os Illéos,³⁹ taking Alvaro with them. Alvaro finally convinces Pereira Coutiño to make a peace treaty with the *Tupinamba*. Even before signing the pact,

³⁷ “Se cuenta que al verle alejarse del Brasil, sus otras mujeres se arrojaron al agua suplicándole que las llevase consigo, y que varias de ellas prefirieron ahogarse a abandonar al hombre de fuego, a quien miraban como a un semidiós.”

³⁸ Probably Pereira Coutinho, an early figure in the early history of Bahia province.

³⁹ Bringing this essay back to the site of Amado’s *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*

however, Pereira Coutiño breaks his word and returns to punish his foes. A storm breaks propitiously, destroying Pereira Coutiño's fleet and freeing Alvaro. The white cacique then returns to his tribe, now seeing himself as not European but instead as *Caramura* (the man of fire), the leader of his people, the *Tupinamba*. In this capacity, he establishes good relations with the Portuguese, including "Tomás de Sousa, who one could say was the most important colonizer of Brazil"⁴⁰ (154). The book ends with the death of *Caramura* "at an advanced age, having left very many children. Today, the families of Bahia proudly consider this fortunate adventurer among their ancestors"⁴¹ (154).

As much as Alvaro resembles the Adelantado of *Los pasos perdidos*, both figures bear striking similarities to an even earlier European traveler. "When Columbus landed on the coast of the West Indies after his first voyage," observes Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*, "he may have thought that he had reached Japan, but he was still more certain of having rediscovered the earthly paradise" (74). But even Columbus could not have considered this paradise simple; in the first place, people already populated this land and lived according to their nations' laws, which would come into conflict with the laws of a newly-forged European country. As Ferdinand and Isabel consolidated their Iberian territories to form the new Spanish nation they seized power from the Vatican as well as the old aristocracy that had arisen under *Mozárabe* (Christian cultures in Moslem areas) and *Mudéjar* (Moslem cultures in Christian areas) regimes predominant between 711 and 1492. "America existed as a legal document before it was physically

⁴⁰ "Tomás de Sousa que fue, puede decirse, el más importante colonizador del Brasil."

⁴¹ "Caramura murió en edad avanzada, habiendo dejado muchísimos hijos. Las familias de Bahía se enorgullecen hoy de contar entre sus ascendientes a ese afortunado aventurero."

discovered” observes González Echevarría in *Myth and Archive*. “In the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*, the Catholic Kings drew up a contract with Columbus, before he set out, outlining in considerable detail his, and the Crown’s, rights over any discovered territories” (46). On the other side of the Atlantic, anthologies and university courses dealing with Latin American literature continue to place extracts from Columbus’ journal at or near the beginning.

In his final novel, *El arpa y la sombra*, Carpentier advances on the themes of *Los pasos perdidos*, which he employed *El hombre de fuego*, by focusing on the foreignness of Columbus. In this, he also follows in the literary footsteps of Washington Irving, who writes of the complexities caused merely by naming the Discoverer. Born to the family of Domenico Colombo, reports Irving, “Columbus latinized his name in his letters according to the usage of the time, when Latin was the language of learned correspondence. In subsequent life when in Spain, he recurred to what was supposed to be the original Roman name of the family Colonus, which he abbreviated to Colon to adapt it to the Castilian tongue” (10).⁴² *El arpa y la sombra* imagines a journal in Columbus’ mind that begins during a trial held at the Vatican to decide on his beatification, leading to a series of flashbacks that Columbus had decided not to reveal to his ecclesiastical confessor. In this text, written shortly before his own death, Carpentier provides — in the thoughts of Columbus, the Italian sent by Spain to circumnavigate, and then accidentally discover, a world — a compelling example of the type of oblique identity I have been attempting to comprehend in the Americas.

⁴² I follow Irving’s footsteps, as well, by referring to the discoverer as Columbus. As an alternative, I also turn to the ironically-employed designation, Discoverer.

Considering the question of who would rebuild Jerusalem and Mount Zion, Carpentier's Columbus recalls that the "*Abbot Joachim Calabrés said that this person would have to sally forth from Spain. This person would have to sally forth from Spain* — listen to that. He didn't say that he would have to be a Spaniard. And, speaking for myself, I could say like Moses in the land of Midian: 'I am a stranger in a strange land.' But these foreigners are the ones who find the Promised Lands"⁴³ (121 emphasis in original). Although the Columbus of *El arpa y la sombra* first insists that he has landed at Cipango (Japan), a promised destination in the Far East, he must eventually admit his initial error and seek royal favor for achieving a goal much different than the one he promised:

I was the Discoverer-discovered, uncovered; and I am the Conqueror-conquered because I began to exist for me and for the others the day I reached *over there*, and since then, it is those lands that have formed me, sculpted my shape, defined me in the air that surrounds me, it is those lands that confer on me, in my own eyes, an epic stature that everyone denies me, especially now that Columba [Queen Isabel, his lover in Carpentier's version] has died, bound to me in an exploit full of marvels worthy of a chivalric song — but a chivalric song erased, before being written, by the themes of the new romances that people want to hear now. (125 emphasis in original)

Columbus' accident, his mistake, assures his fame as the first Spanish *criollo*

⁴³ Although Carpentier's Spanish text forms an important part of the research material for these studies, the passages from *El arpa y la sombra* cited here come from the translation by Thomas Christensen and Carol Christensen.

in America. “It is he who inaugurates criollismo,” writes Ángel Rama, “by being the first to speak from the dominant culture that imposes itself and decrees itself discoverer.” It is this Geneovese mariner, he continues, “without a homeland, and an immigrant in foreign lands that invents for himself a new homeland”⁴⁴ (242). Rama then links Columbus directly to Carpentier’s identification:

Symbolically, he travels to the West instead of going towards the East, constructing a discourse of the unpublished, of the unsaid, in such a way as to definitively establish “a conflict of the Word with the Word.” He does not attempt to confront a known reality with another unknown. What Carpentier’s Columbus describes is not reality but instead words that articulate this reality still hidden by the Word, and in doing so creates this fascinating Christopher [Cristóforos], the one who carries and bears with words, or more precisely, who invents words, which is to say the writer, which is to say the fabulist, which is to say the charlatan.⁴⁵ (243)

This post-structural reading not only describes the text but also shows how Carpentier has, as González Echevarría has pointed out, constructed a history of the Americas appropriately focused on its founding villain.

⁴⁴ “Es él quien inaugura la criollidad, por ser el primero en hablar desde la cultura dominante que se impone y se decreta a sí misma como descubridora. La invención de este rijoso mariner genovés, carente de patria e inmigrante en tierras extranjeras, que inventa para sí una nueva patria.”

⁴⁵ “Simbólicamente viaja al Poniente, en vez de hacerlo hacia el Oriente, construyendo un discurso sobre lo inédito, sobre lo no dicho, de tal modo que lo que en definitiva estatuye es ‘el conflicto del Verbo con el Verbo.’ Porque no se trata de enfrentar una realidad conocida con otra inédita. Lo que el Colón de Carpentier describe no es la realidad, sino las palabras que mentan esa realidad todavía escondida al Verbo y eso hace de este fascinante Cristóforos aquel que transporta y carga con las palabras, más exactamente, el que inventa las palabras, es decir, el escritor, es decir el fabulador, es decir, el farsante.”

The literary history found in Salgari, Amado, and Carpentier reveals a great deal about how Americans see themselves. What their protagonists demonstrate — and in surprisingly similar ways given their obvious differences — are elements of American identity that resonate with readers throughout the hemisphere. Alvaro has to lose himself in a jungle, eventually rejecting and even betraying his Portuguese background in order to become the leader of people to which he will never belong. In a geographical reversal, Gabriela, raised in the Sertão (Brazil's backlands), loses herself in the relatively urban Ilhéus, where she lovingly betrays (Amado clearly deals with complexities unknown to Salgari) and eventually leads by inspiration. Of course, popular images such as these have served governments interested in promoting national stereotypes of racial mixing; leaving that propaganda behind, we can see how the rejection, rejecting, and betrayal — none likely to receive official approbation — lead to an always almost-ready auto-comprehension that teeters on the verge of American identity.

“Traditional storytelling with its penchant for exaggeration and the marvelous defies factual reporting,” writes Jean Franco in *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*. Reading Gabriel García Márquez, Franco sees such accounts “transmuted into cultural capital...If myth flourishes on absence and scarcity,” she concludes, “what does literature gain by its appropriation if not nostalgia for a past that one would not want to inhabit?” (125). Like the Latin American magical realists discussed by Franco, Hurston boasts of her skillful employment of exaggeration and marvelous effects. The connection between Hurston and her Latin American peers can be seen in their politics as well as their prose. “Clearly in settler colonies, like those of Latin America,

decolonization did not occur with the withdrawal of the colonizer,” observes Franco.

What happened after independence from Spain was informal economic colonization by European powers and finally North American economic ascendancy, an event that is accurately registered in Conrad’s *Nostramo*. The Mexican Revolution, Guatemala, Chile, Cuba, and Nicaragua represent disrupted attempts at emancipation from neocolonialism, narrativized in the United States as failures of socialism or as communist plots.

(107)

Without a doubt, the history of the United States began with imperialistic tendencies, expanded with the Louisiana Purchase and wars with Mexico, and took up the colonization of the hemisphere in earnest after the Spanish American War of 1898. This does not mean, however, that all of the people in the United States advocated or even necessarily benefitted from Washington’s practices. The same colonization perpetrated on the former Spanish colonies took place to varying degrees in the former English colonies. Colonized people arguably include many different residents of the United States; in any case, few would argue that it does not include Sioux living on government reservations, Mexicans living on stolen lands, Puerto Ricans living in a colony, and African-Americans living in ghettos or, in the case of Hurston, growing up in rigidly segregated municipalities.

Hurston on the Rock

And Moses was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bore him a son, and he called his name Gershom; for he said: "I have been a stranger in a strange land."

Exodus 2:21-22

Bamshad and Olson explain how "the implicit definition of what makes a person a member of a particular race differs from region to region across the globe. Someone classified as 'black' in the U.S., for example, might be considered 'white' in Brazil and 'colored' (a category distinguished from both 'black' and 'white') in South Africa" (80). Zora Neale Hurston moves through several definitions in the late 1940s and early 1950s during her research on and trip to Honduras. On Florida's Biscayne Bay while waiting for the Honduras expedition to begin she declares herself amused "at having to explain that she was black, since people assumed she was a Latin American from the Argentinian [*sic*] boat docked nearby" (Hemenway 324) In relation to this new identity, Hurston writes to her editor, "I feel that I have come to myself at last" (Kaplan 621). Once in Honduras, on her quest for a lost city, Hurston observes that people call her a Mestizo, making it easier for her to get "hold of some signs and symbols through the advantage of blood" (qtd. in Hemenway 306). This Latin American connection, specifically centered in the Caribbean, does not come as suddenly as her letter makes it appear; Alain Locke, Hurston's early mentor, describes their common milieu in an inter-American fashion as early as 1925. "Take Harlem as an instance of this," he writes.

Here in Manhattan is not merely the largest Negro community in the world, but the first concentration in history of so many

diverse elements of Negro life. It has attracted the African, the West Indian, the Negro American; has brought together the Negro of the North and the Negro of the South; the man from the city and the man from the town and village; the peasant, the student, the business man, the professional man, artist, poet, musician, adventurer and worker, preacher and criminal, exploiter and social outcast. Each group has come with its own separate motives and for its own special ends, but their greatest experience has been the finding of one another. (3)

Locke follows this up several pages later by referring to a local periodical published in several languages. “The pulse of the Negro world has begun to beat in Harlem. A Negro newspaper carrying news material in English, French and Spanish, gathered from all quarters of America, the West Indies and Africa has maintained itself in Harlem for over five years” (7). However long this newspaper lasted, if it even existed,⁴⁶ Locke’s declaration of hemispheric connections tied to Africa and an African American Diaspora points to an early inter-American consciousness in this major Harlem Renaissance thinker.

At the same time that she discovers her own Latin American identity, Hurston frames her final novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee*, by connecting its Floridian setting to Caribbean history. The people of Sawley, birthplace of Arvay Henson, the story’s protagonist, “had heard that the stubbornly resisting Indians had been there where they now lived, but they were dead and gone” (2). A subsequent group left little further mark on the town’s consciousness:

The conquering Spaniards had done their murdering, robbing,

⁴⁶ My searches, including many hours spent in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, uncovered other references to this paper but failed to turn up a copy.

and raping and had long ago withdrawn from the Floridas. Few knew and nobody cared that the Hidalgos under De Sota [*sic*] had moved westward along this very route. The people thought no more of them than they did of the magnolias and bay and other ornamental trees which grew so plentifully in the swamps along the river, nor the fame of the stream. (2)

In Eastern Florida, on the other side of the state and the other end of the story, Arvay sees “the ancient Turtle Mounds, kitchen middens of a people who had disappeared before the coming of the Spaniards; rusting old iron pots left over from the indigo industry of the Minorcans; foundations of an old fort left by the Spaniards” (318).

In fact, the white people of Sawley not only ignore their region’s past but also go to a great deal of trouble to create a new Anglophone Southern identity to replace the earlier Caribbean influences. “The Reconstruction was little more than a generation behind,” observes the narrator of *Seraph on the Suwanee*. “Men still living had moved into west Florida after Sherman had burned Atlanta and made his triumphant march to the sea. A dozen or more men who had worn the gray of the confederacy were local residents” (3). Hurston takes this a step further by citing a 1903 text that her Sawley characters might have read while developing their new Southern identities. Sitting down to dinner with Jim Meserve, Arvay’s future husband, Brock Henson tells his prospective son-in-law that young girls got married early “back in Arkansaw [*sic*] where I come from” (37). As his wife jumps to denounce him as a liar who has never even visited Arkansas, the narrator explains Brock’s literary connection to the state. “Everything that happened

was in Arkansaw [*sic*], influenced by a paper-backed book that had the rural South by the ears for the last few years and had become a sort of laughing Bible among them, called *A Slow Train Through Arkansas*” (38). The book referred to here actually contains no information about marriageable ages, but does reveal a great deal about conscious cultural creation in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although spelled differently than in the standard orthography recorded by Hurston, *On a Slow Train through Arkansaw: Funny Railroad Stories, Sayings of the Southern Darkies, All the Latest and Best Minstrel Jokes of the Day* by Thos. W. Jackson contains drawings related to short jokes and humorous anecdotes that readers might have read aloud to gathered friends and family. The constant textual patter includes puns, one-liners, vaudeville routines, and jabs at professions, physical characteristics, and ethnic groups. Some of these are merely silly, with the type of punch line known as a groaner. An old lady who asks, “Are you the colored porter?” is told “no, he wasn’t colored he was born that way” (9). Another starts by asking where one goes to get a new knee to replace a broken one. “To Africa, that is where the negroes.” This is followed by directions for a lady who breaks her knee, who should visit “Jerusalem, where the Shee-neys grow” (18). Police officers, Dutch immigrants, and women come in for similar treatment by Jackson. Other stereotypes in the book have serious overtones, especially in the context of the era in which the book came out. “The rose is red, the violet’s blue, / Where you see three balls you will see a Jew” (34). In another: “Scotland grows the thistle, / England grows the rose, / Ireland grows the shamrock, / And the Sheney grows the nose” (65). In other anecdotes, a Jew purposely has himself

beaten up so he can see diamonds (50), African Americans wonder if they should speak with white trash (52), old maids go crazy over kisses (78), and men on trains regularly employ pickup lines that Charles Drouet would have disdained to try out on Sister Carrie. Some jokes in the book are really funny. A Jewish pawnbroker, forced at gunpoint to eat a loan note, finally receives his money. When the same customer comes back for another loan the pawnbroker asks for another note, but this time asks, "Would you just as soon write it on a ginger snap?" (49-50).

In addition to its apt mention in *Seraph on the Suwanee*, the dialogue in one of its anecdotes, "A Coon that Has Lost His Home," resembles lines found in her "Story in Harlem Slang." Both narratives center on African American men who live off working women. In Jackson's version, the man comes home to find the door locked and the woman telling him, "I ain't gwine to 'low yo' to come between me and my work." When the man protests that the weather has turned cold and snowy, she replies, "Yo' knowed it was cold befo' yo' went out dar. I tole yo' way long last summer when yo' was layin' round here dat winter was comin' on" (47). With more skillful use of language, Hurston's "Story in Harlem Slang" has two men bragging about their reliance on women's wages. As a woman comes around the corner on her way home from work, the men try out their persuasive skills on her. Sadly for them, she dishes it right back. "You got any money?" she demands. "Nobody ain't pimping on me. You dig me?" (132). Finally, she tells them both, "You skillets is trying to promote a meal on me. But it'll never happen, brother. You barking up the wrong tree. I wouldn't give you air if you was stopp'd up in a jug. I'm not putting out a thing. I'm just like the cemetery — I'm not putting

out, I'm taking in! Dig?" (132-33). I bring these two narratives together not to suggest that Hurston has absorbed Jackson, but instead to demonstrate how Hurston works within a setting filled with pervasive influences of minstrelsy and other manifestations of nineteenth-century popular culture on literature of the twentieth.

Since, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Hurston considers the speech, and indeed the culture, of Southern whites and blacks as having the same sources, readers find white characters employing these seemingly stereotypical African American phrases. While Hurston finds sources of African American speech in the South's greater preservation of British culture and ultimately proposes more complicated formations, Locke believes the movement went entirely in the other direction. "The South has unconsciously absorbed the gift of his [the Negro's] folk-temperament," he announces.

In less than half a generation it will be easier to recognize this, but the fact remains that a leaven of humor, sentiment, imagination and tropic nonchalance has gone into the making of the South from a humble, unacknowledged source. A second crop of the Negro's gifts promises still more largely. He now becomes a conscious contributor and lays aside the status of a beneficiary and ward for that of a collaborator and participant in American civilization. (8)

For the purposes of the present study, set well after the recognition of these mixtures, precise sources matter less than the situation on the ground in the first half of the twentieth century.

Read in either direction, Locke and Hurston confound conclusions

based on distinct racial separations. Writing about Hurston's brief narratives in "The Eatonville Anthology," Robert Hemenway observes that one sketch, "Turpentine Love," forms "the kernel of a novel Hurston would not write for twenty years, *Seraph on the Suwanee*. It has special significance because it is about black people," adds Hemenway, "while *Seraph* is about whites" (69). A reading of this three-paragraph story reveals that in spite of its appearance in an anthology named after an African American town, admittedly a persuasive clue, Hurston identifies neither the color nor any specific ethnicity of her "Turpentine Love" protagonists (*Complete Stories* 60). As Hemenway notes, the novel that grows out of "Turpentine Love" focuses on white people, but considerations of this choice must begin with Hurston's belief in a greater degree of liminality than one tends to find in discussions involving whites and African Americans in the United States, a belief that Hurston supports with her own growing Caribbean consciousness.

Arvay Henson, the protagonist of *Seraph on the Suwanee*, comes from a white family that Hurston takes pains to portray as trashy. Arvay's husband, Jim Meserve, resembles the criollo in Carpentier's *Concierto barroco* in social class but without the financial reserves. Jim's "ancestors had held plantations upon the Alabama River before the War. In that respect, Jim Meserve differed from the rest of the inhabitants of Sawley, who had always been of the poor whites who had scratched out some kind of existence." Added to this, Jim "was obviously Black Irish in his ancestry somewhere" (7). Arvay and Jim's circle of acquaintances eventually includes a Portuguese immigrant, Alfredo Corregio, and his wife, who comes from a Georgia cracker family making her a race traitor in Arvay's eyes. Alfredo's wife came from "Real white people,"

thinks Arvay, “talked English and without any funny sounds to it” (120). The Corregios’ eldest daughter

was more American looking like her mother, but there was a sort of Latin overlay that made her exotic. She was already ripe-looking, and all in all, a very pretty girl. It seemed strange to Arvay for her to be named plain Lucy Ann with those looks. The younger girl was named Felicia, and her name fitted her. Great soft mellow eyes with lashes so long that Arvay said that you could almost plait them. High arching eyebrows in a shiny black curve that almost met over the bridge of her nose. Her hair was so thick and rich that Arvay thought with wonder that she must have ten hairs to every one of [her own daughter] Angeline’s and she had always considered that Angie had an extra thick head of hair. Young as she was, already it went curling to her waist. Her lips were red, red, and rosy. (120)

As further proof of exotic foreignness, Arvay notices that her physically and mentally deformed son Earl goes crazy when the Corregios arrive. “Nothing much wrong with Earl,” she tells Jim. “He was all right, and you know it, until you fetched them furriners here on the place. They must have some different scent from regular folks and it maked Earl sick in some way or another. All you got to do is to get rid of ‘em; and Earl will be all right” (125). Even though Jim often finds his way to the Corregio dinner table, Arvay refuses to join him there as she considers the Corregios “Gees” (129) and the food cooked by Mrs. Corregio “Geechy messes” (128). “Jim and the rest insisted that the Corregios were as white as they were,” observes Hurston’s narrator,

“but it made Arvay haunted to see any member of that family” (212).

Drawing from an American literary tradition that places Spaniards in the interstitial places between Black and white, Hurston has Kenny, her protagonist’s son, develop an interest in Felicia Corregio⁴⁷ that coincides with his musical formation. Eventually, the mother must confront increasingly complex views of racial construction as the “sight that Arvay dreaded to see came before her eyes. Kenny came with his guitar around his neck and Felicia on his arm” (210). Arvay blames the Corregio family for leading her musical son Kenny astray so that Felicia can marry well without the potential mother-in-law’s interference. “That Felicia, no doubt put up to it and prompted by her mother, who would naturally want her to luck up on a good, nice white boy to marry to” (241). As Arvay stewes over this deception, the racial overtones take on ever increasing significance for her. “Felicia and her mother were nothing but heathen idolaters, and not to be treated white. Arvay proceeded to set up images of them among the African savages and heathen Chinees. They were not fellow-humans, nothing of the kind” (242).

Arvay’s fears spring from a deep well of white American terror. In “Spanish Masquerade in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,” Julia Stern discusses several interstitial racial identities that informed American literature during the nineteenth century. In her reading of Stowe’s novel, Stern explains how the brown tint of a mulatto might also be “closely associated in the white American nineteenth-century, middle-class imagination with the exotic Spaniard: bullfighters, gypsies, and flamenco dancers who are often darker in skin tone and who represent a romantic version of the old world” (110).

