

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:                   PROTEAN GODS: A RETELLING OF  
HISPANIOLA'S STORY THROUGH THE  
MAROON

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This dissertation argues that an exploration of the maroon, or the runaway slave, in literature can be a means to acknowledging the too-often-repressed historical, political, and cultural connections between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and can also help us uncover more accurate and less restrictive versions of Hispaniola's story. Hispaniola's story is often told through the fatal-conflict narrative, reducing Haitian-Dominican relations to an unending cockfight. The fatal-conflict narrative paints the Dominican Republic and Haiti as two nations fated to regard one another as ultimate, foreign archenemies, destined to be in total conflict. It also paints the Dominican Republic and Haiti as two nations whose fight for Hispaniola and for the preservation of their respective cultures is fatal. The formation of the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti has bolstered the fatal-conflict narrative, silencing a shared history of resistance and cross-pollination. My work extends and contributes to existing scholarship by uncovering instances of cooperation and collaboration that

suggest alternative views of a united island and that complicate contemporary political and social realities in the Dominican Republic. Rather than reaffirming a discourse of national difference through a focus on the border, I focus on the maroon as a protean figure who undoes the fatal-conflict narrative. I argue that these change agents, the maroons, anchor the island in what Cedric Robinson calls the Black Radical Tradition, the evolving resistance of African people to oppression. Maroon figures also reveal different angles to Hispaniola's story through their forms of resistance and penchant for metamorphoses.

I also examine twentieth and twenty-first century maroons found in Dominican and Dominican American literature. Like their counterparts from the past, modern-day maroons take flight, resist forms of enslavement and oppression, and undergo transformations that challenge conventional ways of thinking about Haitian-Dominican relations and the island of Hispaniola. Writers from the Dominican diaspora—among them Angie Cruz, Junot Díaz, and Nelly Rosario—have played a pivotal role in interrogating history, and more specifically, memories of violence and the repercussions associated with migration. Not only does this interrogation rewrite history, but it offers a means of forging a new, fuller story that erodes the border and expands the island's boundaries, all the while magnifying the role of the Black Freedom struggle in the making of a whole Hispaniola.

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by

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## Dedication

For my mother, Ketupi: “El viento es la Victoria.”

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# Introduction

## *Shifting the Focus: Rebel Gods at the Center of Hispaniola*

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only  
fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye.  
—Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*<sup>1</sup>

The Caribbean island of Hispaniola is made up of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and as such the larger world habitually envisions divisions between these two nations. Undeniably, present political and social realities reinforce this view. While some scholars have characterized the relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti as a perpetual cockfight, others describe it as a fugue of interdependence, or twinning. Yet, Hispaniola was not always so neatly reduced to the binary of Haiti and the Dominican Republic if one takes into account, for example, the island's maroon history; the twenty-two year unification period from 1822-1844; the 1865 War of Restoration, where Dominicans and Haitians fought against Spanish re-colonization; or the porous border which has been described as forming over time and ever changing "in nature, location, and function."<sup>2</sup>

Borders attempt to delineate boundaries of nation and culture. Yet they always prove to be porous, especially if we consider how nations come into existence and are re-imagined over time. This dissertation revisits the island's story through the runaway slave, which shifts the focus away from the border and draws our attention to a whole island. The maroon is an

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<sup>1</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction: Narrating the Nation," *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990) 1.

<sup>2</sup> Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave, 2003) 17.

individual who takes flight to secure his or her freedom and to resist colonial powers, and who possesses a protean nature. Maroons cross borders, wage war, and establish communities within borderlands that are under constant threat.<sup>3</sup> The maroon figure can be traced from as early as the sixteenth century to present day. Like their predecessors, modern-day maroons take flight, fleeing or migrating to, from, or within Hispaniola. Additionally, they resist forms of enslavement, and oppression, including brutal dictators, U.S. occupying forces, or more broadly, economic hardships and patriarchy. Moreover, modern maroons undergo transformations. The maroon is part of a tradition of resistance that can be traced from the first maroon rebellion on the island in 1503 to the writers and organizations working today—both on and beyond the island—to create a more inclusive and more just society. Focusing on the maroon in literature, rather than on the border, is a means of acknowledging the often repressed historical, political, and cultural connections between the people of Hispaniola.

The word maroon comes from the Spanish *cimarrón*. Throughout the Americas, the term *cimarrón* has evolved since the early sixteenth century. It first appeared in Hispaniola under Spanish rule in 1528, and referred to Taíno natives who fled and sought refuge alongside the cacique<sup>4</sup> Enriquillo.<sup>5</sup> The word *cimarrón* is an early Americanism referring to domesticated animals that became wild or ran away, and later to indigenous and African rebels who ran away. Descriptions in *Sir Francis Drake Revisited* (1628), and *History of the Caribby Isles* (1666), equate “symerons” or “marons” with flight and savagery, indicating how the term evolved

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<sup>3</sup> Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cacique: A leader of an indigenous group.

<sup>5</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1989), 11-12. Examining the term’s etymology of the term, Deive underlines its Taíno origin: *símara* (“arrow”); *símarabo* or *símarahabo* (“bow or arch of arrow”); *símaran* (“shot (or projected) from a bow”); and “*silvestre*, *selvático*, [and] *salvaje* [(wild; forest, jungle, wild; and wild, untamed or savage)]. These last three terms (*silvestre*, *selvático*, [and] *salvaje*) became associated with descriptions of domesticated animals that became wild, and later with indigenous and black slaves who revolted.

orthographically but not semantically.<sup>6</sup> *History of the Caribby Isles* (1666) associates maroons with forests and mountains, drawing attention to maroon tactics such as isolation, defense, and secrecy.<sup>7</sup>

During the second half of the seventeenth century *cimarrón* continues to evolve orthographically and semantically. It appeared as *marrón* and as *marronage*, its derivative, in the French Antilles. In the late seventeenth century, “maroon” was synonymous with “buccaneer” and “pirate”; if a person was “shipwrecked or isolated” they were marooned.<sup>8</sup> Presently, “marooned” still means to be shipwrecked and isolated, as well as abandoned and forsaken. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the term “maroon” was predominately used in Jamaica. Without losing its previous associations with “savagery and bestiality,” the word acquired connotations of “freedom and autonomy, endurance, courage, and superior warriorhood.”<sup>9</sup> Evolving in the nineteenth century, “marooned” was used to describe blacks and whites in the Caribbean, people who were “psychologically placed in the condition of a Caribbean runaway and [suffering] brutality, withdrawal, and separation from [their] ancestral culture.”<sup>10</sup> Importantly, where as Europeans or their descendants had the possibility of being rescued and returned to their homeland, Africans of the diaspora could never return home.<sup>11</sup> The non-European maroon was readily identified as “the resistant maroon” who rebelled in various ways

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<sup>6</sup> Cynthia James, *The Maroon Narrative: Caribbean Literature in English Across Boundaries, Ethnicities, and Centuries* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), 12-13. James quotes from *Sir Francis Drake Revisited* (1628), which defines maroons as: “The Symerons (a blacke people, which about eightie yeeres past, fled from the Spaniards their Masters.” She also cites Norman Davies’ *History of the Caribby Isles* (1666): “They will run away and get into the Mountains and Forests, where they live like so many beasts; then they are call’d marons, that is to say Savages.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

against his or her master. Finally, ‘to be marooned’ also meant to be surrounded by individuals deemed “primitive” by Europeans.<sup>12</sup>

My method of tracing the maroon in literature is grounded in Cedric Robinson’s seminal work, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983). Robinson highlights the limits of Marxist theory. According to him, not only did Marxism’s theory of historical materialism emerge from the middle class, rather than from the proletariat, but also its nationalism (specifically German nationalism) at times undermined its goal of achieving multinational working-class solidarity. Additionally, Robinson points out that despite Marxism’s recognition of and sympathies towards class struggles and slavery, Marx’s theory was a Western construction that did not view Africans and the Black Diaspora as agents of change and resistance. Marx assigned slavery to “primitive accumulation,” an earlier stage of economic development. He acknowledged that African resources made possible by slavery and slave trade.<sup>13</sup> Yet he did not realize the following:

The transport of African labor to the mines and plantations of the Caribbean and subsequently to what would be known as the Americas meant also the transfer of African ontological and cosmological systems; African presumptions of the organization and significance of social structure; African codes embodying historical consciousness and social experiences; and African ideological and behavioral constructions for the resolution of the inevitable conflict between the actual and the normative.<sup>14</sup>

For Robinson, Marxism was and is reductive in its conceptualization of the roles that race, gender, and culture play in the formation of society and within capitalism. Robinson claims that rebellion in the New World was not only a critique of Western society and colonialism, but also a “total rejection of enslavement and racism,” influenced by a desire to preserve and “transfer” a

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 121-122.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

past.<sup>15</sup> Responding to Marxism's failure to view Africans as agents of change, Robinson sets out to track the evolving resistance of African people to oppression through history and literature from the twentieth century. Importantly, he sets himself apart from historians such as Lynn Guitar and Erin Woodruff Stone by framing black resistance in the New World as a manifestation of the Black Radical Tradition, a tradition of revolt originating in Africa.<sup>16</sup> Through reinterpretation and through new forms of outward and inner rebellion, this tradition has evolved over centuries.

Robinson's text is expansive in its reach, and intriguing in the way it methodically unearths the Black Radical Tradition and documents its survival, despite its systematic silencing. Yet, it also intrigues me because of the areas it leaves open for further investigation. One way Robinson tracks the Black Radical Tradition is by tracing the occurrence of maroon settlements in the New World. He begins with Columbus's arrival in Hispaniola, thus moving from the enslavement and decimation of the Amerindians to the promotion of African slavery, an idea championed by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas.<sup>17</sup> After analyzing the introduction of enslaved Africans to Spanish Hispaniola, Robinson delves into the meat of his discussion regarding marronage by examining 'red and black' alliances and the evolution of black resistance.<sup>18</sup> He devotes some attention to marronage in Mexico, and a considerable amount of attention to marronage in Brazil, Haiti, North America, and the British West Indies. In all of

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<sup>15</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, "Foreword," *Black Marxism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), xiv. See also Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 122.

<sup>16</sup> Lynn Guitar, "Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-1545)," *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 42. Erin Woodruff Stone, "America's First Slave Revolt: Indians and African Slaves in Española, 1500-1534," *Ethnohistory* 60.2 (2013) 208. Historian Guitar asserts that "patterns" of resistance, which spread throughout the Americas, were conceived in Hispaniola. Similarly, Stone argues that the indigenous rebellion (1519-1534) led by Enriquillo, one of the last caciques or Taíno chiefs, provided a "template for revolt" for the first maroon rebellion (1521) in Hispaniola.

<sup>17</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 125-127.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-130.

these cases he shows how slaves “found means of disengagement” by committing acts of arson or destroying tools, taking flight from their oppressors, organizing revolts, and reestablishing and sustaining communities.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, disengagement also took on “less overt forms” in the way slaves prepared themselves for rebellion through “obeah, voodoo, Islam, and Black Christianity.”<sup>20</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley’s foreword to Robinson’s text highlights the “avenues” of further exploration that were inspired by *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. He notes, for example, the role of women in black resistance—a crucial subject that Robinson neglects. I believe another major avenue for exploring the Black Radical Tradition involves approaching a whole Hispaniola and tracking marronage not just in Haiti but also in the Dominican Republic.<sup>21</sup>

Hispaniola remains understudied, despite the body of literature produced from within the island and from its diaspora. The Dominican Republic, in particular, is underrepresented and oversimplified in scholarly circles within the United States and England. As Silvio Torres-Saillant notes, a number of texts from the twentieth century examine race in the Americas or more narrowly, Latin America, and do not address Dominican society. Texts that fail to include Dominican society include *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (1997) by Peter Wade; *African Presence in the Americas* (1998) edited by Carlos Moore, Tanyia R. Sanders, and Shawna Moore; *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations* (1998), edited by Arlene Torres and Norman E. Whitten; and *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* (1999), by Kwame Anthony

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 130-164, 310.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix A for information on “Cimarrones in Eastern Hispaniola.”

Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr.<sup>22</sup> Despite the fact that the D.R. is the site of the first maroon revolts in the New World and is what Torres-Saillant calls “the cradle of blackness in the Americas,” the nation is often excluded from the Black Atlantic, or reduced to a nation struggling to accept its blackness.<sup>23</sup> In a recent essay, Ginetta E. B. Candelario echoes Torres-Saillant’s description of the D.R., describing Santo Domingo and the greater Caribbean as the “cradle” of modernity, a place that encompasses the conflict between freedom and enslavement, humanity and inhumanity.<sup>24</sup> The D.R. was the site of the first European colony, the first maroon revolts, and the first withdrawal from the transatlantic slave trade. It was also the first site to abolish slavery in the Americas.

Relying on Robinson’s methodology, I set out to track the Black Radical Tradition on the island through history but also through literature. One of my major questions follows from his investigation: In light of increasing global flows of capital and people, how are writers from the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries highlighting, reinterpreting, or preserving the Black Radical Tradition? And are they doing so in a way that challenges a dominate narrative of Hispaniola? Literature from and about Hispaniola has played a pivotal role in interrogating an official history, the violence of the past, and the repercussions associated with flight. Not only does this interrogation serve to rewrite and give voice to silences and gaps in history, but it also offers a means of potentially forging a new story, and fuller story that magnifies the maroon’s role in the reinterpretation of the Black Radical Tradition, and better reflects the complexity of Hispaniola.

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<sup>22</sup> Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness* (New York: CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, 2010), 1.

<sup>23</sup> Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness*, 1-4. See also Silvio Torres-Saillant, “The Dominican Republic,” *No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans Today* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1995), 110.

<sup>24</sup> Ginetta E. B. Candelario, “La ciguapa y el ciguapeo: Dominican myth, Metaphor, and Method,” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 20.3 (2016), 100.

This study traces the trajectory of the maroon—his or her capture, modes of resistance, association with the power of a collectivity, and transformation—in literature published in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both on and off the island. It examines the maroon as an agent of change who takes flight, committing acts of *petit marronage*, a short-term flight also known as *cimarronaje pequeño* or *cimarronaje simple*, and *grand marronage*, a long-term flight also known as *cimarronaje grande*. Because flight can take both external and internal forms, I trace marronage as a process that involves capture, “seasoning” or acclimating to a new environment and learning how to survive within the plantation system, psychological or inner-resistance, and flight and physical confrontation.<sup>25</sup> Importantly, this study aims to move beyond a reductive “literature of resistance.”<sup>26</sup> Thinking of marronage as an active and continuous act, my study examines the maroon as a shapeshifter whose transformation involves physical as well as internal metamorphosis.

To read the maroon, my work draws from Cynthia James’s *The Maroon Narrative: Caribbean Literature in English Across Boundaries, Ethnicities, and Centuries* (2002), and also from Neil Roberts’ *Freedom as Marronage* (2015). James’s study examines works written by British and Anglophone Caribbean writers over four hundred years. Her research highlights forms of marronage beyond literal flight or resistance including psychological marronage and “linguistic rebellion,” or resistance through language.<sup>27</sup> James offers a foundation for this study by tracing marronage in literature written from within and outside of the Anglophone Caribbean in the twentieth century. She offers an entire chapter to the role of women writers in

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<sup>25</sup> Lynne Guitar, “Boiling it Down,” 41-43. On Hispaniola, slaves became ‘seasoned’, meaning they became acclimated to the ‘climate, foods, and diseases’ before potentially being sent to another expedition and/or colony; this ‘seasoning’ also included learning how to survive among the Spaniards.

<sup>26</sup> James, *The Maroon Narrative*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 73

interrogating “maroon concerns.”<sup>28</sup> James argues that the maroon can be the indentured servant, the traveler-narrator, the African-Caribbean writer, or the Caribbean writer living in exile. She also notes how literature from this period sets a precedent for twenty-first-century works.

Neil Roberts’ scholarship is pertinent to this study because it builds upon James’s conceptualization of the maroon as an “accidental or purposive immigrant.”<sup>29</sup> Roberts uses the term “modern maroon” to refer to “refugee immigrant.”<sup>30</sup> Although Robinson and James engage this concept, they don’t explicitly use the term “modern maroon.” Roberts argues that modern-day maroons take flight, challenging the idea of impermeable borders as well as sameness. He also maintains that marronage involves “an economy of survival” and an active process over time.<sup>31</sup>

In the last two decades, scholarly attention has focused on the border’s historical formation and literary manifestations. Yet, this focus on the border does not encourage a vision of a united Hispaniola. A considerable amount of scholarship revisits *dominicanidad*, or Dominican national identity, and “foundational fictions” that revise history by reimagining the Dominican nation’s Spanish and indigenous past while “scratching out” its African ancestry.<sup>32</sup> Much of recent scholarship also revisits *antihaitianismo* ideology in the D.R., promoted extensively after 1937 under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo and his successor, Joaquin Balaguer. Hispaniola’s border is nearly always at the center of the island’s story.

*Protean Gods: A Retelling of Hispaniola’s Story through the Maroon* extends this research. However, it shifts focus away from the border to the maroon, or *cimarrón*. The

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>30</sup> Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), 25.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>32</sup> Doris Sommer, “Starting from Scratch: Late Beginnings and Early (T)races in Enriquillo, Cumandá, and Tabaré.” *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 233-256.

literature that I examine reimagines the maroon in ways that challenge official history and the foundational fictions from or about Hispaniola. In this sense, the novels that I examine are revisionist histories that offer new versions of Hispaniola's story by defying a traditional narrative that pins Haiti and the D.R. against one another. Importantly, the novels that I examine also create emotional proximity between a reader and the maroon. This proximity has the capacity to undo ideological, cultural, and racial binaries. The protean maroon is synonymous with multiplicity and pushes up against rigid ideas of nation, making us question who has been left out of Hispaniola's story and why. My analysis makes four original contributions. First, it underscores the complex roles s/he fulfills beyond the more established role of hero or warrior. Second, it explores the author's role as a literary maroon. Third, it examines the rebel woman in literature. The female maroon is often imagined in the literature I look at as a survivor and as a figure whose escape ensures future flights across the island and beyond. Finally, my project traces modern-day maroons in literature by writers of the Dominican diaspora. It argues for the inclusion of the *dominicano aucente* and *dominicanyork* (absent, excluded, or exiled Dominicans living in New York or abroad), as well as the indentured servant and Chinese-Dominican, in our imagination of the maroon. The twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers who have envisioned the lives of maroons illustrate how these individuals can be a means of reimagining the story of the island.

This dissertation joins with other recent scholarship in questioning the "fatal-conflict model," promoted in Michelle Wucker's widely read *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola* (1999).<sup>33</sup> Wucker utilizes the cockfight as a metaphor for Haitian-Dominican relations and for the interwoven roles of machismo and violence on either

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<sup>33</sup> Samuel Martínez, "Not a Cockfight: Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations," *Latin American Perspectives: Popular Participation against Neoliberalism* (2003), 81.

side of the border.<sup>34</sup> In her analysis, the rooster is symbolic of the “strongman political traditions in which the word of the man at the top deeply influences how the people act and speak.”<sup>35</sup> Viewed as paternalistic figures, “strong fighters” like Trujillo and Duvalier developed cults of personality and cultures of fear. Armed with these methods, they prevented meaningful democratic changes and “diverted citizens’ attention toward a nationalistic and racist political agenda.”<sup>36</sup> But rather than recognizing the failures and corruption of their own leaders, each nation viewed its neighbor as a scapegoat.

In “Not a Cockfight: Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations (2003),” Samuel Martínez critiques Wucker’s text representing the D.R. and Haiti as two nations fated to regard one another as archenemies destined to be in “total conflict on all status levels.”<sup>37</sup> The cock-fight narrative bolsters rather than challenges what Martínez terms “a fatal-conflict model.”<sup>38</sup> According to Martínez, this model denies the historical and cultural ties that bind these two nations, including a shared history of black resistance. A struggle exists in Hispaniola, but the struggle is not for the island itself. Martínez defines the major conflict as a struggle over the immigrant bodies that are needed within a system of racialized capitalism to ensure the demand for cheap labor.<sup>39</sup> The September 23, 2013 ruling by the Dominican Republic’s Constitutional Court supports Martínez’s argument. The ruling, which retroactively revoked the citizenship of anyone born in the country to noncitizens after 1929, rendered many Haitians and Dominican-Haitians stateless.

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<sup>34</sup> Michele Wucker, *Why the Cocks Fight* (Hill and Wang, 1999), X.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 234-235.

<sup>37</sup> Samuel Martínez, “Not a Cockfight,” 81 and 88.

<sup>38</sup> Martínez, “Not a Cockfight,” 81.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

In *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, Race, and State on Hispaniola* (2003), Eugenio Matibag offers a strong model for Haitian-Dominican relations.<sup>40</sup> Tracing political, economic, and cultural interactions between Hispaniola's two nations, he maps "counterpoints" of cooperation, as well as conflict, within Haiti's and the Dominican Republic's colonial era, post-revolutionary period, dictatorships, invasions and occupations, and more recent economic challenges.<sup>41</sup> Matibag argues that "marronage can serve as a metaphor for varieties of escape: from the regimen of the plantation, or from pre-determined social meanings."<sup>42</sup> For him, marronage is a "fugue" of interdependence and the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is a site of refuge, freedom, and subversion.<sup>43</sup> He argues that historical counterpoints in marronage and the border reveal "dangerous discrepancies between [Spanish and French] colonies," and "disturb the larger order of the island."<sup>44</sup>

Matibag's work is primarily interested in historical accounts, but he nevertheless underscores the importance of literature to interrogations of historiography. The scholar devotes a chapter to depictions of Haitians in Dominican literature.<sup>45</sup> More importantly for my purposes, his examination of José Alcántara Almánzar's work calls attention to a story where the protagonist is persecuted "like a runaway."<sup>46</sup> According to Matibag, the story reveals "compassion for one who could be Haitian or Dominican or both." He adds "the runaway's ethnicity is indeterminate, but not his pain and poverty."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, VII.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 and 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 54, 56, 60.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 166-186. Matibag diverges from his methodology because he does not follow this chapter with a study of the depictions of Dominicans in Haitian literature.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Matibag's text, as well as more recent works, reveals "[how] works of fiction may turn out to be 'truer' than historical works . . . because of the meanings they evoke."<sup>48</sup> Literature focusing on the maroon can be a way to interrogate history with an agenda, but also, in the case of the postcolonial Caribbean, a way to represent truths omitted from history. Dawn F. Stinchcomb's *The Development of Literary Blackness in the Dominican Republic* (2004) seeks to understand social, historical, and socio-political forces that have shaped Dominican racial constructs and ideas of nation through literature. Stinchcomb also serves as an important touchstone for my work, as she traces the emergence of Afro-Dominican literature in the twentieth century through a study of the works of Aída Cartagena Portalatín, Blas Jiménez, and Norberto P. James Rawlings. Maria Christina Fumagalli's recent *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (2015) is also pertinent to my study. Like Matibag, she examines marronage, but to a more limited extent than I do in the pages that follow. Drawing from Matibag's model of interdependence, Fumagalli takes up the work of expanding the archive so that it includes fiction, poetry, film, investigative journalism, plays, and visual art produced within and outside of the island. Literature in particular enables her to interrogate counterpoints such as the 1791 Bois-Caïman ceremony, the 1937 Massacre, and the post 1960s border struggles. She aims to show how a diverse set of writers and artists depict the island as "caught up in a puzzle-like unity of contrast and affinities, continuities and discontinuities."<sup>49</sup> Excavating "personal" experiences, Fumagalli uncovers the "deep contradictions" characterizing Haitian-Dominican relations. Although she acknowledges maroons as agents of change in the

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<sup>48</sup> Pedro Luis San Miguel. *The Imagined Island: History, Identity, & Utopia in Hispaniola*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 5. Matibag is not the first to underscore the importance of literature to interrogations of historytelling. Notably, San Miguel devotes a single chapter to literary texts.

<sup>49</sup> Fumagalli, *On the Edge*, 13-14, 23.

1791 slave revolt that sparked the Haitian revolution, she does not trace a history of collective resistance through this figure.<sup>50</sup>

Richard Lee Turits is also among those scholars reinterpreting the border of Hispaniola. He too challenges the fatal-conflict narrative as he reconstructs the border's formation through events such as the 1937 Massacre known as the Corte [the cutting], or Kout Kouto [the stabbing]. The Massacre, which was carried out by the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo and his regime, claimed the lives of an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans.<sup>51</sup> Turits argues that an anti-Haitian rhetoric was not the sole or main instigator of the massacre, although it was revived intensely after the genocide. The brutal slaughter was an assault on the "bicultural and transnational" border community of Haitians and Dominicans. The "contact zone"<sup>52</sup> was a liminal space where Dominicans, Haitians, and Dominican-Haitians mixed, and created families and networks across the border.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the border was not physical and ideologically demarcated before 1937.<sup>54</sup> The unique ethnic flexibility existing within the contact zone posed a major problem for Trujillo and the elite, who viewed cultural homogeneity as vital to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 87, 90. For example, in her examination of Madison Smartt Bell's novel, *All Souls' Rising* (1995), she focuses on Touquet, a white character who personifies "borderland history," takes advantage of the border's porous nature, and acknowledges an island prior to Spanish and French colonization. Interestingly, Fumagalli also notes that the maroon Riau is the only character whose thoughts are told from the first person point-of-view. Although she does not include an analysis of this character, on some level she acknowledges that the text magnifies the maroon and his importance in the making of the island.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Lee Turits, "A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (Duke University Press, 2002), 592-595.

<sup>52</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991), 33-40. Pratt is the first to use the term "contact zone."

<sup>53</sup> The two most significant novels that revisit the 1937 Massacre are Jacques Stéphen Alexis's *Compère Général Soleil* (*General Sun, My Brother*) (1955), and Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* (1998). Both of these texts illustrate different aspects of this liminal space and elevate characters who problematize binaries of nation, ethnicity, and language.

<sup>54</sup> Turits, "A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed," 593-594, 616. Oral histories from Dominicans and Haitians in the late 1980s support this assertion. Turits affirms how prior to the 1937 Massacre, Dominicanidad was "far from uniformly imagined" in opposition to Haiti or Haitian culture. Contrary to official historiography, Dominicans in the borderlands did not fear a Haitian cultural or political takeover in the 1930s. Rather, as part of the biethnic, bicultural, and bilingual community, they were "unable to make sense of, or find a place for [themselves] in, [an] elite formulation of a monoethnic Dominican nation radically distinct from Haiti."

centralizing power and regulating the economy.<sup>55</sup> In many ways, the contact zone constituted a country simultaneously a part of and apart from the D.R. and Haiti. Its existence complicates the cock-fight narrative because the narrative relies on the existence of two distinct nations and on the belief that two distinct groups are struggling for power over the island.<sup>56</sup>

Viewing the maroon as a metaphor for the island can be a way to break out of rigid binaries limiting the way we view Dominican-Haitian relations, the ‘nation,’ national identity, and more broadly, the island. The maroon can be a means to probing not just the island’s multiplicity, but the notion of mutability as it relates to the individual. Lucia Suárez’s research aims to complicate binaries through a comparative analysis of novels by writers who belong to the Dominican and Haitian diaspora. Her seminal *The Tears of Hispaniola* (2006), situates writers from the diaspora as forerunners in reimagining memory and interrogating silences surrounding “the violence of the past.”<sup>57</sup> For her, diasporic writers play a pivotal role in reconstructing historical events like the 1937 Massacre. They use fiction to understand the effects of trauma on individuals in the contact zone and to create emotional proximity between a reader and a protagonist. Suárez describes Haiti and the Dominican Republic as “marassa...spirit twins, or child spirits.”<sup>58</sup> She sees the relationship between Hispaniola’s two nations as one marked by deep historical, physical, social, and spiritual connections that resemble the profoundly complex and intimate relationship between twins. This twinning is a useful way to view how the D.R. and Haiti are inextricably tied to and reliant on one another. However, I

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 606.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 619-620. The model begins to unravel even more when Turits acknowledges that while some Dominicans were complicit in the massacre, there were also Dominicans (local residents as well as local soldiers) who protected their Haitian and Haitian-Dominican neighbors. The genocide was experienced as “an act of madness” by some local Dominicans who at first believed soldiers were targeting the entire community.