⁴⁷ The name practically scans as a Happy Correction. Since Hurston wrote much of the novel while traveling in Honduras, this seems like more than a happy coincidence.

Denials of these liminal sites of identity, Stern points out, reveal more about white fear than racial reality. “Such terror over racial blending constitutes one of the more ironic facts of antebellum American culture; well before 1830...Americans had long been and would continue to be a deeply mixed people” (123). In *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Hurston portrays the twentieth-century continuation of this nineteenth-century terror. Unlike Jim, who easily befriends the Corregio family, Arvey knows almost nothing about her ancestors. In Hurston’s accurate portrayal, Arvey’s flimsy knowledge of her own family history would have made her subject to this terror, even in the first decade of the twentieth century. By the end of the novel, Arvey only sets these feelings aside; changing her views altogether would have stretched the story’s fictive powers beyond any reasonable limit.

Hurston places her fiction in a historical setting to pose equally complicated questions of identity in *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. Glenda B. Weathers reports on a history of the Promised Land’s employment as a metaphor, first in African American song lyrics and then in novels. “Enslaved by law or custom, African Americans have found the Promised Land metaphor an apt vehicle for describing the epic proportion of their suffering,” she writes.

Black vernacular songs such as ‘Bound for the Promised Land,’ ‘Going Into Canaan,’ ‘I Won’t Have to Cross Jordan Alone,’ and ‘Go Down Moses’ attest to the metaphor’s power for engendering hope. Indeed, the journey to the Promised Land frequently assumes the same symbolic significance as a return to the Garden of Eden or a search for it. The two places, Eden and the Promised Land, can share the same tropes and images,

evoking an imaginative place on the other side of some barrier
— often a river — that must be crossed for deliverance. (201)

In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, adds Weathers, “Hurston sympathetically positions her protagonist as one bound for a better land” (205). As in other readings of Hurston that almost always focus on *Their Eyes Were Watching God* while excluding the remainder of Hurston’s oeuvre, Weathers’ article ignores Hurston’s sustained literary involvement with Moses, an interest, as seen in this dissertation’s first chapter, that includes short stories and essays and culminates in a novel, *Moses, Man of the Mountain*.

Like Carpentier, Hurston’s Moses asserts an identity at odds with his accent. Aaron, ever jealous of Moses, tries to use these differences to get closer to the people. “I’d naturally understand ‘em better than you,” he tells his supposed brother (250). As Moses learns to speak among his followers, an old woman exclaims, “Moses is getting so he talks our language just like we talk it ourselves” (251). As seen in this admiring phrase, even though Moses comes closer to speaking like a Hebrew, his speech patterns continually distance him from them; he can only approach, but never arrive at an accepted Hebrew identity. Throughout Hurston’s book, Moses never feels at home among the Hebrews even when they praise him for his latest miracle. Moses endures a conflicted relationship with his oppressed Hebrew people that resembles Hurston’s own feelings in regards to oppressed African Americans. As a result, “Moses himself felt lonely and yearned for [his father-in-law] Jethro and his family. He felt more like an alien than he had felt in his life” (254). In the end, Moses understands that the Hebrews will not respect the “laws and statutes” that he has brought them if they see him grow infirm and

pass away like the other men. “No,” writes Hurston, “Moses must not die among the Hebrews. They must not see him die” (349). Although the narrator offers this good reason for Moses’ final removal, the most compelling reason remains that he does not belong among them. The biblical story of Moses offers a similar version in which Moses, who has offended God in an incident that makes little sense in the context of the Exodus, is not allowed to enter the promised land with his people. In both versions, his people never even get to know the exact location of Moses’ earthly remains.

Only the fact that American Jews did not really become white until after the Second World War prevents critics from completely accepting this 1939 novel, instead of the later *Seraph on the Suwanee*, as Hurston’s first with white protagonists. Even so, this tale of Moses looks an awful lot like putting supposedly African American speech in the mouths of white people when Moses’ father Amram looks “down on the thick red hair of his wife, her white face with the eyes closed in weariness” (22). Whatever color the book’s Hebrews claim, as former slaves they consider themselves lighter than Zipporah, Moses’ wife. Miriam, who calls Moses a brother when it suits her, calls Zipporah “black,” a very strong epithet in 1939. When challenged, she replies, “Oh you know I’m talking about that dark-complected woman that Moses done brought here trying to make out she’s a lordgod sitting on a bygod” (296). Carried away with her racist rage, Miriam places Zipporah’s roots in Ethiopia and warns against having “people like that among us mixing up our blood and all” (297). By the time Miriam begins to publicly spew this hatred, Moses has done more to demonstrate his position on ethnic mixing than just enter into a mixed marriage; as he leads the Hebrews out of Goshen,

he replies affirmatively when “a great horde of mixed-blooded people” beg for inclusion (226). Defending his wife, Moses reminds the Hebrews that they had been accompanied by “mixed multitudes” throughout their exodus (299). And just in case anyone doubts the author’s views of this, a footnote adds: “A multitude of mixed-blood people marched out of Egypt with the Hebrews” (247). Hurston’s “love for the specificity of African American culture,” observes Barbara Johnson, “was countered by her deep suspicion of the notions of racial purity and of ‘race pride’” (23). Hurston’s emphasis on the inclusion of mixed-race peoples in her portrayal of Moses held special importance to African Americans, violently deprived of ethnic purity, and ultimately to almost all Americans whose peripatetic histories have uprooted family trees.

Hurston’s Moses demonstrates more latitude than the current governors of the Promised Land who consider Jewish “a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion” (Law of Return). Making some provision for the citizenship of mixed-blooded people, rights to citizenship granted under Israel’s Law of Return “are also vested in a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew, except for a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion” (Law of Return). Even so, no hordes of mixed-blooded people will find accommodation under this law; merely based on Miriam’s version of events, Moses would not have qualified either as a Jew or the relative of one. The protagonist’s lack of sufficient documentation to qualify under an Israeli law promulgated years after the publication of *Moses*,

Man of the Mountain reveals profound authorial handling of identity. After Moses flees from Egypt, a country in which he does not belong, he finds refuge in Midian, a land he has never known. When he names his son Gershom, he has spent his life as “a stranger in a strange land” (Exodus 2:21-22). Nothing in the Bible subsequently turns him into an Egyptian or Midianite. He may become the first Jew, as our Hebrew School teachers insisted, when he delivers the laws of God to the Hebrew people, but his descendants will never enjoy the rights of *aliyah* (the right of return to the Promised Land). How curious that the sacred texts create a prime exponent that can never engender another member of his own faith. Neither Israel nor the Jews stand as unique exponents of identity construction, of course; other members of other groups have similarly attempted to formulate clear components delimiting inclusion, but no other founding text I have seen works this hard to exclude descendants of founding figures.

Johnson’s “Moses and Intertextuality” makes much of the “ethnic nonsimplicity of Hurston’s Moses” (20). In her view, this suggests “that Hurston is *not*, as many readers have asserted, simply appropriating Moses for the African American tradition but that she is putting into play and into crisis the very notions of race and ethnicity” (21 emphasis in original). Noting that Hurston’s portrayal of Moses, like Freud’s, often criticizes oppressed people, African American and Jewish, in sometimes harsh terms, Johnson comes to the conclusion that both authors separate the leader from the liberated people in order to “Place difference at the root of a foundational story. And in both versions, Moses’ difference is also a self-difference...At the origin is difference” (24). This leads Johnson to see the return of Moses “not as the

origin but as the primal self difference of origins. For both Freud and Hurston are chafing under, as well as rethinking, the mark of difference within a logic of identity” (25). In terms of Hurston’s place in America, this threatens “dominant discourses” by maintaining “the independence of *not* belonging to the ‘compact majority,’ as Freud put it” (26 emphasis in original). In the end:

Freud and Hurston are here dramatizing a predicament that may in fact *be* the universal: the double bind of particularity identifying with universality, the subjectivity-constructing transference onto the empty set. This dramatization occurs through the radical defamiliarizing of a foundational legend and through the rewriting of leadership as alterity and erasure. In this way they provide insight into both the appeal and the cost of employing a discourse of universality, and they begin the task of reconceiving the nature of theoretical, as well as historical and political, authority. (28-29)

Carpentier and Hurston are both outsiders who create a paradigm of the inside against which they are measured. Reading Hurston through Carpentier allows us to see her as a Caribbean author and understand how her novels comprehend American culture; going back to Carpentier through Hurston, we can see him not as French but instead American; he has not only looked into the Caribbean of Latin America, however one defines those entities, but into all of America. In *Los pasos perdidos*, Carpentier has represented American identity with an unnamed narrator with unclear ancestral roots who realizes that he can discover no promised land or any place of comfort. Carpentier follows this up in *La arpa y la sombra* with a

discredited discoverer who claims land on the wrong continent for a nation with which he can never identify. Even earlier, Hurston has represented American identity with Arvay, who never fits into either white or black society or even her own family, and Moses, a leader unable to enter into his peoples' promised land, unable to become one of the people, and unable to bequeath his descendents anything more than a vague connection — the child of, the grandchild of, the great-grandchild of, etcetera — to the religion, culture, and nation created by those people. Like Freud, observes Johnson, Hurston “consciously identified with Moses” (18). In the first chapter of this dissertation, I noted Carpentier's inclusion of the artist as a marvellously real hero; seen outside of the confines of black and white, Hurston stands on the rock where Moses stood, parting the seas to reveal a future she will never live to behold, a future made only of promises yet to unfold.

Chapter Four — Artistic Conviction: The Guilty Politics of Carpentier and Hurston

A government's spirit must be that of its country.¹
José Martí "Nuestra América"

In the end, Alejo Carpentier and Zora Neale Hurston continue along paths whose similarities are not always obvious at first sight. Both authors turn to the State as a necessary recourse without viable alternatives, a prescient move for each of them since to this day the leaders of their respective States continue to hold nearly absolute power within their territories. Even so, neither Carpentier nor Hurston accept their respective national governments with anything like the blind eye that superficial readings of their works might suggest; they instead base their commitments to the concept of a State on the premise of a dialectic that continually places individuals, especially themselves, in Hegelian opposition to State power in a quest for personal freedom in a future perfect that, as of the moment in which they write, they can at best view as an event that will someday have come to pass. Most importantly, in terms of this project, they continue to investigate other nations and consider the future of America.

This final chapter considers the ways that Carpentier and Hurston deal with the idea of the State, the very different people who inhabit it, and how those people forge connections with other peoples. The first section considers how the United States struggles to get beyond its basic perception of people made black and white — a concern, as Juan Flores and Miriam Rodríguez have shown in the first chapter of this dissertation, increasingly recognized throughout the continent — even as it increasingly recognizes the many

¹ "El espíritu del gobierno ha de ser el del país."

shades of America. Moving beyond color, this first section then takes up persistent black and white bifurcations of culture and politics. The second section of this chapter undertakes an examination of the politics in Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces* and *La consagración de la primavera* that reveals more questioning of Revolution than other authors have attributed to these works. An acceptance of the nuances of Carpentier's views makes it easier to apprehend the demurrals that, in spite of having passed unrecognized, appear so obviously in Hurston's *Dust Tracks on the Road*. Finally, a revision of *Seraph on the Suwanee*, perhaps with eyes not watching God, will determine why this final novel, far from a relic best ignored like the protagonist's "seldom talked about" Uncle Chester (68), requires our attention. An aging white woman and her black creator, we will see, still have a great deal to tell those of us dedicated to novel reading.

Shades of Black and White

Just because a person is a minority does not mean that person will be progressive.

George Elliott Clarke

As discussions ensue over the blackness of Colin Powell, Clarence Thomas, and even Barack Obama, George Elliot Clarke's seemingly obvious comments on contemporary politics apparently remain incomprehensible to some auditors, some of whom will deny the ethnicity or even the skin color of those deemed politically errant. "On the other hand," adds Clarke, "it's time to realize that not only Anglo Saxons can be leaders." These two statements belong, just as Clarke has made them, together. Although Clarke focuses his comments on Canada, recent events in the United States reinforce his point; two African Americans appointed to the highest cabinet post in the land remain African American even when advocates for African American rights dislike their policies and actions. Notably, the appointment of more non-white cabinet members than found in any other administration in the history of the United States immediately preceded the election of that nation's first African American president; in realpolitik, one follows the other. Neither the appointments nor the election, however, guarantee any particular political outcome.

Particular outcomes require the difficult work of investigation and cogitation in order to decide on action. Inaction offers no alternative. As political scientist Bonnie Honig points out in a forthcoming article, "Ismene's Forced Choice," Ismene differs from Antigone in that the latter seeks political confrontation while in the case of the former politics comes to her; for both,

no possibility of doing nothing remains.² Those of us fortunate enough to occupy potentially influential positions as educators and scholars might find opportunities to create changes without ending up shamed or buried alive. As noted in earlier chapters of this dissertation, Spivak urges humanities scholars to emulate the rigorous studies of linguistics and Area Studies in order to avoid the pitfalls of a simplistic multiculturalism that reifies — indeed, creates a myth of — monocultures meant to merge into multis.

Demonstrating the pitfalls of easy political acquiescence, Gwen Bergner offers an example — obviously applicable to the work of Hurston — of seemingly useful short-term strategies with frightening long-term consequences. “Black Children, White Preference: *Brown v. Board*, the Doll Tests, and the Politics of Self-Esteem” traces a history of social science based on doll tests conducted by Kenneth and Mamie Clark in order to assess racial self-esteem based on whether girls chose black or white dolls. Since, as Bergner observes, “we prefer to see our social problems as psychological rather than political,” we end up with “a melodramatic tableau, blending children (the ‘innocent’ victims of racism) and dolls (the quintessential marker of childhood fantasy) — while leaving the perpetrators invisible (and the spectator guiltless)” (323). In addition to eliding politics, observes Begner, sensationalized reports overshadow potentially useful research; in contrast to popular press accounts, she points to “sober policy papers that reasonably advocated multicultural education” (317). Eventual responses to the Clarks’ studies from the Black Power movement resembled “How It Feels to Be

² In “Ismene’s Forced Choice,” Honig makes a convincing case for Ismene’s decision to undertake the first burial of Polynices in order to save her sister, Antigone, from breaking Creon’s law. I gratefully acknowledge Professor Honig’s permission for this prepublication citation.

Colored Me” and other commentaries on race previously published by Hurston as they

considered the ‘black self-hatred’ or ‘mark of oppression’ approach not only outdated, but also out-and-out racist. Critics argued that it ignored the cultural richness and support systems within African American communities and the history of strategies African Americans had used to survive centuries of slavery, segregation, and discrimination. Further, the self-hatred thesis had ultimately become detached from a history of oppression and instead came to represent the essential character of the black psyche. (Bergner 310)

Bergner acknowledges the political situation in which the Clarks operated and credits them for helping end legislated segregation in the United States. “If the racial preference and self-esteem discourse supports policies meant to remedy inequality,” she asks, “why worry that the claims are based on bad science or misconceptions of African American identity?” (302). In the first place, her response addresses the political reality of diminishing returns by reporting that policies based on the Clarks’ findings “have not remedied the deep disparities of racial inequality in U.S. education” (302). Beyond that, she notes, the self-esteem argument winds up in “appeals for white sympathy rather than in a demand for equal rights. Finally, the strategy depends on an outmoded and essentialist conception of racial identity at odds with policy trends toward accommodating bi- and multiracial identity formations and poststructuralist conceptions of ‘race’ and subjectivity” (302). This leads Bergner to consider the long-term importance of solidly rooted thinking on

social issues. “We cannot achieve racial equality by neatly separating the political and economic from the social and psychological,” she concludes (325). Following Spivak, I add that we cannot separate any of these from the cultural. In “Deconstruction and Cultural Studies,” she insists that Human Rights “can only be approached if culturally diversified ethical systems are studied.” Acknowledging her own position in the system, she points out her inability to “dictate a model for this from my New York City office... I can only qualify myself and my students to attend upon this as it happens elsewhere” (29). Just as easy scientific solutions lead to the long-term difficulties observed by Bergner, easy reading, viewing, and listening leads to a culture bereft of literature, art, and music or, in the end, any sense of itself. As Hannah Arendt observes, “modern equality, based on the conformism inherent in society,” has become “possible only because behavior has replaced action as the foremost mode of human relationship” (*The Human Condition* 44). As a result, easy politics sets up the very control that makes any discussion of these issues not only almost impossible to undertake but difficult to even conceive.

A black and white approach to all issues, not just skin color, lends support to a Politics Lite that makes it hard for the United States to understand itself much less figure out its place in America. Historically, immigration has tinged black and white bifurcations by fueling what Žižek calls “everyday racism” in which, even though mainstream society accepts “the Jewish, Arab, Oriental other, there is some detail that bothers us in the West: the way they accentuate a certain word, the way they count money, the way they laugh. This tiny feature renders them aliens, no matter how they try to behave like us”

(*How to Read Lacan* 67). Subsequent waves of immigration only temporarily disrupt black and white views, however, as successive groups of Italians, Irish, and Jews continue to turn “white.” More recently, some Asians find themselves similarly whitewashed as affirmative action forms at universities begin to offer a box called “Asian (except Japanese),” Silicon Valley lobbies the Immigration Service for increased visas granted to computer programmers from India (Wax), and the City of New York decides that Chinese students applying for prestigious Stuyvesant High School do not require tutoring offered to “underrepresented” minorities (Bennett). In the face of these transformations, any hopes for ethnic complications are increasingly left to the new all-purpose category “Latino” that includes blacks, whites, Asians, autochthonous groups, and mixtures desired as a multicultural goal by those deemed non-Latino.

Certainly Latin America, however defined, has much to teach Anglo America. As an example, Timothy Brennan’s *At Home in the World* points to Carpentier’s acclamation of popular culture “exported globally by a country (unlike the United States) that had no imperial claims. The importance of this view,” he adds, “is inseparable from the almost universal assumptions that exist about the supremacy of U.S. mass cultures as a political foundation for a new globalism” (298). Widespread dissemination of Cuba’s popular culture brings up questions that Brennan poses concerning

the possibility of a viable mass culture in noncapitalist countries — countries, in other words, where the subaltern is nominally in power. It raises the question, for example, of whether a corporate, technological mass culture has displaced

the authentic, collective forms gestured to in the testimonial, and it makes one wonder whether a type of exportable mass culture — that is one capable of global dissemination — exists differently from the varieties now made in the United States and (to a lesser extent) Western Europe. (303)

Sadly, the answers encourage little hope. In addition to the aggressive marketing of culture allied with a lack of serious attempts at music education discussed in chapter two of this dissertation, audiences in Anglo-America make little effort to move outside of their comfort zone, leaving spectators with superficial impressions of Latin America that may cause more harm than complete ignorance.

Simply put, these comfort zones allow for distanced interactions with all kinds of people as long as they safely remain staged; closer at hand, people tend to segregate themselves among audience members who fit into some imagined community, be it of color, economic class, educational background or all of the above. Spectatorship practiced in this manner deprives performers of typically expected responses: the types of acclamations, disapprobation, and moments of silence expected; this in itself alters the situation, but it also then converts the output of the performers. In *La consagración de la primavera*, a musician warns a Russian dancer who wishes to see Afro-Cuban dance, “You won’t get anything by going to one of them... Furthermore, the presence of a white woman like you, kind of half Polish...”³ (257). Her presence as an outsider will change the situation. Even so, the musician takes her to this secretive performance after realizing she will get more out of attending than

³ “No sacarás nada con ir a una de ellas... Además, la presencia de una blanca, como tú, de tipo medio polaco...”

she would by not attending; in this case, both dancer and musician move past their comfort zones. Along with virtual sex and warfare, Žižek mocks “the contemporary redefinition of politics as the art of expert administration without politics,” which, in *How to Read Lacan*, he links “to today’s tolerant liberal multiculturalism as an experience of Other deprived of its Otherness,” in this case an “idealized Other who dances fascinating dances and has an ecologically sound holistic approach to reality, while features like his wife-beating remain out of sight” (38). We end up, concludes Žižek, with “a product divested of its substance... Everything is permitted, you can enjoy anything — on condition that it is stripped of the substance that makes it dangerous” (38). Although no pure performance place even exists, spectators willing to endure discomfort will hear sounds, from the audience as well the stage, unknown to those who confine their outings to campus “world music” offerings or stay home with Putumayo disks spinning in the background.

Performances as tourist attractions — with, in many of these cases, the “tourists” staying home to await visits by the attractions — accomplish much greater harm than merely depriving spectators of cultural profundity; they also reify and infantilize the staged Other as object. Focusing on exotic treats limited to repetitious diatonic music, colorful folkloric dance, and spicy (because we’ve learned how to tolerate it) food maintains an image of the catch-all Latinos as lacking *bellas artes*, without musical scores, choreographed ballet, or a real literature of their own. Fernández Retamar begins his essay “Caliban” with a question asked by “A European journalist, and moreover a leftist... ‘Does a Latin American culture exist?’” For Fernández Retamar, this interrogation reveals roots of perilous “colonialist

nostalgia” with its implied corollary, “Do you exist?” (7).

With some justification, Brennan considers how Carpentier, like Fernández Retamar, employs his position in the Cuban Revolution to address lingering European nostalgia and ever-present US colonization. Along these lines, Graziella Pogolotti demonstrates convergences of culture and politics in one of Carpentier’s marvels: the Festival del Libro Cubano (Cuban Book Festival), which

coincided with the democratization of culture project promoted by the triumphant Revolution... Culture now meant something other than a heavy burden directed by scholars and students. It lived, playfully and ready to party, in this moment of privileged reencounter. It returned as part of life. Its presence wiped out the false image of elitism, but without descending into erroneous populist positions that underestimated the people’s capacity to apprehend more complex language.⁴ (16)

Literacy programs developed by Carpentier under the revolutionary government began with the widespread distribution of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, a choice that demonstrated respect for the intelligence of the people and, not incidentally, also encouraged skepticism of originary concepts such as purity of blood, church, government, and — remarkably — those who claim to save the world.