<sup>57</sup> Lucía M. Suárez, *The Tears of Hispaniola: Haitian and Dominican Diaspora Memory* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006) 11 and 18.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 6.

believe the metaphor perpetuates the fatal-conflict model of the Dominican Republic versus and/or in competition with Haiti; dominant twin versus weaker twin; white versus black; and victimizer versus victim.

Historical figures from the twentieth century are modern-day maroons who embody multiplicity and mutability. This study compares these protean maroons to dominicanos ausentes in twentieth and twenty-first century literature. Notably, much of this literature is written by women in the diaspora and features rebel women as leading protagonists. Like Suarez's work, Myriam Chancy's research also interrogates trauma and silence as she explores issues of race, gender, sexuality, and national identity in her comparative analysis of Haitian, Cuban, and Dominican women's literature. According to Chancy, women writers and artists "are the new archaeologists of a historical site we would do well to call 'amnesia.'"<sup>59</sup> Women writers from Hispaniola's diaspora reimagine traditional constructions of womanhood, race, and nationhood. Their novels highlight not only nations undergoing transformation, but also border crossing and transnational identities that offer an "alternative archive" to official history.<sup>60</sup> Chancy draws from visual art, interviews, and history. Although she does not discuss marronage, her research revisits the U.S. occupations and the dictatorships in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and analyzes the rise of two oppositional leaders, François Borgia Charlemagne Peralte and Olivorio Mateo Ledesma. By examining photographic evidence of their deaths, she draws political, social, and religious connections that show how these two figures push up against ideas of nation. She is not the first to outline these connections.<sup>61</sup> Yet, her analysis highlights how these figures challenge the fatal-conflict narrative. She suggests that an

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<sup>59</sup> Myriam J. A. Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), xxii.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxi. Chancy examines texts by Julia Alvarez, Angie Cruz, Edwidge Danticat, and Loida Maritza Pérez. She argues that they are reimagining (or, in Alvarez's case, perpetuating) traditional constructions of womanhood, race, and/or nationhood.

<sup>61</sup> Jan Lundius, and Mats Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1999), 103-112.

examination of the border in relation to such figures offers new ways of approaching and rewriting the story of the island. Together with Martínez, Matibag, Fumagalli, Turits, Suarez, and Chancy exemplify a recent revived interest in the story of Hispaniola as a whole island.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter 1, ““Macandal. Makandal. Mackandal””: The Man, Prophet, and Protean God,” traces the maroon leader François Makandal in twentieth-century texts set prior to the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). The chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach, utilizing secondary historical literature, historiography, cultural-anthropology, fiction, and poetry to conduct a comparative analysis of the many versions of Makandal in a range of creative and scholarly works: C.L.R. James’s *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938); Robinson’s *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983); Joan Dayan’s *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (1998); Alejo Carpentier’s *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of This World)* (1949); and Manuel Rueda’s poetry collection, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal (Makandal’s Metamorphoses)* (1998). In this chapter, I argue that Makandal becomes synonymous with the Black Radical Tradition not only through his leadership of the Great Fear in 1757, but also through his connection to Islam and Vodou, and through his penchant for transformation. I argue more specifically that Rueda’s use of *pluralism* can be considered an “avenue” of the Black Radical Tradition. The poet envisions a cosmic Makandal, a maroon whose multiplicity erases binaries of culture, race, religion, gender, sexuality, space, and time.

Chapter 2, “The Role of Invention in the Black Radical Tradition: Boukman Dutty, Zamba Boukman,” traces the maroon leader Boukman Dutty in fiction and in historical literature. The chapter revisits James’s *The Black Jacobins*, and Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of*

*This World*. It also devotes considerable attention to Guy Endore's 1934 novel *Babouk*. Like Makandal, Boukman is associated with the Black Radical Tradition through his connection to Islam and Vodou, his oratory skills, and, most important, his use of invention. Endore's narrative imaginatively recreates a Boukman-like leader prior to the Bois-Caïman ceremony which was a Vodou ceremony that sparked the Haitian Revolution. The narrative offers views of a borderless island. In the story Babouk does not undergo dramatic physical metamorphoses like his predecessor, but he does engage in a psychological marronage that leads to flight and revolt. Endore represents marronage as a process that involves reversals, and one that manifests in a character who manipulates language and whose forms of resistance changes. Babouk fulfills the role of the Griot (the West African historian, storyteller, poet, and/or musician) "whose gift and duty it is to tell [listeners] of their past and point [them] to [their] future."<sup>62</sup> Through storytelling and the acquisition of language, Endore's Babouk cultivates a revolutionary consciousness in the enslaved masses of Hispaniola.

Chapter 3, "Rebel Women in Hispaniola: Lisette's Individual and Collective Power," focuses on one avenue unexplored by Robinson, the role woman played in the Black Radical Tradition and, more broadly, in gender politics. The chapter traces Lisette's development and her forms of resistance in Évelyne Trouillot's *The Infamous Rosalie (Rosalie l'infâme)* (2003). Lisette is a young, literate creole slave who becomes a maroon. The protagonist possesses the ability to inhabit individuals and their experiences while maneuvering through different groups and parts of the island. Trouillot's text probes women's unique circumstances during the mid-eighteenth century, magnifying the main character's perspective and her connection to a larger collective of rebel women stretching across the island. Lisette inherits, develops, and carries on a

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<sup>62</sup> James, *The Maroon Narrative*, 9. See also Carolyn Cooper "'Resistance Science': Afrocentric Ideology in Vic Reid's Nanny Town," *Maroon Heritage: Archaeological Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives* (Jamaica Canoe Press, 1994), 109-118.

tradition of resistance by practicing multiple forms of marronage. Although she comes close to fulfilling a mythical role, she (like her predecessor Babouk) remains in the realm of mortals. Trouillot's novella highlights the many forms resistance takes among colonized women, including suicide, abortion, and infanticide.

The final chapter, "On and Off the Island: The Modern-Day, Time-Traveling, Transnational Maroon," takes its inspiration from the similarities between Romaine Rivière, who led a rebellion in 1791, and two Romaine-like leaders who emerged during the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Engaging with Myriam Chancy's work, the chapter conducts a comparative analysis of François Borgia Charlemagne Péralte and Olivorio Mateo Ledesma with modern-day maroons found in Angie Cruz's *Let it Rain Coffee* (2005), Nelly Rosario's *Song of the Water Saints* (2002), and Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). Cruz's protagonist, Don Chan, is a time-traveling maroon who rewrites the story of the island and offers a vision of a whole Hispaniola while magnifying the roles played by an array of modern-day maroons, among them the indentured servant, the Chinese Dominican, the rebel woman, and *dominicanos aucentos*, Dominicans who are absent, excluded, or exiled from the Dominican Republic. He practices marronage, creating a collectivity and cultivating a revolutionary consciousness in his followers through invention and physical combat. Despite the novel's focus on Don Chan, rebel women are also crucial to the novel, often preserving and reinterpreting a Dominican-Haitian tradition of resistance.

Rebel women also take center stage in Rosario's and Díaz's text. As in Anglophone Caribbean Literature. The woman maroon appears as "savior, nurturer, enduring family stabilizer, and non-abdicating provider."<sup>63</sup> Rebel women also physically resist, engage in psychological marronage, and join networks of other women. Rosario's and Díaz's texts

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<sup>63</sup> Cynthia James, *The Maroon Narrative*, 105-106.

emphasize the role of the rebel woman in preserving the Black Radical Tradition through regeneration. Rebel women such as Angie Cruz's Miraluz and Esperanza, Nelly Rosario's Graciela and Leila, and Junot Díaz's Beli and Lola, make it possible for future generations to take flight. Embodying flight and power, they include the runaway mother, as well as more mythical figures such as the Dominican superwoman, or *ciguapa*. This chapter connects the narrative techniques of Cruz, Rosario, and Díaz to literary marronage and to the idea of *ciguapeando*, an avenue unexplored by Robinson.

Together, the chapters that follow argue that the maroon is a point of departure for writers attempting to probe the past and rewrite history, whether in the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries or twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This figure not only enables us to highlight black resistance on the island and over time, but also to acknowledge a shared history of resistance connecting the Dominican Republic and Haiti. By tracing maroon metamorphoses, Hispaniola emerges as an island not so easily cut in halves. Each text examined in this project offers a nuanced chapter of a larger narrative. The selected works are bound together in the way they elevate the maroon – a protean figure who enables us to see an island made whole through the power of imagination.

## Chapter 1: “Macandal. Makandal. Mackandal”: The Man, Prophet, and Protean God

*They all knew that the green lizard, the night moth, the strange dog, the incredible gannet, were nothing but disguises . . . With wings one day, spurs another, galloping or crawling, he had made himself master of the courses of the underground streams, the caverns of the seacoast, and the treetops, and now ruled the whole island.*  
- Alejo Carpentier, Trans. Harriet de Onís, *The Kingdom of This World*

The epigraph above invokes François Makandal, the shapeshifting maroon leader from Alejo Carpentier’s *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of This World)* (1949).<sup>1</sup> Leaning on official history, Carpentier explores the myth of Makandal and the power behind his metamorphoses. As a prerevolutionary leader, Makandal is known for organizing “the great fear of 1757,” a calculated poisoning of over 6,000 French plantation owners and planters in the northern province of Saint Domingue.<sup>2</sup> His rebellion contributed to what would culminate in the Haitian Revolution, the most successful slave rebellion in the Americas. The historical figure of Makandal is believed to have been born in Guinea or the Congo-Angola region.<sup>3</sup> As a Muslim and a member of the West African Mandingo people, he was fluent in Arabic.<sup>4</sup> The maroon leader was likely a *marabout* or prophet.<sup>5</sup> Imprisoned while fighting in a war, he was sold to European traders and brought to Saint Domingue as a slave. In Hispaniola, Makandal was sold to

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<sup>1</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*. trans. Harriet de Onís (1949; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006) 35-36.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Dayan, “Gothic Americas,” *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 252.

<sup>3</sup> Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 60, 291n.70.

<sup>4</sup> Sylviane A. Diouf, “Resistance, Revolts, and Returns to Africa,” *Servants of Allah*, (New York University Press, 2013), 217 - 218.

<sup>5</sup> Diouf is citing Jean Fouchard, “Mémoire sur la création d’un corps de gens de couleur levé à Saint-Domingue, 1779,” *Les marrons de la liberté* (Paris: Editions L’École, 1972), 494-495, 217-218. Additionally, Makandal’s name aligns with makanda, or “Guinean sorcerers.” Yet in Mandinka, mo kadann originates from ka mo kada, which means “to tie someone concretely with a rope, chain, or in a mystic manner.”

Lenormand de Mézy, one of the wealthiest plantation owners in Limbé.<sup>6</sup> While he was working in the sugar mill, his hand got caught in a cane press; later, it was amputated. This episode instigated his marronage which spanned eighteen years and culminated in the great fear. In 1758, he was captured and burned at the stake, but not before convincing his followers he would outmaneuver death by taking the form of a mosquito so he could return and resume fighting.<sup>7</sup>

Alejo Carpentier uses this figure to explore stories of resistance and survival in Hispaniola. Under the guise of different animals, Carpentier's Makandal has the powers of flight, underwater breathing, and galloping. He can transform himself into the most miniscule creatures, inheriting their capacity to subvert through "disguise, confusion, and camouflage."<sup>8</sup> The author attributes Makandal's power in part to his connection to animals; the maroon acquires their nature, and even his weapon of poison is said to creep or crawl ("reptando") like a reptile down chimneys, through cracks, and into wells.<sup>9</sup> The one-armed Makandal has a penchant for shapeshifting, a penchant fueled by the enslaved mass's ardent belief that he can in fact cheat the flames of death. As Ruler of Hispaniola, the entire island, he is a maroon-god who is readily associated with both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Like other *cimarrones*, he is an important historical figure in Hispaniola, but someone who has not always made it into "New World" or Dominican "official" history. Sustained by the interrelationship of history and myth, Makandal for Carpentier is a historical and literary figure who resists erasure and the dominant narrative of the island.

In this chapter, I trace the development of the maroon leader, Makandal, in Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (*The Kingdom of This World*) (1949), in C.L.R. James's *The*

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<sup>6</sup> Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 60.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 292n.87.

<sup>8</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Alejo Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo* (New York: Rayo Planeta, 2009), 32.

*Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), and in Manuel Rueda's *Las metamorfosis de Makandal (Makandal's Metamorphoses)* (1998). My method of tracing the maroon in Dominican literature, aimed partly at asserting the importance of the literary imagination in presenting images of the whole island, is influenced by Cedric Robinson's tracking of the Black Radical Tradition, his name for the evolving resistance of African people to oppression. I deal primarily with narratives written in the twentieth century and set prior to the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). My main focus is on prose fiction and poetry, but I also draw from secondary historical literature, historiography, and cultural-anthropology. In tracing the maroon through literature from and about Hispaniola, I argue that Makandal is best understood as an agent of the Black Radical Tradition, a character who complicates visions of the island through his powers of transformation and anti-colonial resistance. Ultimately, he is a figure who rewrites Hispaniola's story by erasing the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and acknowledging a shared history between these two nations. Additionally, mythical Makandal expands the definition of "maroon" by complicating notions of nation, race, and gender. In Rueda's *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* especially, the maroon becomes a central figure in the island's story, as well as a figure of aesthetic possibilities and boundless exploration. Rueda imagines a cosmic Makandal who is unhindered by racial or gender constructs, by space or time, tethered and untethered to the island or its nations, embodying all those elements within and surrounding the island.

*The Maroon: Man, Prophet, Messiah, and Protean God*

A number of writers acknowledge Makandal as a pivotal pre-revolutionary in Hispaniola's history. In *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938),

C.L.R. James reinterprets the Haitian Revolution, setting it in the context of the French revolution and elevating Toussaint L'Ouverture. Confronting a long history of European colonization, James questions Eurocentric history by placing the Haitian revolution in the center of modernity. He highlights the role of maroons in the revolution, singling out the leader and prophet Makandal. As "the greatest of [maroon] chiefs," Makandal was able to "unite the different sections [of rebel bands]." <sup>10</sup> Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983) similarly tracks the evolving resistance of African people to oppression. For Robinson, Makandal is synonymous in Hispaniola's history with "a revolutionary consciousness that proceeded from the whole historical experience of Black people."<sup>11</sup> In *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (1998), Joan Dayan traces the role of Vodou practices in Haiti, arguing that these rituals "work through the terror" of colonialism.<sup>12</sup> Almost always exclusively mentioned in relation to the revolutionary leader Dessalines, Dayan's Makandal is privy to information that destabilizes any fixed role assigned to him. As a spirit, "the one-armed maroon hero, Makandal, warn[s] Dessalines not to go to Pont-Rouge," where a revolt against him and death await.<sup>13</sup> Manuel Rueda's poetry collection, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal (Makandal's Metamorphoses)* (1998) expands upon Alejo Carpentier's Makandal in the 1949 historical-fiction novel *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of This World)*. Through his use of pluralism, Makandal is transformed into a god and a figure of modernity that unites the D.R. and Haiti. The maroon leader is envisioned as a messiah, a protean god, and ruler of the whole

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<sup>10</sup> C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 20.

<sup>11</sup> Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 169.

<sup>12</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, xvii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

island. The pages that follow examine how all of these writers interrogate Hispaniola by reimagining François Makandal.

One of the key elements linking maroons in literature is their ability to practice simultaneity, a state in which “one is simultaneously multiple things and some of the things [are] oppositional and contradictory.”<sup>14</sup> Simultaneity emerges from Makandal’s many different roles including the role of an African prerevolutionary leader and orator. In *The Black Jacobins*, C.L.R. James describes Makandal as “the greatest chief” who led “the only organized attempt at revolt” prior to the Haitian Revolution (1791 – 1804).<sup>15</sup> Makandal is a pivotal leader:

He was a Negro from Guinea. Makandal was an orator [with] equal eloquence to the European orators of [his] day and different only in his superior strength and vigour; fearless and, though, one-handed, had a fortitude of spirit which he knew how to preserve in the midst of the most cruel tortures. He claimed to predict the future; like Mahomet he had revelations; he persuaded his followers that he was immortal; the handsomest women fought for the privilege of being admitted to his bed. Not only did his band raid and pillage plantations far and wide, but he himself ranged from plantation to plantation to make converts, stimulate his followers, and perfect his great plan for the destruction of white civilization in San Domingo.<sup>16</sup>

James insists that Makandal defied the stereotype of the docile Creole Negro, a construction that negated an individual’s “civilization, culture, religion, history, place, and humanity.”<sup>17</sup> Instead, the maroon leader is assigned the label of “domestic enemy.”<sup>18</sup> He is believed to be more “menacing” to a white colonist audience because he is African, and he is a constant reminder of the “New World’s past.” Like a good commander, Makandal is a public speaker who possesses

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<sup>14</sup> Junot Díaz, “President’s Lecture at Clark University,” *Clark University’s President’s Lecture Series* (2014). Díaz explained: Instead of this logic...that you get one choice, either or, or that you’re somehow divided or somehow you live between cultures – whatever that means, because I’m trying to meet the person who doesn’t live between cultures – this frame of simultaneity was more useful - that one is simultaneously multiple things and some of the things that we simultaneously are, are often ten times oppositional and contradictory. There’s nothing like the Caribbean to teach you that oppositions can reside quite comfortably, that disturbing contradictions that would otherwise challenge some of the more basic laws of physics have no problems thriving.

<sup>15</sup> James, *The Black Jacobins*, 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

the power of persuasion and the ability to inspire. James writes: “The leaders of a revolution are usually those who have been able to profit by the cultural advantages of the system they attack.”<sup>19</sup> He singles out important individuals who participated in Haiti’s revolution: Henri Christophe, who as a waiter had the opportunity to gain ‘worldly’ knowledge; Toussaint L’Ouverture, who grew up in a Catholic household that gave him a degree of independence not afforded to most slaves; and Pierre Baptiste, a mentor to Toussaint who knew Creole, French, and “a little Latin and geometry.”<sup>20</sup> For James, Makandal and other individuals embody the collision of different cultures and the contradictions present on both the African continent and in Hispaniola.

Embodying simultaneity, Makandal is a leader, a orator and a prophet in Islam. James draws a parallel between Makandal and Mahommet (Muhammad) who unified Arabia into one state, founded Islam, and became a prophet in Islam. As part of the Black Radical Tradition, “Islam embraced a multiracial civilization incorporating peoples from Arabia, Africa, the Near East, the East, and southern Europe, which would form armies...Africans were prominent in these armies.”<sup>21</sup> In James’s imagination, Makandal’s connection to Mahommet associates him within this “multiracial civilization.” The parallel emphasizes the maroon’s leadership and prophesizing abilities, and ties him to a tradition of diasporic resistance. It also stresses Makandal’s African origins and his indomitability.

James notes that for six years, Makandal devises a plan that culminates into “the great fear of 1757” and the poisoning of an estimated six thousand people.<sup>22</sup> Slaves frequently used poison against whites and their animals, as well as other slaves. The use of poison was a means

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<sup>19</sup> James, *The Black Jacobins*, 19.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 88 – 89.

<sup>22</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 252.

of exercising power and for causing terror in anyone on the plantation. It was often difficult to detect poison, to distinguish it from death and disease, and to identify who created it.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, slaves used poison to commit suicide, which promised a “release” from slavery and a spiritual return to Africa. Importantly, the mass poisoning of 1757 was not an individualistic effort, but rather a collective effort brought to fruition by Makandal and his followers. Makandal is known historically for his particular use of collective “terrorism” as a tool of resistance. In James’s work, Makandal is a hero, organizing collective resistance to resist colonial terror.

Like James, Robinson elevates the maroons and views them as integral to the Revolution. He places them at the center of New World history and, more narrowly, Hispaniola’s history. Robinson is not interested in Makandal’s individual capacity to bring about change. Rather, he associates this figure with other prominent maroon leaders such as Hyacinth, Boukman Dutty, and Romaine.<sup>24</sup> These maroon leaders lose their individual identities to an extent, but they gain the collective power of a social movement. Robinson also places an emphasis on Makandal’s employment of “mind, metaphysics, ideology, [and] consciousness,” as tools that enable him to persuade blacks and their masters to “sense the hatred of the slaves in palpable terms” and to convert this hatred into a “material force.”<sup>25</sup> This conversion was instigated by those who possessed “truth,” a level of consciousness which made them fearless,

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<sup>23</sup> James, *The Black Jacobins*, 16. See also: Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>24</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 169-170. See also (1) C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 108, 86-87, 96; (2) Carpentier, *El Reino de este mundo*, 59-63; and (3) Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 54. In *The Black Jacobins*, Hyacinth is divinely inspired, and rushes towards French soldiers “crying that his talisman would chase death away.” Robinson also describes how Hyacinth and his men reach into cannons without fear. Boukman Dutty, a priest or Papaloi, is known to have conducted a ceremony alongside a priestess and in the heart of the Caiman woods, which began the fight for Independence in Haiti. In Alejo Carpentier’s *The Kingdom of This World*, Boukman’s ceremony can be seen as continuing a force of resistance nurtured and sustained by Makandal. Romain-la-Prophétesse had been a free slave from eastern Hispaniola, who fought in the Haitian Revolution; like the aforementioned maroons, he is also described as divinely inspired, guided by the Virgin Mary and Holy Spirit.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

and was informed by their desire to “live, [die, and obtain] their freedom on their own terms.”<sup>26</sup>

Even further, this “truth” links maroons throughout the Americas.<sup>27</sup> In Robinson’s account,

Makandal and “the great fear” form part of an African tradition of collective resistance.

Religions such as Obeah, Myalism, Pocomania, and Vodou are integral agents within the Black Radical Tradition. Through his association with spirituality, Makandal undergoes metamorphosis and acquires more roles and power.

Several works refer to stories of Makandal’s spiritual powers. He gains the role of an intervening spirit in a song recovered by oral history. This enhances his role as a prophet, underscores his multiplicity, and highlights how he is reimagined as someone who can influence history. In Joan Dayan’s *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, Makandal is exclusively mentioned in relation to the revolutionary leader Dessalines, “the only ‘Black Jacobin’ who became a god.”<sup>28</sup> He is described as “the one-armed maroon hero [who] warned Dessalines not to go to Pont-Rouge,” where he was killed.<sup>29</sup> A part of a song “reported” in Milo Rigaud’s *La Tradition voodoo et le voodoo haïtien (Haitian Tradition and Haitian Vodou)* (1953) follows: “Everyday Makandal is going to speak to Dessalines/Dessalines doesn’t want to listen.”<sup>30</sup> To foreground Makandal’s powers, Dayan focuses on Défilée (Dedee Bazile), a sutler (someone who follows an army and sells provisions) in the Haitian Revolutionary Army, and “the first to stand by [Dessalines] after his dismemberment.”<sup>31</sup> Défilée is thought to have collected the leader’s body

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. See also Alvin Thompson, *Flight to Freedom* (Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2006), 76 and 235. Robinson mentions, for example, Grand Nanny, a diviner and exorcist, who had a significant influence on the Jamaican Windward Maroons; and Nat Turner, a Christianized maroon who led the 1831 rebellion in Virginia.

<sup>28</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 42-45.

parts, whose meaning scholars debate.<sup>32</sup> In the song, Dessalines acquires names and roles, including General Dessalines and Emperor Dessalines. These names are in addition to Duclos (his name under the slave system), the Liberator, Papa, and Ogou Desalin.<sup>33</sup> Despite Dessalines's prominence and power, it is Makandal who is privy to vital information. According to the song, Makandal has information – perhaps from an informant or perhaps “divinely inspired” – that places him in a very unique position. His “warning” may suggest he knows Dessalines' fate or perhaps prophesizes it, but it illustrates his access to information. Like Défilée, the maroon leader has access that allows him to intervene in the making of Haiti's history, and to tip the balance in favor of the Liberator. Makandal's intervention also adds to the mythos surrounding Dessalines by playing a role in the Emperor's transformation into an Iwa, or Vodou god. In the song, Dessalines' death can be seen as punishment from the gods for “ignoring their warnings not to go to Pont-Rouge.”<sup>34</sup>

Dayan draws attention to another song that emphasizes Makandal's warning to Dessalines and adds even more complexity to the maroon figure. A portion of the song follows: “Pito m'mouri passé m'couri (Better to die than run away) / Pito m'mouri passé m'couri (Better to die than run away) / Dessalines, Dessalines démembré (Powerful/Dismembered Dessalines, Dessalines) / Vive la liberté (Long live liberty).”<sup>35</sup> Originally sung during the Haitian Revolution, the song has been preserved by Vodou ritual.<sup>36</sup> Dayan examines the use of *démembré* which she translates as powerful, dismembered, beaten, or battered.<sup>37</sup> In contrast to an overt warning, this second song illustrates Makandal's vision through the force of image: a

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 36. Défilée is known to have collected the Dessalines's body parts. Scholars debate whether this act facilitates or prevents his transformation into a hero, martyr, priest, and iwa (god, image, or spirit).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Duclos, 19; martyr of liberty, 17; Papa, 24; Ogou Desalin, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 31. Translation provided.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 31, 292n69, 292n70.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 31.

powerful yet dismembered Dessalines. In light of Makandal's warning, the last lyric resonates suggests that the Emperor's fate might have been sealed for the sake of *liberté*. If this is the case, Makandal can be seen as a prophet, as well as an anomaly. He is a man who has the ability to intervene and to see what Dessalines cannot perceive; a prophet whose intervention illustrates a level of engagement pushing beyond the prophet role; and an all-seeing man whose warning may in fact instigate Dessalines' decision to go to Pont Rouge, for the General would rather meet death than to run away. The maroon not only possesses multiple roles, but embodies contradiction; he can be both powerful and powerless in his predictions or godlike manner, and he can offer salvation or deliver death. Dayan argues that the song illustrates a "Dessalines who is battered and powerful, dead and living."<sup>38</sup> Dayan writes:

The history told by these traditions defies our notions of identity and contradiction. A person or thing can be two or more things simultaneously. A word can be double, two-sided, and duplicitous. In this broadening and multiplying of a word's meaning, repeated in rituals of devotion and vengeance, we begin to see that what becomes more and more vague also becomes more distinct: it may mean this, but that too.<sup>39</sup>

Although Dessalines was the only Black Jacobin to become an Iwa, what would happen if Makandal underwent a similar transformation? If he was both living and dead, or an Animal-man?<sup>40</sup> How does Hispaniola become more distinct through this figure? The work of these writers and critics suggests that literature is able to explore these possibilities and contradictions in ways that history cannot, because it is governed by what might be, not by what was or what was believed to have been. Alejo Carpentier and Manuel Rueda also engage with the powers of literature in their texts, and in ways that underscore the maroon's multiplicity and metamorphosis in relation to Hispaniola's Black Radical Tradition.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>40</sup> Manuel Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* (Santo Domingo: Banco Central de la República Dominicana, 1999), 91.

In Alejo Carpentier's 1949 novel, *The Kingdom of This World*, Makandal is ruler of the whole island. Carpentier's Makandal is a story teller, a leader, a messiah, and a protean god. The protagonist in this historical novel is Ti Noël, a slave on the M. Lenormand de Mézy plantation. Through Ti Noël, the reader is privy to Makandal's stories and bears witness to the great fear of 1757. In the chapter, "What the Hand Found," Makandal is made responsible for "pasturing the cattle," after his arm is caught in a cane press and amputated. Away from the stables and in the "mountainous shady slopes," Makandal acquires an acute interest in "the secret life of strange species," plants and fungi.<sup>41</sup> Accompanied by Ti Noël, he visits a Maman Loi (priestess) who converses with him about plants, fungi, and herbs. After one of these visits, Makandal subdues and poisons a dog in heat. Soon after, he disappears, setting in motion the great fear. In the chapter, "The Reckoning," the Maman Loi brings Ti Noël a message from the maroon. The protagonist then meets Makandal in a cave and learns that the rebel has built a network of followers. Following the leader's instructions, Ti Noël poisons two of Lenormand de Mezy's "milch cows."<sup>42</sup> As the poisoning is set in motion, Makandal acquires more powers. He becomes a houngan (priest) and a Ruler of Hispaniola.; his metamorphosis lasts four years. Eventually, he is captured and burned alive, but the enslaved masses ardently believe in his ability to cheat death. They don't see that "a flame fed by his burning hair drown[s] his last cry."<sup>43</sup> In the eyes of the oppressed, Makandal remains in "the Kingdom of This World."<sup>44</sup>

Makandal is at the center of a male-driven oral tradition of storytelling. In fact, Carpentier's novel begins with an emphasis on the importance of storytelling as Ti Noël remembers Makandal's tales when confronted by a copper engraving of an African king:

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<sup>41</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*. trans. Harriet de Onís, 17. See also, Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo*, 23.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 26. See also Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo*, 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. See also Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo*, 45.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* See also Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo*, 46.

With deliberately languid tone . . . the Mandingue Negro would tell of things that had happened in the great kingdoms of Popo, of Arada, of the Nagos, or the Fulah. He spoke of the great migrations of tribes, of age-long wars, of epic battles in which the animals had been allies of men. He knew the story of Adonhueso, of the King of Angola, of King Da . . . Above all, it was with the tale of Kankan Muza that he achieved the gift of tongues, the fierce Muza, founder of the invincible empire of the Mandingues . . . They were kings, true, kings. . . Back There there were princes as hard as anvils. . . who were leopards . . . 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.<sup>45</sup>

Like James's Makandal, Carpentier's Makandal possesses the "gifts of tongues," gifts that are notable in the content and delivery of the stories he tells. Makandal holds "a strange fascination" over followers such as Ti Noël.<sup>46</sup> However, this Makandal also exposes the protagonist to an African kingship and an African inheritance that are elevated above a colonial inheritance. The African kings featured in the maroon's stories are warriors. They are skilled in combat and well-acquainted with war. Like leopards, they've mastered the art of camouflage and ambush. Adaptable and resourceful, they can read and fully utilize the natural elements. These African kings, whose legacy remains alive through the re-telling of their stories, are the "true" kings. In contrast, the white monarchs are dominated by idleness. They listen more to violin symphonies and gossip than to cannon roar, and they rely on generals to fight their wars and on huntsmen to catch their game. Makandal's storytelling reconstructs a repressed African history, and affirms the importance of this history in the face of European dismissiveness.

Makandal's role as a messiah is also pertinent to understanding his ability to create a collectivity and sway a mass. Like James, Carpentier represents Makandal against the false construction of the "docile Creole Negro." However, Carpentier's text emphasizes Makandal's promise of salvation, rather than his prophetic power. After Makandal takes flight, the narrator in Carpentier's novel describes the master's reaction: "A one-armed slave was a trifling thing . . .

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 7-9. Also: Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo*, 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 13-15.

besides, it was common knowledge that every Mandingue was a potential fugitive. Mandingue was a synonym for intractable, rebellious, a devil.”<sup>47</sup> Consistent with James’s Makandal, Carpentier’s maroon leader is viewed as a “domestic enemy” by whites; he is believed to be more rebellious and more menacing to a white colonist audience because he is African. The short passage also shows Makandal as a hybrid messiah figure. Messiahs are viewed as “anointed ones” with knowledge of how to obtain paradise on earth through holy war, asceticism, or dancing.<sup>48</sup> Yet, they can be labeled outsiders, anti-christ figures, or others within a conflict involving two or more groups.<sup>49</sup> Makandal is likened to a demon by a white power structure, but he is a leader promising salvation to his followers. One commonality found between messiah figures is an “illness or mutilation” that “signals the transformation of the messiah’s body into the social body as it enters the liminal space.”<sup>50</sup> Makandal’s metamorphosis into a messiah is instigated by his amputation. Thought to be debilitated, he is put to “pasturing cattle,” where he develops a relationship with Maman Loi, a Vodou priestess who initiates him into the religion.<sup>51</sup> Carpentier imagines Makandal’s transformation into a messiah figure through the leader’s relationship to the land itself, and especially through his interest in plants, fungi, and herbs. Like Dayan’s all-seeing Makandal, Carpentier’s Makandal has exclusive access to information. His outsider position also marks him as a messiah, for he “discover[s] the secret life of strange species given to disguise, confusion, and camouflage.”<sup>52</sup> Further into the novel, Makandal employs this secret in his rebellion, moving toward fulfilling the roles of a messiah and god.

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<sup>47</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*. trans. Harriet de Onís, 21.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas O. Beebee, “Hybrid Messiahs,” *Millennial Literatures of the Americas, 1492 – 2002* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 47-48.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 17-18.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Carpentier utilizes the maroon legend in *The Kingdom of This World* to reexamine and reimagine collectivities in the Caribbean, above all the enslaved masses. As the descendant of a vast lineage of African kings and a messiah, the leader of the great fear can be seen as both an agent and extension of the Black Radical Tradition, a tradition preserved and instigated by Vodou. Again we encounter a Makandal that employs “mind, metaphysics, ideology, [and] consciousness” to influence slaves so that they transmute hatred into action.<sup>53</sup> He possesses these truths as a “houngán del rito Rada,” or a male priest in the Vodou rite of Rada.<sup>54</sup> The one-armed Makandal is transformed into a human god through Vodou ritual:

Invested with superhuman powers as the result of his possession by the major gods . . . [Makandal] was the Lord of Poison. Endowed with supreme authority by the Rulers of the Other Shore, he had 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.<sup>55</sup>

By taking part in Vodou rituals and allowing himself to be mounted or taken over by a god , Makandal becomes divine and human, and a Savior-figure embedded in the enslaved mass.<sup>56</sup> Makandal never became a god in Haiti, unlike Jean-Jacques Dessalines.<sup>57</sup> Instead, Carpentier’s Makandal is handpicked by the gods and bestowed with superhuman powers and ruling authority.

An adjective like “chosen” and a noun like “crusade” underscore Makandal’s role as a messiah and foretell the salvation he will bring through battle. In *Myth and History* (1992), Barbara Webb joins with those who associate Makandal with Vodou and its role in collective resistance. Webb identifies Vodou with “Haiti’s magic,” asserting that the religion anchors the

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<sup>53</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 169.

<sup>54</sup> Carpentier, *El reino de este mundo*, 30.

<sup>55</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 68.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

novel in the marvelous real.<sup>58</sup> Makandal becomes the embodiment of this “magic,” and a messiah who has the capacity to “combine religious and political functions.”<sup>59</sup> The reader witnesses this power in the way thousands of slaves are swayed politically and spiritually, and in the power of their blind faith. Through Vodou ritual, Makandal gains absolute control over his body’s geography and can engage in flight, ambush, and subversion. His dominance works to influence and inspire the “thousands of slaves” who translate Makandal’s message into material force against white authority.

As the epigraph to this chapter shows, Makandal is a protean god and Ruler of Hispaniola. With boundless power, he “slip[s] through a keyhole,” and “change[s] his shadow.”<sup>60</sup> Although one-armed, he can transform into an animal with “several feet,” wings, or antennae. He becomes “fly, centipede, moth, ant, tarantula, ladybug, even a glow-worm.”<sup>61</sup> Carpentier depiction echoes what Alvin O. Thompson calls a primary and a primitive desire for freedom through Makandal’s transformations. Thompson draws a distinction between two types of desire for freedom. According to him, every living creature possesses a primary desire for freedom. He writes that “Enslavers and other Europeans saw marronage as a primitive (not primary) desire for freedom that linked the Maroons to animals or, at best, wild men –.”<sup>62</sup> Carpentier quite literally depicts Makandal as different animals. The mythologizing of Makandal romanticizes the maroon, and distracts from the harsh conditions—hunger, sickness, animal attacks, weather, and threat of capture— that runaways endured. Romanticizing the maroon also creates distance between the reader and the maroon because it fails to probe the inner life of someone like Makandal. Yet, this romanticism can draw in readers, who (like Ti Noël) remain in awe of

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<sup>58</sup> Webb, *Myth and History in Caribbean Fiction*, 17.

<sup>59</sup> Beebee, “Hybrid Messiahs,” *Millennial Literatures of the Americas, 1492 – 2002*, 47.

<sup>60</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 36.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>62</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 46.

Makandal and his power. As the Lord of Poison transforms, he acquires more names: “The Mandingue Makandal. The man Makandal. The One-Armed. The Restored. The Transformed (El mandinga Mackandal. Mackandal Hombre. El Manco. El Restituido. El Acontecido).”<sup>63</sup> Such naming paradoxically destabilizes and solidifies the shapeshifter’s character, and moves him closer to fulfilling a messianic and godlike role.

Like Makandal, Hispaniola is a shapeshifter. The island has been known as Ayiti, Haiti, Hayti, Insula Hispana, La Isla Española, Española, Quizqueia, Quisqueya, St. Domingue, San Domingo, and Santo Domingo. Naming reflects the different colonial forces that have claimed the island and mimics the island’s capacity for transformation and its capacity to encompass elements in tension with one another. Carpentier transforms Makandal into a protean god who rules the entire island because his nature mirrors the island’s mutability. For most of its history, Hispaniola has been a politically divided island made up of two sovereign nation-states. But how does one’s vision of Haiti and the Dominican Republic change if they are both associated with Makandal and ruled by him, at least in the imagination? Subtly, Carpentier encourages us to revisit the collectivities in Hispaniola. For the writer, *lo real maravilloso* had the capacity to affirm the “cultural plurality” of the Americas because it emerges from the interactions between Amerindian, African, and European cultures.<sup>64</sup> He saw “creative potential” in this amalgamation, or cultural *mestizaje*, and envisioned a regional identity emerging from this mix.<sup>65</sup>

Importantly, Carpentier depicts “Todos (Everyone)” as believing in Makandal’s metamorphoses and attributes much of Makandal’s power to popular belief in him. In human-form, he still holds vestiges of his former shapes: “scales, bristles, fur” remain on his skin; his

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<sup>63</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 41.

<sup>64</sup> Webb, *Myth and History in Caribbean Fiction*, 13.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

chin is feline-sharp; and his eyes are angled like bird eyes.<sup>66</sup> These vestiges notwithstanding, Carpentier emphasizes his corporeal human-form: “[Having] completed the cycle of his metamorphoses, [Makandal] stood poised once more, sinewy and hard, with testicles like rocks, on his own human legs.”<sup>67</sup> The rebel’s humanness is stressed through masculine imagery; his metamorphoses have lent him more strength, strength he will undoubtedly need when he’s threatened with death. Makandal returns to being a man, a fact important to understanding his final transformation into a being who is both mortal and immortal. The enslaved empower him by believing in his transformative abilities and perpetuating the mythos of Makandal, a super-human figure able to counter the terror of white rule. Carpentier writes:

And Makandal, 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...  
The bonds fell off and the body of the Negro rose in the air, flying overhead, until it plunged into the black waves of the sea of slaves. A single cry...“Makandal Saved!”...  
And the noise and screaming and uproar were such that very few saw that Makandal, held by ten soldiers, had been thrust head first into the fire, and that a flame fed by his burning hair had drowned his last cry.<sup>68</sup>

The chapter, “The Great Flight,” has a problematic narrative perspective. The enslaved mass cry “Makandal saved!” but they never see the man burned alive. Scholars debate whether this scene embodies the marvelous real and the collision of myth and history, or whether it in fact reveals how the novel is not necessarily written from the perspective of the marvelous real if one were to consider the narrator’s reasoning.<sup>69</sup>

Carpentier wrote in the prologue to *The Kingdom of this World* that “the sensation of the marvelous presupposes faith. Those who do not believe in saints cannot be cured by the miracles

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<sup>66</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 37-46.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>69</sup> Webb, *Myth and History in Caribbean Fiction*, 32. See also Victor Figueroa, “The Kingdom of the Black Jacobins: C.L.R. James and Alejo Carpentier on the Haitian Revolution.” *Afro-Hispanic Review* (2006), 55-71.

of saints.”<sup>70</sup> The myth of Makandal is not only accelerated through his transformation, but also by the mass’s collective belief in his resurrection. Some might contend that Makandal’s execution captures the “realist aspect” of the marvelous real or the slip of a narrator who does not believe in Vodou and perpetuates European rationalism. However, the execution is better viewed as a scene actively negotiating myth and history, ultimately solidifying myth and history as equal constructions of a Caribbean reality. This interplay complicates our understanding of “what it felt like to be a slave,” to wrestle with reality and miracle, to hope that a man like Makandal could survive being burned alive if many minds, hearts, and faith willed it, to believe that a man like this could help effect the miracle of freedom from enslavement.<sup>71</sup>

In Manuel Rueda’s *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, the maroon survives the burning stake. He becomes a fly of fire (*mosca de fuego*), a fly of gold (*mosca de oro*), the Fly-god (*Mosca-dios*). He is also a “nature-mediator,” an androgynous god, and a symbol for Hispaniola.<sup>72</sup> Manuel Rueda was a pianist, literary critic, playwright, and a leading poet from the Dominican Republic. His works include *La criatura terrestre* (1963); *Con el tambor de las islas: Pluralemas* (1975); *Por los mares de la dama* (1976); and *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* (1998).<sup>73</sup> He played a significant role in the group *La Poesía Sorprendida* in the 1940s, and created the vanguard movement *Pluralismo* (1974).<sup>74</sup> The literary critic María del Carmen

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<sup>70</sup> Carpentier, “Prólogo,” *El reino de este mundo*, 4.

<sup>71</sup> David Barry Gaspar and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Afterword,” *Babouk* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), 184.

<sup>72</sup> María del Carmen Prosdocimi de Rivera, “En Manuel Rueda, Makandal llega a ser símbolo, aliento, viento y sombra,” *El Caribe* (1999), 3.

<sup>73</sup> Rueda ((August 27, 1921 – December 20, 1999) wrote a number of works including: *Las noches* (1949 , 1953); *Tríptico* (1949); *La trinitaria blanca* (1957); *Teatro* (1968); *Adivinanzas dominicanas* (1970); *Conocimiento y poesía en el folklore* (1971); *La prisionera del Alcázar* (1976); *El rey Clinejas* (1979); *Las edades del viento* (1979); *Papeles de Sara y otros relatos* (1985); *De tierra morena vengo* (with Ramón Francisco, 1987); *Congregación del cuerpo único* (1989); *Noche de nadie (antología poética)*, edited by León Félix Batista, Amado Santana (2015).

<sup>74</sup> Original members included Miguel Alfonseca, Margarita L. de Espaillet, Iván García, Alexis Gómez, Luis Ledesma, Orlando Menicucci, Apolinar Núñez, Gio Ripley, Manuel Simó, Diógenes Valdez, and Marcio Veloz Maggiolo. See “Movimiento pluralista,” in Manuel Rueda’s *Con el tambor de las islas, Pluralemas* (Santo Domingo: Taller, 1975),

Prosdocimi de Rivera explains that a pluralema is “a visual and musical conjunction . . . [that] conceptualizes a line of verse as a poetic pentagram, where each term can move in an unimaginable number of directions; [this in turn] establish[es] a series of phonetic-emotions, of ideas and anti-ideas, of reciprocal meanings.”<sup>75</sup> The concept of a pluralema—“a song [sung] in several directions simultaneously, from top to bottom, right to left, cross and vertical”<sup>76</sup>—expands the use of music and sound, as well as the mix of prose and verse, perspectives and voices present in a poem. It also resists a horizontal poetic structure, and plays with the power of image and contrast. In its expansion of these elements, it engages the reader more actively.

*Las metamorfosis de Makandal (Makandal's Metamorphosis)* is dependent on pluralismo, although more in content than form if compared to Rueda's earlier work *Con el tambor de las islas, Pluralemas (1975)*. *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* is structured like an epic poem or a musical composition. The book's invocation is followed by five major movements, each one composed of either singular or sequence poems that trace Makandal's ever-changing form and encourage readers to think about the maroon's significance to the island and the poet. As noted above, Rueda's text expands upon Alejo Carpentier's *Makandal*. Yet, Rueda's *Makandal* is a protean and androgynous God who ties together Hispaniola's two halves. In Rueda's imaginative creation, the maroon's rebellion is not just against colonial forces, but also against those “ratas” (rats) of “new History” who work tirelessly to delineate “la línea” (the line), infesting the island.<sup>77</sup> In this respect, Rueda's *Makandal* is a time-traveler of sorts who rebels

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161. See also Prosdocimi de Rivera, “Poeta culto y apasionado, Manuel Rueda se escapa...,” *El Caribe* (1 January 2000), 4-5.

<sup>75</sup> Prosdocimi de Rivera, “Poeta culto y apasionado, Manuel Rueda...” 4-5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. See also Manuel Rueda, “Claves para una poesía plural,” *Con el tambor de las islas, Pluralemas* (Santo Domingo: Taller, 1975), 9-20. See also José Alcántara Almánzar, “Sobre literatura dominicana 1965-1985,” *Los escritores dominicanos y la cultura*, (Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, 1990), 152-155.

<sup>77</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 99-103, 125.

against anything that adulterates his island or tethers him to a specific place. Embodying the poetic image, he invites and resists interpretation because even interpretation would confine him.

*Las metamorfosis de Makandal* also extends certain ideas put forth in Rueda's poem "Cantos de la frontera" (Songs from the Border) from his 1963 collection *La criatura terrestre* (*The Land-Being*). In the foreword to this collection, Rueda highlights the *rayano*: "that indecisive type who always fluctuated between two adjacent countries, lacking the strength to decide for either one, an extraordinary symbol of our land, single [única] and undivided until man marked it with the necessary opprobrium of a line."<sup>78</sup> The poet calls attention to the artificiality of the border both in his foreword and in the poem. Through the narrator or the *rayano*, he condemns the delineation of *la línea*, which denotes the place of the other and normalizes the division of Hispaniola. Notably, the narrator imagines the potential for communication between birds from either side, inquiring: "En dónde estás, hermano, mi enemigo de / tanto tiempo y sangre" (Where are you, brother, my enemy / [of] such a long time and so much bloodso).<sup>79</sup> In the speaker's imagination, the border remains vigilantly guarded by "soldiers," "troops," "flags," and "presidents." A conversation between the two sides doesn't take place, but Rueda wants to draw attention to the possibility of this dialogue. In *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, Race, and State on Hispaniola* (2003), Eugenio Matibag challenges the fatal-conflict model that pits Haiti against the Dominican Republic by tracing political, economic, and cultural interactions which reveal a "narrative of interdependence and reciprocal influences that have shaped each country's identity."<sup>80</sup> He asserts that in "Cantos de la frontera," the poet searches for "an alternative to the division," a time before and "beyond" the

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<sup>78</sup> Manuel Rueda, *Noche de Nadie* (2015), 37-54. Translation from Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 179.

<sup>79</sup> Rueda, *Noche de Nadie* (2015), 65, 67.

<sup>80</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 3.

line, moving towards an “oneiric space.”<sup>81</sup> In *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, Rueda similarly moves beyond the line as he explores a dreamlike, utopic vision of a united Hispaniola.

Like the different spellings of his name, Makandal undergoes metamorphoses, marking him as unpredictable and undeterminable. Rueda begins with an invocation, underscoring the theme of transformation in the spelling of Makandal’s name: “Makandal. Makandal.

Mackandal.”<sup>82</sup> The maroon’s penchant for metamorphosis is also highlighted in the way he acquires names and power: Man of the islands (Hombre de las islas); sembrador de vida (sower of life); Dios de alas grandes (great-winged God); Anaïsa; paridor de dioses (child-bearer of gods); Padre andrógino (androgynous Father); Mosca-dios (Fly-god); Makandal-nadie (Makandal-no-one); milagroso rayano (miraculous *rayano*); nacedor (man who is born and unborn).<sup>83</sup> Additionally, Makandal becomes synonymous with multiplicity through his naming.

For example, he declares that he is the goddess Anaïsa. Rueda collapses these two figures, indicating that they are interchangeable.<sup>84</sup> Later, the poet seemingly fuses two deities. Anaïsa becomes Anaïsa-Ezili, a compound which on the surface suggests the fusion of two entities. Ezili exists on either side of la línea. She is associated with love, beauty, and power.<sup>85</sup> However

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>82</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 25, 40, 46, 53, 54, 128, 134, 178, and 191. Rueda writes: “Tú no has nacido nunca, nacedor” (191). Makandal is ‘a man who is born’ and ‘an unborn man.’ For a more complete list of Makandal’s names, see Appendix B. Like the Greek god Hermaphrodite, Rueda’s Makandal is also an “androgynous father (Padre andrógino)” in “Metamorphosis”; named the “child-bearer of gods (paridor de dioses),” he is even instilled with the power to give birth to deities. He acquires more names and thus, power in the third stanza of “Initiation of Flight (Iniciación del vuelo).” Here, Makandal has power over women’s fertility. Thus, he plants and protects life. For the complete stanza in English and Spanish, see Appendix C.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 58, and 64.

<sup>85</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *El indio, el negro y la vida tradicional dominicana* (1978), 112. See also Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (University of California Press, 1995), 59. Deive describes the vodú version of Ezili as one of the most popular in the Dominican Republic. Similar to her counterpart in Vodou and to Anasia, Ezili’s symbol is the heart and she is described as “a woman of extraordinary beauty, flirtatious, sensual, recklessly extravagant and a lover of pleasure and luxury.” Ezili, in Haitian Vodou, manifests herself as Ezili Freda, who is also a “lady of luxury and love” associated with the Virgin Mary or the Mater Dolorosa. Vodú’s Ezili, as Deive asserts, is associated with the Virgen de la Dolorosa (Our Lady of Sorrows), Our Lady of Altagracia (the patron of Santo Domingo), and Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

briefly, Rueda transforms a woman into a leading protagonist in Hispaniola's story by bringing together a Dominican Vodou goddess and a Haitian Vodou goddess, connecting two Dominican Vodou deities, or highlighting a compound that on the surface seems to bring two entities together. On further investigation, Rueda's choice may in fact underscore the fusion of three goddesses possessing similar attributes.

Naming paradoxically works both to solidify and to make this figure ambiguous. The name Makandal-nadie (Makandal no-one), for example, defines a nameless maroon whose origins have not been told. Early on, naming establishes Makandal as an agent of change in Hispaniola's history. Rueda addresses Makandal directly: "He aquí tu historia, tu nombre hecho de nombres en los que siempre encontraremos todas la repuestas" (Here is your history, your name made of names in which we'll always discover all of the answers).<sup>86</sup> The phrase "your name made of names" alludes to Pedro Mir's *Tres leyendas de colores* (*Legends of Three Colors*) (1984), which retells Dominican history by comparing recorded information and national history.<sup>87</sup> In this text, Mir revisits the December 1521 Wolof rebellion. He notes that while the maroon remains anonymous in history, this anonymity marks him or her as part of a greater collectivity. He writes: "Not to have a name is to contain all names . . . Anonymity is a kind of sum total, collectivity, unanimity. To be no one is, at the same time, to be everyone. Anonymity is plural."<sup>88</sup>

From the beginning of Rueda's text, the reader senses not only Makandal's significance to the poet who has "trapped [the figure] in [his] notebooks," but to a greater collectivity, an

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<sup>86</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness* (CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, 2010), 36. Torres-Saillant refers to the Wolof uprising as the 1522 rebellion. A number of historians, including Carlos Esteban Deive, assert that the rebellion took place on December 25, 1521.

<sup>88</sup> Pedro Mir, *Tres leyendas de colores*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Santo Domingo: Taller, 2004), 199. Translation from Silvio Torres-Saillant's *Introduction to Dominican Blackness*, 51.

anonymous or unacknowledged mass in Hispaniola and, I will venture, specifically in the Dominican Republic.<sup>89</sup> Although Rueda uses the term *cimarrón* sparingly, he does choose a maroon leader as the protagonist of his book, and a protagonist whose presence dominates the work more than the poet's. This, coupled with the allusion to Mir's text, suggests that Rueda wants the reader to view the maroon as an agent of change in the island's story. In doing so, he gestures towards the Black Radical Tradition, for he calls upon a maroon synonymous with resistance and known to be a maker of collectives. In the second line of the invocation, Rueda writes: "Proteico como tus sonidos" (Protean like your sounds). The word *proteico* associates Makandal with Proteus, the sea divinity from Greek mythology who predicts the future and changes forms to avoid telling what he knows.<sup>90</sup> He is a God who eludes, tricks, and cannot be trusted. Like Proteus, Makandal is as an agent of change in Hispaniola's story because he has the power of a mass. He is a god who changes in appearance and nature. Much like a frog or salamander, he changes sex and color, and lives on land or in water.<sup>91</sup> He is envisioned as an "animal-hombre" (animal-man), a "bestia-caminante" (beast-walker), and an "hombre o fantasma" (man or ghost).<sup>92</sup> He is also represented as all-consuming, unpredictable, unruly, and even violent like the sea. A god who "can be two or more things simultaneously," he should be loved and feared.<sup>93</sup>

Rueda complicates Hispaniola's story with the use of colonial Spanish, Dominican Spanish, French, Latin, and indigenous terms. In the first movement of "Ritual Songs" (Cantos

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<sup>89</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 9.

<sup>90</sup> Morford, Mark P.O. and Robert J. Lenardon. *Poseidon, Sea Deities, Group Divinities, and Monsters. Classical Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 101.

<sup>91</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 60. Rueda describes the island as a "batrachian that believed it was an island ("batracio que se ha creído isla"). According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the term *batrachian* points to amphibians, yet it emphasizes frogs and salamanders rather than caecilians which are limbless, serpentine amphibians (large worms or slick snakes). The term *batrachian* is also synonymous with *proteus*.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., "animal-hombre," 91, 131; "bestia-caminante," 91; "hombre o fantasma, vivo o muerto," 181.