The next section of this chapter alludes to a similar skepticism in

⁴ “La iniciativa de Alejo coincidía con el proyecto de democratización de la cultura, promovido por la Revolución triunfante... La cultura no significaba ya una pesada carga dirigida a eruditos y escolares. Vivía, alegre como un Festival, en la ocasión de un reencuentro privilegiado. Volvía a ser parte de la vida. Con su presencia, borraba la falsa imagen de elitismo, sin caer por ello, en erróneas posiciones populistas subestimadoras de las capacidades del pueblo para captar lenguajes más complejos.”

Carpentier's novel *El siglo de las luces*. In his written works and public statements, the author supported the Revolution, but never with an uncritical eye that would have insulted his readers and the masses in whose name the new State claimed legitimacy. Well beyond the slogans designed to initiate immediate action, cultural production lays the foundation for enduring changes. For this reason, a prolonged reading of *La consagración de la primavera* creates a means of reviewing Carpentier's earlier pre-revolutionary novels; just as works by a subsequent author transform those by an earlier exemplar, subsequent writings within one set of collected works can reimagine that entire oeuvre. *Écue-yamba-ó*, *El reino de este mundo*, *Los pasos perdidos*, and *El siglo de las luces* become different works upon the publication of *La consagración de la primavera*. In Carpentier's hands, Igor Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, the concert work that provides the novel's title, transforms, as well; in the novel, this work by an emphatically non-revolutionary composer turns into catalyst for revolutionary subjectivity.

As a centerpiece for his penultimate novel, Carpentier might have considered works by Sergei Prokofiev, an internationally popular composer who, like the author, gave up the comforts of exile and returned to his homeland in order to support a revolution made in the name of the people with whom he had spent relatively little of his life. As an exponent of a wider tonal palette, Dmitri Shostakovich would have provided other interesting selections. In 1978, as an outspoken proponent of a Cuban Revolution benefitting from support from the Soviet Union, Carpentier consciously selected the work of Stravinsky, a composer who, forty years earlier, had declared:

The present problem of communist Russia, as you certainly understand, is above all a problem of general concepts, that is to say, of a system of comprehending and estimating values. It is the problem of choosing and singling-out the admissible from the inadmissible; a synthesis of experience with its consequences, in other words with its conclusions, which determine the taste and style of all life, of all action. From which I conclude that a general concept is, in truth, not capable of evolving, being in itself a closed circle. One can only remain inside it or step outside it. That is exactly the case with the communistic concept. For those who are held inside the circle, every question, every answer is determined in advance. (113-14)

The composer's statement — made at Harvard at a time when, as Carpentier points out in *La consagración de la primavera* — Russia was at the height of its popularity in the United States, characteristically yoked politics and culture. “I am well aware that there is a point of view that regards the period in which the *Rite of Spring* appeared as one that witnessed a revolution. A revolution whose conquests are said to be in the the process of assimilation today,” observes Stravisnksy, who answers, “I deny the validity of that opinion. I hold that it was wrong to have considered me a revolutionary” (9). After praising his friend Maurice Ravel as one of the few to see the matter correctly, Stravinsky explains his position: “I was made a revolutionary in spite of myself. Now, revolutionary outbreaks are never completely spontaneous. There are clever people who bring about revolutions with malice aforethought...It is always necessary to guard against being misrepresented by

those who impute to you an intention that is not your own” (10). Keeping in mind the possible malice of Carpentier, readers can decide how the novel *La consagración de la primavera* messes with the intentions of the Stravinsky who composed *Le sacre du printemps* thirty years before making this statement or the Stravinsky at the time of his passing some thirty years after making this speech.

Cultural Politics ¡Cha-cha-chá!

You ought to ask me what I mean, so that I can answer that the chachachá, like abstract art, like beatnik literature, like hermetic poetry, like jazz, of course — are all guilty art forms. Why?

Because in a Communist state, everything and everybody is guilty.

Nobody, nothing is free of guilt. Not even art, especially not art.

Guillermo Cabrera Infante (*Guilty of Dancing the Chachachá* 108)

So, too, was Carpentier guilty. Even Cabrera Infante, who has parodied Carpentier's French formation in *Tres tristes tigres* (a title unfortunately translated as *Three Trapped Tigers*) and apparently mocks his colleague or someone much like him in *Delito por bailar el chachachá* (*Guilty of Dancing the Chachachá*), must admit that Carpentier, as one of "everybody" in a Communist state, is guilty. I would argue that the same universal guilt pertains in all States in which opposition continues, meaning in all but those States that have died; if, as Hegel insists, people find themselves in a State as a result of opposition, every subject must eventually be guilty in order to have any chance of finding freedom within the State. This applies especially in places where critical thinking and artistic production retain the power to effect change; "freedom" in a system that teaches ignorance of creativity can only exist in quotation marks. Carpentier's publications after the Cuban Revolution challenge the Communist government as much or more than any passages found in Cabrera's delightful "minimalist" novel, *Delito por bailar el chachachá*.⁵ Perhaps this demonstrates an advantage of socialism that I have mentioned elsewhere in an article that discusses the films of Tomás Gutiérrez

⁵ Cabrera Infante begins this novel, "No hay arte sin etiqueta y la etiqueta ahora es minimalista" (13). ("There is no art without labels and the current label is minimalist." My translation.)

Alea, an auteur who does not hesitate to criticize Cuba's government. "In Cuba," I write,

Gutiérrez was never stopped by censure. Further, the filmmaker enjoyed government financing and space in which to create his art. Even though one knows that not every Cuban artist enjoys such support, there are artists in the United States who also cannot work, not due to direct censorship but instead because of hunger, neglect, and lack of dissemination in a popular culture system managed by large corporations.⁶ (Katz "Che y Teddy")

An advantage for artists working in a socialist system comes from the economic support that forecloses the quiet suppression made possible by a lack of funding or dissemination often found in capitalist systems.

Opposed to facile views of politics and art, Carpentier pursues a political dialectic in his penultimate novel, *La consagración de la primavera*, in which accidental spouses Vera and Enrique engage in debates that begin during his involvement in the Spanish Civil War and continue through the Cuban Revolution. Vera, a ballet teacher whose family fled the Bolshevik Revolution and whose lover died in the Spanish Civil War, marvels at people who embrace or reject political movements as easily as they purchase clothing or dismiss artistic endeavors:

Today, any cocky schoolteacher, café philosopher, or shrewish socialite thinks him or herself qualified to overturn the

⁶ "En Cuba, Gutiérrez jamás fue parado por la censura. Además, el cineasta gozaba con becas del gobierno y el espacio para crear su arte. Aunque se sabe que todos los artistas cubanos no disfrutaban con tal apoyo, hay artistas en Estados Unidos que tampoco pueden trabajar no por la censura directa sino por el hambre, el olvido y la falta de difusión debido a un sistema de cultura popular manejado por las grandes empresas."

establishment and build better worlds on the ruins of the present, forgetting that kings and emperors had been raised, instructed, and educated to take on the enormous responsibilities of Power, and that the Thrones, after all, settled upon a secular tradition as something that could endure wherever men had a crumb of discernment — and stupidly, they could not figure out the difference between prolonged periods of peace, stability, and collective well-being due to the authority of Louis the XIV, Catherine the Great, or Queen Victoria and the perpetual disorder of fragile and turbulent republics that, like France in this century (not to mention the mulatto and bandy-legged [*patizambas*, with racial connotations as well] democracies of America), suffered from an endemic state of anarchy...⁷ (322)

Enrique, on the other hand, advocates for inclusion of an unqualified *demos*, meaning the rest of the people or, as one might put it in Spanish, *los demás*.⁸ These democratic views held by Vera's husband contrast sharply with his privileged past and his easy integration into Havana's bourgeoisie following his return from fighting for the Republican cause in Spain's Civil War.

⁷ “Hoy, cualquier maestrescuela engraido, filósofo de café o socializante musarañero, se creía calificado para trastocar lo establecido y construir mundos mejores sobre las ruinas del presente, olvidando que los reyes y emperadores habían sido educados, instruidos, formados, para asumir las enormes responsabilidades del Poder, y que los Tronos, al fin y al cabo, se asentaban en una tradición secular que por algo perduraba donde los hombres tuvieran una mija de discernimiento — y estúpido sería quien no advirtiese la diferencia que había entre los prolongados períodos de paz, estabilidad, bienestar colectivo, debidos a la autoridad de un Luis XIV, Catalina la Grande o la Reina Victoria, y el desorden perpetuo de la frágiles y turbulentas repúblicas que, como la de Francia en este siglo (por no hablar de las democracias mulatas y patizambas de América), padecían de un endémico estado de anarquía...”

⁸ I use the term “unqualified” here in the Platonic sense explained by Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition*. “Democracy,” she writes, “is the specific situation in which it is the absence of entitlement that entitles one to exercise the *arkhê*” (31).

In *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (best remembered as a result of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's film version, disseminated in the United States and Canada as *Memories of Underdevelopment*), Edmundo Desnoes provides a nicely encapsulated assessment of Carpentier's place in these political debates, and at the same time dismisses much of the reasoning that led Carpentier to these positions. Anticipating his own presentation at an upcoming conference in Havana, the narrator of Desnoes' novel observes, "Carpentier will be one of the other speakers"⁹ (67). This prospect of hearing the great author induces mixed feelings; on one hand, Carpentier "is the only writer who does not need the revolution in order to shine!"¹⁰ (69); on the other hand, he notes his lack of interest in the author's ability "to extract from underdevelopment the landscape and absurd history of the New World...I am tired of being Antillean!" declares the narrator, "I have nothing to do with Marvelous Realism; the jungle does not interest me and neither do the effects of the French Revolution on the Antilles"¹¹ (68). As seen in the first chapter of this dissertation — and in the novels referred to by Desnoes, *Los pasos perdidos* (The Lost Steps) and *El siglo de las luces* (The Age of Light, or Enlightenment, translated in the English-language edition as *Explosion in a Cathedral*)— Carpentier based much of his revolutionary fervor on the need for Cuban culture to resist encroachments from the United States; while Desnoes admires his predecessor's literary stature, he shows that not everyone,

⁹ "Carpentier es otro de los que hablarán." (These translations from *Memorias de subdesarrollo* are my own since I prefer them to Al Schaller's English version, *Memories of Underdevelopment*.)

¹⁰ "¡Ese es el único escritor que no necesita de la revolución para lucirse!"

¹¹ "Como cronista de la barbarie americana no está mal; ha logrado sacar del subdesarrollo el paisaje y la absurda historia del Nuevo Mundo. Pero eso no me interesa. ¡Estoy cansado de ser antillano! Yo no tengo nada que ver con lo 'real maravilloso'; no me interesa la selva, ni los efectos de la Revolución Francesa en la Antillas."

even those involved in writing novels, maintained an equally tight focus on cultural aspects of the political battles.

Carpentier wrote his chronicle on the Antillean effects of the French Revolution, *El siglo de las luces*, “in Caracas between 1956 and 1958,” recalls Roberto González Echevarría in *The Pilgrim at Home*, “when the Cuban revolutionaries were fighting against Batista’s regime and the prospects for a radical change in Cuban society appeared very dim” (214). The novel follows the career of Victor Hughes — according to Carpentier, an intrepid political organizer and later general of the French Revolution — from his early years of subversive activity through his involvement in the exportation of revolutionary ideals to the Caribbean where supporters of the new French State find ways to justify increasing forms of repression as essential to the furtherance of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. At the end of the novel, cousins — and presumably lovers at this point — Esteban and Sofía, who had earlier supported Hughes, disappear on the streets of Madrid while taking part in the Second of May (1808) uprising against the French invasion of Spain. As González Echevarría points out, the publication of *El siglo de las luces* during the first years of the Cuban Revolution raised questions about the author’s politics. “Carpentier’s statement that he had made changes in the novel gave rise to speculation hostile to the Cuban Revolution,” observes *The Pilgrim at Home*, “particularly when he declared his allegiance to the new government and was made director of the state publishing house” (214). Ironically, Carpentier’s subsequent removal from that directorship revived this controversy. The author spent his final years serving as a cultural attaché for the Cuban embassy in Paris, a position not unlike the Italian post given to Cabrera Infante even though the

former remained outwardly loyal to the Revolution eventually derided by the latter.

No matter how much or little Carpentier adjusted his novel to the tastes of the Cuban Revolution, a reader can hardly imagine the revolutionaries finding much comfort in the betrayals recounted in *El siglo de las luces*. In one of many such powerful scenes, Esteban and other government representatives traveling on a French ship called *L'Amie du Peuple* encounter the *Andorinha* and its crew of mutinous slaves. Knowing that the French have abolished slavery, the slaves gladly fall in with their new friends from *L'amie du Peuple*. "Esteban was much moved," notes the narrator of *El siglo de las luces*, "and filling his bowl with wine offered it to these erstwhile slaves, who kissed his hands" (186). The French and African men party on the beach, celebrating their newfound amity made possible by the Revolution, until the white men become preoccupied by the propinquity of black women still aboard the *Andorinha*. This leads to a battle as the white men haul the black women off the boats and rape them. The next day, with his vessel ostensibly headed for Guadalupe and a promised formal manumission, the French captain reveals a different intention. "You know very well I can't keep the promise I made those scoundrels," he tells Esteban. "It would be a fatal precedent. The Commissar [Comisario] wouldn't tolerate it. We're going to a Dutch island, where we shall sell the shipload of blacks" (188). Sofia has a similar revelatory moment when Hughes, grown secretive and paranoid, leads troops on a mission to capture and re-enslave the free blacks living in the remaining French colonies of the Caribbean. "It certainly looks as though you've given up the idea of spreading the Revolution," she tells Hughes. "At one time you

intended to bring it here to America” (322). After justifying the Revolution and his continuing role in it, Hughes finally declares himself “a politician. And if the restoration of slavery is a political necessity, then I must bow to that necessity” (323). Given the coincidence of Revolution and publication, one has to wonder how Fidel Castro, avowedly interested in changing his government’s relationship with Afro-Cubans and their culture, responded to this linking of Revolution and retrogression. Did Cuba’s leader view *El siglo de las luces* as a European failure that he would avoid or as a threatening glimpse of another Antillean disaster?

To the extent that Cuba has dealt with its problems of black and white, discussed by Carpentier at great length in *La consagración de la primavera*, more good work has been done by musicians than politicians. “In general,” notes Robin Moore, “musical labor straddled a cognitive boundary between white-collar and blue-collar, elite and common, in the minds of many” (19). Carpentier, one of the many cited by Moore, dedicates a chapter of *La música en Cuba* to an examination of these interstitial places. Young whites who played music professionally performed contrary to “the prejudices of a colonial society, that recently had attained prominence, consigning its sons to law, medicine, the church, a military career, or, for lack of anything better, public administration, reserving for itself the monopoly of the most ‘honorable stations’” (153). Young blacks in search of possibilities had a very different view of music as an occupation. “Barred from the law, medicine, ecclesiastical careers, and the better administrative positions, blacks considered music a very reputable profession, one that allowed them to scale the heights of the social ladder” (154). In Havana and other Cuban cities, this created the economically

and socially liminal places described by Ira Berlin in New Orleans, where Africans “mixed easily with Native-American traders, European merchants and planters, and sailors and dockside roustabouts whose racial origins defied categorization” (200). With a public posture that embraces *afrocubanismo* as a fundamental part of national identity, the Cuban government would clearly like to have the world think it has solved its long history of racial discrimination. Anecdotally, the harsh critiques of Afrocuban exiles such as Celia Cruz, Carlos Barbería, and Paquito D’Rivera make the government’s case less convincing, especially when seen in light of the overwhelming white presence still predominant among its leadership.

Carpentier’s penultimate novel, published two years before his passing, records a credible revolution with the potential to avoid the corruption of earlier attempts, deal realistically with a long history of black and white antagonism, and in which a subject can find herself in the State; as a means of accomplishing all this, the author adds to Hegel an ideal performance of *La consagración de la primavera*, the title of this novel taken from the *Le Sacre du printemps* created by Vaslav Nijinsky, Nicholas Roerich, Serge Diaghilev, and Igor Stravinsky. Artistic creation and political action merge throughout this novel. Considering how he had landed on a battlefield of the Spanish Civil War, Enrique recalls how, “in the face of these problems, musicians of the moment began to ask themselves anxiously if they ought to become atonalists or neoclassicists, poets began to ask themselves if they had arrived at the moment to join the Communist Party...”¹² (74). As artists consider taking up

¹² “Y así como los músicos del momento empezaban a preguntarse angustiosamente, puestos antes nuevos problemas, si habían de hacerse atonalistas o neoclásicos, los poetas empezaron a preguntarse si no les había llegado la hora de ingresar en el Partido Comunista...”

the writings of Marx and Engels, “all the more irrefutable when opposed by the falacies and errors of Feuerbach, Dühring, or Kautsky,” notes Enrique, some started “to replace the already dated quarrels surrounding figurative or non-figurative painting and neoclassicism or atonality in music”¹³ (77). Enrique’s eventual wife, Vera, employs similar analogies as she considers her politically-conflicted relationship with her Communist lover, Jean-Claude. More than any argument, Vera worries about the way that they leave political debates out of their daily discussions, since she believes “an atheist can get along with a practicing Catholic, a theologian with an unbeliever, an atonalist with a Mozartian pianist, a master of cubism with a painter of postcards, a wise man with a foolish woman. What’s impossible is establishing an enduring harmony on a foundation of political silence” (128).

As clearly seen by going back to Stravinsky’s expressed views, Carpentier does not confuse artistic style with personal politics, but in this case models the ways that selected artistic forms can, however temporarily, mark political moments. In this case, atonality can signal a willingness not only to break with classical traditions but also to abandon ordinary notions of the way things ought to be; Arnold Schönberg’s early twentieth-century compositions that refuse to return to or even define a home tonality continue to discomfort listeners a hundred years later. This does not make atonality always the equivalent of Marxism,¹⁴ but instead posits this system as one of a

¹³ “...tanto más irrefutable cuanto más se le oponía a las falacias y errores de Feuerbach, Dühring o Kautsky...había venido a sustituirse a las ya viejas querellas en torno a la pintura figurativa o no figurativa, al neoclasicismo o al atonalismo en música.”

¹⁴ In fact, the Soviet Union forbade performances of atonal composers deemed guilty of “decadent formalism.” As Stravinsky recalls, Shostakovich in this way joined the “ranks of Hindemith, Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and other European composers” (108). More recently, Žižek employs the term atonal throughout *In Defense of Lost Causes* as a synonym for decadent pointlessness (397 and other pages).

number of ways to prepare diatonically-formed listeners for a break with major and minor tonality and for expanded tonal possibilities such as fifths flatted by quarter or other fractional tones, quarter tone scales, pentatonic scales, detuned octaves, or a return to Greek modes. Even the ubiquitous diatonic structures of major and minor reject their own tonalities in a variety of ways that include transpositions, modulations, chords with extensions that make tonal centers sound less certain, and a system based on relative intervals that undermine any idea of an originary tonic (root). For Carpentier, these musical examples demonstrate sonic dialectics of dissonance and consonance that also occur less clearly in other arts or in politics.

At first, Enrique would seem to embody the cultural-political dialectic Carpentier sets up in *La consagración de la primavera*, especially as so much of this protagonist's life compares to that of his author. Growing up in Havana during the first decades of the twentieth century, Enrique rebels against the limited cultural opportunities in a land dominated politically and economically by the United States. After moving to Paris, he enjoys a reasonably comfortable bohemian lifestyle, and falls in love with a German Jew called Ada. It was, ““an odd name for a Jew,’ I had said, thinking that she should have borne a traditional Biblical name: Rebecca, Deborah, Judith. ‘The first women who appeared in the Scriptures had very short names,’ she said. ‘Eva, Ana, Lea, Ada...’” (96). Enrique's first woman, in the sense of the first whom he loves, studies Cuban music, and teaches her new lover a great deal about the sounds of his country. In what at first seems like an aside to this romance, Ada returns to her own country to find out what has happened to her parents, but her quick trip becomes a permanent relocation as she quickly disappears in

the German concentration camps. Unable to find her on his own trip to her homeland, Enrique returns to Paris brokenhearted. Finding an opportunity to fight Nazis, he joins his friend Gaspar, an Afro-Cuban musician, who has prepared to enlist in the Republican army fighting the Fascist-backed military takeover of Spain.

On the Spanish battlefield, Enrique meets Vera when she arrives to visit her wounded lover Jean-Claude. Enrique and Vera do not get along initially, in part because she opposes Jean-Claude's involvement in the war and hopes to bring him back to Paris as quickly as possible. In spite of this inauspicious beginning, they develop a sufficient amount of friendship for him to visit her in Paris after the defeat of the Republicans and the death of Jean-Claude. With no other romantic engagement on either side, Enrique and Vera begin to live together.

As the German army approaches Paris, the couple escapes to Havana, where Enrique uncomfortably returns to the embrace of a family he finds politically conservative and culturally philistine. In order to secure the protection of Vera by his aunt, a powerful family matriarch who hates her nephew's companion at first sight, Enrique claims that they have married, a lie turned true during a hastily-arranged civil ceremony. Enrique decides to pursue artistic ambitions as an architectural student, and speaks movingly of new trends in his chosen field of endeavor. These dreams fade after graduation, however, as postwar construction projects in Cuba involve nothing further than houses and businesses commissioned by rich friends of his family. Feeling his failure as an artist, Enrique also endures the barbed comments of his friend Gaspar, who reflects on the ability of the white Cuban to leave

behind the Communist cause and retreat to his well-off — and racially segregated — haunts.

Enrique feels this break most keenly while dancing with his cousin Teresa at New York City's Rainbow Room at the top of Rockefeller Center; during a set of popular songs, the band breaks into "The Internationale," an anthem the protagonist had previously heard sung in Spain by no less an artist than Paul Robeson. "This isn't for a fucking dance in a cabaret," insists Enrique. "I never thought I'd see anything like this. It's like, just thinking of it makes my blood boil"¹⁵ (280). Teresa, who — however ironically — sides with her family on economic matters (and thus continues the role played by Mouche in *Los pasos perdidos*), does not share her cousin's indignation:

"Well, to me it seems fine. You know that sooner or later we rich people have to screw ourselves so we might as well start getting used to hearing 'The Internationale.'"