<sup>93</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 33

Rituales), he writes “Bon soir la société” (Good evening to all society), a phrase commonly said at the beginning of both Haitian Vodou and Dominican vodú rituals.<sup>94</sup> Scholars use the term vodú (or vudu) to underscore the similarities between Haitian Vodou and what is known as La Veintiuna División (Twenty-One Divisions) or Los Misterios in the Dominican Republic. Rueda’s use of the phrase “Bonsoir la société,” works to bridge these two “halves” of the island.<sup>95</sup> The line signals “Makandal’s flight.” More concretely, it signals how the ritual that unfolds within this book is the emergence of a new order comprised of the many forces at play within the island, including the hybridization of ideas and languages. For example, Rueda plays with the hierarchy assigned to ideas in “From Smallness and From Bigness” (De lo pequeño y de lo grande): “I was every word in a syllable” (Sílabas de la que fui toda palabra).<sup>96</sup> Here, the poet uses *toda*, which generally would have a feminine ending (*toda*), and suggests that the syllable actually encompasses what it composes. He takes this initial challenge one step further through neologisms. In the seventh stanza of the same poem, Rueda utilizes *Inmensación*, where the noun “immensity” is reimagined as a verb.<sup>97</sup> He writes: *Inmensación de lo pequeño/ hasta ser tú/ piedra rugiente en el borde del tiempo* (The *immensation* of the small/ even becoming you / bellowing rock in the border of time). Other examples of neologisms include: (1) *paridor*, a word created from *parida* (a woman who gives birth) and one that depicts Makandal as a male child-bearer of gods; and (2) *nacedor* (a male who is born), derived from *nacer* (to be born) and coupled with “unborn.”<sup>98</sup> These passages tell readers they are entering a world where the accepted rules of logic and language do not apply. Rueda bends the logic of grammar and syntax,

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<sup>94</sup> Martha Ellen Davis, “Vodú of the Dominican Republic: Devotion to “La Veintiuna División,”” *Afro-Hispanic Review* (2007), 75-77.

<sup>95</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 23 – 24.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 14. Prosdócimi de Rivera also cites this term in “En Manuel Rueda, Makandal llega a ser,” 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 53, 191. Rueda writes: “Tú no has nacido nunca, nacedor.” Makandal is both “a man who is born” and “an unborn man.”

of received notions and ideas, of roles and forms. This manipulation of colonial and contemporary words to create a new syntax and grammar, as well as his representation of multiple languages highlight the tension between an old order and a new order, between colonialism and modernity, between colonial Spanish and a language more rooted in Hispaniola, and between a divided island and one he conceptualizes as united. In the same instance, the poet underscores the limits of these binaries and the need to move beyond them.

The exclamation “Bonsoir la société” reinforces a bridge between the D.R. and Haiti, between Vodou and vodú (La Vientiuna División or Los Misterios). It marks the beginning of a new order and a reimagining of the island’s story that acknowledges the presence of both Vodou and vodú (La Vientiuna División or Los Misterios). This reimagining invokes the power dynamics of colonizer versus colonized, enslaver versus enslaved, civilization versus barbarism, the city versus the country. Rueda also acknowledges the similarities between the two religions through the naming of spirits and deities. He includes biblical allusions in his text, but his presentation of Haitian Vodou and Dominican vodú spirits is more overt. He includes the following deities found in Vodou and vodú: Agüé-taroyo, also known as Agwe-Tawoyo or Admiral Agwe; Anaïsa, also known as Anaïsa Pye, Anaïsa Pie Danto or Saint Anne; Atibón-Legba, also known as Legba, Papa Legba, Saint Antonio, Saint Lazaro, or Saint Pedro); Damballah-wedo; and Sedifé, also known as Candelo, Papa Candelo o Candelo Sedife).<sup>99</sup> The poet avoids the Catholic names of these deities, thus underscoring Makandal’s close ties to Vodou, vodú, and other religions integral to the Black Radical Tradition. He also invokes these

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<sup>99</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*: Agüé-taroyo (Agwe-Tawoyo or Admiral Agwe) (126); Anaïsa (Anaïsa Pye, Anaïsa Pie Danto or Saint Anne) (27-31, 46, 130); Atibón-Legba (Legba, Papa Legba, or Saint Antonio, Saint Lazaro, or Saint Pedro) (129); Damballah-wedo (95, 118); Sedifé (Candelo, Papa Candelo o Candelo Sedife)(28).

deities openly in a country where many feel the need to practice vodú or La Vientiuna División clandestinely.<sup>100</sup>

Rueda's treatment of religious elements is one way he revises the island's story. He also collapses moments in history as he explores the maroon's place in the past and in the present day. The second section, "Makandal en la hoguera" (Makandal at the Stake), maps the young figure's experience through the Middle Passage to Hispaniola: "Makandal [,] black in the belly of [a] white whale/ shackled young grasshopper / that peeks out at the ship's portholes / with nostalgia for his leather shield / and his spear / where lived the obedient blazes / of the drum and of the water."<sup>101</sup> Rueda envisions Makandal within a whale's belly, drawing an allusion to Jonah from the Hebrew Bible and underscoring the maroon's survival, figurative resurrection, and role as a prophet, or even a divine-being in the making. The image of an enslaved protagonist is contrasted with a Makandal who "roars." Again, the maroon acquires names: he is envisioned as a god carried in a "slave ship," and "chained by the wind and waves." As this ship continues on its course and unknown lands amass, he becomes known as the *príncipe arada* (arada prince),

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<sup>100</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *El indio, el negro, y la vida tradicional dominicana*, (Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1978), 85-117. See also: Martha Ellen Davis, "A Tire Blowout Gives Entry into the World of Spiritism," *The Dominican Republic Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Duke University Press, 2014), 407; and Martha Ellen Davis, "Vodú of the Dominican Republic: Devotion to "La Veintiuna División," *Afro-Hispanic Review* (2007), 75-90. See also: Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz, et. al. *Religiosidad Popular Dominicana Y Psiquiatría*. 2 ed. (Rep. Dominicana, 1995), 49. The ethnomusicologist and expert on Dominican popular religion, Martha Ellen Davis affirms this simplification Carlos Esteban Deive, a Hispanic-Dominican anthropologist and leading historian, argues: "Vodú is practiced all across the Dominican geography . . . Typologically, [it] has, in general, the same basic grouping of elements as in Haitian Vodou, but . . . degraded and less complex." Deive is responding to historians who have "systematically negated the existence of vodú in Santo Domingo." This negation is premised on the belief that vodú only exists in bateyes and rural or border areas, and primarily is practiced by Haitian laborers and immigrants. Vodú is labeled a "barbaric and nefarious cult" that conflicts with the nation's Catholic-Hispanic heritage. Drawing from sociology, psychiatry, and popular religion, Dagoberto Tejeda Ortiz and others claim that while "freedom of religion" is said to exist in the D.R., "vodú is not legally permitted" or openly acknowledged. They argue that as a result "vodú has had to be simplified, symbolized and "coded" to the fullest. To survive, it has had to incorporate many elements of legitimacy[.] In addition to Catholic elements, it has incorporated some European spiritualism, Eastern philosophy, Cuban Santería, Venezuelan popular religiosity, and the Taíno culture."

<sup>101</sup> Original stanza: Makandal negro en el vientre de su ballena blanca/ joven saltamontes aherrojado/que atisba asomado a las claraboyas de la nave / con la nostalgia de su escudo de cuero / y de su lanza/ donde vivían los resplandores obedientes/ del tambor y del agua (121).

*joven guerrero* (young warrior), and *joven caimán* (young caiman).<sup>102</sup> By the end of this section, “the island rises” and the reader is confronted by the “cane and molasses boiling in the sugar mill . . . mined coasts, the sweet coasts.” Rueda revisits the middle passage to construct a history that revisits colonial legacies, and new forms of corruption that are readily illustrated in “Himno” (Anthem):

<p>Below bateyes<sup>103</sup> of blacks smeared with molasses  the cane bent like a whip  in the foreman’s hands  and skirmish bawling  <span style="padding-left: 100px;">OUE OH OH</span>  rising in painful spirals  black brute pain rooted in its own  ravings.</p>	<p>Abajo los bateyes de negros untados con melaza  la caña doblada como un foete en las manos  del capataz  y la escaramuza del voceo  <span style="padding-left: 100px;">OUE OH OH</span>  que sube en espirales de dolor  dolor de bestia negra anclada en sus propios  desvaríos.</p>
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The poet meditates on the condition of the Haitian bracero or laborer working on Dominican sugar estates. He aligns the bracero’s condition to slavery by repeating the image of sugar; by likening the cane to “a whip” by making a parallel between the foreman and an overseer; and by emphasizing the intensity of pain. Bringing the reader out of a colonial era and into the present, the stanza illustrates “two diametrically opposed representations of reality: slavery and free-wage labor.”<sup>104</sup> Both of these representations are present through Rueda’s parallel.

In addition to constructing a history that revisits colonial legacies, Rueda also defines a “New History” that underscores the maroon’s place in the present day. In the poem, “El gran desfile” (The Great Parade), Rueda equates the image of the rat with the paradigmatic Dominican politician: “la rata de bicornio” (the rat with a bicorn) is likely the Dominican

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<sup>102</sup> Rueda, *Las Metamorfosis de Makandal*, 122-123. Note: Arada was an African kingdom on the Ivory Coast (Guinea), targeted by slave traders.

<sup>103</sup> Cane-cutters’ compounds. See Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 14.

<sup>104</sup> See Samuel Martínez, *Peripheral Migrants* (University of Tennessee Press, 1995), xiii.

dictator Rafael Trujillo, and “la rata ciega” (the blind rat) his successor, Joaquin Balaguer.<sup>105</sup> Both political figures promoted a false, “uniformly conceived national identity.”<sup>106</sup> They also epitomize Santo Domingo’s systemic corruption in contrast to the honesty of the idealized border towns.<sup>107</sup> The contrast reflects the border communities’ distance from and deep distrust of the government and other forces from the capital.<sup>108</sup> This distrust was deepened in 1937 when the Trujillo regime destroyed the bicultural and transnational communities at the border.<sup>109</sup> *Ratas* are not only found in a place like Santo Domingo, but also in Washington D.C.: “Decorated Rats / discoursing in Washington / with lachrymal pathos / after coveting sugar quotas / which later will become delicious / gruyère cheeses/ in whose interior they will live satiated and happy / writing up speeches and proclamations / that will be our Peace.”<sup>110</sup> Their reference to the U.S. capital highlights the United States’s role in transforming the Haitian-Dominican border (and the D.R.) through its collaboration with the “rats.”<sup>111</sup> The rats are also individuals working with politicians and in the service of U.S. forces that help perpetuate corruption and inequality. Ironically, the *lacayo* (footmen or servant) becomes an *amo* (a master) via demagoguery, possessing power dependent on an “umbilical cord with the empire.”<sup>112</sup> These rats fight amongst themselves because they will always want to eat, competing to be “the true rat.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> See Rodríguez, *Divergent Dictions* (2011), 106. See also Fumagalli, *On the Edge*, 237. In a conversation with María del Carmen Prosdociami de Rivera on June 15, 2016, the scholar confirmed this identification. Noting that the “rat with a bicorn,” a representation of Trujillo, is a repeated image in Rueda’s poetry.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>107</sup> Fumagalli, *On the Edge*, 237.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed,” 593-594. Turits says that El Corte or Kout Kouto was an assault on the “bicultural and transnational” community composed of both Haitians and Dominicans. Oral histories suggest that Dominicans in the contact zone were indifferent to *dominicanidad* as it was defined in the capital and major cities.

<sup>110</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 93-94.

<sup>111</sup> Fernando Cabrera, “Nueva producción de Manuel Rueda permite a la vez apreciar las transformaciones del héroe haitiano y del poeta dominicano,” *El Caribe* (1998), 7. Fumagalli, *On the Edge*, 237.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* Cabrera is referencing pages 93, 96, and 97 of “El gran desfile” (The Great Parade).

<sup>113</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 96.

The poem, “El gran desfile” (The Great Parade), denotes performance, a charade associated with political corruption and moral degradation. This performance is not only enacted in the D.R. but also in Haiti. The seventh stanza of “Canto de amor” (Love Song) references Citadelle Henry Christophe (Citadelle Laferrière), Limonade (Limonad, a municipality in the Cap-Haïtien Arrondissement), and Christopher Columbus.<sup>114</sup> The cortejo (procession) includes “the orangutans of rhythm” who “pant” (jadean) and “sniff white powders of crazed moons” (sorbiendo polvo blanco de lunas de locura) as the minuet is replaced by rock-and-roll and Columbus walks upon a rug of “prostrated rears” (traseros prosternados).<sup>115</sup> In *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, the poem “Farsa” (Farce), follows “El gran desfile.” It has images of degradation under the umbrella of “new History” and its synonym, “Business”: child-trafficking, narcotics, clandestine bank transactions, and “pistol shots in the avenues overlooking the sea.”<sup>116</sup>

Rueda incorporates sarcastic and satirical imagery in “El gran desfile,” and in “Canto de amor” (Love Song). His imagery is symbolic of decadence, perversion, and hypocrisy. However, the poet also incorporates images invoking beauty, for among these threats lies something akin to hope and love. For example, in “Canto de amor” (Love Song), the goddess Anaisa emerges and is affectionately called “my flamingo” (flamenca mía) by Makandal.<sup>117</sup> In the movement between History and new History, the reader comes in contact with what Rivera de Prosdocimi calls “the borderline between the real and the ethical.”<sup>118</sup> She reminds readers that Rueda’s “playfulness” heightens the reader’s awareness of ethics and limits. She writes: “In this multiple text, Rueda returns to Pluralism, not only in the numerous references but the imagined... the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 30. Note: Carpentier references Limonade at the end of “Las cabezas de cera (The Wax Heads).”

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 100. Rueda writes: Porque la nueva Historia es el Comercio/y el tráfico de niños/ y los estupefacientes/y las transacciones bancarias realizadas /por los enmascarados a medianoche/y los pistoletazos en las avenidas que dan a mar.” Fumagalli refers to this stanza in *On the Edge*, 236.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>118</sup> Prosdocimi de Rivera “En Manuel Rueda, Makandal llega a ser,” Col. 1 P.3.

playfulness in sound and satire... corrosive mockery... the presence of an animal dance in a gargantuan zoo.”<sup>119</sup> Rueda names his book “the book of frontiers,” and describes it as “the obverse and reverse of a crazed geography.”<sup>120</sup> In doing so, he defines the island as an island of opposites and multiplicity, and an island that can counter corruption. Through pluralismo, Rueda moves from heightening the reader’s awareness of borders to breaking these frontiers and offering a previously unimagined “memory.”<sup>121</sup>

Part of Rueda’s agenda is to encourage the reader to approach the island and its history in innovative and unconventional ways through the figure of Makandal. Although the metaphor of marassa or twinning is a useful way to see how the D.R. and Haiti are tied to one another, it still risks reducing this relationship to a binary perpetuating the fatal-conflict model. Rueda is aware of binaries and their limitations. In the poem “Cantos Rituales,” the poet offers a vision of Hispaniola’s two halves, and then undoes this image: “Estar en las dos orillas del camino como / los jimaguas que entienden la vida aproximan- /do sus mitades al gran sexo andrógino de /Dios” (To be on both sides of the road like / the twins who understand life / bringing their halves closer to the great androgynous sex of / God).<sup>122</sup> The poet invokes Hispaniola’s two halves through the image of the twins straddling a road . Yet, he brings them together through the figure of a god who encapsulates a binary but does not maintain these two elements separate.

In “Cantos Rituales,” the reader traces the maroon’s flight across an island not so easily divided in halves. Readers witness Makandal “crossing the polychrome ray from north to south / and from east to west raised in the altars/ of twilight (De norte a sur cruza el rayo polícromo / de

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Col. 1 P. 3

<sup>120</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 10. “Libro de las fronteras es esté, anverso y reverso ...”

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 24

este a oeste alzado en los altares / del crepúsculo).”<sup>123</sup> We are reminded of *la raya* (the line) solidified by the 1937 Massacre. The poet gives us a sense of a “whole island” by tracing the maroon’s crisscross movement.<sup>124</sup> Beyond *la raya* are the borders between mortality and immortality, earth and sky, day and night. Rueda lends more meaning to Makandal’s movements by envisioning him within a sacred place and during twilight, a moment of semi-darkness where the terrain and its markings are not clearly defined. Even in the text’s third movement, “Makandal en la hoguera (Makandal at the Stake),” Rueda offers a binary, only to undo it. In one instance Hispaniola is “la tierra dos” (the two-earth). In another instance, the poet declares: “La tierra es una y no dos / Makandal es uno y no dos” (the land is one and not two / Makandal is one and not two).<sup>125</sup> The move between duality and wholeness, a separation and a bringing together, illustrates a divided island and a whole island, an Hispaniola that has been defined and an island in the making. At the very least, the island is envisioned within a loop of evolution and reversion. Like his island, Makandal never becomes fixed to one single storyline or even to *la raya*.

Through imagery and word choice, the maroon represents Hispaniola’s two halves. Rueda says that “This is the book of frontiers” (*Libro de las fronteras es esté*).<sup>126</sup> with this declaration, he establishes *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* as a text of beginning and end, border and boundary, barrier and horizon, a place where a maroon emerges as a guaraguao bird or animal herd, god or goddess, or the all-consuming ocean. The poet cites two cities to recall the border: Dajabón and Juana Mendez (or Ouanaminthe).<sup>127</sup> Rueda highlights these northern border towns because they are closer to Makandal’s “origin,” the place where he launched “the great

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 126.

fear.”<sup>128</sup> These towns are also in the northwestern region that was targeted during the 1937 Massacre. Haitian and Haitian-Dominicans were targeted in the Cibao Region as well.<sup>129</sup> If the use of proper nouns is one way Rueda maps the border, he draws an incomplete *raya*.<sup>130</sup>

Although Rueda alludes to “la línea,” the terms “frontera” (border) and “fronteras” (borders) appear sparingly in the text. The minimal appearance of these words contrasts the repetition of “tierra” (earth or land) throughout the text.<sup>131</sup> This border becomes located within and is undone by the maroon figure. Makandal-as-god is defined as the “Spirit of the two lands and four seas” and becomes an amalgam of these geographies.<sup>132</sup> In “From the Small and From the Big (De lo pequeño y de lo grande),” the term “pequeñez” (smallness) is a figurative representation of the island:

I am the smallness.  
I am the largeness your hands recognize.  
Jungle that satiates my appetites,  
and the stimulus of my tired lips...

Yo soy la pequeñez.  
Yo soy lo grande que tus manos conocen.  
Selva que saciará mis apetitos  
Y estímulo de mis labios cansados...

I am the man of the islands:  
smallness  
upon smallness  
sky upon head  
with its thousand wings  
and all of its stars in sight.  
Navigator  
with maps and compass to maneuver  
lacerated oceans in this smallness  
liberated in this smallness of land that is

Yo soy el hombre de las islas:  
pequeñez  
sobre pequeñez  
cielo sobre la cabeza  
con su millar de alas  
y todas sus estrellas a la vista.  
Hombre de las navegaciones  
con los mapas y la aguja de marear  
océanos lacerados en esta pequeñez  
liberados en esta pequeñez de tierra

<sup>128</sup> Cabrera, “Nueva producción de Manuel Rueda permite,” *El Caribe*, 6. Jimaní is on the Dominican side of the border; Malpasse is on the Haitian side. South of the island, these towns make up the Malpasse-Jimaní border. In *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, Eugenio Matibag notes that Trujillo and Duvalier signed a transborder agreement in Malpasse on December 22, 1958; they agreed to defend one another against “external aggressions” (155). In 1991, the D.R.’s government closed access to Jimaní (199).

<sup>129</sup> Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed,” 589.

<sup>130</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 109, 181. See also: Richard Lee Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed,” 590n1.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, “la línea,” 125; “fronteras,” 91. ; “frontera,” 212;

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

shared  
and unknown seas.<sup>133</sup>

compartida  
y de mares ignotos.

Makandal speaks in this poem, and his declaration (“I am the man of the islands”) associates him with the greater Antilles. More concretely, the repetition of “pequeñez” establishes him as synonymous with all of Hispaniola. The maroon as a representation of two nations is reinforced in “Initiation of Flight” (Iniciación del vuelo), where Makandal is depicted as split by the island’s two countries: “Man in halves of land and sea” (Hombre en mitades de tierra y mar).<sup>134</sup> Although the maroon is called the *milagroso rayano* (miraculous border-dweller), he is also the embodiment of two countries, and one island. Makandal, *Dios de alas grandes* (great-winged God) appears in the following way: “Pájaro negro dentro de cuyas alas la isla / asciende” (black bird within wings the island / rises).<sup>135</sup> Like a *syllable* encompassing a *word*, the great-winged God encompasses the island. Within Makandal’s wings, once symbolic of Hispaniola’s halves, the island as a whole rises, moving towards an “oneiric space.”<sup>136</sup> In collapsing these images rather than presenting them as fragmented, Rueda magnifies Makandal’s role as a unifier, a figure to be embraced by those who inhabit the island.

The Dominican Republic’s and Haiti’s shared heritage of maroon, and an African heritage, is a radical move in the book, and one that counters the fatal-conflict narrative. In

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 17-18. See also Rueda’s, “La canción del rayano (The Rayano’s Song),” in *La criatura terrestre (The Land-Being)* (1963).

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 43. The imagery of the island as a bird, or viceversa is presented in this text. Yet, Rueda developed this image in an earlier poem “Cantos de la frontera” (Songs from the Border), which appeared in his 1963 collection *La criatura terrestre (The Land-Being)*. In the second stanza of “Cantos de la frontera,” Rueda writes: “Al pájaro que cante de este lado/ uno del lado opuesto tal vez respondería/Pero esta es la frontera/ y hasta los pájaros se abstienen de conspirar/mezclando sus endechas.” As noted, this poem appears in *La criatura terrestre (The Land-Being)* (1963). Importantly, on September 27, 1991, Former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide addressed the United Nations General Assembly, and invoked this image of Hispaniola as a bird. Decrying the “brutal campaign of repatriations” in the D.R., he implored that each country respect its neighbor, describing Haiti and the D.R. as “two wings of the same bird, two nations that share the beautiful island of Hispaniola.” See Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 187; and Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution*, 116.

<sup>136</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 180. See footnote 81.

Rueda's imagination Makandal is transformed into a figure of modernity with the capacity to embody the island. The poet imagines a new collectivity, a whole island taking its roots in West Africa. Rueda conjures up images and sounds associated with an African and (to a lesser extent) Taíno ancestry.

Makandal as a symbol for the island has been interrogated by Fernando Cabrera, María del Carmen Prosdocimi de Rivera, Néstor E. Rodríguez, and Christina Maria Fumagalli. Cabrera asserts that Rueda's text magnifies a larger "insular collective," and "[ties] the old, French colony, Haiti, with la española, Quisqueya."<sup>137</sup> Even in his article title, Cabrera acknowledges that Rueda's work magnifies a historical figure who is remembered and depicted as a "Haitian Hero"—a figure who has not been mythologized or actively considered part of Dominican history. According to Cabrera, the maroon remains in a mythical realm, generating "uncultivated hopes" in those who remember him, and becoming the poet who investigates a utopic vision of "all that must be...and that has not been."<sup>138</sup> In contrast, Rivera de Prosdocimi argues that Makandal becomes a symbol of breath, wind, and shadow, as well as a memory that unites "two borders of one island."<sup>139</sup> Both the historic and mythic Makandal appear in Rueda's text, but she asserts: "There is another Makandal *cuco* [ghost-like or boogiemán], a being [surrounded by] rumors, the unknown, [a] realm of elusiveness and darkness, [a] terrain alluding to a divided but single island. Ultimately, that is the Makandal of this song [(or text)], of one land that rises above men and the poet."<sup>140</sup> For Prosdocimi a childlike fascination, thrill, and even fear of the unknown drives the poet to try to capture the elusive Makandal. While the maroon represents the island and unknown, he is also a symbol for what could be, what lies within the unfamiliar, unexplored,

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<sup>137</sup> Cabrera, "Nueva producción de Manuel Rueda permite" Col. 2. P. 6, and Col. 4 P. 7.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 6-7. See also Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 214.

<sup>139</sup> Prosdocimi de Rivera "En Manuel Rueda, Makandal llega a ser," Col. 1 P.3, and Col. 2. P.3.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., Col. 2 P. 3.

and even unimagined. Rodríguez adds “utopia is not limited to the symbol of the island. Rather, its central feature is not geographical but consists of the subversion of nationalist teachings.”<sup>141</sup> He discusses Rueda’s utopia “as opening up a different space or alternate model.”<sup>142</sup> Resistance manifests itself as the creation of a new space for the telling of a new or different version of the island’s story. For Rodríguez, Makandal represents interdependence. Christina María Fumagalli makes a similar argument, and echoes previous assertions affirming Makandal as a symbol for the island and of interdependence. Like Rivera Prosdocimi, she focuses on Makandal *cuco*, the border being from the poet’s childhood. She argues: “Rueda firmly anchors ‘the hero of his fantasies’ to the raya when he recalls how he encountered Makandal as a child . . . In other words, Makandal, the ‘wandering bird / of the two fatherlands’ embodies the possibility of restarting the conversation between the birds from the two sides of the River Artibonite.”<sup>143</sup> Fumagalli emphasizes the idea of interdependence, or what she calls “inter-island and intra-island openness” that “celebrates and gains strength from marine and across-the-border continuities, connections, mutual influences, and shared – if disavowed – empowering memories and experiences.”<sup>144</sup> However, she points out that *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* does not propose political unification of the island.

Rueda never firmly anchors Makandal to la raya, nor is the maroon just a “wandering” figure. Rather, Makandal moves into, out of, and between binaries and spaces. He is also constantly “in construction or collapsing.”<sup>145</sup> The “wandering” maroon mutates. He acquires names and a nature marked by multiplicity, and moves from place to place, never settling in any one part of his island. Makandal becomes synonymous with Hispaniola as early as the second

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<sup>141</sup> Rodríguez, *Divergent Dictions*, 107-108.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>143</sup> Fumagalli, *On the Edge*, 238.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 235, 238, 242.

<sup>145</sup> Rodríguez, *Divergent Dictions*, 103.

paragraph within the text,. This is also a figure who settles on land, and who finds a sense of home in the sky, wind, and sea (the forces of nature), and within the poet's imagination. Notably, Rueda never explicitly identifies "Haiti" or "the Dominican Republic," encouraging us to think outside of these two spaces.

Even the poet's limited use of or reference to "la raya," "frontera," or "fronteras" is another gesture encouraging us to think beyond the binary of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Although a border can reveal sameness, a border is also a limit utilized to "circumscribe two entities . . . maintain the difference of cultures, of national identities . . . give to us the place of the other . . . corral the other"; it is a locus of cultural homogeneity, if one does not "step from home."<sup>146</sup> Rueda applies pluralismo conceptually, and envisions a protean god as moving between and out of dualities. Makandal is anonymous and also named, and he possesses multidimensionality like a god or person. The poet 'steps away from home,' the D.R. to reconstructs the island's story, and include a tradition of African resistance. Pluralismo can be considered part of the Black Radical Tradition in the way it has not only affirmed the existence of black resistance, but creates or acknowledges a suppressed history in the D.R. and a collectivity connected to, influenced by, and inspired by Makandal. The poet moves beyond his initial intentions in the poem "Cantos de la frontera" (Songs from the Border or Border Songs) from *La criatura terrestre (The Land-Being)* (1963). Rueda's Makandal does not "embod[y] the possibility of restarting the conversation between the birds from the two sides of the River Artibonite," as Fumagalli asserts.<sup>147</sup> Rather, the poet approaches *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, as though conversation between the two birds had already taken place in subversive and unacknowledged ways.

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<sup>146</sup> David E. Johnson, "The Time of Translation: The Border of American Literature," *Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 132, 134.

<sup>147</sup> Fumagalli, *On the Edge*, 238.

In all the aforementioned texts examined in this chapter, the maroon has a mythical status in the way he fulfills the roles of a prophet and messiah, manipulates his physical form, and cheats death through his metamorphoses. The maroon appears and disappears, defies natural and unnatural forces, and ultimately, escapes colonial persecutors. He also escapes his previous forms as he is reimagined by writers. The fact that Makandal still has followers in the form of writers who write him and readers who read him underscores the importance his story to Hispaniola.. Yes, writers romanticize Makandal. But they do so in a way that moves beyond simple notions of “resistance.” Literature illustrates a complex Makandal who cannot be reduced solely to a “hero” or “warrior.” He is a figure who disrupts the fatal-conflict narrative, but more importantly whose qualities and contradictions mirror the island and its inhabitants.