"But not like this. And least of all in the *Rainbow Room*. There's something in all this, a frivolity, a faddishness that outrages me. Even more, I see a bad omen in this; those who so lightly accept what they hated yesterday could be the first to deny tomorrow what today they applaud. 'The Internationale' wasn't meant for them."¹⁶ (280 emphasis in original)

Žižek writes about the use of this same anthem as an accompaniment to sex in

¹⁵ "Que eso, carajo, no es para que se baile en un cabaret. Jamás creí que vería semejante cosa. Es que, de sólo pensarlo, se me revuelve la sangre."

¹⁶ "Pues, a mí me parece muy bien. Tú sabes que, tarde o temprano, los ricos tendremos que jodernos. Por lo tanto, más vale que uno se vaya acostumbrando a oír *La Internacional*"

"Pero no así. Y menos, en el *Rainbow Room*. Hay, en todo esto, una frivolidad, una novelería, que me indignan. Además, veo un mal agüero en ello: quienes con tanta ligereza aceptan lo que ayer aborrecieron, serán los primeros en renegar, mañana, de lo que hoy aplauden. *La Internacional* no se hizo para ellos."

the movie *Reds*. Although the Slovenian philosopher does not go back to *La consagración de la primavera*, Carpentier similarly juxtaposes sex and revolution when, shortly after leaving the Rainbow Room, Enrique and Teresa begin a long-lasting affair that he describes as “the love of love without love” (282). While the film soundtrack, as Žižek observes in *How to Read Lacan*, “integrates the October Revolution — for Hollywood the most traumatic historical event — into the Hollywood universe by staging it as the metaphorical background for the sexual act between the movie’s main characters” (50), Carpentier turns the empty act, one that leaves out the novel’s principal protagonist, into an emblem of revolution’s betrayal.

Soon after his night at the Rainbow Room, Enrique returns to Havana and continues his supportive role as Vera’s protector and advisor. Whatever has happened with Teresa, he genuinely cares about his wife and her plans to build a corps of ballet students. As they pursue artistic careers made difficult by Havana’s conservative politics and culture, more bad news comes their way; a military takeover orchestrated by Fulgencio Batista leads to a dictatorship that makes life unendurable even for relatively well-off former revolutionaries, and Enrique surreptitiously joins a subversive group aligned with rebels in the Sierra Maestra. Eventually believing his identity compromised, Enrique flees to Venezuela. After taking an extended break in Caracas, Enrique makes new contacts that put him back to work as a commercial architect. During this time, he loses contact with Vera, and worries that she may have been taken captive by Batista’s *radiopatrulleros* (secret police) even though she has no sympathies for revolutionary activity of any kind.

While Enrique attempts to locate Vera, Fidel Castro begins to win battles in the Cuban countryside and eventually marches triumphantly into Havana. This revolutionary success creates mixed feelings in Enrique. He has enjoyed a very comfortable exile in Caracas, including time for an affair with Irene, and now feels sidelined in a cause he not only espoused but for which he fought so hard. “And there, slowly sipping an Aragonese white wine that was a specialty of the house, I felt terribly alone, alone in the face of all I saw and heard, alone before a historical reality that directly concerned me — overwhelmed due to my evident margination”¹⁷ (522). In this moment, as in the autobiographical sections of *Los pasos perdidos*, Carpentier treats his own past with a fairly brutal honesty. The author, who had lived in Paris, fled the advancing German army, and spent relatively easy years living under a Venezuelan dictatorship, may have felt these same emotions upon the triumph of a cause in which he believed. “But, as much as I might try to justify myself to my own conscience,” anguishes Enrique, “I had to admit that a real revolutionary would have taken a different course of action. I had not gone beyond being a bourgeois involved in conspiracy — in the role of a Carbonaro or ‘conspirator’ — lost in this century”¹⁸ (522-23).

At the age of fifty (in this biographical resemblance the somewhat older author fudges a bit), Enrique heads back to Cuba. He finds Teresa headed in the opposite direction as she prepares to abandon the country and, after finding out that Vera has discovered his betrayal, tells his cousin,

¹⁷ “Y allá, saboreando lentamente un vino blanco aragonés que era especialidad de la casa, me sentí terriblemente solo, solo ante lo visto y oído, solo ante una realidad histórica que directamente me concernía — agobiado por una evidencia debida a mi marginación.”

¹⁸ “Pero, por más que tratara de justificarme ante mi conciencia, debía admitir que un verdadero revolucionarios habría procedido de distinta manera. No pasaba de ser un burgués metido a conspirador — trasunto de carbonario o ‘laborante’ — extraviado en este siglo.”

“Goodbye... forever”¹⁹ (540). Freed from his bourgeois family, he can finally, much like the protagonist of *Memorias de subdesarrollo*, engage in work he believes in, in this case constructing buildings that will serve the people’s interests. At the same time, he approaches a sense of what freedom might look like in a state disposed to serve the interests of those same people. While discussing the sudden dissolution of their commercial interests, Enrique and his business partner begin laughing. “We really did not know why we laughed, but we felt this happiness inside, this impression of liberty, of *readiness*, of moving towards *something new* that signified a great life change, a far flight from an environment that, at bottom, far from procuring our independence as a result of increased benefits, imposed a greater servitude every day”²⁰ (544 emphasis in original). Finally, thinks Enrique to himself, “‘The day will arrive when you will be worthy of having this country as your inheritance’ — I believe that it is said in the *Book of Exodus*. And from an exodus I returned and, for the first time, I feel like the inheritor of all this that I contemplate”²¹ (552). Up until now, his life has consisted of waiting and hoping. “And this I did: *hope* [*esperar*] — accepting in this the ambiguity of a term that also means to *wait* and to *trust*...”²² (515). That one word in Spanish signifies a great deal in the manner in which it creates a unity among seemingly different synonymous possibilities.

When troops backed by the United States invade, Enrique joins his

¹⁹ “Adiós... para siempre”

²⁰ “No sabíamos por qué reíamos en realidad, pero sentíamos esa alegría interior, esa impresión de libertad, de *disponibilidad*, de tránsito hacia *algo nuevo* que significa todo gran cambio de vida toda huida fuera de un ámbito que, en el fondo, lejos de procurarnos una independencia mediante beneficios cada día nos impone una mayor servidumbre.”

²¹ “‘Llegará el día en que serás merecedor de que este país sea tu herencia’ — creo que se dice en el *Libro del éxodo*. Y de un éxodo regresaba y, por vez primera, me sentía heredero de todo esto que contemplaba.”

²² “Y eso hacía yo: *esperar* — aceptándose aquí la ambigüedad de un vocablo que también significaba *aguardar* y *confiar*...”

voluntary regiment in the ensuing battle at the Bay of Pigs. Wounded in action, Enrique wakes up in the hospital to find himself reunited with Vera. He does not, after all, embody the cultural-political dialectic Carpentier sets up in *La consagración de la primavera*, but instead stands in for its author; Enrique's first person reminiscences, interspersed between hers, make up the smaller part of this story. We need his point of view to focus on hers, but the real dialectic takes place with her as the subject.

Even though she also comes from a bourgeois family, revolution has never seemed to Vera like a fun way to thumb her nose at her relatives. Her parents, as pampered and reactionary as Enrique's aunt, flee to London as the Bolsheviks take over Russia. As a ballerina in Paris, Vera loves the Hispanicist academic Jean-Claude in spite of his membership in the Communist Party. His death while fighting in the Spanish Civil War confirms for her the stupidity of all political activity. In Havana, she believes that she has shunned politics by dedicating herself to the establishment of a ballet school for the children of Enrique's family friends. Enrique's cousin Teresa takes a great deal of interest in her work, and helps Vera build up a clientele while smoothing over rough patches with the aunt caused precisely because the school project involves a political stance that its founder herself fails to perceive: dedication to the art form, as opposed to merely amplifying social graces, interferes with the common feminine expectations of Enrique's social class.

Connections between ballet and politics grow much closer when Gaspar agrees to introduce her to an *abakuá* (African society) dance at the home of the real-life pianist, Bola de Nieve. "*Folkloric* dance, seen in its ambience, is magnificent," he tells her. "But you take it to the stage and it

becomes long, repetitious, monotonous. To stage it in a theater, you have to repaint it, frame it, put it in conditions that throw a spotlight on it. Then it stops being *folklore*... One cannot dance in a theater like one dances *there*”²³ (257 emphasis in original). Vera finds the performance and begins to applaud. “Stop that,” snaps Gaspar. “This is not a *show*”²⁴ (259 emphasis in original). As the dance presents an *arará*, an athletic art form, Vera has a vision: “If Nijinsky could have had ballet dancers like this, his first choreography of *The Rite of Spring* would not have been such a failure. It was *this* that the music of Stravinsky called for: the dancers of Guanabacoa, and not the wimps and sissies of Diaghilev’s ballet”²⁵ (260 emphasis in original). The expatriate Russian ballet teacher then makes a fairly obvious connection, but one with complications best explored by an author familiar with both Afro-Cuban traditions and the music of Stravinsky; hoping to go back to *Le sacre du printemps* and improve on Nijinsky’s failure, Vera decides to mount a production based on Stravinsky’s score with Cuban dancers, white and black. Her plan will take many years since she does not envision the dancers in front of her performing the ballet but, in further echoes of Exodus, their children. Still thinking that politics plays no part in this project, in spite of the endemic oppression of blacks that causes her to keep this a secret from the white patrons of her profitable first academy, Vera opens a conservatory for young dancers from Afro-Cuban families. As if that were not enough, she brings her

²³ “La danza *fo-lórica*, vista en su ambiente, es magnífica. Pero la llevas a un escenario, y te resulta larga, repetida, monótona. Para encaramarla en un teatro, hay que repintarla, encuadrarla, ponerla en condiciones de que le echen los focos encima. Entonces, deja de ser *fo-lore*... No se puede bailar en un teatro como se baila *allá*.” I can think of no useful way to reproduce in English Gaspar’s slangy pronunciation of folklore as *fo-lore*.

²⁴ “Deja eso... Que esto no es un *show*.”

²⁵ “Si Nijinsky hubiese contado con bailarines así, su coreografía primera de *La consagración de la primavera* no hubiese sido el fracaso que fue. Era *esto* lo que pedía la música de Stravinsky: los danzantes de Guanabacoa, y no los blandengues y afeminados del ballet de Diaghilev.”

best white female students to serve as assistant instructors and eventually as dancers opposite black males in the proposed program.

The need for secrecy begins to excite Vera's political consciousness. So do assaults on the black students following Battista's military takeover. Soon, it becomes apparent that the re-visioned ballet will never take place in Havana so Vera, with support from Enrique and various friends, begins to plan an opening night in New York, a possibility nixed by their appearance on a United States blacklist, and finally Paris. In addition to Stravinsky's ballet, the Parisian performance will include dances based on American offerings by Heitor Villa-Lobos, Silvestre Revueitas, Amadeo Roldán, and Alejandro Caturla (355). Even this dream dies on the night the *radiopatrulleros* destroy her school and slaughter her leading male dancer on the street. Desperately afraid, Vera calls on Teresa, who provides a hideout in her home.

Among Teresa's belongings, Vera comes across unhidden mementos of the cousins' affair. Confronted, Teresa basically tells her cousin's wife to grow up, accept realities, and understand that this relationship meant little. Perhaps most cuttingly, Teresa lets Vera know that Enrique also used his cousin's place while conspiring against Batista. After Teresa goes back to sleep, Vera withdraws a small portion of the couple's money from the bank and heads to Baracoa, Cuba's first settlement, now ignored on the island's eastern shore. Having effectively disappeared from Enrique as well as the government agents, she purchases a house in Baracoa and becomes a well-liked, however eccentric, part of the community. She also develops a possible love interest — probably never consummated — in a never-named local doctor who introduces her to the history of Cuba, literature from many places, and extensive

philosophical readings.

As well-disciplined troops take Havana, Vera's readings and experiences cause her to take a different view of revolution:

I give up. I'm tired of running, of fleeing all the time. I have wanted to ignore that I lived in a century of profound changes and, by not recognizing this reality, I'm left naked, homeless, disarmed in the face of the History of my era — an era I wanted to ignore. And I now perceive, as a brief glint of illumination, that one cannot live against an era, nor glance back nostalgically towards a past that burns and collapses, on pain of being turned into a statue of salt. At least, if I had not been with the Revolution, I had not been against it, preferring to ignore it. But for me, these ignorant times have come to an end. This time I do not live onstage but as part of the public. I am not behind a barrier of footlights, creator of mirages, but I form part of a collective to whom has arrived the hour of pronouncing itself and taking its own destiny in hand. I walked through the borders of staged illusion to place myself among those that look and judge and to insert myself into a reality in which *one is* or *one is not*, without wiles, abracadabra, feints, or half-truths. Yes or no... And I ask at last, with the timidity of a neophyte frightened beforehand by the mysteries of a trial of initiation: "What must one do to be with the Revolution?" And

they answer: “Nothing. Be with it.”²⁶ (509-510 emphasis in original)

Vera knows the “Theory” of revolutions in which “all new people who came to power in countries where they sweep with a new broom invariably began with magnificent intentions”²⁷ inevitably destroyed by the trappings of power (524). Even so, she sees evidence of something different in the new leadership. Along with many in Cuba, including wealthy operators accustomed to wielding power, she notes the formal distance maintained by rebel leaders. “It was inexplicable that they refused to accept treats, to be received in their clubs, ignored the enchantment of their revels, the taste of their liquor, the charms of certain women — and this, after so many privations”²⁸ (533). In Samuel Beckett’s much-quoted phrase, this revolution might “Try again. Fail again. Fail better” (7).

Miraculously, Vera has become a part of this; she expects no further miracles. Reunited with a repentant Enrique, she begins to find her conservatory’s survivors in order to embark on new attempt at *The Rite of*

²⁶ “Me rindo. Estoy cansada de huir, de huir siempre. He querido ignorar que vivía en un siglo de cambios profundos y, por no admitir esa verdad, estoy desnuda, desamparada, inerte, ante una Historia que es la de mi época — época que quise ignorar. Y percibo ahora, como en breve fulgor de iluminación, que no se puede vivir contra la época, ni volver siempre una añorante mirada hacia un pasado que se arde y se derrumba, so pena de ser transformado en estatua de sal. Al menos, si no he estado con la Revolución, no he estado contra ella, prefiriendo ignorarla. Pero se terminaron, para mí, los tiempos de la ignorancia. Esta vez no vivo en un escenario, sino dentro del público. No estoy detrás de una mentida barrera de candilejas, creadora de espejismos, sino que formo parte de una colectividad a quien ha llegado la hora de pronunciarse y tomar su propio destino en manos. Traspuse las fronteras de la ilusión escénica para situarme entre los que miran y juzgan e insertarme en una realidad donde *se es o no se es*, sin argucias, birlibirloques, fintas ni términos medios. Sí o no... Y pregunto al fin, con la timidez del neófito amedrentado de antemano por los misterios de una prueba iniciaca: ‘¿Qué hay que hacer para estar con la Revolución?’ Y me contestan: ‘Nada. Estar con ella.’”

²⁷ “Teoría: toda la gente nueva que llegaba al poder en estos fregados países, empezaba siempre con magníficas intenciones.”

²⁸ “Era inexplicable que se negaran a aceptar convites, a ser recibidos en sus clubes, a ignorar el encanto de sus fiestas, el sabor de sus licores, la belleza de ciertas mujeres — y eso, después de tantas privaciones”

Spring, which now has a place and secures her place in the Revolution.

“Today something takes place that I never believed possible: I found my own *stability* [*estabilidad*] within a word that Spanish, French, and English enunciate in ten letters, synonymous for me, during so many years, of a hellish cauldron”²⁹ (576 emphasis in original). Carpentier’s use of *estabilidad* establishes the manner in which his protagonist finds herself in “the most immense contradiction” of love and with “*substantial freedom* in the state as its essence, its end, and the product of its activity” (Hegel 199 and 275, emphasis in original). More than Enrique, Gaspar, or anyone else in the novel, she becomes a subject in opposition to a State (*estado*), with both subject and State achieving stability in successively changing moments.

²⁹ “Ocurre hoy lo que nunca creí posible: que yo hallase mi propia *estabilidad* dentro de lo que se enunciaba en español, en francés, en inglés, con una palabra de diez letras — sinónimo para mí, durante tantos años, de caldero infernal.”

Another National Anthem

There's another national anthem, folks,
 For those who never win,
 For the suckers, for the pikers,
 For the ones who might have been...

Assassins Stephen Sondheim

A family member complains about Saddam Hussein's involvement in an attack on New York City, Barack Obama's medical plan, and other events of the day. As I listen to her spin out talking points so carefully rehearsed by radio talk show hosts, I hear something different behind these formulations: she feels left out; in fact, she has been left out. Few theorists, policy makers, academics, activists, intellectuals, or artists have any interest in the fate of this aging white woman who fears the loss of her lifetime savings and who also fears the idea that she and her life may be as meaningless as society makes it seem; more than the loss of money, she resents a lack of respect accorded to her. In a discussion of Zora Neale Hurston's final novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Cynthia Ward asks if "a critical mass of working-class readers" could "stretch the boundaries of imagined community to embrace 'Crackers' and 'poor white trash'" and decides "no: such a development is categorically and practically impossible for a number of reasons." Ward's reasons include a middle-class readership that causes the working-class author to, in various ways, "deauthorize" her voice and the class distinctions created by literature that cause readers to separate the characters with whom they identify from those with whom they are differentiated by the manner in which works portray them (77). Still, Hurston's publication of *Seraph on the Suwanee* suggests that perhaps, in time, someone could make this leap of literary faith. A recent spate of books dealing with whiteness in the United States suggests once again

Hurston's prescience; reviewing *Stuff White People Like*, *The History of White People*, and *How Race Survived U.S. History*, Kelefa Sanneh asks, "Is white identity shifting?" (74). And in 2010 we also see the political antics of masses of white people adoring a former governor whose principal achievement may consist of bearing a surname attesting to a lack of color.

Well before the triumphs of the mid-twentieth-century civil rights movement, Hurston makes a significant literary leap by understanding that white people do not need to accept "colored" people but rather learn to accept themselves. In *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Hurston comprehends the white people who feel left out by focusing on a protagonist, Arvey Henson, who believes that her husband, Jim Meserve, prefers the company of up-and-coming white people like himself to that of those from lower-class backgrounds like hers. "You come from some big muck-de-mucks and we ain't nothing but piney-woods Crackers and poor white trash," she scolds him. "Even niggers is better than we is, according to your kind" (126). This conflict poisons the couple's family relationships; even at home, Arvey felt that she

didn't belong where she was, that was it. Jim was a Meserve. Angeline was a Meserve. Kenny was a Meserve, but as far as they were concerned, she was still a Henson. Sort of a handmaiden around the house. She had married a Meserve and borned Meserves, but she was not one of them. A handmaiden like Hagar, who had found favor in the master's sight. They didn't have to count her when anything important was to be done. (199)

Meanwhile, Jim remains unaware of his supercilious attitude towards Arvey.

Having left his family behind, he believes that he has shed their ways. "I had too much sense to follow their lead," he tells Arvay.

While my old man was sitting around reading and taking notes trying to trace up who did what in the Civil War, and my two brothers were posing around waiting for the good old times that they had heard went on before the War to come back again, I shucked out to get in touch with the New South. So far, I don't think that I have made out so bad, do you. (203)

Even as he appears so wonderfully comfortable with all kinds of people, Jim cheerfully uses his wife along with the downtrodden whites and African Americans around him without caring about the fact all of them make out much less well than he does. Jim Meserve initially establishes the basis of his growing wealth by running a still in collaboration with his African American partner, Joe Kelsey, who takes the greater risks. Later, Jim's impoverished son-in-law begins to put away money by working for "the Boleta man, and started out to selling tickets for the Numbers" (186). Although the son-in-law, Like Kelsey, pulls himself up economically, none surpass the rise of Jim Meserve.

Theresa R. Love writes that *Seraph on the Suwanee* portrays the disintegration of a white marriage while earlier novels by Hurston have shown black marriages that survived adversity; the stories told in *Jonah's Gourd Vine* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, however, do not completely uphold that difference. For Love, "Arvay is symbolic of persons who harbor prejudices of one kind or another. Not only is she hindered from having a meaningful relationship with her husband because of his superior social and economic background, she is also unable to relate to Joe, the black man whose loyal

service is a main cause of her husband's success" (60). Arvay's eventual overcoming of her prejudices, explains Love, make it possible for her marriage to finally flourish. What does not appear in Love's article is the connection between Jim Meserve's ability to get along with — and make good use of — African Americans, foreigners, and other people despised by a larger society and his treatment of Arvay as a dumb animal. In fact, the relationship between Jim and Arvay suffers several ruptures. At one pivotal moment, she leaves for an an extended stay with her mother during which she hopes to reconnect with her hometown.

Arvay tossed her head defiantly and rhymed out that she was a Cracker³⁰ bred and a Cracker born, and when she died there'd be a Cracker gone. [This actually rhymes where she lives.]

Jim's and even her own children's ways were not her ways. She had tried and tried but she did not fit in. Let Jim and them have their ways. She would go back and let Jim strain with his house and his impudent, biggety niggers his ownself. (272)

This line of thought leads to anti-intellectualism as an expression of anger at missing out on educational opportunities, such as the music Arvay wanted to study. "Arvay scorned off learning as a source of evil knowledge and thought fondly of ignorance as the foundation of good-heartedness and honesty" (272). Although she will find her hometown even lazier and more deceitful than she remembers, Arvay longs to return "to the good old times and simple honest things, where greed after money and power had no place" (272).

Having presented Arvay's fears, Hurston then shows them to be well-

³⁰ The Oxford English Dictionary defines "cracker" as "A contemptuous name given in southern States of N. America to the 'poor whites'; whence, familiarly, to the native whites of Georgia and Florida."

founded. Arvey arrives home just in time to share the last chapter of her mother's life. Maria Henson, the mother, finds great comfort in her impending death, even without promises of everlasting reward; life, she has found, just wasn't worth the effort. "Arvie, I know that I don't amount to much. Just one of them nothing kind of human things stumbling around 'mongst the toes of God. Ain't seldom had, nor neither done what I desired. It wasn't for me to have and to do. My footprints'll be erased off before my head is hardly cold" (280). In one of several references to R.H. Barrow's *Slavery in the Roman Empire*, Arendt reveals how "the curse of slavery consisted not only in being deprived of freedom and of visibility, but also in the fear of these obscure people themselves 'that from being obscure they should pass away leaving no trace that they have existed'" (*The Human Condition* 55). As seen in the second chapter of this dissertation, however, Maria Henson's neighbors do not forget her so quickly. Bradford Cary, a wealthy town notable, publicizes his friendship with Maria in order to establish a reputation as a man of the people while pursuing a career in politics.

Although Bradford Cary's specific views never appear on these pages, readers get a glimpse of Jim Meserve's political views, which tend to resemble some of those espoused by Hurston. "It's just like my husband says," declares Arvey after seeing the terrible shape in which her sister Lorraine's family has left the old homestead.

He says folks makes a bad mistake when they call places slums. He says folks are the slums instead of the places they live in. Places don't get nasty and dirty and lowdown unless some folks make 'em like that. Place some folks in what is

called slums and they'll soon make things look like a mansion. Place a slum in a mansion and he'll soon have it looking as bad as he do. It ain't right to blame it on the place. Leave the land along by itself, and it'll grow up into trees and flowers. It don't grow up into slouchy people. (304-305)

Never one to leave readers with a simplistic formulation, Hurston then has Arvey find release by burning down the house, which she sees as an “ill-deformed monstropolous accumulation of time and scum” (306). Whatever Jim — or even the author — says, it appears as though slum places can exist. As Arvey looked on her act of arson, “exultation swept over her followed by a peaceful calm. It was the first time in her life that she was conscious of feeling that way. She had always felt like an imperfect ball restlessly bumping and rolling and rolling and bumping. Now she felt she had come to a dead and absolute rest” (307). Slums might be people or places or, when Hurston wills it, both. In any case, the cause of Arvey's problems will fit neatly into neither nature nor nurture.

Since *Seraph on the Suwanee* does not perform the quisling acts attributed to it, critics have tried to find the novel guilty by association with a web of statements and writings that supposedly demonstrate Hurston's turn to madness, right-wing Republicanism, and plain bad writing. “Essentially,” writes Harold Bloom in the Introduction to *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*, “Hurston is the author of one superb and moving novel [*Their Eyes Were Watching God*], unique not in its kind but in its isolated excellence among other stories of the kind” (1). Surprisingly, Bloom goes on to argue that Hurston “was refreshingly free of all the ideologies that currently obscure the

reception of her best book. Her sense of power,” he contends, “has nothing in common with politics of any persuasion, with contemporary modes of feminism, or even with those questers who search for a black aesthetic” (4). During her “later years,” writes Alice Walker in “A Cautionary Tale and a Partisan View,” Hurston “became frightened of the life she had always dared bravely before. Her work, too, became reactionary, static, shockingly misguided and timid. This is especially true of her last novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee*, which is not even about black people, which is no crime, but *is* about white people who are bores, which is” (67 emphasis in original). Not finding the book’s protagonist boring, I searched in vain for reasons, and wondered if Walker disliked the presentation of an average white woman or if she took offence at a seemingly happy ending afforded people with the wrong politics.

Seen in any light, Walker seems to ignore her own advice, given in “On Refusing to Be Humbled by Second Place in a Contest You Did Not Design,” to “think of Zora Neale Hurston as an artist, period — rather than as the artist/politician most black writers have been required to be” (104). Following this line of reasoning, in which she focuses on Hurston as an artist, Walker makes an interesting comparison between public expectations of writers and musicians with a consideration of “the lives of Zora Hurston and Bessie Smith (whom no one, it seems, thought to ask what *she* thought of things like integration)” (105 emphasis in original). Walker then goes on to relate an anecdote, compelling even if apocryphal, involving Bessie Smith at a party thrown by Carl and Fania Van Vechten, famous white patrons of the Harlem Renaissance. As Smith “entered, never having seen Carl or Fania Van

Vechten before (and dragging her full length, white ermine on the floor behind her, an ermine purchased with money from her bestselling records), Fania Van Vechten flung herself into Bessie's arms. Bessie knocked her flat, exclaiming over a glass of straight gin: 'I never *heard* of such shit!'" (105 emphasis in original). Like Smith, Walker notes, Hurston undoubtedly

knew shit when she saw it... Yet she never knocked anyone flat for having the audacity to patronize her, nor does she ever complain in print about the hypocrisy she must have borne. The difference between Hurston and Smith? One's work — singing, to which one could dance or make love — supported her. The other's work — writing down unwritten doings and sayings of a culture nobody else seemed to give a damn about, except to wish it would more speedily conform to white, middle-class standards — did not. (105)

As in previous chapters, where I concurred with commentaries on Latin America while encouraging the possibility of their application to Anglo America, I find Walker's point not only compelling but also deserving of wider consideration for two reasons. First, this difference in the treatment of celebrated and relatively (and, in this case, literally) unsung artists obviously, as Walker demonstrates, transcends color. Secondly, Hurston's work, as shown in *Moses, Man of the Mountain* and *Seraph on the Suwanee*, sets down in writing the doings and sayings of more than one "culture that nobody else seemed to give a damn about." While Moses has connections in high places that make it possible for him to knock people flat once in a while, Arvey will have to rely on the survival methods used by Hurston.

A more useful contextualization of Hurston's political voice would take care to avoid the "visibly foregone conclusions" that Spivak criticizes in *Death of a Discipline* (8). Moving beyond the standard critiques — what everyone already thinks they know about the author — requires past readings of her texts and future receptions of the ideas expressed in those texts. Mary Helen Washington asks, "How did this celebrant of black folk culture become, in later years, a right-wing Republican, publicly supporting a staunch segregationist and opposing the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision?" (125). Washington's question assumes that Hurston's political views changed and that the new views were incompatible with the author's celebration of black culture in the United States. In fact, as seen in the discussion of Alain Locke to follow, Hurston consistently espoused a politically conservative philosophy that had much in common with views formulated by other Harlem Renaissance figures. Her views only seemed to diverge and become more radical when she criticized the Supreme Court's decision on desegregation that, recalls Washington, she believed implied "the inferiority of black teachers, black students, and black schools in the South" (134). Although well aware of Jim Crow racist legislation in the states segregated *de jure*, notes Washington, Hurston also remained aware of "the hypocritical notion that intolerance was located in the South, and that, by extension, the North was a haven of equality" (133).

At the same time that Hurston criticized tactics meant to desegregate schools, a well-known commentator in the North had no trouble voicing similar concerns about federal intervention to promote integration in the South without having her position, published in *Responsibility and Judgment*,

simplistically branded segregationist. Looking at a newspaper photo showing an African American girl harassed by white classmates in a newly-integrated school, Hannah Arendt asks what she would do if she “were a Negro mother? The answer: under no circumstances would I expose my child to conditions which made it appear as though it wanted to push its way into a group where it was not wanted. Psychologically,” she explains, “the situation of being unwanted (a typically social predicament) is more difficult to bear than outright persecution (a political predicament) because personal pride is involved” (193). In Arendt’s view, “the very attempt to start desegregation in education in schools had not only, and very unfairly, shifted the burden of responsibility from the shoulders of adults to those of children,” but had also managed to “avoid the real issue” (194). Instead of seeking equal opportunities in education, according to Arendt, the government involved African Americans “in an affair of social climbing; and if I chose this way of bettering myself,” she argues, “I certainly would prefer to do it by myself, unaided by any government agencies” (194). Arendt provides a compelling case against the prevailing integration processes throughout her article, concluding that she finds “the most startling part of the whole business was the Federal decision to start integration in, of all places, the public schools. It certainly did not require too much imagination,” she explains, “to see that this was to burden children, black and white, with the working out of a problem which adults for generations have confessed themselves unable to solve” (203). Finally, she observes, in a view consistent with those expressed at greater length in *The Human Condition*, forcing “parents to send their children to an integrated school against their will means to deprive them of rights which clearly belong

to them in all free societies — the private right over their children and the social right to free association” (212). To top this off, parents sending their children to schools in far-flung neighborhoods sensed, not always inaccurately, that integrationist politicians and their wealthy supporters enrolled their own children in private academies. They do still.

For this and other reasons, promises from the political left had little credibility in the African American community. In “The Outsider,” Addison Gayle, Jr. recalls the era of Hurston’s first published novel as one in which “Wallace Thurman and Rudolph Fisher were dead, and the forces they had helped to set in motion during the Renaissance were already being undermined by the efforts of the Communist party” (35). For much of Hurston’s adult life, architects of the New Deal paid little more than lip service to thoughts of integration. Moreover, Franklin Delano Roosevelt capped his presidency by sending segregated armed forces to fight racist Fascism and sending US citizens with Japanese family connections to concentration camps. When integration finally became the mode of choice on the political left during the final decades of Hurston’s life, some worried that African American institutions such as the Negro Baseball leagues and the Duke Ellington Big Band would simply disappear. As many of these fears proved well-founded, black separatist groups gained influence in the years after Hurston’s passing. In response to the invitation to assimilate — as imperative, even if formulated more politely, as previous orders to segregate — some decided that staying in one’s own pot might prove better than melting. Hurston, “as well as many other southern blacks, feared that they would be the losers in the integration plan,” observes Washington. “It is both ironic and sad,” she adds, “to realize

that Hurston would not have been denounced for any of these views in the sixties or seventies. She might even have been considered militant” (134).

Complications leading to Hurston’s erstwhile-conservative-cum-nascent-militancy begin with her earliest publications. While noting “the universal agreement that she was one of the most memorable personages of the period” (36), Hemenway discovers practically no mention of the Harlem Renaissance and its significance in Hurston’s autobiography or any of her other publications or correspondence (35). Although Hurston worked with many leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance, she eventually broke with almost all of them. In some cases, these breakups were caused by personal and professional differences. A very close and productive friendship with Langston Hughes eventually broke up over the proper credits due for their 1930 collaboration on the play *Mule Bone*, which remained unperformed and unpublished three decades after her death. George Houston Bass observes in his introduction to the play, “The cover page of the draft of the playscript in the Hughes papers at Yale University bears a handwritten note by Langston Hughes that reads, ‘This play was never done because the authors fell out’” (2). Given Hurston’s tempestuous relationships with friends, their differing social views may have had less to do with this falling out than did relatively mundane misunderstandings.

Other estrangements clearly had political roots. Hurston’s battles with DuBois began early; in a letter sent to Annie Nathan Meyer in 1927, she warns her correspondent against following “the writings of Dr. Du Bois too carefully, [as] he is a propagandist with all the distorted mind of his kind. He is doing a great service perhaps for his race, but he must use propaganda methods and

those methods never follow actual conditions very accurately” (Kaplan 108). As a Southerner from a small town, Hurston tended to consider the university educated African Americans from up North almost as clueless as well-intentioned white people. Her attitude against Du Bois grew stronger over the years; by 1951, she offered a pronunciation of his name as Doctor “Dubious” (Kaplan 643). The Southern rural roots that made Hurston proud sometimes impeded friendships and working relations with other figures associated with the Harlem Renaissance; Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright, for example, “reviewed her books and accused her of caricature” (Hemenway 333-34). Her attempts to exalt artistic production previously marginalized as folklore brought her into direct conflict not only with the political stance of Ellison and Wright but with many of the artistic and intellectual ideals of the New Negro Movement earlier espoused by Alain Locke. Hurston grew increasingly unhappy with Locke “over the years, eventually calling him, in a moment of anger, ‘a malicious spiteful little snot that thinks he ought to be the leading Negro because of his degrees’” (Hemenway 40).

In spite of this venom, Hurston never strayed far from the political views of her early mentor. In *The New Negro*, Locke takes pains to position himself as politically moderate. “Of course, the thinking Negro has shifted a little toward the left with the world-trend, and there is an increasing group who affiliate with radical and liberal movements,” he acknowledges.

But fundamentally for the present the Negro is radical on race matters, conservative on others, in other words, a ‘forced radical,’ a social protestant rather than a genuine radical. Yet under further pressure and injustice iconoclastic thought and

motives will inevitably increase. Harlem's quixotic radicalisms call for their ounce of democracy to-day lest to-morrow they be beyond cure. (5)

As if to say, we can remain conservative politically if society speaks to our specific concerns that remain radical, for now, only on issues of race and equal opportunity. More importantly, Locke's statement interrupts views of African Americans or Northerners as always to the left of whites or Southerners, stereotypes that obscure more than clarify political realities in the United States.

Even during her early years in the Harlem Renaissance, Hurston created moments that troubled her colleagues. Locke, for example, believed that "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" revealed too much to white readers (Hemenway 40). Some lines in that early essay continue to trouble contemporary readers. "I am not tragically colored," writes Hurston.

There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it. Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world — I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife. (153)

She then sums up the history of slavery and reconstruction in the United States with a stunning declaration that "the operation was successful and the patient is doing well, thank you" (153), a diagnosis that many of the "patients"

involved would reject even now, more than eighty years later. Since Hurston's other writings, especially "Seeing the World as It Is" discussed below, demonstrate that she has no intention of ignoring discrimination and abuses of power, one can fairly read "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" as a statement emphasizing overcoming as opposed to victimization.

Rather than putting these ideas forward in a totalizing manner that would support assimilation, Hurston complicates her reasoning by insisting on a differentiated identity that locates her as, among other identifiers, American and African American. To demonstrate this multiplicity, Hurston refers to an incident at a jazz club in order to completely disassociate herself from a white companion. Remarking on their contrasting reactions to the music, she observes how the white man "has only heard what I felt. He is far away and I see him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us. He is so pale with his whiteness and I am *so* colored" (154 emphasis in original). As my previous two chapters on music and identity demonstrate, I do not subscribe to this essentialist view of skin color and musical reception any more than I accept the success of slavery and reconstruction. In fact, as we will soon see in Hurston's comments on Edison, Einstein, Carver, and Just, she did not habitually separate people into categories. As related in the previous chapter, people in Honduras later informed Hurston that she was not really "*so* colored" but actually *mulata*. Her larger view here does much to convince me, however; a continent inhabited by people of widely varied colors must recognize points of similarity and difference and handle the resulting moments of harmony and tension. The final attempt of "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" to reconcile assimilation and difference with an affirmation of belonging

to no race alienates its author from all prevailing schools of racial theory. “I have no separate feeling about being an American citizen and colored, I am merely a fragment of the Great Soul that surges within the boundaries,” she insists in a conclusion that practically bellows, “My country, right or wrong” (155).

Lest one believe that Hurston suffered from the xenophobic madness often associated with that last phrase, further readings of her work demonstrate just how wrong her country could be. An appendix to *Dust Tracks on a Road* introduces three sections left out of the first publication. The most important of these, according to editor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.,

is “Seeing the World as It Is,” which contains very controversial statements about both race and politics.

Obviously written prior to December 7, 1941, the chapter contains too many anti-American statements to be published after Pearl Harbor. Significantly, this chapter was intended to be the final chapter in the first draft of the book, which makes Hurston’s pro-Japanese statements and her criticism of U.S. imperialism even more noteworthy. Apparently she wished initially to end on this radical note. (212)

“Seeing the World as It Is” begins with Hurston’s view of race relations in the United States and then moves on to apply that view to relations between nations. When read closely, the latter reveals a great deal about the former. None of them should be read as “anti-American” except by those who would condemn any criticism of the United States.

Hurston’s discussion of black and white in the United States makes

two fundamental points. First of all, individuals in groups remain sufficiently different that no representative type exists and no leader can purport to speak for all. “Races have never done anything,” writes Hurston. “What seems race achievement is the work of individuals. The white race did not go into a laboratory and invent incandescent light. That was Edison. The Jews did not work out Relativity. That was Einstein. The Negroes did not find out the inner secrets of the peanuts and sweet potatoes, nor the secret of the development of the egg. That was Carver and Just” (239). This by no means causes Hurston to dismiss the presence of “race prejudice, not only in America, but wherever two races meet together in numbers” (243). She does not believe, however, that any one leader or solution will serve for all black people. “Anyone who goes before a body and purports to plead for what ‘The Negro’ wants is a liar and knows it...And why should Negroes be united?” she asks. “Nobody else in America is” (241). With these statements, Hurston explores complications at the precise moment in which many African American political leaders demanded simplistic fealty that would help promote a united cause. Lori Jirousek sees these same complications in Hurston’s anthropological studies, which she reads “in light of two cultural theorists, her contemporary and mentor Franz Boas and our own contemporary Homi Bhabha, [to reveal] further implications of this ethnographic work as mixed genre, cultural record, and racial commentary” (418). In “‘That commonality of feeling’: Hurston, Hybridity, and Ethnography,” Jirousek argues that Hurston prefigures “postmodern ethnography by challenging the scientific objectivity of the ethnographer and asserting her active presence in the text” (417). And, one can argue, postmodernist studies will by definition focus, as does Hurston, on the

here and now.

Hurston's second point, the desire to leave historical injustices behind seen in "How It Feels to Be Colored Me," may be more problematical. Noting her own place, "three generations removed" from the horrors of slavery, Hurston sees no reason to rebuke "the grave of some white man who has been dead too long to talk about... The present is upon me," she adds, "and that white man's grandchildren as well. I have business with the grandson as of today. I want to get on with the business in hand. Since I cannot pry loose the clutching hand of time, I will settle for some influence on the present" (244). Attempts at African American redress seem to Hurston "as ridiculous it would be for the Jews to hang around the pyramids trying to get a word with Old Cheops. Or for the English to be billing the Duke of Normandy the first of every month" (244). As a believer in some serious reassessment of Thomas Jefferson and a partisan of reparations for the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States, I find Hurston's historical take difficult to accept. At the same time, I see how people still dealing with brutally-enforced legal apartheid might want to avoid narrow obsessions with past injustices capable of leading to censorship by repletion and of creating melioristic appraisals that elide current injustices.

The paragraphs that develop Hurston's international view of race relations bring new meanings to the problematic domestic observations set out in the beginning of Hurston's censored chapter. "The Occident has never been christianized and never will be," she declares. "It is an oriental concept which the sons of hammer-throwing Thor have no enzymes to digest. It calls for

mekness, and the West is just not made meek” (246).³¹ The leaders of India’s independence movement, she points out, have distressed the West by resorting to precepts propounded by Christian missionaries who want the world to hear about their religion, “but not lose their heads and carry the thing too far, like Gandhi does for instance” (246). The Kings of Dahomey sold captured people into slavery, she reports, but felt outraged when the French came in and took over their land. The French felt their actions in Africa justified, but then complained when Germans took over France. As sides lined up for a Second World War, Hurston observes how many “bitter tears are being shed over the fate of Holland, Belgium, France, and England.” Even so, she confesses “to being a little dry around the eyes. I hear people shaking with shudders at the thought of Germany collecting taxes in Holland,” she continues. “I have not heard a word against Holland collecting one twelfth of poor people’s wages in Asia” (250-51). On the other side of the planet, Hurston notes, “Japan’s application of our principles to Asia is never to be sufficiently deplored” (249). This indignation, she writes with a good deal of sarcasm, “is more than justified. We Westerners composed that piece about trading in China with gunboats and cannons long decades ago. Japan is now plagiarizing in the most flagrant manner. We also wrote that song about keeping a whole hemisphere under your wing. Now the Nipponese are singing our song all over Asia” (250). As for keeping a hemisphere under control, Hurston notes that the United States has a “big brotherly duty to teach [Latin America] right from wrong. He must be taught to share with big brother before big brother comes

³¹ In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt also refers to Christianity as a development that came from “Asiatic forms of worship and beliefs in an invisible God (as we would say today) who is beyond time and life and the universe” and thus contrasts with the anthropomorphic Greek gods (18).

down and kicks his teeth in. A big *good* neighbor is a lovely thing to have. We are far too moral a people to allow poor Latin judgment to hinder good works” (249 emphasis in original).

As President Roosevelt prepares to intervene in the march of Fascism, Hurston observes that he could first “extend his four freedoms to some people right here in America before he takes it all aboard [*sic*], and, no doubt, he would do it too, if it would bring in the same amount of glory. I am not bitter,” writes Hurston, “but I see what I see...I will fight for my country, but I will not lie for her. Our country is so busy playing ‘fence’ to the mobsters that the cost in human suffering cannot be considered yet” (251). As for white people generally, Hurston suggests:

I just think it would be a good thing for the Anglo-Saxon to get the idea out of his head that everybody else owes him something just for being blonde. I am forced to the conclusion that two-thirds of them do hold that view. The idea of human slavery is so deeply ground in that the pink-toes can’t get it out of their system. It has just been decided to move the slave quarters farther away from the house. (251-52)

In this moment before Washington’s entrance into the “good war,” Hurston accurately portrays the allies’ hypocrisy. Beyond that, she points out a greatly expanded system of slavery “farther away from the house,” arguably more widespread than the human servitude enforced in the United States before the Civil War, that continues to beat down impoverished people throughout the world. Sadly, Hurston’s observations on this matter remain true to this day; as just one example, an article in *The Lancet* titled “Where and Why Are 10

Million Children Dying Every Year?” points out that more than 27,000 children (nine times the number of people killed in the World Trade Center attacks in 2001) die from hunger and other easily-avoidable causes every day (Black).

As seen in the excision of these paragraphs from *Dust Tracks on a Road*, Hurston’s forthright positions came at a particularly difficult time for the dissemination of African American views when even famous personalities in the music world spoke cautiously. Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington’s aversion to saying or doing anything abrasive has sometimes been interpreted through the years as lack of concern about such embattled issues as civil rights,” observes the jazz critic and political writer Nat Hentoff. “He has made no fiery statements nor has he marched on picket lines” (74-76). Ellington counters these criticisms by referring to his musical works that promote black pride and protest social injustice. While traveling in segregated states, he adds, the band lived in their own Pullman railway cars that would outshine the standard of living held by much of their white audience. “We made our point,” Ellington tells Hentoff. “What else could we have done at that time?” (76). In such an environment, even well-intentioned but willfully ignorant white people could act like enemies.

In “What White Publishers Won’t Print,” Hurston sees that well-intentioned white world continuing to view black writers with even less regard than that granted in the eighteenth century to the teenaged American slave Phillis Wheatley, a notable poet greatly influenced by her readings of Greek and Latin and by Alexander Pope’s employment of heroic couplets. “He is still a savage, and no amount of translating Virgil and Ovid is going to change

him,” writes Hurston in her approximation of white views as she sees them. “In fact, all you have done is to turn a useful savage into a dangerous beast” (170). Because so many readers still cannot view African Americans and other outsiders as fully fleshed humans, she declares, publishers “shy away from romantic stories about Negroes and Jews because they feel that they know the public indifference to such works, unless the story or play involves racial tensions. It can then be offered as a study in Sociology, with the romantic side subdued” (170). Publishers, Hurston felt, only took an interest in morbid stories about African Americans.