## Chapter 2: The Role of Invention in the Black Radical Tradition: Boukman Dutty, Zamba Boukman

More famous in Hispaniola history than the shapeshifter François Makandal is the revolutionary leader Boukman Dutty, who played a pivotal role in the 1791 Bois-Caïman (Cayman Wood) ceremony. The ceremony set off a chain of events that led to the Haitian Revolution and the forming of the second independent nation in the Americas.<sup>1</sup> Historical evidence suggests that Boukman was “chronically maroon”; he had been caught and sold a number of times prior to his enslavement under Monsieur Clément.<sup>2</sup> Boukman’s experience as a commandeur and a coachman on the Clément plantation enabled him to network with slaves in different plantations and to follow the colony’s day-to-day “political developments.”<sup>3</sup> Boukman was also a houngan (or priest) whose considerable influence over his followers earned him the name “Zamba” Boukman.<sup>4</sup> He was said to be a towering man, and his height was judged as evidence of his mental strength and strong leadership ability.<sup>5</sup> The maroon’s speech at the Bois-Caïman ceremony, and the subsequent revolt, reverberated throughout Hispaniola. Notably, Dominican blacks rebelled in the Nigua plantation and in Guarico after news of the rebellion stretched across the island.<sup>6</sup>

The Haitian Revolution is not usually called a maroon war because it is understood within the context of revolution. However, according to Carolyn E. Fick, “all armed slave

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<sup>1</sup> David Barry Gaspar and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Afterword,” *Babouk* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991) 191-193. Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 29, 46, 47. Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1989), 197, 199.

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 92-94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* See also H. Pauléus Sannon, *Histoire de Toussaint L’Ouverture* (1920). Sannon blends fiction and legend

<sup>5</sup> Gaspar and Trouillot, “Afterword,” *Babouk*, 192.

<sup>6</sup> Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 64.

rebellion necessarily takes on a maroon dimension.”<sup>7</sup> In the 1791 revolt, many slaves became maroons when they fled. These individuals often evolved from deserters into armed rebels and freedom fighters. Their development was rapid and to different degrees because of collective rebellion, and because of the major social and political shifts at the time. Evidence suggests marronage was increasing before 1791. Prior to the 1791 revolt, a 1776 treaty between the colonies had attempted to demarcate a border. Pyramid-like markers were erected in August of that year but were breached almost immediately.<sup>8</sup> Maroons often sought refuge in east Hispaniola and the southern mountain range, and arms were trafficked back and forth. A 1767 extract from the register of the Upper Council of Le Cap states: “The slave . . . inconstant by nature and capable of comparing his present state with that to which he aspires, is incessantly inclined toward marronage. It is his ability to think, and not the instinct of domestic animals who flee a cruel master in the hope of bettering their condition, that compels him to flee.”<sup>9</sup> Wherever there has been slavery, there has been flight. In the context of Hispaniola, marronage was not only perceived as an individual’s desire for freedom, but also as a powerful desire and act capable of destroying the colonies.<sup>10</sup>

The 1791 Haitian revolt is rarely discussed as part of Dominican history, but the event and its participants, including Boukman, profoundly impacted the country. In the making of the first black republic, the leaders of the Haitian Revolution were forced to wrestle with the demands and desires of individuals in both French-speaking and Spanish-speaking Hispaniola.<sup>11</sup> Haitians pushed to unify the island under a single sovereign government. Their efforts met mixed

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<sup>7</sup> Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 74, 106, 107.

<sup>8</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 58-59.

<sup>9</sup> Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 50 – 53.

<sup>10</sup> Scholars studying marronage tend to focus on marronage in Haiti, rather than marronage across Hispaniola. See Appendix A for more information on “Cimarrones in Eastern Hispaniola.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 52 – 53.

reaction in Spanish Hispaniola. Historian Eugenio Matibag argues: “Anti-colonial revolution bound the two nations together...Although loyalist reaction, anti-Haitian sentiment, and competing drives toward independence did their part to disrupt the unitarian current.”<sup>12</sup> The Haitian Revolution put the leader Toussaint L’Ouverture in a position to garner enough power to unify the island in 1801.<sup>13</sup> He abolished slavery in the Dominican Republic, “eliminated racial privileges,” “restructured the colonial economy,” and generated prosperity.<sup>14</sup> These advancements were shortlived, though. In 1802, with the rise of Napoleon, the French army invaded Santo Domingo and reinstated slavery. Toussaint’s army retreated, maintaining control only in the west. However, the Revolution left a paradigm of social justice that would replicate itself in local movements for racial equality and justice.<sup>15</sup>

French rule over eastern Hispaniola lasted until the War of Reconquest (1809) reestablished Spanish rule.<sup>16</sup> With support from the Spanish governor of Puerto Rico, a small group of landowning creoles drove French forces out of the D.R. and ceded authority to Spanish rule. However, a portion of the population challenged the choice to submit to Spain because of Spain’s refusal to abolish slavery. In 1812 a group of Afro-descendants, some enslaved and others free, organized a plot to restore Haitian authority.<sup>17</sup> The plot was thwarted, and the dead bodies of the rebels were dragged through the streets. In 1821 a “pro-Haitian party” declared independence from Spain and requested the “protection of Haitian laws,” only weeks after Núñez

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<sup>12</sup> Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint : Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 53-54.

<sup>13</sup> Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness* (Dominican Studies Institute: Research Monograph, 2010), 1 – 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* This is but one of Toussaint’s legacies. For more views on Toussaint: Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1990); C.L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989); and Édouard Glissant, *Monsieur Toussaint: A Play*, trans. Michael J. Dash (Lynne Rienner, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* See also Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 94; David Howard, *Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic* (Oxford: Signal Books and Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 27.

de Caceres had proclaimed the independent state of “Haití Español.”<sup>18</sup> Faced with the choice between Spain, its former colonizer, and Haiti, whose government had abolished slavery, Dominicans had a “double attitude” towards unification with their western neighbor.<sup>19</sup> But a significant portion of the Dominican population viewed Spain as its former colonizer and oppressor.<sup>20</sup> Hispaniola became a unified island once again in 1822 under President Jean Pierre Boyer. Boyer abolished slavery, despite opposition from the creole elite.

Revisionist histories portray the unification period as an “invasion” or “occupation” of the Dominican Republic by Haiti, but the unification of the island created more opportunities for commercial and cultural exchanges between Hispaniola citizens. Although the population in the east was deeply divided over the question of unification, Haiti was viewed as the “lesser of two evils” by most of the population, with the exception of a small minority of Catholic clergy and white landowners.<sup>21</sup> During most of the unification period, Boyer’s administration held power with the aid of Spanish-speaking black, mulatto, and white soldiers of eastern Hispaniola, not with its own troops. It was not until the Boyer administration tried to make French the language of education and government that the Spanish-speaking population of the Dominican Republic began to grow restless with Haitian rule. Discontent among the Spanish-speaking population increased after 1836 “when a major global economic downturn made the weight of taxes imposed by the Haitian government seem less bearable to the residents.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. See also: Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 94-96; Samuel Martinez, “Not a Cockfight: Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations,” *Latin American Perspectives* (2003), 85; Franklin J. Franco, *Historia del pueblo dominicano*, 2nd edition (Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1993), 176-177.

<sup>19</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 11. Matibag is referencing Jean Price-Mars, *La République d’Haïti et la République Dominicaine. Les aspects divers d’un problème d’histoire, de géographie et d’ethnologie*, V.1 (Port-au-Prince: Collection du Tricinquanteaire de l’Indépendance d’Haïti, 1953), 165.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel Martinez, “Not a Cockfight: Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations,” 85 – 87. See also Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 94-104; Franklin J. Franco, *Historia del pueblo dominicano*, 2nd edition (Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1993), 181-186

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 86.

Chapter 2 analyzes narratives championing Boukman and considers his impact on Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. The chapter revisits *The Black Jacobins*, and *The Kingdom of This World*, but its main focus is on Guy Endore's 1934 novel *Babouk*. This narrative dares to reimagine the maroon figure, his experiences, his forms of resistance, and his relationship to the island. Endore's *Babouk* particularizes Boukman by developing his character beyond the confines of the Bois-Caïman ceremony, and by offering views of a borderless island. Boukman as maroon does not undergo dramatic metamorphoses into different animals, like Makandal. Instead, he undergoes an internal transformation. Boukman is made into a change agent in the way he practices invention, crafts stories, acquires language, and constructs words once unknown to him. Boukman linguistic invention makes him a maroon figure and places him in the Black Radical Tradition. The maroon is able to cultivate a revolutionary consciousness among the enslaved masses, to build abolitionist coalitions across the island, and to practice self-affirmation and self-assertion.

### *A Mighty Voice*

In both C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938), and Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World* (1949), Boukman is tied to the Bois-Caïman ceremony. In these texts, he appears briefly as a participant in the ceremony and as a captured leader who is executed. His disappearance marks the emergence of a new and emerging leader. James gives Makandal and Boukman more or less equal presence in the text and marks them both as great revolutionary leaders. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, Carpentier devotes a significant portion of his text to developing the shapeshifter Makandal, but Boukman does appear in the chapter "The Solemn Pact." The lack of details surrounding this maroon does not suggest one leader was more effective than the other. Rather, James and Carpentier gave him

limited space because they were grappling with the scarce archival materials that mention Boukman, as well as the fact that Boukman has been less mythologized than his predecessor. Nevertheless, both writers place Boukman within the Black Radical Tradition by invoking the Bois-Caïman ceremony as part of the Haitian Revolution.

James magnifies Boukman as a *papa-loi* and leader of “gigantic” size who was instrumental to the 1791 revolt, and who built upon Makandal’s rebellion. In the chapter “The San Domingo Masses Begin,” he writes: “They had travelled a long, long way since the grandiose poisoning schemes of Mackandal.”<sup>23</sup> Although the 1757 Great Fear is represented as a failed and a “isolated effort,” James acknowledges its contribution to the “organized mass movement” of 1791. Almost in the same breath, James defines Boukman as “the first [among] a line of great leaders whom the slaves were to throw up in such profusion.”<sup>24</sup> He depicts the maroon as a particularly skillful and influential leader, one who perhaps is savvier than his predecessor. Boukman is framed as a rebel and domestic enemy helping to plan the 1791 revolt from within the plantation system as a “headman [who follows] the political situation both among the whites and among the Mulattoes.”<sup>25</sup> The rebel’s position gives him access to information about the master that he can relay to his coconspirators and use to carry out the rebellion. Where Makandal’s agency originates from his knowledge of plants and herbs, his ability to transform into animals, or (in one song) his close proximity to leaders, Boukman’s power is tied to his position within the plantation system and his ability to hide among his enemies. However, the starkest contrast between James’s Makandal and his Boukman is how the writer aligns one with Islam, and the other with Vodou.

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<sup>23</sup> C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 86.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

For James, Boukman is synonymous with Vodou, the “medium of the conspiracy.”<sup>26</sup> Vodou has the ability to bring the enslaved together “to sing and dance and practice the rites and talk . . . and hear the political news and make their plans.”<sup>27</sup> The priestess Fatiman does not appear in James’s telling of the Bois-Caïman ceremony. Instead the houngan Zamba Boukman takes center stage. He is depicted as a great orator who rouses his followers with his oratorical powers. According to James, the rebellion begins on the heels of Boukman’s words. In becoming synonymous with Vodou, Boukman becomes synonymous with resistance. Vodou enables the houngan to translate the desires of his followers into “material force.”<sup>28</sup> James identifies Boukman and his followers as a “modern proletariat,” an organized collective prepared to strike.<sup>29</sup>

The tone of James’s narrative shifts when describing the Great Fear versus the Bois-Caïman ceremony and the 1791 revolt. When recalling Makandal, James mixes both history and legend. For example, the rebel leader is said to have superhuman strength, even though he has only one arm. Makandal has such a strong influence that his followers “consider it an honour to serve him on their knees.”<sup>30</sup> Women fight over who will lay next to him.<sup>31</sup> The legendary Makandal is placed alongside historical Makandal, the orator and leader of the “bold design” to poison whites.<sup>32</sup> His one weakness is excessive confidence. By contrast, James draws attention not to Boukman’s physical power but to his role as an houngan, and, more specifically, to his capacity to create a collective through the power of his words, his spirituality, and his character.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 169.

<sup>29</sup> James, *The Black Jacobins*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 20.

Both leaders embody military leadership and spirituality, but this mix makes Makandal a myth, and Boukman a mortal.

Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*, tracks the Black Radical Tradition through prerevolutionary and revolutionary leaders and through the protagonist Ti Noël. Carpentier describes both Makandal and Boukman as members of a "great line of leaders." Like James's Boukman, Carpentier's Boukman is synonymous with Vodou, a "secret religion that uphold[s] and unite[s] [the enslaved] in their revolts."<sup>33</sup> The use of the plural *revolts* reminds readers of a history and tradition of African resistance in Hispaniola. In Carpentier's version of the Bois-Caïman ceremony, the priestess Fatiman appears as a "bony, long-limbed Negress."<sup>34</sup> As in James's account, the identity and influence of this woman is ignored in order to create a masculine lineage. Carpentier foregrounds Boukman's role as an orator by giving his voice texture, purpose, and power:

Suddenly, a mighty voice arose in the midst of the congress of shadows, a voice whose ability to pass without intermediate stages from a deep to a shrill register gave a strange emphasis to its words. There was much of invocation and much of spell in that speech filled with angry inflections and shouts. It was Bouckman, the Jamaican, who was talking.<sup>35</sup>

Rather than providing a physical description of Boukman or magnifying his "gigantic size," Carpentier concentrates on the leader's voice, a decision that works not only to flesh out this figure, but also to give him presence among "the congress of shadows." The power and range of Boukman's voice makes him a dominant figure among the slaves. He is able to capture and maintain his audience's attention with his rhetoric, and to translate their "anger into material force." Carpentier very subtly pushes the maroon into a mythical realm. Boukman holds his audience spellbound as he gives his speech at the Bois-Caïman ceremony. The audience forgets

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<sup>33</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 72.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-61.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

“the rain running down on them.”<sup>36</sup> Boukman retreats into the shadow of Fatiman, who lets out a “howl” to invoke the “Ogoun of the Irons, Ogoun the Warrior, Ogoun of the Forges, Ogoun Marshal, Ogoun of the Lances, Ogoun-Panama, Ogoun-Bakoulé.”<sup>37</sup> Carpentier emphasizes Boukman’s proximity to the gods. The leader informs his followers of the pact between the initiates in Hispaniola and the Loas of Africa. The audience swears to obey Boukman after Fatiman’s invokes the gods.

The Spanish colony of Hispaniola is a minor setting in *The Black Jacobins*, and *The Kingdom of This World*. In James’s text, Spanish San Domingo is where the future leader Toussaint L’Ouverture sends his wife and children as a “safe spot.”<sup>38</sup> In Carpentier’s narrative, aid might come from Spanish colonists trying to undermine the French.<sup>39</sup> Spanish San Domingo remains in the background, but James and Carpentier do point to the porousness of the border between Western and Eastern Hispaniola. James and Carpentier both illustrate Boukman’s importance to the invention of a Black Radical Tradition on Hispaniola. Yet, the maroon’s significance is largely confined to the Bois-Caïman ceremony in both of these texts. What could a narrative reveal about the maroon condition and about the island if it followed more closely Boukman’s movements beyond this event? Guy Endore’s *Babouk* probes this question. The text explores and reimagines Boukman beyond what is hinted at in James’ and Carpentier’s texts. As we shall see, he connects Boukman to both sides of Hispaniola and to the Black Radical Tradition.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> James, *The Black Jacobins*, 90.

<sup>39</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onís, 62.

*Babouk: Teller of Tales, Houngan, and Rebel*

Guy Endore's *Babouk* (1934) is an understudied historical novel that traces the story of a powerful maroon leader with unique storytelling abilities. It was written by Guy Endore (1901 – 1970), who graduated from Columbia College in 1924 with a degree in Romance languages.<sup>40</sup> His works include *The Man From Limbo* (1930); *The Werewolf of Paris* (1933); "The Day of the Dragon" (1934); "Lazarus Returns" (1935); *Methinks the Lady* (1945); *King of Paris: A Novel* (1956); and *Detour at Night* (1959). He also wrote and produced the biographical novels *The sword of God: Jeanne d'Arc* (1931); *Voltaire! Voltaire! A Novel* (1961); *The Heart and the Mind: The Story of Rousseau and Voltaire* (1961); and *Satan's Saint: A Novel about the Marquis de Sade* (1965). In the 1930s, Endore became a successful Hollywood screenwriter. Notably, he was an activist and a member of the Communist Party, who was blacklisted in Hollywood in the late 1940s, during the House Committee on Un-American Activities investigation.<sup>41</sup>

When the novel *Babouk* was published in 1934, few readers picked it up. That may be because when the novel was released little had been written about the Haitian Revolution from outside of Haiti.<sup>42</sup> Notably, *Babouk* was released four years before *The Black Jacobins*, which had a larger readership. Notably, *Babouk* was released four years before James's *The Black Jacobins*, which had a larger readership. The book's reception might also have something to do with the fact that Endore was white. Some might question the authenticity of Guy Endore's text and ask if a white man writing in the United States in the 1930s can write an honest narrative of an African slave in Haiti during the 1700s. Jamaica Kincaid's foreword gives a compelling answer to this challenge. Kincaid argues that more works *Babouk* need to be written, and not just by writers from the African diaspora. She writes:

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<sup>40</sup> Gaspar and Trouillot, "Afterword," *Babouk*, 184.

<sup>41</sup> "Guy Endore, 69, Novelist, is Dead," *New York Times* (Feb. 21, 1970), 31.

<sup>42</sup> Gaspar and Trouillot, "Afterword," *Babouk*, 185.

He [Endore] was a white man and he wrote a work of fiction, a passionate human account of the life of an African slave. He also wrote screenplays in Hollywood, and at some point in his life he was publicly censured and humiliated for the views he held about American society. I am glad the author of this book was a white person. I think that every white writer should write a book about black slavery, as I think every writer who is not a Jew should write a book about the Holocaust. Perhaps some day someone will produce a work of such overwhelming literary merit that it brings the machinery of slavery and holocaust to a complete halt.<sup>43</sup>

Kincaid sees the act of writing—a pursuit of and an exploration into the human condition and those forces that have shaped it—as a means of stopping bondage and genocide. Writing as Endore does with a genuine intent to empathize with an individual apparently different from oneself might be one way to become more conscious of those constructs creating divisions. Endore’s “passionate account” is very clear, to the point that sometimes the novel reads like a “political pamphlet.”<sup>44</sup>

In *Babouk*, Endore sets out to explore how the slave trade and capitalism are related and how colonial legacies continue to affect Afro-Americans. He uses history as a kind of anchor, but he also knows history’s limits, its prejudices and its silences. Gaspar and Trouillot note that Endore questioned the authority of historical documents versus lived individual experiences at a time when this questioning was uncommon among historians. They write: “For Endore, the purpose of the historical novel was to go where the recorded story stops and to fill in the vacuum. This always requires a careful reading of the sources, but at time it also requires deliberate invention.”<sup>45</sup> The use of epigraphs in *Babouk*, and the narrator’s interjections signal the author’s critical engagement with and questioning of official history.

The protagonist of Endore’s novel, Babouk, is loosely based on the historical figure Boukman. The similarities between them are many: their names; their rise as leaders after

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<sup>43</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, viii.

<sup>44</sup> Gaspar and Trouillot, “Afterword,” *Babouk*, 196.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

Makandal's rebellion; their mental and physical strength; the manner of their deaths; and, most pivotally, their participation in a Vodou ceremony that instigates their rebellions. Endore recreates the Bois-Caïman ceremony, placing Babouk and a priestess named Nara at its center. During the ceremony, Nara sacrifices a pig. The participants drink the pig's blood and vow loyalty to the group. However, Endore takes liberties. For example, in Endore's version of the Caïman ceremony, the reader hears Babouk's voice through dialogue as the author makes a distinction between "plead[ing] with Bamballa for the favor of the white masters," and revolting ("sing[ing] out a battle song and go[ing] out...").<sup>46</sup> As the storyteller, the maroon Babouk reminds the crowd of the animals they used to hunt in Africa, particularly the "lumbering" elephant which everyone remembers "with a strange sort of kindness."<sup>47</sup> He then compares this lost game to the game that is upon them, "the beast that runs on two legs."<sup>48</sup>

To unite the different tribes, Babouk provides visual representations of their collective power. His first demonstration involves a comparison of different kerchiefs that represent the predominant groups on the island: the indigenous (or "viens-viens"), the whites, and the blacks. The black kerchief is the last to remain, making them "the real masters of Saint Domingue."<sup>49</sup> Here Endore collapses the figures of Babouk and Makandal. In his historical notes, Moreau de Saint-Méry mentions an almost identical demonstration led by Makandal.<sup>50</sup> In a second visual representation, Babouk presents to his audience a "tall cylindrical jar of glass, filled nearly to the brim with black beans" representing the enslaved masses.<sup>51</sup> Over the black beans he pours "grains of yellow maize," which represents the colonist and planters. At first glance, the grains of

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<sup>46</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 151.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>50</sup> Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 62.

<sup>51</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 153.

yellow maize seem to dominate. Babouk shakes this jar, and his lesson of collective power is clear: “Dispersed among the great quantity of black beans they [the grains of yellow maize] were effectively lost.”<sup>52</sup> All of these details point to Endore’s creative liberties which he took while attempting to flesh out the maroon.

A pivotal scene in the novel occurs when the protagonist seizes a baby belonging to Leontine, the master’s niece. Babouk declares that “Nits grow into lice” and then throws the baby to the ground and plunging his spear through it.<sup>53</sup> He justifies his actions because he believes the baby will grow up to be a parasite like Odeluc, living off the sweat and blood of the enslaved. This scene does not romanticize Babouk. Instead it reminds readers that Babouk’s story is the story of one maroon and the different and sometimes violent ways he endures, reacts to, survives, and resists colonial brutality.

Endore account of Babouk’s infanticide conjures an image from a historical account from November 1791, which was presented to the National Assembly in France. Describing an attack on the Gallifet plantation, the account says that rebels held as their flag “the body of a white child impaled upon a stake.”<sup>54</sup> This image was used widely in France to condemn the Haitian insurrection.<sup>55</sup> However, the story was likely more fiction than fact because eyewitnesses Pierre Mossut and Antoine Dalmas did not mention it in their accounts of the Gallifet rebellion.<sup>56</sup> Pierre Mossut was a manager at the Gallifet plantation who survived and wrote to the marquis de Gallifet, describing the “complete devastation.”<sup>57</sup> Dalmas was a surgeon on the Gallifet

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>54</sup> Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (2004), 111.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 92.

plantation who survived the insurrection. He would later write a memoir that he reduced the Bois-Caiman ceremony to “African barbarism.”<sup>58</sup>

Endore is doing something more complex than highlighting a falsity in what has been passed as history. In the chapters following the infanticide, the narrator interjects more and more, and with particular poignancy on page 168:

Our historians, who always shout reign of terror when a few rich people are being killed and see nothing much worthy of comment when poor are slaughtered by the thousands in the miseries of peace, cry out unanimously: The pen cannot describe the cruelty of these savages.

My pen is not so delicate; it can say, and it will never cease to say: not over a thousand or so of whites were killed in this reign of terror, while the legal and protected slaves trade killed over a hundred thousand Negroes a year. Buried its victims in Africa and America and strewed them over the Atlantic Ocean.

One must be exact: the slaves revolted, and the reign of terror that had lasted hundreds of years in Saint-Domingue stopped! Yes, Candy heated his corkscrew to pull out the eyes of former white masters, and Jeannot got ready his planks between which he tied his victims to saw them in half and, and that was peace compared to the long reign of terror under the whites, from Columbus down.

The passage is Endore’s response to historians who view Babouk and other rebels as cruel “savages” without a proper understanding of the slave system. He underlines the stark contrast between the killing of dozens of whites during slave revolts with the killing of hundreds of thousands of slave in Africa, the Atlantic, and the Americas. The narrative suggests that Babouk’s actions, like the actions of Candy and Jeannot, cannot so easily be dismissed as savagery.

Endore establishes Babouk’s voice as a voice that creates a collective. At the end of Chapter 3, the main character declares the following while in the hold of the ship: “We are on the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 77 and 100.

ship of the dead.”<sup>59</sup> This statement, somber in tone, brings together different individuals into a mass. The “We” revises and adds onto Babouk’s words, which evolve from a statement to a cry. This cry is then transformed from a prayer to a chant that offers release and an opportunity for the Africans to grieve over their lost freedom. The evolution of the protagonist’s words maps a journey from the act of dying to death to the afterlife. As this chant is echoed it evolves from “We are dead . . . We have died long ago,” to “We are on the boat that takes the dead to N’koolango, where the dead reside.”<sup>60</sup> The narrative shifts its focus to followers of Islam who repeat the al-fatiha, the opening (seven verses from the first chapter of the Quran asking for guidance, lordship, and mercy). The nameless individuals ask for God’s guidance and compassion as the sun sets.

Shortly after these prayers, Babouk’s statement evolves again: “We are going to the kingdom of the dead.”<sup>61</sup> On a figurative level, the blend of elements forges a collective, a “chorus” that echoes the storyteller’s words and promises they will see relatives who have passed away and all that they’ve consumed ( “animals slain . . . food we have eaten”). Islam also plays an integral role in creating this collectivity. As Endore envisions Babouk’s (or Boukman’s) life prior to Jamaica and Hispaniola, he acknowledges religion as an influential factor. As discussed in Chapter 1, Islam brings together the multitudes and makes them into an army, a great collective stretching across the Atlantic. Invention not only enables the author to map this movement, but also to acknowledge Islam’s role, its preservation, and its presence in the protagonist’s life in Africa and later on the island, an island whose first revolt was carried out in 1521 by Islamic Wolof slaves in the east.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Endore's use of invention works to particularize the protagonist's strength as an orator who initiates a male-centered oral tradition and to anchor him in the Black Radical Tradition. He does so in a way that distinguishes Babouk's storytelling ability from Makandal. In *The Black Jacobins* (1938), Makandal is described as a great orator whose public speaking capabilities are "equal" to his European counterparts. The maroon leader's strength as an orator suggests he was in some position to "profit from the cultural advantages" of the system that enslaved him.<sup>62</sup> Babouk's relationship with orality is quite different. His role as a griot or storyteller was conceived and nurtured first in West Africa and during his experience throughout the Middle Passage. Also, his role is more particularized; it possesses a wider variety of functions. Like Carpentier's Makandal, Babouk initiates a masculinist oral tradition of storytelling. Also, like Carpentier's Makandal, who recovers stories about the "great kingdoms of Popo, of Arada, of the Nagos or Fulah,"<sup>63</sup> the keeper-of-stories recalls "long epics about the Mandingo empire," empires including "invincible armies" and "great" cities of a "glorious African past."<sup>64</sup> The recovery of this "glorious African past" is important because it elevates an African history above European history. The author consistently makes the reader aware of the tension between the main narrative of his novel and a Eurocentric version of history. He draws from a plethora of historical works to recreate the 1791 revolt and the lay of the land, including plantation names and the names of French masters. In many ways, the narrative responds to each quotation, negotiating history and fiction and making us more aware of history-telling as storytelling. The act of storytelling, both on the part of the author and of the main character, compels the reader to think about who has written history, and how history has been written or passed down. Through

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<sup>62</sup> James, *The Black Jacobins*, 21.