Part of the problem that Hurston explains in “What White Publishers Won’t Print” arises from enduring reification. “It is assumed that all non-Anglo-Saxons are uncomplicated stereotypes. Everybody knows all about them. They are lay figures mounted in the museum where all may take them in at a glance” (170). In fact, New York City’s Museum of Natural History — a site undoubtedly well-known to Hurston since her mentor, Franz Boas, curated there from 1896-1905 — resembles similar collections with its inclusion of dioramas that make it easy for visitors to take in various autochthonous African, Asian, and American groups in reified settings. In what Hurston calls The American Museum of Un-Natural History, one might find “the ‘typical’ Oriental, Jew, Yankee, Westerner, Southerner, Latin, and even out-of-favor Nordics like the German. The Englishman ‘I say old chappie,’ and the gesticulating Frenchman. The least observant American can know all at a glance. However, the public willingly accepts the untypical in Nordics, but feels cheated if the untypical is portrayed in others” (171). Works by Sinclair Lewis and other writers in the United States reveal that Nordics were, in fact,

stereotyped in the nineteenth and early twentieth century; *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, and even the later *It Can't Happen Here* lampoon common views of Germans and Scandinavians as wild and potentially subversive. As these images faded, Hurston shows, the reification of more recent immigrants and established non-white groups continued among academics as well as readers of popular press reports.

In the twenty-first century, George Elliott Clarke continues to speak to Hurston's concerns as he explains the "Afracadian" take of his dramatic poem *Trudeau: Long March, Shining Path*, which he composed in 2007 to provide a "black perspective on somebody who never gets talked about in the media by people of color." Clarke is not the only black writer to notice that the conditions reported by Hurston have not been entirely overcome. When Shelagh Rogers interviews two authors of romance novels, she asks for their thoughts on Harlequin's Kimani series directed at black readers. One of the authors, Kayla Perrin, expresses mixed feelings about Kimani, noting the continuing segregation but also the opportunities the series offers writers like herself. As for the projected audience, she observes how "up until the — what? — early nineties, publishers pretty much didn't think that black people read for entertainment. And then *Waiting to Exhale* [published in 1992 by Terry McMillan] came out and did so extremely well, and after that point publishers said, 'Let's try putting out some romances for black folk and see how it goes.'" Even so, notes Perrin, Harlequin did not go into this market until 2004. When Rogers pushes this further by inquiring about interracial romance novels, Perrin responds by discussing a proposal shot down by Harlequin, which told her, "Marketing says that our readership just doesn't like

those stories.” She adds, however, that the “publishing or marketing people are out of touch with reality. The readers are, like, we would love interracial.” As Pamela Yaye, the other interviewee, points out, “we have interracial readers” (Rogers). A decade into the twenty-first century, publishers still struggle to comprehend statistics on “interracial” book buyers and, worse still, wonder whether only those so identified will care to read about black and white lovers.

Published in the middle of the twentieth century, *Seraph on the Suwanee* does not announce an integration that would have certainly seemed out of place during the first decades of that century, but instead traces early steps that would lead to greater strides only seen after the author’s passing. Whatever hope one may find in *Seraph on the Suwanee* for the future of race relations will only arrive with future generations. However well blacks and whites get along in the book, their families and communities remain separate. An exchange between the black Joe Kelsey and white Jim Meserve, presented as close friends and associates in the novel, makes this point clearly. After Jim tells Joe that he — and, by extension, all of his African American friends — should stop partying so hard on Saturday nights, Joe agrees, but then makes his friend and employer laugh by adding, “But if you was to be a Negro just *one* Saturday night, you’d never want to be white no more” (44 emphasis in original). Hurston does not present this segregated view as something new in her final novel; although a town run by African Americans makes this easier to forget, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* clearly demonstrates the segregation rampant in US society when Tea Cake argues against a move that will bring him and Janie into contact with white strangers who, unlike the whites they know, will not trust them. “Dat sho is de truth,” Janie replies, “De ones de

white man know is nice colored folks. De ones he don't know is bad niggers" (202). Explained by the whites in *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Hurston presents much the same story. "Arvey sympathized and understood" the feeling her husband had for his black friend and employee.

Every Southern white man has his pet Negro. His Negro is always fine, honest, faithful to him unto death, and most remarkable. Indeed, no other Negro on earth is fitten to hold him a light, and few white people. He never lies, and in fact can do no wrong. If he happens to do what other people might consider wrong, it is never his Negro's fault. He was pushed and shoved into it by some unworthy varmint. If he kills somebody else, the dead varmint took and run into the pet's knife or bullet and practically committed suicide just to put the pet in wrong, the lowlife-ted scoundrel-beast! If the white patron has his way, the pet will never serve a day in jail for it. The utmost of his influence will be invoked to balk the law. Turn go *his* Negro from that jail! (61 emphasis in original)

Members of the Kelsey family — whose relations with the Meserves run the gamut of friendship, employment, and business association — accept the subordinate position implicit in this patronage, even replicating the slave era habit of identifying themselves as members of the family. "I had sense enough to know that you wasn't locking up against us," Jeff Kelsey tells Arvey, who had, as both of them know, been doing exactly that, "because us Meserves don't mistrust one another" (313). Both became Meserve's, Arvey as a wife and Jeff as a fixture on the property, through a feudal acceptance of Jim's

protection.

A book that came out shortly after the appearance of *Seraph on the Suwannee* helps place the politics of Hurston and her final novel. William Bradford Huie provides an inside look at a murder trial in *Ruby McCollum: Woman in the Suwannee County Jail*, and the contributions by Hurston also reveal racialized aspects of life in that Florida county. If, as Cynthia Ward suggests and I hope to confirm, *Seraph on the Suwannee* provides a useful critique of power relationships between blacks and whites in the United States, Huie's volume extends that case and, with Hurston's chapter, demonstrates her conscious efforts to obtain that objective. Huie investigated the McCollum case and wrote this book at the instigation of Hurston, who reported on McCollum's first trial for the Philadelphia *Courier*. Hurston believed that as a white man Huie would have better access to the defendant and, in general, to the Suwannee County legal system. Huie, a native of Garden City, Alabama, comes in hoping to exploit his position as a white southern insider, and in some ways deals with Southern whites in the same manner that Hurston had dealt with Southern blacks, using anthropological techniques to explore the reasonings behind the actions of his own people. According to Huie, he and Judge Adams "are both Yellow Dog Democrats — we'd both vote for a 'yellow dog' before we'd vote for a Republican — and we both, no doubt, voted for Eisenhower in 1952, though the Judge ain't saying" (14). This bonding tactic does not turn out as well as Hurston and Huie hope. Among other setbacks, Huie ends up spending time in jail for refusing to pay a contempt of court fine imposed by Judge Adams.

Huie shows power relationships at work between his black and white

informants. Ruby McCollum, for example, cannot even talk honestly with one of her attorneys, Frank Cannon. “First,” declares Cannon, “she’s a Negro in trouble and I’m a white man. So she can’t level with me. Too many centuries of deviousness behind us” (128). Hurston describes her impressions of the trial as “one of a smothering blanket of silence. I gained other vivid impacts, but they were subsidiary and grew out of the first. It was as if one listened to a debate in which everything which might have lead to and justified the resolution had been waived” (Huie 89). Black people, writes Hurston, are afraid to speak out, and white people, while fearing no violence, are “afraid of ‘outsiders’ — what the outside world might learn and say” (Huie 91). As Huie points out in one of his various descriptions of local landscapes along the Suwannee River, bridges are “adorned, overhead with a musical-noted ‘Way Down Upon the Suwannee River,’ and at White Springs there is a Stephen Foster Memorial to the tormented soul who never traveled south of Louisville and who died drunk and destitute” (107). *Seraph on the Suwannee* speaks to these black fears and white frustrations in ways that still require discussion; anyone doubting this would be well advised to look at the 2008 federal election results in places like Suwanee County, Florida, where an overwhelming 71% of the voters cast ballots against the first African American presidential candidate nominated by a major political party.

Striking similarities appear in the communities portrayed in the domestic comedy in *Seraph on the Suwanee* and the legal reporting of *Ruby McCollum: Woman in the Suwannee County Jail*. Ruby McCollum shot Dr. Clifford LeRoy Adams to death in Live Oak, Florida on Sunday, August 3, 1952 at 11:34am. Ruby’s husband Sam was attending church with their

children at the time of the murder. The trial of Ruby McCollum took place in Live Oak, Florida, the county seat of Suwannee County, and was overseen by Circuit Judge Hal W. Adams (no relation to the shooting victim). In a conversation with Huie, the judge insists that the county “conducted everything in a quiet orderly manner. We gave the Negro woman a fair and square trial” (14). Huie asks whether the Judge has really forbidden conversations between the defendant and the press. “That’s correct,” replies Adams. “When Guy Crews was her lawyer, he raised the question of letting some of the Negro reporters [which would include Hurston] from Northern newspapers see her. But I didn’t want her bothered by these strangers. They were a threat to a quiet, orderly manner of trial. So I entered an order that would prevent their seeing her” (14-15).

Determined to pursue his investigation, Huie discovers that the Judge conspired with other community leaders in order to keep facts about the victim covered up. Ruby and her husband, ‘Bolita Sam’ McCollum, ran gambling schemes that were protected by the doctor along with other whites viewed as respectable pillars of the community. Huie also uncovers the doctor’s checkered past and more recent affairs, including a longstanding liaison with Ruby McCollum. By excluding representatives of the press and limiting testimony and cross-examination, the Judge forced an outcome that demonstrated Ruby’s guilt with the skimpy motivation that she did not want to pay a relatively small medical bill owed to Dr. Adams. Ruby was not, however, a stereotypically poor black defendant. Even after payoffs to well-placed white protectors, she and Sam made a great deal of money from ‘bolita’ (an operation also described by Carpentier as flourishing in Havana) and other

gambling rackets. The couple drove a big car and, according to photographs in Huie's book, lived in a bigger and nicer-looking house than the doctor's. In a very few cases, blacks — such as Ruby and her husband Sam McCollum — gain power through economic enterprise undertaken in conjunction with whites. Like Joe Kelsey, the McCollums fronted illegal gambling enterprises for Dr. Adams, “a Big Man, powerful, a grandson of wealth and power.” Adams has good reason to erase this connection, observes Huie, since at the time of the killing he

has just been elected to the state senate by a landslide; he has just ventured from the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; he was the “county leader” for Governor Fuller Warren and for former U.S. Senator Claude Pepper; he was the only doctor in Florida to support “socialized medicine”; he was “gonna be governor, sure” and get for the “pore folks” more roads, more jobs, and more pensions. (20)

In the case of the McCollum's, the illegal nature of the enterprise that made it possible for black players to gain some power from the white need for secrecy also converted them into potential threats in need of elimination.

Digging ever deeper in to Adam's life, Huie speaks with insurance companies who reveal some of the scams the doctor employed to rip off patients and nurses working in the doctor's office. Edith Park worked as a nurse for Adams. “As to money he was ruthless,” she tells Huie. “He paid only people who made him pay. This he told me” (153). Adams, Huie finds, defrauds the Veterans Administration (141), botches surgery (160), cheats local business people (169-70), threatens to testify falsely in order to make a

patient sign over the deed to a house (173-74), and forges the signature of his friend LaVergne Blue on a will. This last episode may have formed part of a murder plot with Adams planning to use this fraudulent will as a means of collecting all of Blue's "real and personal property" (115). Eventually, Huie uncovers Dr. Adam's purchase of a point 410 pistol and other evidence indicating that he might have planned Ruby's murder (188). A point 410 pistol has few practical uses. Unlike other pistols, however, it fires "not a bullet but a shotgun-like shell. No .410 gauge pistol can ever be identified as a murder weapon" (187). Adams, observes Edith Park, "was trying to become a better citizen" (156). In order "to get rid of Ruby," adds Park, "he knew he'd have to kill her. I don't know. I think he *honestly wanted to improve his life* — he wanted to be governor so he wanted to become more respectable" (157 emphasis in Huie's text).

In instance after instance, Huie shows the ideological suppression of entrenched segregation that usually needs no force to back it up. When needed, shows of force and even violence are readily produced to maintain the power of a select circle of white people over the rest of the population; normally, however, white powers need no violence as the blacks fearfully submit. Huie writes, "The law and the courts are instruments of white men; and the Negro has had centuries of practice in avoidance" (198). One sees this most obviously in white on black oppression, but many instances demonstrate that the powerless whites have little more opportunity than the powerless blacks to make their voices heard or even think about trying. Explaining his own position as a southern white man in this situation, and why he spent so much of his time and money on this case, Huie insists that he did not care

much for Ruby McCollum as an individual, and also denies the often-made charge that he is a “nigger lover.” He adds:

I don't think any more of the rights of Negroes than I do of white men. I meddled — and I wrote this book — out of a conviction that free men cannot repeat too often the story of the foolish ones who enthrone the psychopath as a benefactor, and then, when he is cut down, they must canonize him and resent his being “smeared” and kill the scapegoat in order to secure themselves from embarrassment. (249)

Huie ends on an ambiguously hopeful note. Although he eventually succeeds in having Ruby's sentence reversed, the defendant ends up doomed to spend most of her remaining years in a mental institution, having been declared unfit to stand trial. Meanwhile, Huie plans to sue the estate of Dr. Adams on behalf of Loretta, the daughter of Ruby McCollum and Dr. Adams. “No mulatto child has ever gone into an American court and established a claim to a white father's estate,” writes Huie eight years after the publication of *Seraph on the Suwanee*. “Loretta could be the first” (248). A preliminary search has so far turned up no further word on Loretta, who seems to have disappeared in this murky history. Clearly, the world has still not brought about the social changes that some commentators wish Hurston would have created in her fiction.

Like Huie, Hurston finds what hope she can in the materials at hand. “The *Arvay Henson* rode gently on the bosom of the Atlantic,” begins Arvay's reflection on her life and marriage (349). This leads to no conclusions, however; Arvay has abandoned her insistence on what should be and has

begun to accept what is. “Within her own flesh were many mysteries... What all, Arvay asked of herself, was buried and hidden in human flesh? You toted it around with you all your life time, but you couldn’t know” (350). Arvay has decided to stay with her husband. Hurston never made this decision with her two, possibly three, husbands, and she does not urge such a choice on any other woman; in this case, she has only had the protagonist of this novel make this decision about her own life.

Sitting up through the night next to her sleeping husband, Arvay tries to come to peace with her own history. As sunlight entered her cabin, “Arvay sat up as best she could without disturbing Jim and switched off the artificial light overhead and met the look of the sun with confidence. Yes, she was doing what the big light had told her to do. She was serving and meant to serve.” The text does not say who or what she will serve, but this moment seems to both invert and fulfill the youthful “day of Arvay’s renunciation” (5), when she had chosen to become a missionary rather than ever marry a man. Having thought her life through to this point, Arvay “made the sun welcome to come in, then snuggled down again beside her husband” (352). This last line concludes nothing since the turbulent life of Arvay and Jim will likely continue. Arvay has come to these moments of peace several times during the course of the novel; if this one should last will be known to her on some future page not included here. Anyone wishing her well can only hope that the couple enjoys their moments of peace and prosperity since their creator certainly knows that the future holds depression, holocaust, a second world war, and the introduction of nuclear weapons. For a moment, however, this middle-aged uneducated white woman from a poor Southern family has made it about as

far to happiness as anyone in her situation could have managed. Hurston has explained this earlier in the novel: “Tomorrow? When and what was that? Who ever has believed in the reality of death in the presence of vibrant life? It is a parable sometimes told by the old. Some man in a far country, whom you never knew, went off somewhere one time, and being a fool, laid down and died. But who, in love, ever paid any attention to a made-up tale like that?” (219). Indeed, who in any condition would ever believe in a made-up tale called Tomorrow?

OK, So Let's Suppose You're from the United States and Would Like to
Become an American...

I'm searching for America and fear I will not find you;
your tracks have disappeared in the darkness¹
Rubén Blades "Buscando América"

Four hundred years before I prepared to defend these pages, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez apprenticed in the painting studio of Francisco Pacheco. Working under his mother's family name, which sounded less Jewish or Moorish than his father's, Velázquez rose to prominence as the royal painter for Philip IV, the ruler of the world's most powerful empire. Along the way, he enjoyed the benefits afforded an up-and-coming figure living in a capital that controlled vast colonies. Peter Paul Rubens, a prestigious painter brought in from the Low Countries, mentored the rising star. Drawn to Italy, like many of his colleagues, "Velázquez was no ordinary artistic pilgrim," writes Jonathan Brown in *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier*. Even though upper-class Italians despised his standing among "low-class Spaniards [*spagnoli bassi*]," Velázquez "was the painter of the king of Spain and therefore had entry to places where only the most privileged of his fellow artists could go" (69). The king's painter had every reason to believe in the supremacy of his culture and language; esteemed colleagues such as Francisco Ribalta, José de Ribera, Francisco de Zurbarán, and Bartolomé Murillo endeavored emulations of his success while he painted images of the writer Luis de Góngora, the Count-Duke of Olivares, Church officials, and, of course, the royal family.

During the life of Velázquez, much of the world imitated cultural

¹ "Estoy Buscando América y temo no encontrarte; tus huellas se han perdido entre la oscuridad"

emanations of Spanish empire. In England, for example, translators assiduously scanned plays and novels from Spain into their notably less prestigious vernacular; in *Cardenio*, we have evidence that Shakespeare read Cervantes, but the Manchego would not have bothered himself with any works published in the barbarous tongue of the Bard. Eventually awarded a coveted place in the order of Santiago, Velázquez enjoyed the perquisites of a State in possession of boundless global empire. Empire faded, however, without its citizens or many of its rulers noticing. Even artists and intellectuals, people expected to provide imaginative and critical insights, failed to perceive the advancing twilight. Half a century after commencing his studies, Velázquez had an inkling of things to come when required to deliver the daughter of his friend and patron Philip IV to the king of France in fulfillment of a peace treaty. Some say the grief of this relinquishment brought on the painter's subsequent fatal illness. By the end of the century the royal line in Spain died out as well, replaced by the French Bourbons.

Historians now call the latter part of the 1500s and the first half of the 1600s the *Siglo de Oro*, a Golden Age of painting, plays, and poetry arguably more worthy of preservation than the Spanish government's conquests, wars of aggression, religious intolerance, and ethnic expulsions. Spain has since joined Europe, while remaining Spanish, perhaps because more people remember Velázquez than the once more powerful Count-Duke of Olivares or even the mighty kings who frittered away fortunes stolen from America on battles with their Protestant colonies in Flanders and the Netherlands. As a result, Velázquez lives and changes; the paintings of Édouard Manet, created over two centuries after the Spanish Golden Age, transformed the officially-

sanctioned production of Philip IV's faithful retainer into works that broke the rules of French academic art, thus making possible French Impressionism. After Manet, Pablo Picasso recreates Velázquez' most famous work, *Las meninas*, in a cubist style that in one and the same look preserves and transforms the vision of its predecessor.

Transformations of *Las meninas* also include changes of title reflecting shifts in political reality. "In the palace inventory of 1666, the picture is called 'Her Highness the Empress with her ladies and a dwarf,'" observes Jonathan Brown in *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting*:

By 1734, it was referred to as the "Family of King Philip IV." Both of these titles are typical of the casual descriptions used by the court officials entrusted with compiling royal inventories and cannot be relied upon for purposes of identification except in a general way. The name of *Las meninas* was not given to the picture until 1843, when it was so listed in the Prado catalogue by Pedro de Madrazo. The elevation of the servants above their masters may have sprung unconsciously from the republican sentiments that swept nineteenth-century Europe, but the new title is no more revealing than its predecessors. (88)

Although he provides a useful history of the changing titles, we should not in this instance rely entirely on the estimable Professor Brown for his analysis of the text. After all, the court officials involved did not assign numbers or nicknames; their choices are, in fact, appropriately descriptive. In addition, the painting portrays a head of State and his family, making the cataloguing of this artifact a matter of more than passing interest. Under

these circumstances, one can fairly surmise that the changing emphasis from the young princess to her family and then her servants conveys a great deal of meaning.

“Her Highness the Empress with her ladies and a dwarf” lends a great deal of credence to the way in which another historian of Spanish art, Ricardo Abrantes, has put together this puzzle. An empress this young, and not attached to an emperor, must be posited as destined for greatness. This original title, surely not hastily pasted on as a “casual description,” describes a painterly attempt to change the gendered thinking of Spain in the middle of the seventeenth century. With no living male heir and, realistically, no great chance of ever seeing robust offspring of either sex, Philip IV must have appreciated, or even instigated, Velázquez’ attempted social transformation. And we can only imagine how differently Spanish history might have proceeded had “Her Highness the Empress with her ladies and a dwarf” succeeded in its mission. Perhaps an Empress Margarita would have managed to forestall the Bourbon usurpation.²

The change of title to the “Family of King Philip IV” also seems more contrived than casual. With a male heir (born after the painting) in place, the palace did not require a portrait of an empress. Court officials serving the Bourbon monarchs would have found a spare Austrian ruler not only superfluous but subversive, as well. Margarita as empress might have invalidated the need for Bourbon interference, causing viewers to question the legitimacy of monarchs not descended from her royal line. A portrait showing the family of a previous king, however, serves as a moment of history that

² In addition to the Abrantes text in the Works Cited, I rely here on my class notes from Professor Abrantes’ course, *Pintura del Museo del Prado*, which I attended during the spring semester of 2002 at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

legitimizes the fundamental concept of monarchical authority. Brown concedes a greater possibility of intent, the desire to raise the servants above those served, to the final change in title. He does not, however, explain why the cataloguers would have done this “unconsciously.” Whether intended or not, *Las meninas* now describes a portrait of María Agustina Sarmiento and Isabel Velasco rather than either a princess or a royal family; the title instructs viewers to center on the woman who kneels and the woman who curtsies. The title has changed and so, for whatever reasons, has the picture. Ultimately, the intentions of Velázquez, Philip IV, and all of the officials who named and renamed the painting do not matter to the spectators from all over the world who enter the Museo del Prado to see *Las meninas*, not concerned about the painter’s designs but about the protagonists and, by extension, all of the other erstwhile nonentities who now dare function as people. Thus the impossibly conservative output of the court painter at the height of empire not only becomes the precursor of a break with the academy but also an image of workers overturning their masters, a path not only possible but, in retrospect, obvious.

On the pages of *In Defense of Lost Causes*, Slavoj Žižek explains this process of finding possibilities for the future in our past. Cultural traditions make us “simultaneously less free and more free than we think,” he writes, because:

we are thoroughly passive, determined by and dependent on the past, but we have the freedom to define the scope of this determination, that is, to (over)determine the past which will determine us...I (can) retroactively determine which causes

will determine me: we, subjects, are passively affected by pathological objects and motivations; but, in a reflexive way, we ourselves have the minimal power to accept (or reject) being affected in this way, in other words, we retroactively determine the causes allowed to determine us, or, at least, the *mode* of this linear determination. “Freedom” is thus inherently retroactive: at its most elementary, it is not a free act which, out of nowhere, starts a new causal link, but a retroactive act of endorsing which link/sequence of necessities will determine me. (314)

Žižek precedes this idea with examples of literary production that demonstrate retroactive transformations in works from earlier eras. Even without his references, any literary critic can come up with subsequent texts that sunder previous critiques from older works. No one who has made it all the way through even the first volume of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de La Mancha* can now undertake an ingenuous reading of the chivalric epics that inspired Cervantes. “Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote” by Jorge Luis Borges forever changes Cervantes’ best-known work, and no one will read anything by Borges with the same attitude after finishing *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco.

Žižek offers musical examples, as well, but here a musician could go much further. Music transforms the past on a daily basis with melodies played over changing chords or even different tonalities; anyone who has heard the classic example of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” performed in major and minor modes can attest to the startling alteration of affect heard

in the same melody. In this, under-recognized musical arrangers and orchestrators cause tremendous changes in the sounds we hear.³ Many of us consider Coleman Hawkins' "Body and Soul" and John Coltrane's "My Favorite Things" the "real" versions of these songs. Working in the tradition of Bill Evans and Richie Beirach, pianist Bob Rodríguez turns the bebop practice on its head; instead of transforming harmonies with new melodies, such as the lead line of "Scrapple from the Apple" performed over the chord changes to "Honeysuckle Rose," in the manner of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, Rodríguez employs seemingly impossible harmonic patterns that recreate the melodic lines of "Stardust," "Over the Rainbow," and Chopin's "Prelude, Op. 28." Performed, these sound possible; a subsequent generation of listeners could even perceive the earlier versions as misguided efforts. Along with these relatively complex examples, listeners can easily discover how music changes the past by singing or by touching a musical instrument. Since keyboards have become ubiquitous, one can simply touch the C and then a G; following that touch the C and go to F. In these two situations, one clearly hears how the previous C sounds different. More extreme examples occur when playing a C followed by a B or a C to a G flat.⁴ I encourage everyone to try this — using the footnote provided here, if necessary — as a practical method of changing the past or, as Žižek would have it, our future changed by a

³ Arrangers usually work with a melody, sometimes with a set of chords, and decide on the harmonies, rhythms, and other musical elements that provide accompaniment. Orchestrators generally assign specific instruments to existing melodies, harmonies, and rhythms.

⁴ Those who do not know the names of notes on a keyboard can find the C as the white key just to the left of any pair of black keys. Moving to the right, the white keys are named alphabetically from C to D, E, F, G, A, B, and back to C. The G flat is the leftmost in any group of three black keys.

present reshaping of the past's image.

The movement from C to Gb, once forbidden by the Council of Trent as *Diabolus in musica*, brings to mind uncomfortable music, sound that refuses to keep its place in the background, thus functioning as an instructive dialectic, with harmonic oppositions that create tonal subjectivities, but always in a changed situation — no one can understand the relentless workings of time better than a working musician — that erases the past while leaving a palimpsest that gives rise to the next round of oppositions. Some musicians make a show of subversion by invoking their own personal, and possibly laudable, political views, by injecting provocative lyrics, or by acting as if adherence to a particular style in itself makes revolutionaries out of performers and listeners alike. But music that actually changes minds must first demand attention, often by means of elements that initially seem unpleasant. Hearing new sounds may also involve attendance with unaccustomed audiences; listening with the usual crowd can cause as much dullness as listening to the same style of music. Like any other worthwhile text, a musical composition should require time, effort, and discomfort.

As Vera demonstrates in Carpentier's exemplary Communist novel, *La consagración de la primavera*, moving beyond a comfort zone creates a place where revolutionary subjectivity becomes possible. Her experiences teach her to be dis-agreeable. Vera does not argue for the sake of arguing in the current fashion of so-called Contrarians; more interestingly, she manages to see things differently than do the people around her. Although she tries to treat others with courtesy and respect, her views annoy her husband's bourgeois social set

as much as they trouble her Communist friends in Paris. Her desire to venture outside of the social limits imposed by race and class add to both her discomfort and her artistic growth. In spite of her outside position, she does not turn into an angry and alienated figure, just one who speaks past the shibboleths that go down so easily for everyone else. In the end, her position turns this Russian-raised-in-England-formed-in-Paris ballerina into an American.

Arvay's rebellion involves the same discomfort as Vera's, but in a family setting that precedes civil society and State politics. Arvay indulges in religious excesses that shock complacent parishioners, renounces her materialist hometown with promises of missionary activity, and battles with her husband. Unexpectedly, she falls in with different groups of people; unlike Vera, she does not seek this, but it changes her all the same. In a society less likely to effect revolution, at least so far, she takes the preliminary steps of preparing herself as a member of her family and civil society.

Žižek calls for revolutionary preparations, "supplemented by the readiness and ability to discern the moment when the possibility of the Big Change is approaching, and, at that point, to quickly alter the strategy, take the risk and engage in total struggle" (*In Defense* 392). Carpentier and Hurston advocate cultural preparation, not as an artsy way of feeling good about oneself and others, but instead as a means of perpetuating the very discomforts that keep one thinking differently and dealing with different people. Hegel, notes Žižek, "announced the necessity of a cultural revolution as the condition for a successful social revolution" (*In Defense* 195). *In Defense of Lost Causes* offers "the correct leftist-enlightened reply to Joseph Goebbels's infamous

dictum ‘When I hear the word culture, I reach for my gun’: ‘When I hear guns I reach for my culture’” (489). Of course, this can seem like an easy way out; invoking culture, for example, lets rock stars engage in radical discourse while raking in millions, including corporate endorsement fees. In one of his ubiquitous YouTube videos, Žižek, who himself seems well on the way to pop stardom, urges his audience to “drop the eternal temptation, especially of leftist intellectuals, nostalgia for another place where things are really happening. You know in the thirties, forties it was ‘we may be in shit but things are really happening in Russia,’ which meant I can go on with my highly paid job at the university, my heart is really in Russia but you know...” (“What does it mean to be a revolutionary today? Marxism 2009”). One way of gauging this can be seen in the protagonists discussed in the chapters preceding this conclusion; Macandal, Moses, Filomeno, Arvay, Enrique, and Vera live uncomfortably. Those who fit in comfortably — to whatever social set, however “progressive” its tone — and find themselves in agreeable discussions about pleasant cultural presentations probably have no revolutionary preparations underway.

The posture Žižek proposes does not reject violence. Our violence has begun. The capitalist agenda pursued by the United States and other liberal democracies has, as Fidel Castro points out, resulted in “deaths and suffering on a scale comparable to the Nazi Holocaust.” Based on figures cited in the previous chapter from “Where and Why Are 10 Million Children Dying Every Year?” in *The Lancet*, the leader of the Cuban Revolution would seem to have grossly underestimated worldwide casualties. In this context, Hurston’s characterization of the United States’ “big brotherly duty to teach right from

wrong” bears repeating (249). How many lives would a change in violence — say, for example, a violent overthrow of existing Ideological State Apparatuses — save? Can we ever know?

The question, then, becomes one of when to engage in violence. In the film *Examined Life*, Michael Hardt weighs this concern as it relates to his social set: “I’m sure everyone had some stupid evening in college, smoking way too much and talking.” In the first place, and rather obviously, Hardt writes off the seventy percent of North Americans unlikely to set foot on a college campus. Secondly, he assumes a revolutionary stance among all Central Americans no matter how privileged. In *Wars of Position* Timothy Brennan counters this view by taking on a topic few academics dare touch: the “entry into the university of intellectuals who either were, or were related to, formerly colonized peoples, and who therefore automatically registered as the oppressed when this was often far from the case” (IX-X). From this position, Hardt explains his stance on violence and, perhaps unintentionally, his difficulty encountering people not included in the group he calls “everyone”:

For my generation in the mid-eighties, when I was in my twenties, just starting to do politics in a serious way, it seemed like the only way to, the only outlet for Revolutionary desire was to go to Central America and to somehow participate in or at least observe their revolutions. I mean, so a lot of people went to Nicaragua; I, with my friends, was mostly interested in El Salvador. But the thing I realized at a certain point was that all we could do was really observe what their revolutions were. And the defining moment came for me in a meeting in El

Salvador with a group of students at the University of El Salvador, and at a certain point a friend there said, “Look, we’re really grateful for these North American comrades who come to help us, but what would be really best for us is if you all would go home and make revolution in the US. That would really be better than trying to come help us here.” And it was true, of course. I don’t think any of these North Americans were particularly helpful in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, etcetera. But I said at that point, “You know, Reagan’s in the White House; I have no idea what it would mean to make revolution in the US. I just don’t have any...” And he said, “Look, don’t you have mountains in the US?” And I said, “Yeah, we have mountains.” He says, “It’s easy. You go to the mountains. You start an armed cell. You make revolution.” And I thought, oh shit, you know, that, it just didn’t correspond to my reality. Like those notions of constructing the armed cell, especially constructing the armed cell in the mountains and then sabotaging things. It didn’t make any sense at all so we really had no idea at all how to do it. Not just we didn’t know practically, like we didn’t know which rifles to take up into the mountains; it’s the whole idea of what it involved is lacking, and required a real conceptual rethinking.

Although his friends at the university in El Salvador offered useful insights, Hardt does not follow this up with an obvious observation: in his world, blowing things up and killing people in Central America may seem

revolutionary, but the same actions in the United States amount to terrorism; after all, one would have to engage in some serious conceptual rethinking before attempting to convince anyone in North America to deal with English-speaking white people as if they were Latin Americans.

Few willingly endure the harsh lives chosen by Karl Marx, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela, and fewer still take up arms to follow the path blazed by José Martí, Pedro Albizu Campos, Lolita Lebrón, and Fidel Castro. The rest of us can decide which figures following this list in the future deserve our support and when that support should include violent intervention. “Have no shame in being kindly and gentle,” writes William Saroyan, that gentlest of American storytellers, in *The Time of Your Life*, “but if the times comes in the time of your life to kill, kill and have no regret” (22). When Enrique returns to Cuba in the final section of *La consagración de la primavera*, he fully supports the revolutionaries and wishes that he had joined them in the Sierra Maestra. He has little time to lament that, however, when armed forces backed by United States airpower invade the Bay of Pigs. Even then, a thoughtful observer might have rejected violence; after all, what chance did the new revolutionary government have against Washington’s power? Even so, Enrique decides that this is the time to take up arms again, and the novel — like the history it records — ends with a triumphant victory against overwhelming forces.

The need for violence could diminish with a diminishment of hegemonic forces. “One reason a transformation in thinking about language and a resultant shift in educational norms may be somewhat more conceivable now than they were even a few years ago,” writes Modern Language

Association President Catherine Porter, “is that evolving political and economic realities are forcing us to see ourselves and the place of the United States on the world stage differently, less presumptuously, than in recent memory” (551). If we can begin to see the United States *in* America, this could come true. Revolution and Independence loom large in the grand narratives of almost every American nation. As hollow as these words sound today, the continent still offers fertile ground for oppositions if for no other reason than our population of people living in opposition not only to each other but also to their own sense of what it means to be American. The often-invoked “encounter” brought on by Columbus did not merely bring Europe together with America; instead, as Steve Olsen explains in *Mapping Human History*, it initiated mixtures of the most distantly related genes. Thus the growth of national, ethnic, and religious appeals useful to dictators around the world must wither on American soil.

Historically, new empires take up when old ones decline. Since the beginning of American colonization, corporate forces such as the East India Trading Company and Hudson’s Bay Company have stepped into power vacuums created in the absence of direct governmental control. At the same time, governmental power often turns out to have been absurdly, even comically, illusory. In *Soul on Ice*, Eldridge Cleaver has a character named Lazarus offer, as an early warning signal,

why it has been so hard historically for Negroes to break the color bar in sport after sport. Once the color bar falls, the magic evaporates, and when the black man starts to excel in a particular sport the question starts

floating around: “Is boxing dying?” “Is baseball through?” “What happened to football?” “What is basketball coming to?” In fact, the new symbol of white supremacy is golf, because there the Brain dominates the Body. But just as soon as the Body starts ripping off a few trophies, they will be asking the question, “What happened to golf?” (163)

The world has seen what happened to golf. Based on news reports, one would think that an African American was the first player to engage in extra-marital affairs. Coverage of that revelation has gone to great pains to demonstrate all the old stereotypes of black sexual prowess.

The next question seems obvious: what happened to the United States? Or, perhaps more to the point, what will happen to the United States? And, in connection with the issues raised here, what will that have to do with America? And what importance does any of this have in a politically fragmented Western Hemisphere preparing for the likelihood of economic irrelevancy in comparison with India, China, and the European Union, themselves increasingly irrelevant in globalized corporate systems that function outside of any legislated structures? Will these changes in international relations include corrections to the balance of power that has tilted towards the United States in America just as it has in the rest of the world? Can those of us from the United States learn, as did survivors of the Babylonian, Roman, and Spanish empires, to develop culturally after the end of Washington’s term as “the world’s only superpower”?

Why should an academic from the United States pay any attention to

these debates? “Teachers of literature and philosophy are competent in a subject,” responds Stanley Fish, “not in a ministry.” If nothing else, this provides one way to practice the inaction espoused by Žižek, who observes that in “today’s progressive politics, the danger is not passivity but pseudo-activity, the urge to be active and to participate” (*How to Read Lacan* 26). At a minimum, Fish’s measured response could scale back a great deal of smug talk and posturing. For all that, one never knows the extent to which a timely discourse or seemingly small or even reactive efforts — Žižek offers examples throughout *In Defense of Lost Causes* — might cause mighty changes. Even if we agree with Fish, our investigations, publications, and pedagogy can lead to unanticipated changes.

Alain Badiou sees in local action the creation of a subject because “in one small place a small group of slaves finds new ways to create a victory.” However deprecated, even denounced at times as upholding hegemonic structures, local action can create change — as long as its organizers avoid the *false activity* repudiated by Žižek. While training a group of tenant organizers in New York City, Bruce Wood warned, “Your neighbors will hate you.” The ones who will hate the hardest, he added, will be those who go to mass demonstrations in Central Park to call for nuclear disarmament, or the ones that buy organic food and carefully recycle their wrappings; these neighbors feel ashamed of their fear and may even turn their efforts to helping the landlord fight you, especially if the battle leads to rent strikes, eviction notices, and other activities that take place too close to — or even within — their homes.

The commentaries on action offered by Žižek and Badiou bring up an

obvious question: what distinguishes useful politics from pseudo-activity? In this case, size does not matter; a gathering that provides a harmless outlet for thousands of demonstrators while leaving all concerned in despair about the possibility for change accomplishes less than a small court case that makes a landlord go ballistic because it reveals the vulnerability of the status quo. Rent abatements, along with fresh coats of paint and a regular supply of hot water, can transform individual political attitudes, especially after those involved have been reliably assured of the impossibility of such results. A community leader who has lived under continual credible threats of his or her extermination will eventually inspire hope merely by continuing to breathe. When an individual lives under threat, he or she may be engaged in useful political activity. Libelous commentaries, calls for censorship, or demands for an individual's expulsion from employment opportunities or media access mark that person as one worth watching and perhaps following. As psychologist David Bricker once told me, "If something strikes you as difficult or scary, you should probably consider doing it." Activities that consistently validate positive feelings should be viewed with suspicion. Comfortable discourse conducted among like-minded interlocutors rarely effects change. While no one indicator can guarantee the avoidance of pseudo-activity, a useful watchword to commence with would be: discomfort.

A widely-disseminated Bollywood film validates Žižek's views on the unpredictability of change. The first Hindi-language film screened at the United Nations, reports *Glamsham Entertainment Magazine*, was Rajkumar Hirani's *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* (Carry on Munna Bhai) ("UN members laughed and applauded"). "Shashi Tharoor, UN under secretary

general for Communications and Public Information, introduced the film,” the article reports. “He appreciated its role in bringing Mahatma Gandhi back into the public consciousness. In a humorous vein he recounted how he was intrigued by the term ‘Gandhigiri,’ used for Gandhism in the film, in the Indian media and tried to figure out what it meant.” As the film continues to enjoy popular success in far-flung places, “Canada has borrowed Munnabhai’s pithy message to the world that nothing is achieved without persistence,” observes V. Narayan Swamy, who adds that the film’s title appears “on Canada’s jerseys.”

Munnabhai, a mobster’s thug, embarks on round-the-clock studies of Gandhi in order to win a radio contest and impress the show’s host, whose voice has enraptured him. Long sessions in the library have the same effect on Munnabhai’s brain as they did on Quijote’s; in this case, the revered figure appears and begins to instruct his thuggish disciple in Gandhian ways. Munnabhai impresses the love of his life and, before he knows it, starts practicing what he preaches: not a cowering non-violence, but active involvement in personal and community activities that put his comfort and safety in jeopardy. Like the mentor inhabiting his mind, Munnabhai will neither strike another nor flinch from a situation in which he might be struck by another. Finally, knowing that she will leave him, he even confesses to the woman he loves that he has lived a lie. Once the movie wraps up, Gandhi’s voiceover fills in the ending of each of the individual stories in the film. Finally, he gets to his own tale, asking, “You’re wondering what happened to me, right? [Deliberate pause] I was shot down years ago,” he answers with a chuckle. At this point the screen

shifts to show him standing in the library. “But 3 [three] bullets cannot kill my beliefs. Times will change, but my thoughts will keep causing chemical cock-ups in some brains. The choice is yours! Live with my picture or live by my principles.” Whatever the limits of cultural studies, they must teach us to live uncomfortably, even unsafely when we dare, and how to treat our friends as colleagues with kindness and respect while engaging in discourse that troubles their peace of mind. We must spread contagion, causing cock-ups in some brains along the way. Even if in our lives the time never comes to kill, we can create dis-ease.

On October 12, 1492, Rodrigo (with a last name that may have been dropped as too Muslim) from a neighborhood called Triana sighted land. He was not the first European to cross the Atlantic; no originary movement occurred there. This was not a discovery of a New World. It was not “Catay,” “Cipango,” or any of the other splendid oriental destinations promised to the Spanish monarchs. It was not India. It was something else, and our choice of transformations may someday make it possible for us to discover what Rodrigo saw that day.

Written in America
October 12, 2010

Works Cited

- Abrantes, Ricardo, Araceli Fernández and Santiago Manzarbeitia. *Arte español para extranjeros*. Hondarribia, Guipúzcoa (Spain): Editorial Nerea, 1999. Print.
- Adorno, Theodor W. "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." *Art and Its Significance: An Anthology of Aesthetic Theory*. Ed. Stephen David Ross. Albany: SUNY, 1994. 539-547. Print.
- Amado, Jorge. *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*. Trans. by James L. Taylor and William L. Grossman of *Gabriela, cravo e canela*. 1958. New York: Knopf, 1962. Print.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition and Extended Edition. London: Verso, 1991. Print.
- Anonymous. America's Best Loved Songs: The Great Standards. No editorial or publication information. Print.
- Aparicio, Frances R. *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures*. Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1998. Print.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. 1958. Second Edition. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998. Print.
- — —. *Responsibility and Judgment*. Ed. Jerome Kohn. New York: Random House, 2003. Print.
- Badiou, Alain and Simon Critchley. "Democracy and Disappointment: On the Politics of Resistance." *Slought Foundation Online Content*. DVD.
- Bamshad, Michael J. and Steve E. Olson. "Does Race Exist?" *Scientific American*. 289.6 (Dec 2003): 78-85. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image — Music — Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath. 1977. New York: Hill and Wang, 1988. Print.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Worstward Ho*. London: John Calder, 1983. Print.
- Benítez Rojo, Antonio. *La isla que se repite*. Barcelona: Casiopea, 1998. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1968. Print.
- Bennett, Chuck. "In 'Wrong' Minority." *New York Post*. 19 Nov. 2007. Web. 13 Sept. 2010.
- Bergner, Gwen. "Black Children, White Preference: *Brown v. Board*, the Doll Tests, and the Politics of Self-Esteem." *American Quarterly*. 61.2 (June 2009): 299-332. Print.
- Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: the First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap P, 1998. Print.
- Berrios-Miranda, Marisol. "Is Salsa a Musical Genre?" *Situating Salsa: Global Markets and Local Meanings in Latin Popular Music*. Ed. Lise Waxer. New York: Routledge, 2002. 23-50. Print.