<sup>63</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onis, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 14.

storytelling a new, fuller version of history emerges, one that places the island of Hispaniola in the Black Radical Tradition.

In addition to elevating an African history, Babouk's stories possess important life lessons and underscore forms of resistance and coping. In Chapter 4, "grief" is established as a kind of "mad[ness]," and reader's witness Babouk's capacity to alleviate this pain through his stories.<sup>65</sup> On the surface, "the tale of the most virtuous bed" exists as a distraction with humorous undercurrents and a moral lesson: punishment awaits those who try to "steal love."<sup>66</sup> The tale recalls two neighbors, Yakuma and Djima, and their wives. Each couple ends up on one side of a bed, after unsuccessful attempts to sleep with their neighbor's spouse. The bed is "virtuous" because it blocks "the stealing of love," and allows the original couples to learn to "embrace once another again."<sup>67</sup> When the storyteller finishes, the collectivity laughs. The male listeners in particular dream up women to cope with their loneliness. The second story in Chapter 4 also teaches a lesson. It encourages the audience to rethink "politeness" and to question the Captain's actions.

Telling stories enables Babouk to continue planting the seeds of resistance. Through the tale of the crab he draws a distinction between "politeness" and selflessness. Prior to the story of "the politest of all animals, the crab," the protagonist notices that his tales invoke laughter from the enslaved audience, but not cheer.<sup>68</sup> The Captain of the Prie-Dieu ship promises the African men they can dance with the women if they continue to behave. The majority of the audience responds with cheers. The main character, though, is "disgusted." He sees no reason to cheer because the women were "stolen." When his audience implores him to tell a story, Babouk

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 30-33.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 34-37. Quotations in this paragraph appear within this page range.

refuses. The crowd asserts that their cheers were motivated by “politeness,” and with this Babouk begins another story. The myth he recalls tells of a world where God needed to attach heads to animals to make them whole. The animals of the world form a long line, waiting for God to pluck a head from “the great basket of heads.” The crab is the first in line, but, out of politeness, it steps aside whenever it is asked if another animal might be first. In the end, the crab is left headless, perpetually “stepping aside.” Drawing a parallel between the crab and humanity, the protagonist raises the consciousness of his audience. A repeated image in this section, the “head” symbolizes wisdom and intellect, but also control, or, at the very least, awareness. The lesson is clear. If the masses continue to “step aside,” the Captain will continue to “steal [their] share.”<sup>69</sup>

The irony here lies in the fact the Captain has already taken possession of the slaves. Babouk the teller-of-stories addresses a blindness that afflicts the black masses, asking them “Are you all crabs, that you should be polite to the white chief?”<sup>70</sup> Coincidentally, the enslaved mass aboard the *Prie-Dieu* become “blind with ophthalmy” after spending four nights in total darkness during a relentless storm. Most of the enslaved recover, but they “obstinately refuse to dance” for the Captain because they know the fate of those who remain blind.<sup>71</sup> The use of “obstinately” suggests they consciously refuse to yield to the Captain’s wishes, and are no longer persuaded by “rum” or even by the pain of the whip. Considering the proximity between the tale of the crab and the literal blindness afflicting the Africans en route to Hispaniola via the Middle Passage, one can argue that the protagonist’s words influence the slaves and their decision to defy the Captain for “seven weeks.” Yet, Babouk’s story is only a contributing factor. The treacherous experience aboard the ship seems to pound the storyteller’s message into the minds

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 43.

and the bodies of the Africans. Resistance manifests itself in different forms. In the crab tale, resistance is raised consciousness.

The protagonist stops telling his stories after his ear is cut off for *petit marronage*. The episode instigates a long silent period that does not end until Babouk is mounted by the spirit of Damballah. Like Carpentier's *Makandal*, a priestess or *mamaloï* "instructs [Babouk] in all the secret knowledge that a chosen vessel of the spirits should possess."<sup>72</sup> However, the storyteller proves to be a disappointing pupil. He falls in love with an enslaved creole, Elizabeth, and starts to go to church. Monsieur Odeluc rapes Elizabeth, who disappears from the text all together. After this, the reader witnesses a shift in Babouk who begins to tell his stories again. For example, he offers a creation myth that explains the creation of whites, blacks, and mulattoes, and tells of how slavery was born in New World.<sup>73</sup> Loosely based on the creation myth of Adam and Eve, the story likens God to a "big planter" who created white Adam to consume the fruit of the land. The Devil responds by creating a white man just like Adam, but when God discovers this he "cracks his whip" and deems the Devil's man not as "good" and paints the Devil's man black. The black man follows the Devil, who is angry and warns him to stay away. The black man continues to follow and is then stricken by his maker and falls down on his face. Apologetic, the Devil makes a black woman for the black man. White Adam takes the woman from "her black man," and the first mulatto is born. God makes white Eve for Adam. For a time period everyone lives in peace, until Adam and Eve eat from a fig-banana tree. They are banished from Paradise and made to toil all day, while the black man dances and sings all day in Paradise. One day the white man builds a ship that he sails across the Atlantic. As black men

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-110.

dance, the white man runs behind them and chains them to bring them to a “New World” where they will toil all day.

While more broadly interrogating the power dynamics present on the plantation, Babouk’s creation myth revisits the “theft” of the black woman, her enslavement, and her violation. He dramatizes the theft of Africans; the black man’s lack of access to the white woman; and how the enslaved work while “the white man cracks his whip” and “[does] not work.”<sup>74</sup> His myths create a space for conversation. They take notice of how mulattos are left parentless within this system because they do not “recognize Negro slave mother” and “white father refuse[s] to recognize them, too”<sup>75</sup> The storyteller’s audience begins to question whether or not “the black man’s wife cared to sleep with the white man.”<sup>76</sup> Babouk’s creation myth does not have the irony of the crab tale. Rather, it confronts the white man and his God directly. The storyteller plants and cultivates seeds of consciousness.

Babouk in some sense loses his voice when he is brought to the Gallifet plantation and is seasoned. Yet, this silence contributes significantly to his rise as a leader. The novel’s rising action finds Babouk struggling to survive under colonial brutality and to find his voice. Throughout the novel, Endore is always careful to remind the reader of Babouk’s humanity, rather than to elevate him to a god-like status or to endow him with superhuman powers. For much of the novel, this version of Boukman remains among mortals. The protagonist’s transformation into a storyteller and leader spans years, as suggested by the greying of his hair. Fear and isolation impede his evolution. Once he is taken to the Gallifet plantation, there is a period in which no one asks him to tell his stories. This is the beginning of his silencing, for he must find a way not only to communicate, but also to act and survive. The main character

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 106-110.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

becomes more convinced of the “white man’s cannibalism” after witnessing Makandal burned alive alongside an unnamed man and woman.<sup>77</sup>

Violence and the threat of violence afflicts Babouk’s soul. The protagonist’s introduction to the Gallifet plantation is another experience that magnifies his awareness of slavery’s ruthless violence. Monsieur Odeluc and his assistant show him the following: “several dry heads, stuck on pikes, and dangling therefrom a number of hands, tied in bunches.”<sup>78</sup> Babouk “squirms.” He sees the dismemberment of these bodies as evidence of the fact that he will be enslaved in the world of the living *and* in the world of the dead because he has no route home. He becomes so afraid he loses control of his bowels and urinates on himself. Even if his soul survives, he believes the division of his body would lead to the division of his soul. The protagonist learns to live with and maneuver fear. For example, he possesses “mortal fear” when being seasoned on the Gallifet plantation. Because he never used a wheelbarrow, he struggles to transport bricks. Onlookers laugh at him; their laughs “cutting” him and making him feel humiliated. He draws from “terror and shame” and learns to use the contraption, although the task holds no real purpose for him. Compounding his fear is Babouk’s physical isolation. For example, during his “seasoning,” he is isolated by “biting laughter and shame.” He rejects any attempts at friendship and is left alone.

Generally, women are underdeveloped characters in Endore’s text. When they do appear they underscore Babouk’s profound isolation. In the novel, women are objectified and used as pawns to manipulate the enslaved men or to satisfy the desires of both blacks and whites. With the exception of Elizabeth, Babouk has limited interactions with women. He rejects the women offered to him, even those women “who would have fought” over him. These women leave him

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 51 and 57.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 57 – 63.

“severely alone.”<sup>79</sup> In this way Endore’s Babouk is unlike Carpentier’s Makandal. In *The Kingdom of This World*, Makandal possesses “a deep, opaque voice” that makes him “irresistible to negro women.”<sup>80</sup> Although Babouk’s stories are tempting to listen to, he never exercises this kind of erotic power over any woman. Instead, those female characters becomes in contact with work to illustrate the different circumstances African and Afro-American women had to endure during slavery, and to emphasize Babouk’s isolation.

Babouk’s relationship to language is pertinent to understanding not just his role as a storyteller, but also his role as a leader. From the beginning of the novel, he is aware of the multiple languages spoken in the ship’s hold, and he patiently awaits the translation of his stories.<sup>81</sup> On the Gallifet plantation he must learn a new language and find a way to communicate. Two pivotal things that highlight the importance of language are Babouk’s interactions with “an old, white-pollled woman,” and the maroons who return him to the plantation.<sup>82</sup> In Chapter 6, an old woman takes pity on the protagonist and offers him the “head half” of a cod. When he refuses the fish, she notices the facial scars that suggest he comes from the same tribe. Yet, the old woman “can’t form a single word” in a language they supposedly share. The main character makes no effort to decipher her attempts to “remember her childhood speech,” the “click of her tongue against her bare gums,” or the “meaningless phrases into the palm of her hand.”<sup>83</sup> The old woman is isolated because she has forgotten her mother tongue. The experience also works to deepen Babouk’s isolation, for he is cut off even from someone who at one point knew his “Mandingo dialect.”<sup>84</sup> Without communication, the protagonist is

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>80</sup> Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, trans. Harriet de Onis, 13.

<sup>81</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 11.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 11.

powerless. Although Babouk eventually cultivates rhetorical skills, it costs him dearly when he encounters Hatuey and maroons.

Babouk distances himself from Gallifet plantation, but he is unable to communicate with Hatuey or the maroons who capture him. These lost opportunities highlight the importance of language in creating a collectivity on the island. The main character flees the plantation. He is perplexed as to why he's been brought to San Domingo and is afraid that the whites are in fact cannibals; the hills promise him home and can "lead him to his village."<sup>85</sup> Endore writes:

Babouk made straight for the hills, plunging boldly through the fields of tall green sugar cane, ripping his way through hedges of candelabra cactus, and then on through muddy fields of indigo, through swamps planted to rice, then through higher ground where ragged banana leaves soughed in the night wind on a don until he came to the foot of the slope.

As he pushed his way upward, now through easily traversed coffee plantations, now through dense vegetation where his passage was obstructed by liana and thorny branches, he was overcome with a feeling of unreality, as though he had died long ago, and were walking in spirit land.<sup>86</sup>

The narrative gives the reader a sense of an expanding landscape, a borderless island that changes rapidly and opens to the maroon.

It is difficult to say how much land the protagonist traverses as he moves across hills, sugarcane, muddy fields, swamps, and higher ground. In contrast to previous images of Babouk in Endore's novel, the narrative presents a character moving freely, even though he discovers that Hispaniola's hills are steeper, the "plants are somewhat strange," and animals like the crocodile possess a different shape than those he knew in Africa.<sup>87</sup> His "feeling of unreality" is rooted in an ever-changing, unfamiliar, and seemingly boundless landscape. The land heightens the reader's sense of Babouk's new isolation because it promises both freedom and capture

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 63 – 64.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

within the pristine spaces of Hispaniola. The maroon feels as though he is “walking in spirit land,” an island where both the world of the living and the world of the dead are collapsed together. This feeling speaks to the runaway’s unfamiliarity with the land, but also to the tension he feels between the sensation of being free and alive, and the sensation that capture and death are on his heels. The island transforms into a bottomless vessel promising liberty and rejuvenation, as well as capture and destruction.

Babouk’s chance encounter with the native figure of Hatuey after his flight foreshadows his capture and reinforces his isolation. In the early sixteenth century, Hatuey fled Hispaniola and warned Cuba’s inhabitants about the Spanish colonizers. He led a revolt and commanded approximately four hundred men. He was captured, though, and like Makandal, he was burned at the stake. In a “forest valley,” Babouk has a chance encounter with Hatuey. Rather than the heroic cacique leader, the reader encounters a Hatuey who is one of a “half dozen or so” Taínos left on the island.<sup>88</sup> For most of the encounter, Hatuey smokes and is in a state of calm. The maroon’s unexpected meeting with Hatuey gestures towards instances of cooperation between Indians and Africans.<sup>89</sup> Later, the narrator tells the reader of how the surviving “vien-viens” were “absorbed within the swarms of Negro slaves.”<sup>90</sup> Highlighting a “primitive desire for freedom,” Endore links Hatuey to Vien-Viens or Biembienes.

In “Totalitarianism and Slavery,” Alvin O. Thompson references an eighteenth century myth that tells of a group of Haitian refugees who settled in the Batoruco Mountains. Thompson cites Father Nouel, a nineteenth century priest who describes them as “semi-savage” men who

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 65-67.

<sup>89</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 96-97.

<sup>90</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 71. See also: Alvin O. Thompson, “Totalitarianism and Slavery,” *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2006) 47.

communicate very little and are who possess the “agility [of] monkeys.”<sup>91</sup> Some are said to practice cannibalism. They appear in Dominican folklore throughout the eighteenth century. Thompson says these Vien-Vien were “generally regarded as African though some people thought that they were Indian.”<sup>92</sup> In the novel, Babouk and the Vien-Vien figure Hatuey try but fail to communicate. The chance encounter seems an opportunity for permanent flight, but ultimately the scene is anticlimactic. It emphasizes Babouk’s isolation and foreshadows his eventual capture.

Babouk’s anticlimactic meeting with Hatuey (again) makes us aware of the powerful role of language within the Black Radical Tradition. After he leaves Hatuey, the protagonist wanders the forest and is ambushed by two men who take him to an “African village,” where the elders decide his fate.<sup>93</sup> I cite the passage at length because it highlights Babouk isolation, even among maroons, and how he must develop language in order to possess more agency:

He found himself suddenly in the midst of an African village . . . [Babouk] remained docile . . . while the chief and the elders of the village discussed his case and repeatedly examine the great brand-mark on his chest to determine its freshness.

Yet, precisely here he should have struggled . . . Had he begged them, there was much they could have done for him.

But he did not know that these Negroes were free men, slaves or descendants of slaves, who had escaped to this region and had resisted all efforts of the whites to force them back into slavery.

Maroons they were called . . . being found in English Jamaica, in Dutch Guiana, in Spanish Cuba. For whatever the whites were unable to slaughter or recapture their fugitive slaves . . . they agreed to consider the maroons as free and independent provided they would cease their depredations on the white man’s fields and promise to return all runaway slaves that came their way . . .

Secretly, of course, these maroons aided many an escaped slave, particularly, women.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 331.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>93</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 73.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

Like Robinson, Endore links maroons across the Caribbean to suggest that the practice of collective marronage transcends linguistic boundaries. He also pays attention to the contradictions of marronage. Maroons sometimes helped the enslaved, but they also sometimes also played a role in the capture of runaways when upholding treaties they had made with European powers.<sup>95</sup>

Endore's use of invention—his weaving of fiction and history—complicates visions of the island. The novel collapses Haiti and the Dominican Republic so that the space one nation inhabits is superimposed upon the space inhabited by the other. This treatment of space is not reserved just for Hispaniola. Endore superimposes the island upon an African village that at first seems familiar to Babouk and yet remains alien. The narrative suggests the protagonist's survival depends partially on a greater demonstration of submission, an act of 'begging' that requires him to make a request [of the maroons]. Babouk does not act here. He remains silent and cooperative, not knowing he is surrounded by "free men" and not knowing how to communicate or persuade the maroons.<sup>96</sup> In a twist of fate, the maroons decide to uphold a treaty they've struck with the "whites" and return Babouk in order to secure their own freedom. In Endore's imagination, language is a tool of invention, as well as a means of maneuvering an amorphous, pristine space or island, and gaining access or penetrating a larger collectivity. Babouk's agency is limited until he further develops this skill.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 225, 228, 260, 289-294, 315, 332. See also Carlos Deive, "Fundacion de San Lorenzo de los Minas," *Los Guerrilleros Negros*, 71-72. Maroon societies were cautious about accepting runaways because they feared betrayal. Runaways in particular were accepted warily because they could be "spies for White authorities," or because they would threaten treaties that had been made with European powers. Curiously, the narrative reminds the reader how they are not in Saint-Domingue but on an island where border and loyalties are tenuous. Thompson asserts that maroons in what is now known as Haiti never signed a peace treaty, not even Le Maniel Maroons, who came close. In contrast, maroons in what is now known as the Dominican Republic made treaties as early as the mid-sixteenth century, though some were not signed and others collapsed. The location of some maroon societies, such as Le Maniel Maroons, has been debated as well..

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 73.

Upon his return to the plantation after his petit marronage, Babouk's ear is cut off, and he undergoes a period of silence or psychological marronage. Rather than marking him as a messiah figure, the loss of Babouk's ear instigates what Cynthia James calls psychological marronage or "a withdrawal [where] flight manifests itself in internal dis-ease."<sup>97</sup> James builds on Gordon Rohlehr's exploration of the "self-in-marronage" or "the submerged self," a Brathwaitian term that refers to the marooned, submerged, and subversive self.<sup>98</sup> This concept references practices of inner-resistance, self-affirmation, and self-assertion. For Rohlehr, self-in-marronage took diverse forms during slavery: suicide; rioting; the preservation and adaptation of African religions and traditions; the development of "charismatic or authoritarian political leadership"; and the preservation of "folktales, proverbs, rhetoric, patterns of performance, and the capacity to create style."<sup>99</sup> The maroon's withdrawal is a process needed so he can heal, and in the case of Babouk, acquire a language he can use to maneuver the island.

Self-in-marronage in Guy Endore's novel is illustrated most clearly in Babouk's storytelling: once he finds his voice, he engages with a larger collective and his stories take a new shape. In Chapter 11, the teller-of-tales improvises a song that foreshadows confrontation. He fertilizes the land alongside his comrades and jokes about the "master" coming to smell the "devil's dirt," which "stinks worse of all."<sup>100</sup> He dares the master to "come out" and smell his "flowery garden" in the song, and to also hear his "plaint."<sup>101</sup> The narrator's voice enters here and ties Babouk's "plaint" to a larger collective that includes Africans and Afro-Americans, dead and living, in a "net" that has the power to "pull [the] deaf master out of his flowery garden and

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<sup>97</sup> Cynthia James, *The Maroon Narrative: Caribbean Literature in English Across Boundaries, Ethnicities, and Centuries* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), 8.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Gordon Rohlehr, "Articulating a Caribbean Aesthetic: The Revolution of Self-Perception," *My Strangled City and Other Essays* (Longman Trinidad Limited, 1992), 1-3.

<sup>100</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 96.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

down into the muddy, stinking field.”<sup>102</sup> The word “plaint” is important because it underscores a charge against the system of slavery and a lamentation that lends urgency to confrontation.

Babouk’s song becomes linked to the promise of resistance. In Endore’s imagination, Babouk forms part of a collective that exists beyond Saint Domingue, beyond the island, and even beyond the U.S. The narrator prophesies a shift in power. A “deaf master” will be toppled from his Eden and forced to reckon with Babouk, his followers, and with a larger collective made up of all the victims—living and dead—of the Middle Passage. On some level, the scene gestures towards the 1791 revolt, the successful Haitian Revolution, and acts of resistance beyond these two events and beyond the borders of Saint Domingue.

The maroon’s promise of confrontation comes to fruition with the tale of King Tleeka, though not in the form of armed resistance. Babouk spins a tale in which salvation for the enslaved comes in the form of an African king named King Tleeka, who will “buy them and take them back to Guinea.”<sup>103</sup> King Tleeka’s tale marks a definitive shift in the narrative. No longer are the lessons that awaken consciousness. They are now stories that inspire action through “a spirit of resentment and independence.”

Finally, [Babouk] vouchsafed: ‘A great black king has arisen in Guinea. As great as the kings of the empire of Songhay. Greater and more powerful than the king of France . . . In the rivers of this kingdom there is so much gold that one man in one week can find enough to buy back one slave. And the king has therefore proclaimed it as a law that in his realm every man and every woman must spend one month every year hunting for gold . . . Yes, this king of Congo is going to build big ships, and he will come to buy us and bring us all back to Guinea. Oh, how we shall dance on that ship that is to take us home.’<sup>104</sup>

Salvation comes in the form of a great king, but not a king who will lead a great revolt. Instead, he will buy back from the planters the people they have enslaved. At first, the listeners are

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>103</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 117.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

skeptical. Babouk declares: “I have news from the maroons . . . Yes, the maroons told me that King Tleeka is buying up the slaves of the Spanish. Our turn will be next.”<sup>105</sup> The fate of the storyteller and of his audience in Haiti is tied to the fate of those on the Dominican side of the island. In Babouk’s vision, and in Endore’s, liberation for the eastern side of the island means liberation for the western side, and vice versa. Babouk crafts a King Tleeka who gains authority through storytelling. News of liberation is relayed by maroons who possess unique access to Babouk and to information regarding the “slaves of the Spanish.”

The main character’s connection to other maroons lends validity to his tale. Listeners remember Babouk’s petit marronage, his habit of wandering off after dark and reappearing at dawn, and the strangers who visited him after dark. All of these things, which once seemed strange, now seem to confirm his connection to the rebels and to the freedom tale he is telling. Slaves wonder about the objects strangers bring him, objects that Babouk hides until visiting nearby plantations. These objects to some extent materialize his connection to the maroons and authenticate his story. The audience also remembers the protagonist’s association with an enslaved priest who has memorized the Koran. This association is seen as further proof of the storyteller’s tale. Babouk “lies glibly” when he invents the story of King Tleeka, but for Endore the falsity of his tale does not matter.<sup>106</sup> Rather, what matters is the way the tale of King Tleeka generates an ardent belief among the audience members, a belief that becomes “a ferment in their minds.”<sup>107</sup> Babouk’s tale is retold to the point King Tleeka’s is known as the king who will liberate “all the slaves of the world,” those enslaved on the island and beyond Hispaniola.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

In *Babouk*, the promise of freedom is embodied by a collective that comes to believe in a skilled storyteller's fictionalized tale. Gradually, small acts of resistance are carried out and build upon one another to become big acts of resistance. The tale of King Tleeka propels the wheels of resistance in motion, solidifying the protagonist's place within a larger collective. The narrative cites acts of resistance "led by Michel, by Polydor, by Noël, by Telemachus Canga . . . by the brothers Isaac and Pyrrhus Candide over at Fort-Dauphine."<sup>109</sup> In two cases, mulattoes are singled out for acts of resistance: "the case of Chapuzet," and "the case of Oge and Chavannes."<sup>110</sup> Endore is drawing on the historical record in these references. For example, Noel was a maroon leader who in the 1770s instilled so much fear in the "*gens de couleur* (people of color or free people of color) . . . that no one dared confront him."<sup>111</sup> Perhaps more formidable was Thélémaque Canga, who led an army of three-hundred. Endore's novel points to the historical increase in marronage during the decade before 1791. But in turning to fiction, the author enables readers to imagine how an ordinary man contributed to the 1791 revolt by cultivating seeds of resistance through stories of hope. The collective rallies around their storyteller, especially when the tale of King Tleeka reaches the planters. Babouk is singled out and whipped, but no one identifies him as the weaver of the Tale of King Tleeka, despite the consequences.

Babouk's final story is an adaption of the story of Cain and Abel.<sup>112</sup> In Babouk's telling, Cain is likened to a white planter who whips Abel so much that he dies. God paints Cain white to signify "he is not his brother's keeper."<sup>113</sup> The protagonist's last message to his followers is that

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 132,141,195. Gaspar and Trouillot note that Endore does not delve into the role of "free people of color," a weakness in the text.

<sup>111</sup> Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 74.

<sup>112</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 173.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

the enslaved must rise and act, or die. Monsieur Odeluc and other planters learn of the conspiracy Babouk is inspiring. They take him to prison, but his imprisonment does not deter the revolt. By the time the protagonist is freed from prison, the uprising has advanced. Babouk struggles to reassert his leadership. He marches to Le Cap, helping put up defenses, and then waits for the whites to respond.<sup>114</sup> Fighting commences, and Babouk (“the bravest of them all”) leads with his standard.<sup>115</sup> He sacrifices himself, placing his body over the mouth of a cannon.

This Babouk stands in stark contrast to the younger version of the character. Young Babouk feared being cannibalized and having his soul dismembered. Babouk, the rebel leader, charges without fear. Robinson recognizes the intricate relationship between “the religions of the oppressed”—obeah, Vodou, myalism, pocomania—and resistance. He notes how this relationship motivated individuals and enabled them to translate “hatred [into] material force,” passion into courage, fear into fearlessness fearlessness.<sup>116</sup> Death in this sense doesn’t mean a dismemberment of the soul, although Babouk’s body is in shards. The main character dies on his own terms, and, like many rebels, wakes in Africa.<sup>117</sup>

Endore magnifies the image of the protagonist’s fragmented body to emphasize the finality of his death, in much of the same way the narrative stresses the disintegration of Makandal’s body and his mortality. Like Boukman, Babouk’s head is put on a pike and displayed in the Place d’Armes in Le Cap, with a sign identifying him as “chief of the rebels.” His eyes remain open and “sparkling.” They seem “to encourage his men on to the massacre.”<sup>118</sup> Here, the author complicates Babouk’s death scene. The rebel leader’s eyes sparkle as though

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>116</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 169-179.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 170. Robinson notes that maroon leaders “shoved their arms into cannon’s mouths,” fearlessly, believing they would return to Africa, and armed with a revolutionary consciousness that involved “the religions of the oppressed.”

<sup>118</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 173-174.

they still possess life and, like his storytelling, still have the capacity to move the people. Rather than instilling fear, Babouk's eyes inspire resistance and open a space for new leadership, for someone who will continue the legacy.

On April 10, 1784 a balloon ascended over the Gallifet plantation, over its sugarcane fields, and over the spectators who watched it with awe.<sup>119</sup> Endore depicts the balloon ascension as a kind of miracle foreshadowing two potential outcomes: white domination over the island and its enslaved masses on one hand, or black rebellion on the other.<sup>120</sup> The balloon ascension also instigates a new story by Babouk, who continues drawing his listeners near and cultivating consciousness. Endore's and his protagonist's use of invention particularizes "a reason to fly."<sup>121</sup> James, Carpentier, and Endore map the Black Radical Tradition onto the island of Hispaniola. All of these writers focus on Boukman's role as a great orator with the capacity to unite the people and to inspire them to rebel through his voice, spirituality, and military leadership.

In Endore's text, the maroon enables readers to reimagine a whole Hispaniola through a network of maroons who relay Babouk's story of King Teekla. In their "Afterword" to *Babouk*, Gaspar and Trouillot argue that the interweaving of history and fiction can be a means of interrogating history and bringing readers closer to understanding what an "ordinary" person felt and experienced under slavery.<sup>122</sup> In other words, the interweaving of history and fiction creates emotional proximity between a reader and someone like Babouk. This interweaving can be a means of rewriting the story of the island. Endore's version of Boukman doesn't possess the same towering presence as the historical Boukman or the romanticized Makandal. He is an

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<sup>119</sup> Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (2004), 91-92.

<sup>120</sup> Endore, *Babouk*, 128 – 136.