- Beverley, John, José Oviedo, and Michael Aronna. Eds. *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Black, Robert, Morris, Saul, & Jennifer Bryce. "Where and Why Are 10 Million Children Dying Every Year?" *The Lancet*. 361:2226-2234. 2003. Print.
- Blades, Rubén. "Buscando America." "Ruben Blades & Seis Del Solar - Buscando America." *YouTube*. 18 August 2009. Web. 18 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqvcqTI7rDI>>
- — —. "Pedro Navaja." *Siembra*. Rubén Blades and Willie Colón. New York: Fania, 1978. CD.
- — —. "Siembra." *Siembra*. Sound recording by Rubén Blades and Willie Colón. New York: Fania, 1978. CD.
- Bloom, Harold. Introduction. *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986. 1-4. Print.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Pierre Renard, autor del Quijote." *Ficciones*. 1956. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1993. 47-59. Print.
- Brennan, Timothy. *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997. Print.
- — —. *Secular Devotion: Afro-Latin Music and Imperial Jazz*. London: Verso, 2008. Print.
- — —. *Wars of Position: The Cultural Politics of Left and Right*. New York: Columbia UP, 2006. Print.
- — —. "World Music Does Not Exist." *Discourse*. 23.1 (Winter 2001): 44-62. Print.
- Brown, Jonathan. *Images and Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Painting*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978. Print.
- — —. *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986. Print.
- Brown, Lew and Ray Henderson. "That's Why Darkies Were Born." Print.
- Burton, Jane. "Frida Kahlo 9 June – 9 October 2005." *Tate Online*. Web. 30 May 2009. <<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/kahlo/roomguide.shtm>>.
- Butor, Michel. "Travel and Writing." *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*. Trans. John Powers and K. Lisker. Ed. Michael Kowalewski. Athens: U Georgia P, 1992. Print.
- Byrd, Joseph. "Whitewashing Blackface Minstrelsy in American College Textbooks." *Popular Music and Society*. 32.1 (February 2009): 77-86. Print.

- Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Guilty of Dancing the Chachachá*. Trans. of *Delito por bailar el chachachá* by the Author. New York: Welcome Rain, 2001. Print.
- . *Tres tristes tigres*. 1967. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2007. Print.
- Camacho Servin, Fernando. "Se agotan los 750 mil timbres con la figura de Memín Pinguín." *La Jornada*. México, DF. 2 July 2005. Web. 3 December 2006. <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx>>
- CARICOM The Caribbean Community and Common Market. Web. 21 May 2010.
- "Carpentier, Alejo." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Web. 16 Oct. 2009. Print.
- Carpentier, Alejo. *El arpa y la sombra*. 1978. *Obras completas*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1983. 215-378. Print.
- . *Cinco poemas afrocubanos*. *Obras completas I*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1983. 211-19. Print.
- . *Concierto barroco*. 1974. *Alejo Carpentier: Obras completas*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1983. 145-213. Print.
- . "Confesiones sencillas de un escritor barroco." Interview with César Leante, 1964. *El acoso. El derecho de asilo*. Buenos Aires: Editora Latina, 1975. Print.
- . *La consagración de la primavera*. 1978. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 2002. Print.
- . *Crónicas*. 1926-1937. Havana: Letras Cubanas, 1985. Print.
- . "De lo real maravilloso americano." *Tientos, diferencias y otros ensayos*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, 1987. 66-77. Print.
- . *Écue-yamba-ó*. 1931. *Obras completas I*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1983. 21-194. Print.
- . *Ese músico que llevo dentro 1*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1987. Print.
- . *Ese músico que llevo dentro 2*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1987. Print.
- . *Explosion in a Cathedral*. Trans. of *El siglo de las luces* by John Sturrock. New York: Farrar, 1963. Print.
- . *The Harp and the Shadow*. Trans. Thomas Christensen and Carol Christensen of *El arpa y la sombra*. London: André Deutsch, 1992. Print.
- . "Historie de Lunes." *Cahiers du Sud*. 157 (Dec 1933): 747-59. Print.
- . Interview with Joaquín Soler Serrano. Video directed by Ricardo Arias for the series A Fondo de RTVE. Madrid: Radiotelevisión Española, 1976. DVD.
- . *The Kingdom of this World*. Trans. by Harriet de Onís of *El reino de este mundo*. New York: Penguin, 1957. Print.

- . *The Lost Steps*. Trans. Harriet de Onís of *Los pasos perdidos*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1956. Print.
- . *Music in Cuba*. Trans. by Alan West-Durán of *La música en Cuba*. Ed. Timothy Brennan. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001. Print.
- . *La música en Cuba*. México, D.F: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946. Print.
- . "El ocaso de Europa." *Carteles*. 16 Nov. 1941: 74-75. Print.
- . "El ocaso de Europa." *Carteles*. 23 Nov. 1941: 36-37. Print.
- . "El ocaso de Europa." *Carteles*. 7 Dec. 1941: 44-45. Print.
- . *Los pasos perdidos*. 1953. Caracas: Monte Ávila, 1991. Print.
- . *El reino de este mundo*. 1948. San Juan PR: U of Puerto Rico, 1994. Print.
- . *El siglo de las luces*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1962. Print.
- . "Sobre el surrealismo." 1973. *Obras completas: Conferencias*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1991. 11-42. Print.
- . "Témoignage." *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives 1922-1939, précédés d'un texte d'André Breton présentation et commentaires de José Pierre Tome I*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 15 January 1930. 148. Print.
- . "Viaje a la semilla." *Guerra del tiempo, el acoso y otros relatos*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 2002. 13-28. Print.
- Castro, Fidel. "Castro: Capitalism Causes New Holocaust." *BBC News*. 13 April 2000. Web. 6 September 2010. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/711910.stm>>
- Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. "El coloquio de los perros." *Novelas ejemplares*. Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2001.
- . Trans. John Ormsby of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de La Mancha*. 1605-1615. Project Gutenberg. Web. 12 Oct. 2009.
- . "El Retablo de las Maravillas." *Entremeses*. Ed. Eugenio Asencio. Madrid: Castalia, 1970. 167-82. Print.
- Chen, Lucía. "La naturaleza caribeña en Humboldt y Carpentier." *Cuadernos Americanos*. 120 (2007): 35-54. Print.
- Clarke, George Elliott. "Readings and conversation - George Elliott Clarke plus Malcolm Azania." 26 February 2009. Department of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta. Performance.
- Cleaver, Eldridge. *Soul on Ice*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. "Treatise on Nomadology — The War Machine." *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1987. 351-423. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion at the Limits of Reason Alone.'" Trans. Samuel Weber. *Acts of Religion*. Ed. Gil Anidjar. New York: Routledge, 2002. 40-101. Print.

- — —. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak of *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1967. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976. Print.
- Derrida*. Documentary film by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman. 2003. DVD.
- Desnoes, Edmundo. *Memorias del subdesarrollo*. Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1965. Mexico City: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1975. Print.
- — —. *Memories of Underdevelopment*. Trans. by Al Schaller of *Memorias de subdesarrollo*. Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review P, 2004. Print.
- Díaz de Castro, Francisco J. and María Payeras Grau. “Alejo Carpentier: breve apunte biográfico.” *Alejo Carpentier: América, la imagen de una conjunción*. Barcelona: Anthropos, 2004. 27-46. Print.
- Du Bois, W.E. Burghardt. *The Souls of Black Folk*. 1903. New York: Fawcett, 1961. Print.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. Trans. by William Weaver of *Nome della rosa*. New York: Warner, 1984. Print.
- Eminem. “When the Music Stops.” *The Eminem Show*. Santa Monica: Aftermath, 2002. CD.
- Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997. Print.
- Fausser, Annegret. *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair*. Rochester NY: U of Rochester P, 2005. Print.
- Fish, Stanley. “Will the Humanities Save US?” *The New York Times*. 6 Jan. 2008. Web. 30 Sept. 2010. <<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com>>.
- Fernández Retamar, Roberto. “Caliban: Notes Towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America.” Trans. by Lynn Garafola, David Arthur McMurray, and Robert Márquez. *The Massachusetts Review*. 15.1/2 (Winter - Spring 1974): 7-72. Print.
- — —. “Entrada en las Antillas de lengua inglesa.” *Calibán y otros ensayos: nuestra América y el mundo*. Havana: Arte y Literatura, 1979. 115-121. Print.
- Franco, Jean. *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2002. Print.
- — —. Private conversation. 3 October 2007.
- Galewitz, Herb, ed. *Music: A Book of Quotations*. Mineola NY: Dover, 2001. Print.
- García Canclini, Néstor. *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados: Mapas de la interculturalidad*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 2004. Print.
- — —. “¿La modernidad dejó de ser una etapa histórica?” *Revista de Crítica Cultural*. 34 (2006): 30-33. Print.

- — —. *Latinoamericanos buscando lugar en este siglo*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2002. Print.
- Gayle, Jr. Addison. "The Outsider." *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986. 35-46. Print.
- Gillespie, Sarah Kate. "The Devil Went Down to Brooklyn: William Moore Davis and the 'Legend of Martense's Lane.'" *Antiques*. 174.5 (November 2008): 130-37. Print.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. Print.
- Glasser, Ruth. "Buscando Ambiente: Puerto Rican Musicians in New York City, 1917-1940" *Island Sounds in the Global City*. Eds. Ray Allen and Lois Wilcken. New York: The New York Folklore Society and The Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College, 1998. Print.
- González Echevarría, Roberto. *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977. Print.
- — —. "Latin American and Comparative Literatures." *Poetics of the Americas: Race, Founding, and Textuality*. Eds. Bainard Cowan and Jefferson Humphries. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1997. 47-62. Print.
- — —. "Literature of the Hispanic Caribbean." *Latin American Literary Review*. 8.16 (Spring 1980): 1-20. Print.
- — —. *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- González Echevarría, Roberto and Enrique Pupo-Walker, eds. *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*. Vol. I. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Racial Memory and Literary History." *PMLA*. 116.1 (Jan., 2001): 48-63. Print.
- Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás, dir. *Memorias del subdesarrollo*. Cuba, 1968. DVD.
- Harmon, Amy. "Seeking Ancestry in DNA Ties Uncovered by Tests." *The New York Times*. Web. 12 April 2006.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Trans. of *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* by H.B. Nisbet. Ed. Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. Print.
- Hemenway, Robert E. *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1977. Print.
- Hentoff, Nat. "This Cat Needs No Pulitzer Prize." *New York Times*. (12 Sept 1965): 64-66, 68, 70, 72, 74, 76. Print.
- Highway, Tomson. *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2000. Print.
- Hijuelos, Oscar. *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*. New York: Farrar, 1989. Print.

- Hirani, Rajkumar, director. *Lage Raho Munna Bhai*. Screenplay by Rajkumar Hirani and Abhijat Joshi. Mumbai: Vinod Chopra Productions, 2006. DVD.
- Honig, Bonnie. "Ismene's Forced Choice: On the Politics of (Post) Lacanian Ethics, Sacrifice and Sorority in Sophocle's *Antigone*." *Arethusa*. Forthcoming, January 2011. Print.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming of *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. New York: Social Studies Association, 1944. New York: Continuum, 2000. 120-67. Print.
- Hosokawa, Shuhei. "Okinawa latina: la orquesta Diamantes y la errante identidad de la emigración nipona-peruana." *Revista Transcultural de Música/Transcultural Music Review*. Vol. 6 (2002). <<http://www.sibetrans.com>>. Viewed 10 August 2009. Print.
- Huie, William Bradford. *Ruby McCollum: Woman in the Suwannee County Jail*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1956. Print.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *The Complete Stories*. 1921-1951. New York: Harper, 1995. Print.
- . *Dust Tracks on a Road*. 1942. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Harper, 1991. Print.
- . "How It Feels to Be Colored Me." 1928. *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing...And Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive*. Ed. Alice Walker. Old Westbury NY: The Feminist P, 1979. 152-55. Print.
- . *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. 1939. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1984. Print.
- . *Mules and Men*. New York: Lippincott, 1935. New York: Harper, 1990. Print.
- . *Seraph on the Suwanee*. New York: Scribner's, 1948. New York: Harper, 1991. Print.
- . *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. 1938. New York: Harper, 1990. Print.
- . *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. New York: Harper, 2000. Print.
- . "What White Publishers Won't Print." 1950. *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing...And Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive*. Ed. Alice Walker. Old Westbury NY: The Feminist P, 1979. 169-73. Print.
- Irving, Washington. *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. 1828. Ed. John Harmon McElroy. Boston: Twayne, 1981. Print.
- Jaeck, Lois Marie. "The Lost Steps: Goodbye Rousseau and into the Funhouse!" *Hispania*, Vol. 75, No. 3. (Sep. 1992). 534-542. Print.
- Jirousek, Lori. "'That commonality of feeling': Hurston, Hybridity, and Ethnography." *African American Review* 38.3 (Fall 2004): 417-28. Print.

- Johnson, Barbara. "Moses and Intertextuality: Sigmund Freud, Zora Neale Hurston, and the Bible." *Poetics of the Americas: Race, Founding, and Textuality*. Eds. Bainard Cowan and Jefferson Humphries. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1997. 15-29. Print.
- Johnson, Sara E. "'You Should Give them Blacks to Eat:' Waging Inter-American Wars of Torture and Terror." *American Quarterly*. 61.1 (March 2009): 65-92. Print.
- Jourdain, Robert. *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy: How Music Captures Our Imagination*. New York: Avon Books, 1997. Print.
- Kaplan, Carla, ed. *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*. New York: Doubleday, 2002. Print.
- Kapschutschenko, Ludmila. *El laberinto en la narrativa hispanoamericana contemporánea*. London: Tamesis, 1981. Print.
- Katz, Marco. "Che y Teddy: el desarrollo de imágenes populares en la pantalla grande." *Espéculo: Revista de estudios literarios*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid. No. 32 (March 2006). Web.
- — —. "Hearing through Our Eyes: Musical Archives and Authentic Performance." *Popular Music and Society*. 31.4 (2008): 511-27. Print.
- — —. "Tiras, timbres y estereotipos: el negro Memín Pinguín y la manipulación de la cultura popular con representaciones étnicas." *Culturas Populares. Revista Electrónica* 5 (July-December 2007). Web.
- Kaup, Monika. "¡Vaya Papaya!": Cuban Baroque and Visual Culture in Alejo Carpentier, Ricardo Porro, and Ramón Alejandro." *PMLA*. 124. 1 (January 2009): 156-71. Print.
- Law of Return 5710-1950. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 July 1950. Web.
- Lennartz, Karl. "The Story of the Rings." *Journal of Olympic History*. Vol. 10 (December 2001/January 2002): 29-61. Print.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Tristes Tropiques*. Librairie Plon, 1955. Trans. by John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Atheneum, 1974. Print.
- Lewis, Sinclair. *Babbitt*. New York: Harcourt, 1922. Print.
- — —. *It Can't Happen Here*. New York: Doubleday, 1935. Print.
- — —. *Main Street*. New York: Harcourt, 1920. Print.
- Lindsay, James, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute, Washington, DC. Conversations 8-11 November 2001.
- Locke, Alain Leroy. *The New Negro: an Interpretation*. New York: Boni, 1925. Print.
- Love, Theresa R. *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986. 47-61. Print.
- Machover, Jacobo. "Pedro Juan por Pedro Juan." *Revista de libros*. 136. (April 2008): 49. Print.

- Manuel, Peter, Kenneth Bilby, and Micahel Largey. *Caribbean Currents: Revised and Expanded Edition: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2006. Print.
- Martí, José. "Nuestra América." *El Partido Liberal*. Mexico City, 5 March 1892. Web. 13 Dec. 2009.
- McGann, Jerome. *The Textual Condition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991. Print.
- McGrath, Charles. "Lost in Translation? A Swede's Snub of U.S. Lit." *The New York Times*. 4 October 2008. Web. 13 Dec. 2009.
- McMillan, Terry. *Waiting to Exhale*. New York: Viking, 1992. Print.
- Millares, Selena. "Alejo Carpentier, en el reino de la paradoja." *Anales de la Literatura Hispanoamericana*. 1999, 28: 1005-1023. Print.
- Monroe, James. "Transcript of Monroe Doctrine (1823)." *Our Documents*. National History Day, The National Archives and Records Administration, and USA Freedom Corps. Web. 12 Mar. 2010.
- Moore, Robin. *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1997. Print.
- Olson, Steve. *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past through Our Genes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Print.
- Pogolotti, Graziella. "Un retablo de maravillas." *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí*. 90.4 (October-December 1999): 15-17. Print.
- Porter, Catherine. "Presidential Address 2009: English Is Not Enough." *PMLA*. 125.3 (May 2010): 546-55. Print.
- Rama, Angel. "Los Productivos Anos Setenta de Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980)." *Latin American Research Review*. 16.2 (1981): 224-245. Print.
- Randel, Don Michael, ed. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986. Print.
- Ratliff, Ben. "Talk to the Newsroom: Ben Ratliff, Jazz and Pop Critic." *The New York Times*. 11-16. Jan 2009. Web. 14 Jan 2009.
- Restrepo Duque, Hernán. *Las cien mejores canciones colombianas y sus autores*. Bogotá: RCN and Sonolux, 1991. Print.
- Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Toronto: Penguin, 2001. Print.
- Richard, Nelly and Diamela Eltit. "Jean Franco: un retrato." *Revista de Crítica Cultural*. 11 (1995): 18-21. Print.
- Riding, Alan. "Premiere for a Lost Vivaldi Opera." *New York Times*. 15 June 2005. Web. 25 Jul 2009.
- Rodríguez, Bob. *Reinventions*. CreOp Muse, 1998. CD.
- Rogers, Shelagh. Interview with Kayla Perrin and Pamela Yaye. *The Next Chapter*. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Broadcast 22 February 2010.

- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Essay on the Origin of Languages which Treats of Melody and Musical Imitation*. Trans. John H. Moran. New York: Frederick Unger, 1966. Print.
- Said, Edward. *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*. New York: Vintage, 2006. Print.
- Saldívar, Ramón. *Figural Language in the Novel: The Flowers of Speech from Cervantes to Joyce*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984. Print.
- Salgari, Emilio. *El hombre de fuego*. Trans. of L'uommo di fuoco, 1904. Madrid: Gahe, 1975. Print.
- Salinas, María Elena. "Ser latino en Estados Unidos." *Washington Hispanic*. 6 Nov. 2009: 12A. Print.
- Sánchez-Pardo, Esther. "Decline and Regeneration in Modernist (Hi)Stories." *European Journal of English Studies*. 12:3 (2008): 291-305. Print.
- Sanneh, Kelefa. "Beyond the Pale: Is White the New Black?" *The New Yorker*. 12 April 2010. 69-74. Print.
- Saroyan, William. *Letters from 74 rue Taitbout*. New York: World Publishing, 1969. Print.
- . *My Name is Aram*. New York: Penguin, 1940. Print.
- . *The Time of Your Life*. 1939. Acting Edition. New York: Samuel French, 1941. Print.
- Shakespeare, William and John Fletcher. *Cardenio or The Second Maiden's Tragedy*. Ed. Charles Hamilton. New York: Marlowe, 1994. Print.
- Sondheim, Stephen. "Another National Anthem." *Assassins: Vocal Selections*. Secaucus NJ: Riltling Music, 1992. Print.
- Sousa, John Philip. "The Menace of Mechanical Music." *Appleton's Magazine*. 8 August 1906. (Posted online by Prof. Lisa Gitelman, Department of Media Studies, Catholic University, Washington DC.) Web.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia UP, 2003. Print.
- . "Deconstruction and Cultural Studies: Arguments for a Deconstructive Cultural Studies." *Deconstructions: A User's Guide*. Ed. Nicholas Royle. New York: Palgrave, 2000. 14-43. Print.
- . "Translation as Culture." *parallax*. 6.1 (2000): 13-24. Print.
- Stern, Julia. "Spanish Maquerade in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*. Ed. Elaine K. Ginsberg. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. 103-130. Print.
- Strauss, Neil. "For Record Industry, All Signs Are Gloomy." *New York Times*. 4 Dec. 1996. A1. Print.
- Stravinsky, Igor. *Poetics of Music: in the Form of Six Lessons*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1942. Print.

- Swamy, V. Narayan. "Canada Adopts the 'Lage Raho' Mantra." *The Times of India*. 3 Oct. 2010. Web. 3 Oct. 2010. <<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>>.
- Taruskin, Richard. *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2009. Print.
- Tirro, Frank. *Jazz: A History*. New York: Norton, 1977. Print.
- Tovar, Paco, ed. "Ideas y sonidos de Alejo Carpentier. La danza de las palabras." *América, la imagen de una conjunción*. Barcelona: Anthropos, 2004. Print.
- Twain, Mark. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. 1889. New York: Airmont, 1964. Print.
- Unamuno, Miguel. *San Manuel Bueno, mártir*. 1933. Madrid: Castalia, 1987. Print.
- "UN members laughed and applauded at 'Lage Raho...'" *Glamsham Entertainment Magazine*. 14 Nov. 2006. Web. 3 Oct. 2010. <<http://www.glamsham.com>>.
- "UNSD Statistical Databases." United Nations Statistics Division. 2008. Web. 12 Mar. 2010.
- "Who We Are." Organization of American States. Web. 12 Mar. 2010.
- Viñas, Ángel, "Los condicionantes internacionales." *La Guerra Civil Española: 50 años después*. Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1985. 123-198. Print.
- Waldo, Terry. *This is Ragtime*. New York: Hawthorn, 1976. Print.
- Wade, Peter. *Music, Race, & Nation: Música Tropical in Colombia*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000. Print.
- Walker, Alice. "A Cautionary Tale and a Partisan View." *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986. 63-69. Print.
- — —. "On Refusing to Be Humbled by Second Place in a Contest You Did Not Design." *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986. 103-106. Print.
- Ward, Cynthia. "From the Suwanee to Egypt, There's No Place like Home." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*. 115:1 (Jan 2000): 75-88. Print.
- Washington, Mary Helen. *Modern Critical Views: Zora Neale Hurston*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1986. 123-38. Print.
- Wax, Emily. "U.S. Visa Limits Hit Indian Workers." *The Washington Post*. 6 April 2009. Web. 13 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com>>.
- Weathers, Glenda B. "Biblical trees, biblical deliverance: literary landscapes of Zora Neale Hurston and Toni Morrison." *African American Review* 39.1-2 (Spring-Summer 2005): 201-212. Print.

- Williams, Raymond. *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 1980. Print.
- Young, Richard A. *Carpentier: El reino de este mundo*. London: Grant & Cutler, 1983. Print.
- — —. ed. *Music, Popular Culture, Identities*. Critical Studies. Vol. 19. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002. Print.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *How to Read Lacan*. New York: Norton, 2006. Print.
- — —. *In Defense of Lost Causes*. London: Verso, 2008. Print.
- — —. “Slavoj Žižek - What does it mean to be a revolutionary today? Marxism 2009.” 6 July 2009. Web. 11 Sept. 2010.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GD69Cc20rw&NR=1>.
- Zuidervaart, Lambert. “Theodor W. Adorno.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2008). Ed. Edward N. Zalta. Web. 17 Mar. 2009.
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/adorno/>>.