<sup>121</sup> Edwidge Danticat, "A Ring of Fire," *Krik? Krak!* (New York: Vantage, 1991), 68. Edwidge Danticat's short story revisits this image of the balloon and Boukman, whose words appear Europeanized and are recited by a young boy.

<sup>122</sup> Gaspar and Trouillot, "Afterword," *Babouk*, 184.

imperfect, unheroic man whose development is not linear, and who nearly misses the revolt. Yet, Babouk as a storyteller becomes synonymous with a larger collective of ordinary individuals, individuals whose flights weren't just physical, but are sometimes internal and spiritual.

## Chapter 3: Rebel Women in Hispaniola: Lisette's Power in Évelyne Trouillot's *Rosalie l'infâme*

The previous chapters explored both the historical and the reimagined François Makandal and Boukman Dutty in several literary and historical texts. Less is known about maroon women in Hispaniola because masculinist historiography has omitted, minimized, and misconstrued their role in slave resistance.<sup>1</sup> Writers like Carpentier and Endore have attempted to recover imaginatively the stories of male maroons from the island. However, there are few narratives about female maroons from Hispaniola. One exception is Évelyne Trouillot's *The Infamous Rosalie (Rosalie l'infâme)* (2003), translated by M.A. Salvodon. In the novel, Trouillot—a Haitian author from a prominent literary family—depicts the life of a young creole slave who becomes a maroon. In a 2009 interview with Edwidge Danticat, she said: “While doing my research for writing *Rosalie*, I could empathize with [slaves] because finally I saw them as human beings and not as an anonymous mass of victims of slavery.”<sup>2</sup> Trouillot's writing acknowledges history's “prejudices and taboos” and its “elite point of view.” Her text explores the experiences of the Middle Passage from the perspective of woman slaves and represents the different forms of resistance they exercised.

In his forward to *Black Marxism*, historian Robin D.G. Kelley argues that Cedric J. Robinson's text opens new “avenues” for intellectual engagement beyond traditional Marxism.<sup>3</sup> Kelley says in particular that Robinson's text opens up a space to interrogate how “gender and

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, (Heinemann Publishers, 1990), 1-10, 51-82.

<sup>2</sup> Edwidge Danticat, “Évelyne Trouillot,” *BOMB Magazine*, (90, 2009), <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2708/evelyne-trouillot>.

<sup>3</sup> Kelley, Robin D. G. “Foreword,” *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), xxi-xxii.

sexuality shaped Black revolt.”<sup>4</sup> Chapter 3 takes up Robinson’s and Kelley’s invitation to expand our sense of the Black Radical Tradition by analyzing the figure of Lisette in Trouillot’s novella and her forms of resistance. I investigate how Lisette’s story complicates the maroon figure, the story of the island, and the process of telling history.

Lisette practices multiple forms of marronage, including cultural marronage, psychological marronage, and physical marronage. The diverse forms of her resistance are important, but more important perhaps is the fact that Lisette’s forms of resistance depend on a larger community of women who together represent the Black Radical Tradition. Trouillot has crafted a character who imagines a collective of powerful maroon women across the island. Similar to Makandal in Carpentier’s writing, Lisette in *The Infamous Rosalie* comes close to gaining mythical status, but ultimately she remains in the realm of mortals. By emphasizing Lisette’s humanity, Trouillot emphasizes to readers the power of empathy as an engine of the Black Radical Tradition.

### Women as Maroons in Hispaniola

Enslaved women are largely invisible in Caribbean history and in maroon literature.<sup>5</sup> There are several causes of this invisibility: the fact women were left out of male-centered historical accounts; a lack of primary sources that focus on women; less opportunities for petit marronage; and the imbalance between the male and female populations in maroon communities.<sup>6</sup> Even in seminal works like Richard Price’s *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xx-xxi.

<sup>5</sup> Jane Landers, “Maroon Women in Colonial Spanish America: Case Studies in the Circum-Caribbean from the Sixteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries.” *Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas*, (Urbana and Chicago: Univeristy of Illinois Press, 2004), 3-18. Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, 1-10, 51-82.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, 1, 8, 63, 67. Landers, “Maroon Women in Colonial Spanish America,” 3.

*Communities in the Americas* (1979), readers only get fragmented information concerning maroon women.<sup>7</sup> Barbara Bush underscores the following:

Conventional histories of slavery...assumed that black women accommodated more readily to slavery. In consequence, their involvement in, for example, slave resistance was ignored, or more damagingly, misconstrued. It has been argued that the woman's physical proximity to white men placed her in a position encompassing the contradictory human possibilities of betrayal and devotion', which generated suspicion, guilt and degradation' around the individual woman.<sup>8</sup>

Bush points out how history has misrepresented slave women, not only by ignoring their roles in resistance, but also by reducing them to stereotypes such as "the scarlet woman, the domineering matriarch, the passive workhorse."<sup>9</sup>

More research is needed on maroon women and their forms of resistance.<sup>10</sup> The historian Alvin O. Thompson says "many more enslaved women were Maroons in spirit" because enslaved women faced unique circumstances that made it particularly difficult for them to take flight.<sup>11</sup> These circumstances included motherhood, restricted movement in a patriarchal society, and the risk of rape. Bush, Kelley, and Jane Landers all note that when women do appear in historical accounts, they are often represented through the mythical or the supernatural. Nanny of the Windward Maroons of Jamaica, the most known female maroon leader, was believed to "catch the enemy's bullets in her buttocks" and to return fire.<sup>12</sup> The Vodou priestess Cécile Fatiman, who facilitated the 1791 Bois-Caïman ceremony, was marked by her "strange

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<sup>7</sup> Landers, "Maroon Women in Colonial Spanish America," 15n1.

<sup>8</sup> Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Bush, Robin Kelley, Jane Landers, the historian Alvin O. Thompson all argue for the need for more research on maroon women.

<sup>11</sup> Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2006), 72-73. Landers, "Maroon Women in Colonial Spanish America," 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

eyes” and access to the gods.<sup>13</sup> Though obscured, evidence points to a tradition of resistance among enslaved women in the Caribbean, and, specifically, on Hispaniola.

Historians have debated the question of whether enslaved women ran away voluntarily. Thompson says the claim women were abducted by maroons to satisfy their sexual desires is a “gross overstatement.”<sup>14</sup> He cautions against “reading into the maroons’ actions the intention to transfer women from a White to a Black enslaver.”<sup>15</sup> According to Thompson, survival mattered far more to maroons than sexual desire. Citing Celsa Albert Batista and Paul Lokken, he argues that enslaved women sometimes fled with maroons on their own volition. The cultural anthropologist Carlos Esteban Deive cites one such case. His 1609 account mentions a couple named Luis Angola and Lucrecia Biáfara, who took flight twice from a plantation. The pair found refuge in the northern mountain range of the Dominican Republic. Lucrecia, described with her “belly to her mouth,” gave birth to a boy a few days after running away.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, men and women sometimes created independent maroon communities. According to a source from 1785, the Dominican-Haitian border maroon community of Le Maniel was made up of “seventy-five males (forty-two maroon born) and fifty-eight females (thirty-eight Maroon-born).”<sup>17</sup> The presence of female maroons in Hispaniola is also supported by a 1785 *lista* (list) from the Spanish priest Luis de Chávez. The document lists the individuals in the maroon settlement of Neyba, located in the southern highlands of the Baoruco Mountains. Neyba included the following:

Forty-three adult males, thirty-seven adult females (twenty of whom had been born onsite), and fifty-two children . . . The oldest women, like Catalina and María, both born

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<sup>13</sup> Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1990), 93.

<sup>14</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 67-71.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros: esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1989), 65-66.

<sup>17</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 69, 332n7.

at Neyba, were said to be about sixty. The youngest female who headed her own household was a single mother named Rosa, age fourteen, who had also been born in the settlement. She had a four-month-old daughter, Barbara . . . Eleven women and thirty-one men had once been the slaves of French masters. Some refugees bore French names and spoke some French and occasionally, some Spanish. Other, however, still bore African names such as Quamina, Macuba, and Musunga.<sup>18</sup>

Landers asserts that both men and women formed and sustained the Neyba community, despite epidemics like measles and dysentery. The account is also striking in documenting the settlement's absorption of runaways from both sides of the island, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. We will never get their full stories, but the women and children of Neyba do not remain invisible. Landers suggests some women might have gained a certain level of independence or status within the community. She notes that in the Chávez account, a woman named Rosa oversaw two plots of land, and possibly worked them alongside her father or father-in-law. Land was likely divided according to need, the ability to cultivate it, and age and seniority; a single mother like Rosa "usually had only a single plot of land."<sup>19</sup> This information is limited but supports the idea that maroon women in Hispaniola sometimes acted independently and had positions of some power.

The history of marronage in the Dominican Republic is understudied, and the history of marronage among women even more so.<sup>20</sup> The story of maroon women is better preserved in Haiti than in the D.R., but again to a limited degree, particularly in comparison to male maroons like Makandal and Boukman. In *Los guerrilleros negros: esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo* (1989), Deive recovers the stories of a couple of maroon women. In addition to Lucrecia Biáfara, who took flight while she was pregnant, Deive mentions a woman named Ana

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<sup>18</sup> Landers, "Maroon Women in Colonial Spanish America," 6. See also, Jane Landers, "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Communities," *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 237 - 238.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix A for information on "Cimarrones in Eastern Hispaniola."

María.<sup>21</sup> In an account focusing on the Nigua revolt, the rebel woman appears like a queen among two-hundred rebels.<sup>22</sup> The Nigua revolt took place on October 31, 1796 on the Juan Bautista Oyarbabal mill. The main leaders included Francisco Sopo, Antonio Carrertero, Pedro Viejo, Petit Juan, Tomas Congo, and Ana María, who was Carretero's wife. Sopo and Carretero were instrumental in organizing the rebellion, which conspired to kill all the mill officials and establish communication with three soldiers of Jean-François Papillon.

On a Sunday evening, "at the hour of prayer and the distribution of plantains," rebels attacked the Oyarzabal mill, ransacking the main residence, burning down the tile, ranch, and cane fields, and killing the livestock. Having seized weapons and ammunition, they positioned two canons in the direction of the anticipated military offense. They then organized themselves into infantry and cavalry units and planned to defeat the troops and then take over Haina and the San Jeronimo castle. The rebels celebrated on the night of their victory. Ana María takes center stage in the account: "extraordinarily well-dressed and joyful, seated under a canopy... she was treated as Queen and responded attentively, affectionately, with expressions of liberality."<sup>23</sup>

The day after the initial victory, a Spanish regiment and battalion crossed the Nigua River, eventually forcing the rebels to retreat and scatter throughout the colony. Ana María, as well as the other leaders of the revolt, were captured, hung, and dismembered. Sixty of their followers, men and women, were also captured, flogged in the pillory and prison, and condemned to serve in the mill with their feet and necks shackled. Deive notes the Nigua revolt

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<sup>21</sup> Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros*, 221-222.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. See also, Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, 72. Interestingly, the description of Ana María is very similar to a description of Cubah, a female maroon leader in what's described as Jamaica's "last true African-led uprising" of 1760: "The Coromantins had raised one Cubah, a female slave belonging to a Jewess, to the rank of royalty and dubbed her Queen of Kingston; at their meetings she sat in state under a canopy, with a sort of robe on her shoulders and a crown on her head."

occurred some miles from Santo Domingo. However, it involved collaboration between Haitian and Dominican rebels.

Although Ana María's account is important to the historical project of recovering maroon women's stories, it is but one account. The disappearance of maroon women in Dominican history becomes glaring when compared to the stories recovered in Haitian history: Lise, a midwife who took flight with an iron collar round her neck and "a withered right leg" Rosette, who fled a hundred times, according to a doctor's declaration; or the two unnamed women among thirteen men who attacked Thomas Bouchet at Nippes in 1758.<sup>24</sup> Another story tells of Zabeth, who repeatedly tried and failed to run away from a plantation in Western Haiti. An account from 1768 traces Zabeth's flights from January to April, saying she ran away multiple times, even after "three of her fingers were crushed in the rollers."<sup>25</sup> On one occasion, Zabeth was made to help dig her own grave, but this did not deter her. She ran away again and was caught. Thompson asks: "Was [Zabeth], for instance, raped, cruelly whipped or brutalized in some other way? Or did she observe such brutalities being meted out to her relatives?" Thompson probes Zabeth's motivation, wanting to understand what other factors shaped her profound desire for freedom. He speculates that trauma must have contributed to that desire, but we will never know the particulars of her desire or of Zabeth's full story.

Zabeth's fragmented story contrasts sharply with the stories of women closely tied to the Haitian Revolution and mentioned in the first two chapters of this dissertation. Joan Dayan's *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (1995) briefly focuses on Défilée, "the first to stand by [Dessalines] after his dismemberment," and someone who (it is sometimes argued) prevents or facilitates his

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<sup>24</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 73-74.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

transformation into a hero, martyr, priest, and iwa (godor spirit).<sup>26</sup> Dayan’s study states Défilée (also Dédée Bazile) was born in Cap-Français to slave parents, was raped by her master at eighteen, and lived “part of her youth in Port-au-Prince at Fort Saint-Clair, where she followed Dessalines as a sutler for the indigenous army.”<sup>27</sup> She descended into madness either when her parents were murdered, or when her sons and brothers enlisted in the army and were killed.

Défilée’s madness was apparently also influenced by her intense loyalty to Dessalines. Citing Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, Dayan underscores the woman’s “wild passion for Dessalines,” a passion that “exacerbated” the trauma caused by the killing of her family.<sup>28</sup> This account claims Défilée’s madness and unreciprocated love led her to “supply soldiers with sex.”<sup>29</sup> A 1955 account from Joseph Jérémie states Défilée’s mind became “unhinged” after the killing of her brothers.<sup>30</sup> Never the less, she continued following Dessalines’s army, gaining the name Défilée for the way she motivated soldiers as she cried out, “défilez, défilez [march, march].”<sup>31</sup> In this account, Défilée is motivated less by infatuation, than paternal love. When Dessalines was assassinated and dismembered by a mob, Défilée picked up his remains, put them in a sack—some versions say the folds of her skirt—and took them to the city cemetery. Some writers view this as a form of mutual salvation in which Dessalines’ remains are preserved and honored.<sup>32</sup> Défilée’s solitary act and her journey among the mob (“filled with those who thought themselves

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<sup>26</sup> Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 39-45.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-45, 287n4, 288n13, 293n84, 293n85, 293n86, 293n87, 294n96. See also: Jean Fouchard, *La Méringue: Danse nationale d’Haïti* (Montréal: Editions Leméac, Inc., 1974), 77 -80; Henock Trouillot, *Dessalines ou le sang du Pont-Rouge* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie des Antilles, 1967), 121, 129; Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d’Haïti (1492-1846)*, 8 vols (Port-au-Prince: Editions Henry Deschamps, 1989), vol. 3, 406; Beaubrun Ardouin, *Etudes sur l’histoire d’Haïti, suivies de la vie du Général J.-M. Borgella*, 2d ed. (1853-1860; reprint, Port-au-Prince: Chez l’éditeur François Dalencour 1958). , vol. 6, fn.1, 74; Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, *Retrospectives...Horizons* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie des Antilles, 1980), 392-393.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

sane”) highlights how she “moves among the mad” and is seemingly the only one sane enough to gather the leader’s body.<sup>33</sup> She becomes redeemed through this act. Défilée’s story is fragmented, and much of what we do know is contradictory.

Another key figure in the history of the female maroon is Cécile Fatiman, the priestess discussed in Chapter 2 in connection with the Bois-Caïman ceremony. As noted above, historians debate how active Fatiman was in the ceremony.<sup>34</sup> Regardless of the exact nature of her role, mythology has made her an important part of the Black Radical Tradition. Accounts describe Fatiman as “an old African woman with strange eyes and bristly hair, just as terrifying as her counterpart.”<sup>35</sup> In a nineteenth-century archive of a Haitian family, Fatiman is identified as a grandmother, a high priestess, as well as a participant in the Bois-Caïman ceremony. She is described as “a green-eyed mulatto woman with long silken black hair, [whose father was] a Corsican prince, [and whose mother was] an African woman.”<sup>36</sup> Sylviane A. Diouf suggests that Fatiman was named after the prophet Muhammad’s daughter.<sup>37</sup> Her speculation points to the understudied role of Islam in black rebellion. More broadly, Dayan argues that the lack of information around Fatiman exemplifies the invisibility of the mulatto women who fought alongside rebels like Boukman. Other women tied to the Haitian Revolution and Hispaniola’s history of resistance include:

The fierce Sanite Belair, who refused to be blindfolded during her execution, Marie-Jeanne Lamartinière, who led the indigènes in the extraordinary Battle of Crête-à-Pierrot... [and] Claire Heureuse (Marie Claire Félicité Guillaume Bonheur), Dessalines’ wife, who saved many of the French he had ordered massacred.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>34</sup> David Barry Gaspar and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Afterword,” *Babouk* (New York: Monthly Review, 1991)191-193. Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 29, 46, 47. Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros*, 197-199.

<sup>35</sup> Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1990), 93.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah*, (New Your University Press, 2013), 309n27.

<sup>38</sup> Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 47.

These rebel women advanced and sustained the revolution. Dayan describes their appearances as “interlude[s] in the business of history making,” reminding us to examine both what we know of these women, and how they are mentioned within a historical context.<sup>39</sup>

In Chapter 2, we saw that an active interweaving of fiction and history enabled Endore to imagine not just the gaps in Boukman’s story, but his place within the plantation system, within a larger capitalist system, and within European colonialism. Trouillot’s novella, though inspired by a historical account, depends on fiction to probe why and how enslaved women resisted in the context of the limited and biased historical archive. *The Infamous Rosalie* is worth studying because it is an example of how fiction helps us revisit the lives of enslaved and maroon women on Hispaniola and to grasp their lived, day-to-day struggles and triumphs, however big or small. As a number of scholars point out, numerous enslaved women across the Americas successfully escaped despite the odds. Some rebel women became spiritual leaders, sustained maroon communities, and performed both combatant as well as crucial non-combatant roles in maroon communities and revolts.<sup>40</sup> The interactions of Trouillot’s protagonist with different characters, and her gradual introduction into grand marronage illustrates the diverse forms of resistance she exercises against colonial forces.

#### *Lisette: Rebel Woman on the Road Heading West*

Évelyne Trouillot’s *The Infamous Rosalie* takes place during Makandal’s rebellion. It focuses on a young, literate creole slave who hides in plain sight to move around the Fayot plantation. She is someone who empathizes with individuals and their pain, and who, ultimately,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 75.

becomes a vessel in which others are “joined” to her.<sup>41</sup> Trouillot’s text departs from masculinist narratives that reimagine the Great Fear of 1757: Guy Endore’s *Babouk* (1934); C.L.R. James’s *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938); Alejo Carpentier’s *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of This World)* (1949); and Manuel Rueda’s *Las metamorfosis de Makandal (Makandal’s Metamorphoses)* (1998). *The Infamous Rosalie* magnifies the ordinary lives of a number of individuals including Paladin, who is charged with attempting to poison his master and burned alive in front of his children; Michaud, a literate and former overseer who lives among the disabled enslaved, having cut off his hand, and who acts as “an intermediary for slaves”; and Samuel, who is injured during a hunting accident with master Fayot and dies before he can become “a hairstylist, tailor . . . a man.”<sup>42</sup> Readers come to know these people through Lisette’s story which is intimately rendered in the first-person. Very few of these characters survive, but through them readers learn different forms of resistance that existed under slavery on Hispaniola: poison, suicide, self-mutilation, fighting, flight, abortion, slave revolts, and cultural preservation.<sup>43</sup> These characters also make the reader acutely aware of the odds against Lisette, not only because of the difficult experiences she has to endure, but also the impossible choices she has to make: whether to keep a child she conceives with the man she loves, whether to flee and leave those most dear to her, or whether to kill a fellow slave who betrays her.

Like *Babouk*, *The Infamous Rosalie* explores experiences of the Middle Passage and takes its inspiration from history. However, it magnifies the distinctive situations and experiences female slaves negotiated and the diverse forms of resistance that they employed in doing so. Trouillot’s novella is inspired by the tale of an Arada midwife from the Rossignol-

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<sup>41</sup> Évelyne Trouillot’s, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 95.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Paladin, 3-5; Michaud, 15, 16, 18, 19; Samuel, 56-58.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-19; 31-33; 49-50; 55.

Desdunes plantation in the Artibonite district, a woman who committed seventy acts of infanticide in the eighteenth-century.<sup>44</sup> During her trial, she displayed a rope necklace made of knots for each child she “remove[d] from the shameful institution of slavery.”<sup>45</sup> She explained one of her methods, which involved inserting a needle into a baby’s soft spot or “fontanel.”<sup>46</sup> The procedure caused lockjaw and led to the infant’s death in a matter of days. Cases of infanticide became so widespread in Haiti that the Upper Council of Le Cap banned women of color from performing midwifery in 1757.<sup>47</sup>

The Saint-Domingue-born Lisette of *The Infamous Rosalie* is from a long line of African-born Arada women. Among them are the protagonist’s mother Ayouba (also called Rose), her great-aunt Brigitte, her grandmother Charlotte, and her godmother Ma Augustine, all of whom survived the barracoons and the Middle Passage aboard the slave vessel *The Rosalie*.<sup>48</sup>

Grandmother Charlotte and Ma Augustine play pivotal roles in the novella. They preserve the memory of Lisette’s heritage and relatives, connecting the protagonist to her mother, great-aunt, and even her father Storm—none of whom she knew. The main character draws strength from these individuals. She also inherits their pain, describing herself as “a prisoner of a past [she hasn’t] lived.”<sup>49</sup> As the protagonist negotiates Hispaniola society, she contends both with present-day horrors, and the horrors her family’s past experiences within the barracoons and aboard *The Rosalie*.<sup>50</sup> At the climax of Trouillot’s novella, Lisette discovers that her great-aunt

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 131. See also Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 48, 287n12.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 287n12.

<sup>48</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 24, 131.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 69.

Brigitte was executed on the island for committing seventy acts of infanticide.<sup>51</sup> The protagonist summons Brigitte's will each time she takes out her great-aunt's cord.<sup>52</sup>

Lisette is profoundly affected by the deaths of Gracieuse and Fontilus; the slaves around her talk of how their spirits "actively seek" the protagonist.<sup>53</sup> Gracieuse, Madame Fayot's cocotte, dies after her seventh abortion. Fontilius, a trained mason and Lisette's dancing childhood friend, hangs himself. After Fontilus's death, the main character takes out her great-aunt's cord more and more. It is also Gracieuse's words that the protagonist recalls when she realizes that she must act or "nothing will change."<sup>54</sup> Gradually, Lisette becomes a go-between, acting as a link between Michaud and the families of maroons, and eventually becoming a "maroon in training."<sup>55</sup> She conceives a child with Vincent The Fearless One, a maroon and her love, and she decides that her daughter will be "born free and rebellious."<sup>56</sup> Her flight, though, is met with betrayal. Hoping to secure her and her daughter's freedom within the year, Clarisse gives master Fayot the names of slaves plotting against him, including Lisette. During her confrontation with Clarisse, the protagonist strangles Clarisse and hides her body. Lisette then takes flight "on the wide road heading west."<sup>57</sup>

### *From Lisette's Inner-Metamorphoses to Physical Flight*

As a creole slave, Lisette is thought by her masters to be more pliable than if she were an African-born slave. Her narrative exists to challenge this mythology and to connect the fate of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 95, 124.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 127-129

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 121.

Creole women with a larger collectivity of women. The colonial representation of the “Creole Negro” as docile was based on the negation of “civilization, culture, religion, history, place, and humanity.”<sup>58</sup> From the opening pages of the novella, Trouillot crafts a protagonist who defies the stereotypes of the docile Creole. The main character recalls telling Grandma Charlotte that she was “Sarah’s [the Fayot’s daughter’s] Negress.”<sup>59</sup> Grandma Charlotte is swift to rebuke her, slapping her across the face and saying that “Arada women belong to no one.”<sup>60</sup> The protagonist is identified as a descendent from the larger Arada nation or kingdom, originally found in the Gulf of Guinea as well as Ghana, Togo, Benin, and western Nigeria.<sup>61</sup> She is reminded that she possesses a proud past and is part of a dignified collective. The memory of Grandma Charlotte’s slap underscores Lisette’s association within a collective of African-born rebel women, Arada women who nurture Lisette’s spirit of resistance and her self-affirmation. The matriarch’s wakeup call forces the young woman to rethink her assumptions and to become more aware of her heritage and her autonomy. Grandma Charlotte’s sharp act is described as more powerful than the whip in its ability to motivate the protagonist.

The experience forever marks Lisette. She questions her place in the world and becomes someone who “refuses all servility.”<sup>62</sup> Ma Augustine, also a pivotal figure, reinforces this connection by telling Lisette that she is a Creole who carries “the gestures of the Arada race.”<sup>63</sup> The term “gestures” suggests that even if Lisette is not entirely conscious of the Arada culture that has shaped her, it lives in her body and in her actions. At the end of the novella Lisette tells Ma Augustine that her unborn child will be an Arada girl like the women in the family, and like

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<sup>58</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 81.

<sup>59</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 4.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 26.

<sup>62</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 7.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 9.

the protagonist herself., Ma Augustine, seeming to correct her, replies, “[She will be] a Creole like you.”<sup>64</sup> Here the term “creole” is reappropriated at the end of the novella and made into a signifier of cultural identity. In “The ‘Invisible’ Black Woman in Caribbean History,” Barbara Bush writes:

If slaves failed to resist the process of alienation which was inherent in the slave system, they faced ‘psychic annihilation’. The preservation of cultural identity was paramount to survival. An indispensable aspect of that identity was the existence of strong kinship bonds between slaves, for these were an emotional anchor for otherwise dispossessed human beings. Was the black woman, as the pivot of the slave family, instrumental in preventing this ‘psychic annihilation?’<sup>65</sup>

Both Bush and Trouillot suggest that enslaved women played major roles in impeding the “psychic annihilation” of other slaves, male and female. Lisette’s bond with the women in her family not only sustains her, but also cultivates her inner life and her will to resist. Borrowing a term from Bush, Lisette is made culturally resistant not only when Grandma Charlotte elicits psychic resistance and impedes social death, but also when she’s told about her family’s past, however painful, however full of “veneration and repulsion.”<sup>66</sup>

Psychological marronage is perhaps a more useful term for understanding Lisette’s process of self-affirmation, which is often nurtured by the women who surround her. As mentioned in Chapter 2, psychological marronage or self-in-marronage manifests itself in the way Babouk preserves, invents, or builds upon stories. In addition to this, Babouk garners inner-resistance by taking an internal flight that which gives him the space to heal, to listen, and to acquire language. Lisette as the narrator of *The Infamous Rosalie* does not invent stories in the same way as Babouk. Instead psychological marronage can be seen in the way she explores and slowly reveals her family’s story, as well as bears witness to other individuals’ stories through

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>65</sup> Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, 7-8.

<sup>66</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 31. For more on “social death,” see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Harvard University Press, 1982).

the written and spoken word. Lisette recalls the “unusually monotonous voice” her Grandmother Charlotte used when revisiting the memory of the barracoons.<sup>67</sup> The Grandmother says:

TR, the initials of the slave ship, the only letters I ever learned, were from the ship that brought me here. The Rosalie. Your eyes tell me that you would have wanted me to learn other letters, to understand the need to play with those forms, to use them and develop a complicit intimacy with them. For me it’s too late: the alphabet will always embody the character of hell.”<sup>68</sup>

Lisette is influenced by an oral tradition, and by the written tradition. On one level, this passage illustrates the brutality of a written language, imposed systematically, culturally, and physically. The passage also emphasizes the importance of orality as an alternative way of communicating, one that is connected to “the simple joy that existed before.”<sup>69</sup>

Whenever Grandma Charlotte or Ma Augustine initiates an oral tradition, there is a reciprocity that lends agency to Lisette. For example, Lisette tells the reader how she would wait for Charlotte’s silence, which gave her “permission to choose [her] story for that day.”<sup>70</sup> Although Lisette is aware of the stories that the matriarchs refuse to tell or are not ready to reveal, she selects, listens to, and reflects upon their stories. In doing so she learns about her family, their painful past, their acts of resistance, and their dignity. She is also learning about herself. Paradoxically, internal flight relies on others.

Yet Charlotte also acknowledges the important role of literacy in the protagonist’s life, despite some of the painful memories it holds for her. We can make the leap that Trouillot’s novella is simultaneously written by and spoken by the main character. It is a text that actively garners stories to reflect the protagonist’s unique position as a Creole and Arada woman who values both orality and literacy. Rather than creating her own stories, Lisette weaves together the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>68</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 80.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

stories of other people, creating a larger narrative that testifies to a community of rebels. In the telling and writing of these stories, Lisette implores her audience to listen and to read these “stories tinged with revolt and despair,” because they might find themselves “prisoners of a past [and a present],” and need “courage to soar . . . and hold on to the stars.”<sup>71</sup> Women’s experiences and acts of resistance feature prominently in the network that Lisette constructs. They challenge the invisibility of slave women in Caribbean history and literature, and complicate our understanding of the ways these women resisted slavery. Lisette’s listeners join a collective of females individuals who span the island. In reading *The Infamous Rosalie* and Lisette’s narrative, the reader too is invited to join this tradition of resistance.

In *The Infamous Rosalie*, psychological marronage is seen notably through Lisette’s interactions with the women who surround her. These women remind her of her cultural legacy, encouraging her to question and reflect and resist. In other words, although psychological marronage is illustrated as “internal dis-ease,” the process of self-affirmation and self-assertion is cultivated by a larger collective of rebel women.<sup>72</sup> The protagonist’s process of self-affirmation, aided by the matriarchs in her family, is also very different from Babouk’s. The things she does not know—most notably the mystery surrounding her aunt Brigitte—also motivates her to probe the past. The main character inherits a past made up of a collectivity of rebel women, most notably great aunt Brigitte. This is the great-aunt whose “name is like a talisman” that protects the protagonist, and who Lisette is said to resemble, for she is “as beautiful as [her] great-aunt” and possesses her “irrepressible will to be proud and free.”<sup>73</sup> The main character pieces together

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 122-123.

<sup>72</sup> Gordon Rohlehr, “Articulating a Caribbean Aesthetic: The Revolution of Self-Perception,” *My Strangled City and Other Essays* (Longman Trinidad Limited, 1992), 1-3.

<sup>73</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 8, 69, 86.

the fragments of Brigitte's story, including the anger Brigitte displays in the barracoons when she tears "apart the fabric [that she'd] been given to cover [her] most intimate body parts."<sup>74</sup>

For most of the novella, a mystery obscures the memory of Brigitte. Specifically, Lisette is not told about a time before the Fayot plantation, on the Montreuil plantation, and the circumstances of Brigitte's death. She asks of Ma Augustine and Grandma Charlotte, "What does their silence mean – this silence that intrigues and confounds me?"<sup>75</sup> Towards the end of the text, Lisette learns that Brigitte had managed to get Augustine, Charlotte, and a pregnant Ayouba (Lisette's mother) sold to Fayot. Two days later, she turned herself in to the constabulary, confessing to the seventy acts of infanticide.<sup>76</sup> Lisette also learns that she encountered death even before she was born. Without regret, her great aunt declared that her "work" was finished, since her love for Ayouba caused her to lack the "courage" to spare Lisette the terror of slavery.<sup>77</sup> Ma Augustine struggles at first to reveal Brigitte's story, almost pleading for the protagonist not to "condemn" the aunt that she so resembles.<sup>78</sup>

The reality of Brigitte's "work" draws both "veneration and repulsion," because it seems to go against and uphold natural law, to be both inhumane and merciful.<sup>79</sup> A number of scholars argue that acts like abortion or infanticide enabled women to resist the mechanisms of slavery and to exercise control over their bodies and their children's bodies.<sup>80</sup> In his seminal work *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), Paul Gilroy examines "the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>80</sup> Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*, 139-142. See also, Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, (Harvard University Press, 1993) 63.

necessity of violence in the cause of black emancipation.”<sup>81</sup> He argues that forms of “counter-violence,” such as infanticide, can be a form of agency. He adds that “a preference for death” or suicide as a reaction to the “terror and bondage” of slavery became a “necessary violence” that enabled slaves to exert power over their bodies and to determine their futures.<sup>82</sup> In other words, a terrorized body and soul was reclaimed through suicide.

Gilroy examines the 1856 accounts that document Margaret Garner’s attempted escape in Kentucky, a tragedy that influenced Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987).<sup>83</sup> Garner fled with her family members and nine other slaves when the Ohio River froze in January of that year. The escape was short lived, for Garner and her family were tracked and trapped by slave catchers at their relative’s home. Much like Brigitte, who preferred her sons dead than enslaved, Garner killed her three-year-old daughter with a butcher knife and attempted to kill her three remaining children. Challenging traditional concepts of freedom, Gilroy argues that infanticide is an “emancipatory act” that delegitimized slavery and more specifically the “perversion of maternity.”<sup>84</sup>

Aunt Brigitte is a paradigm of a resistance in how she physically resists her captors after witnessing the killing of her two sons, and is labeled the most dangerous among the slaves aboard *The Rosalie*.<sup>85</sup> She is also paradigmatic in how she exercises psychic resistance on the island by declaring her boys “better dead, than slaves.”<sup>86</sup> She spares children from suffering and delegitimizes slavery through infanticide. Moreover, she dies on her own terms by turning herself into the constabulary. In her last words she declares that “she never regretted what she

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 63.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 64-68.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>85</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, trans. M. A. Salvodon, 27-28.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 11.

did.”<sup>87</sup> The mystery around Brigitte’s actions makes Lisette curious about the past and its threads in the present. Lisette seeks out Brigitte’s will through her cord, which is a physical manifestation of rebellion.

Brigitte’s cord, her “mercy and hell,” is a repeated image in the book.<sup>88</sup> It is associated with her and with Lisette, for it appears most often in the young protagonist’s hands. The main character summons Brigitte’s will each time she takes out her great-aunt’s cord, which she keeps hidden among her most treasured objects.<sup>89</sup> As the Great Fear is underway, Lisette realizes that she’ll have to “confront a new menace” because more and more slaves are being accused of poisoning their masters and being burned alive.<sup>90</sup> She tells the reader: “I suffer from all the mysteries that surround me, from the stories that reveal themselves as pain comes and goes, from the days ahead that seem to extend immense tentacles of despair and anger.”<sup>91</sup> The protagonist’s anguish is sustained by those stories she inherits; by the torture and beatings; by the many deaths she has seen and mourned; and by what she knows about Brigitte. She exclaims, “My memory is already full of so many dead! . . . One after the other, starting in the dry season and continuing all the way into the rainy season.”<sup>92</sup>

Death is imminent for the main character and for those she loves, including Vincent, Ma Victor, and Fontilus. Death is also a real possibility for characters like Gracieuse, a cocotte who incites rage in Lisette and who on the surface seems to be slightly better off. In an interlude between the present and the past, the protagonist takes out her garde-corps, a kind of talisman Grandma Charlotte gave her, as well Brigitte’s cord, her second talisman. She actively “roll[s]

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 22.

the roughly tight knots . . . between her fingers.”<sup>93</sup> The tactile quality of the cord and the ritual of moving the knots as though in a cycle comfort and anchor Lisette, taking her thoughts in another direction. She recalls washing the cord, much like her aunt used to wash it, but not knowing its full story. For Trouillot, objects are able to comfort and to cause reflection. After Fontilus’s death, the main character takes out her talisman more frequently. She “worr[ies] the knots, as if the cord were a long rosary of hidden regrets.”<sup>94</sup> Lisette’s ritual recalls the Catholic rosary, a devotional aid used to count prayers and pray to God through the Virgin Mary.

When praying the Mysteries of the Rosary, a devotee meditates on the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Lisette instead counts her regrets and the things that fill her with sadness, disappointment, and even shame. Her physical interaction with the cord intensifies as the story continues. She touches the knots obsessively, projecting her anxiety onto them. “Worrying,” in this sense, is a meditative ritual that enables Lisette to become more mindful of life, death, and there afterlife. Through this ritual, the protagonist seeks a material and spiritual connection to her aunt. This invocation is a kind of resurrection, for the cord comes to symbolize continuity and freedom. Brigitte does not outwit death like Carpentier’s François Makandal, who in mythology was transformed into a mosquito when he was burned alive. Rather, her spirit lives on in Lisette. When Ma Augustine looks at the cord she is reluctant to handle it. Her reluctance is “a warning [Lisette] sees reflected in her eyes.”<sup>95</sup> Ma Augustine’s caution affirms the cord’s significance and symbolism.

Despite suppressing a “warning,” Ma Augustine finally tells Lisette the story of her great aunt’s cord. The protagonist discovers that the cord can bring death, but in her case it ensured life. Abortion and infanticide are ways for Brigitte to refuse slavery. Pregnant with Vincent’s

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

child, Lisette knows she has a difficult choice, but it is a choice none-the-less. Her rebellion is choosing life for her baby girl, but only if she is born “free and rebellious.”<sup>96</sup> These are the terms that Brigitte’s actions have determined. Lisette’s decision to spare her daughter’s life is made not after she has decided to flee and join Vincent, but rather when she comes to the realization that Ma Augustine will die soon after she runs away. Here we return to a larger legacy that situates Lisette in a woman-centered collective. Aunt Brigitte’s cord, yes, is symbolic of “mercy and hell,” but it also symbolizes the bond she shared with Ayouba and with the protagonist.<sup>97</sup> Aunt Brigitte spared Lisette’s life because of the attachment and love she felt for her niece. Love, life, creation, fertility, and beauty are all concepts associated with Ayouba’s second name, Rose. As Lisette flees, she acknowledges the cord as a reminder “of the promise of love and dignity.”<sup>98</sup> The reappearance of Brigitte’s cord and the protagonist’s interactions with it signal the move from psychological marronage to physical marronage. This transformation, though, is dependent on a larger collective of women.

After revealing Brigitte’s past, the rhythm of the story becomes faster paced, and Lisette begins to take a more active role in organized resistance. She is part of a circle of women that very few men gain entrance into. The circle extends beyond Lisette’s family and immediate community. Lisette declares:

I hold a single truth: the promise I make to the small being inside me, in the name of everyone who took me by the hand to teach me about the steerage of *The Infamous Rosalie* and the thousand roundabout paths shame can take, everyone who showed me the many milky ways where my need for dignity could soar. It’s my turn now to walk with my daughter, who will be born free, like me, from this land of waves and mountains and whose fate is anchored in the four corners of this island.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 128-129.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 117-118.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 128-129.

Through the repetition of “everyone,” Lisette acknowledges a collective that has shown her the different ways to outmaneuver and ultimately defy the physical and psychological fetters of servitude. The idea of self-worth is also underscored here, and repeated throughout the story. As shown previously, this sense of self-worth is something elicited in the main character by the matriarchs in her family.

Trouillot maps the Black Radical Tradition’s evolution from the barracoons, to the bowels of *The Rosalie*, to Hispaniola. She places particular importance on its practice from generation to generation, and on the role that women have played in its preservation. The passage quoted above makes clear that Lisette has inherited this tradition and will ensure its continuation. Trouillot expands this vision to the “four corners” of Hispaniola and the waters that hug its coasts. The island’s destiny is dependent not only upon Lisette and her child, but also upon a greater unnamed collective that stretches across the island like the mountain range *Massif du Nord* or *Cordillera Central*. Trouillot’s text emphasizes the role that women play in this collective.

In Trouillot’s novella, the main character’s internal unease is both cultivated and inherited and underscores the division between public Lisette and private Lisette. From the opening pages of the story, the protagonist makes readers aware of how she manipulates her appearance and behavior to gain “greater freedom of movement.”<sup>100</sup> This skill is one she hones throughout the text, and one that enables her to garner agency before she runs away. We return to the main character’s declaration, a declaration that encompasses this idea of psychological marronage:

Dwelling within me is my true vision, the one that refuses all servility, that glides over the damask tablecloth, Madame’s gold jewelry, the bottles of wine . . . My movements

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

are mechanical: I set the dishes Ma Augustine hands me on the table, I remove the empty glasses. I barely eat, so I can be free during the nap my master and mistress take.<sup>101</sup>

Lisette acknowledges a division between her public persona and her inner self. Here, the protagonist performs submission and obedience in order to survive. But she is hyperaware of the fact that she is playing a role. Ironically, the main character describes her movements as “mechanical,” as if they are robotic or involuntary, even though each action is a careful deliberation. The term “mechanical” also suggests a lack of feeling in the character, but Lisette’s performance stands in stark contrast to her emotionally charged declaration at the beginning of the passage.

The protagonist masks her authentic self, highlighting how this self resides permanently within her, despite the public persona she sustains. The aforementioned passage underscores a level of self-control and tact that Lisette possesses, illustrated not only in her mechanical movements, but also in the way her rebellious spirit “glides” over the objects and people before her.<sup>102</sup> Lisette’s “true vision” is not static, but rather is a smooth, continuous, and soundless spirit that exists just beneath the surface of the “mealtime” playing out. Notably, the main character describes her “true vision” not only gliding over the immediate scene, but also in her surroundings: “the patios . . . the clipped hedges . . . the fields of sugarcane . . . the workrooms, the Negroes’ gardens that extend all the way to the mountains.”<sup>103</sup> These details define a private Lisette who knows the many spaces she needs to maneuver in order to exercise agency, to act. There is a sense of suspense in the way her “true vision” moves silently, unflustered, and undetected. Ultimately, self-control enables the main character to practice invisibility in plain

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

sight and among those who pose real danger to her.<sup>104</sup> Lisette's power of invisibility is underscored in the follow passage:

As a well-trained domestic on the Fayot plantation who is probably worth thousands of pounds, I supervise the work of two young slaves, and the masters' visitors are impressed by my good manners. I bow my head when I am given orders, and sometimes I dodge slaps and ignore insults. Yet inside me big and unruly movements go unbridled . . .<sup>105</sup>

Again, Lisette's narration draws attention to the contrast between her public persona and her inner being. Aware of her own objectification, she underscores those qualities perceived to add to her value to the master: she is strained, mannered, dutiful, and tractable enough that the Fayots trust her to supervise other slaves and to keep their secrets. The terms "unruly" and "unbridled" reinforce the idea that Lisette's internal unease has evolved to the point of action. Psychological marronage will soon translate into a more active and outward form of rebellion.

The protagonist possesses a rebellious spirit from the very beginning of this story. She resists slavery in different ways: by maintaining her public persona; by escaping periodically to see Vincent; by developing inner-resistance and self-affirmation; by probing the past and reflecting on the present; by biting Monsieur Raoul on the arm when he rapes her; and by filing away information that could be of use.<sup>106</sup> These forms of resistance are incremental. They accumulate until Lisette struggles to maintain her public persona. After Gracieuse's death, and aware of the impending danger to Vincent, she confesses:

When I look at myself in the mirror, whether in the small broken mirror piece that Grandma Charlotte gave me or in the big, oval mirror in the mahogany frame on Madame's dressing table, I find that I can't quite recognize myself. My enormous, worried eyes fill up the space, and I back away at the sight of their fire. My nostrils quiver by themselves, as if I no longer had control over them, and my lips are parted, eager and impatient.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-123.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 32, 39.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96.

At this point, the main character has been exercising psychological marronage and acting as an “intermediary between Michaud and the families of the maroons.” Recalling Gracieuse’s warning, Lisette become suspicious of those in the “Big House,” including slaves who have suffered alongside her.

In the passage above, the protagonist describes two visions of herself: a self not fully revealed, her “true vision” reflected in Charlotte’s fragmented mirror, and a seemingly more intact image, her public persona, reflected in the Madame’s mirror. The repeated image of the mirror, like the cord, becomes a symbol for meditation, an object that forces Lisette to engage in thought and reflection because she does not see herself fully reflected in either mirror. In other words, suppressing her “true vision” has become too difficult, and this struggle manifests itself both internally and physically. Earlier in the story, the main character says she is able to control the “fluttering of eyelids.”<sup>108</sup> The tension in the passage arises from not just the concern that Lisette struggles to hide, but also from the “fire” that her eyes possess.

Fire is synonymous with rebellion. It is also symbolic of transformation, of evolving from one state to another. The passage marks a turning point for the character in which Lisette’s inner-resistance must evolve into external acts of marronage. She fully embraces her inner-self as she abandons her “mask of the attractive Creole woman . . . [her] lace-and crinoline smile, [her] gait of intoxicating fruit,” and moves to confronting her “terror.”<sup>109</sup> The protagonist evolves from being a go-between to becoming a seasoned spy, “spy[ing] as efficiently as [she] serves.”<sup>110</sup> Lisette’s resistance not only becomes more active and outward, but it also takes different forms as she evolves from a spy to a “maroon-in-training.”<sup>111</sup> The protagonist continues to bring the

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

former overseer information she garners at the dinners she serves and records the masters' movements, and she also meets with maroons.

Much of the protagonist's strength stems from her capacity for empathy. This ability to understand, share, and even absorb the feelings of other individuals is developed to the point where Lisette "inhabits" individuals and their pain, ultimately becoming a vessel where others are "joined" within her.<sup>112</sup> Although readers witness the main character's public performance, they most often encounter her inner thoughts, and, in turn, witness her internal transformation. Shifting from her public to her private persona, the protagonist acknowledges that survival is often dependent on "look[ing] away" from those who weep or suffer under "lashes and slice."<sup>113</sup> Yet Lisette never becomes numb to the multiple cruelties she sees and experiences. The main character's capacity for empathy strikes us in the first couple of pages of the text as she runs in and out of a labyrinth of shacks and makes her way to Madame Clementine Fayot. As we witness her movements, we are met with the death of Paladin. An enslaved father, Paladin was charged with poisoning and was burned alive in front of Lisette, his two daughters Lolotte and Marinette, and a group of slaves. The protagonist tells us:

I inhabit the final spasms of Paladin, whose face, before it was turned into a mask of horror by the sizzling stake, I'm unable to reconstruct. I inhabit the fingers of this same man as he plucks the strings of his *banza* on a night of *calendas*, with the music enchanting us. I inhabit the streaks that disfigure him, from his shoulder to his ribs, long tracks of raised welts swollen with memories of the hot branding irons, and their imprints, of belonging and suffering. I inhabit the *chica*, dancing under the bower, prisoner of the advancing hour and the stars that herald the end of our illusory freedom.<sup>114</sup>

The passage above stands in sharp contrast with the dinner scene that follows, a scene in which the main character dutifully fulfills her public persona by serving the Fayots. Lisette's flashback plummets her into an intense re-experiencing of Paladin's death and music. The repetition of the

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-3.

word “inhabit” emphasizes the main character’s reliving of Paladin’s death and life, and denotes a kind of permanence to this reliving. The imagery of the passage underscores the collapsing of time, as well as the intensity of the memories. Paladin’s disfigured face and deteriorating body are contrasted with the magnification of his hands skillfully producing music that makes the main character feel (momentarily at least) an illusion of freedom.

Death is contrasted with the vibrancy of life found in the staccato of Paladin’s rhythm and the feet that respond. This contrast underscores the fact that the protagonist is more than empathetic. She seems to actually relive and feel Paladin’s pain and the pleasure he elicits through his music. Lisette’s re-experience mimics the contractions of Paladin’s body: a contrast between his involuntarily movements to the deliberate movements of his fingers; a fluctuation between pain and pleasure, death and life, or enslavement and some sense of freedom; and an oscillation between present and past. This back and forth not only lends tension to this scene, but illustrates a main character in suspension, an agent that bears witness to and inhabits Paladin, contending with these fluctuations. The protagonist comes close to possessing spiritual powers through her ability to inhabit others, to predict the future, and to influence others. On different occasions, Lisette’s association with a larger Arada collective marks her as a woman who can possibly “predict the future” and “foresee misfortune.”<sup>115</sup> She describes “this strange uneasiness, like the threat of rain with no forewarning wind, an unlocatable itch, or a shooting pain playing hide-and-seek in [her] body.”<sup>116</sup> A foreboding seizes Lisette without warning or a clear source, and leads her to interrogate, for example, Fontilus’s “suffering and [the] bitterness in [his] laughter.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 40.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

Later in the text Fontilus takes his own life, and readers are left to wonder whether Lisette foresaw his death. A moment like this makes us wonder if the protagonist is exercising empathy, intuition, psychic ability, or a mix of these. Robin D.G. Kelley argues that Cedric J. Robinson's text opens up a space to better understand why influential female rebels were endowed with spiritual powers.<sup>118</sup> Trouillot illuminates a different avenue, more notably how ordinary women could be influential rebels—whether endowed with spiritual powers or not. Lisette's ability to inhabit others and to predict the future is never explicitly defined. In other words, Trouillot carefully crafts a character who possesses the potential to exercise these powers and to various degrees, but who never gains a mythical status like François Makandal. The author seems more interested in how an ordinary enslaved woman could survive and resist without spiritual armaments overshadowing her humanity. This move towards resisting a mythical status becomes even more apparent if we compare Lisette with the infamous Makandal, who appears as a secondary character in the text.

Trouillot references Makandal's death in *The Infamous Rosalie*, but she moves away from mythologizing the figure and instead emphasizes ordinary individuals like Lisette. Both Guy Endore and Trouillot stress that Makandal was not saved from the burning stake. In Trouillot's novella, Makandal is invoked as "a single name" that "returns again and again."<sup>119</sup> He remains in the backdrop of the main narrative, never overshadowing Lisette. However, his death is a monumental event for the protagonist and her co-conspirators. One character, Zamor, validates the maroon leader's death through his eyewitness account:

The one-armed man had rushed out of the fire . . . The poor slaves who were there began to exclaim with joy. Their triumphant cries of "Makandal escaped! Makandal escaped!" burst forth without restraint . . . They caught the one-armed man and bound him to a

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<sup>118</sup> Kelley, "Foreword," *Black Marxism*, xx-xxi.

<sup>119</sup> Trouillot, *The Infamous Rosalie*, 50.

plank. They put him back in the fire, in front of all the slaves standing there . . . This time Makandal did not rush out of the fire . . . “Makandal is really dead.”<sup>120</sup>

In this version of Makandal’s death, the slave masses have a profound hope of seeing him escape, to believe that “he is stronger than fire.”<sup>121</sup> This hope, ultimately extinguished, coexists with a sense of the unexpected. Both hope and surprise are manifested not just in “the poor slaves exclamations” that “burst forth” as Makandal leaps out of the fire, but also in the retelling of the moment of the maroon leader’s death.

Lisette and the other characters who listen to Zamor will not believe that Makandal is mortal until his death is confirmed. Trouillot writes: “You see, Makandal is dead. We burned him, and he did not turn into a mosquito. He is dead. Makandal is dead.”<sup>122</sup> Through repetition, Trouillot stresses his mortality, reminding the reader that despite the belief in his powers, Makandal was flesh-and-blood man. His death instigated resistance, but also “whip[ped] a wind of panic” that caused slaves to inform on each other.<sup>123</sup>

The myth of Makandal is sustained by the characters’ desire for his immortality. Yet, in *The Infamous Rosalie*, this myth has to be extinguished for resistance to take another form, for Lisette to see that “nothing will change unless [the oppressed] do something.”<sup>124</sup> In this respect, Makandal in the story is a martyr, but one whose death generates a mix of resistance, renewed fear and helplessness, and even distrust among some of the enslaved. Through this scene and through the representation of Lisette’s inner world and community, Trouillot suggests that the Black Radical Tradition was never dependent on one leader, however mythical, or on male agents of change. Rather, the text illustrates how the Black Radical Tradition was preserved

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-103.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

through diverse acts of resistance carried out by a mass of invisible and ordinary men and women.

In *The Infamous Rosalie*, we have a protagonist who implores us to probe Hispaniola's past and to unearth the inner lives of rebel women across Hispaniola. Currently there is a move towards unearthing the lives, ideas, and writings of women from the late 1700s and onwards in the Dominican Republic. Yet what about those rebel women who came before? What do these freedom fighters look like across space and time? In what other ways do they preserve and recreate the Black Radical Tradition? Through fiction, Trouillot complicates ideas of internal flight. The author also illustrates how one woman can inherit, develop, and transmit the Black Radical Tradition. She shows us that the reinterpretation and evolution of this Tradition is vital to its preservation. But marronage is not practiced solely within Lisette's being. Trouillot's text challenges historical accounts asserting that women did not voluntarily run away. More importantly, it tries to understand women's unique circumstances, their forms of active resistance, of invention, and, yes, of love, despite the odds. In *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* (1998), the maroon becomes a figure who unites Haiti and Dominican Republic.. I suspect that Lisette, if she were viewed in the same way, would inspire thousands of Dominicans and Haitians, especially girls who do not see themselves reflected in official history.

## Chapter 4: On and Off the Island: The Modern-Day, Time-Traveling, Transnational Maroon

Romaine Rivière (Romain-la-prophetessé) a free black or griffe . . . of Spanish origin . . . claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and in direct communication with the Virgin Mary . . . A self-styled prophet who also practiced herb medicine, he no doubt was seen in the eyes of many a slave to be endowed with some sort of supernatural power.

- Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*

The similarities between Romaine Rivière in the epigraph above and twentieth-century historical figures in Hispaniola inspire this chapter. In late 1791, Riviere, a free-colored man of Spanish origin, organized a rebellion and rose as a religious leader of slave insurrections in the southern area of Léogane and Jacmel.<sup>1</sup> Described as a shaman, he led mass before an upside down cross in an abandoned church. With a “saber in hand,” he preached to his acolytes that God was black and that the white population needed to be eliminated<sup>2</sup>. Often, he told his followers that the French king had already freed them; the masters, he said, would not follow through with the king’s orders. The prophet claimed to be the godson of the Virgin Mary, who he claimed responded to his solicitations in writing.<sup>3</sup>

Romaine’s form of worship diverged from “genuine African voodoo practices.”<sup>4</sup> His appropriation of the Virgin Mary was “more characteristically Kongolese than Creole.”<sup>5</sup> For example, the leader’s claim that he was related to and in direct communication with the Virgin is “typical of Kongo prophets.”<sup>6</sup> In contrast, individuals who practice *African-Domingois*, a popular religion conceived in the Kingdom of Kongo and practiced in Haiti, appealed to saints or

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<sup>1</sup> Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1990), 127-128.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Terry Rey, “The Virgin Mary and Revolution in Saint-Domingue: The Charisma of Romaine-La-Prophétesse.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* (Vol. 11, no. 3, 1998), 343-344.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

notable figures from the bible.<sup>7</sup> Romaine practiced and preserved the Black Radical Tradition. Like Makandal and Boukman, he “possessed the truth.”<sup>8</sup> During the U.S. Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24), two Romaine-like leaders emerged. François Borgia Charlemagne Péralte and Olivorio Mateo Ledesma used religion to inspire their followers in the fight against U.S. occupying forces. Yet unlike Romaine, who remained a prophet, Péralte was transformed into a *loa* (god), and Dios Olivorio would be “reborn” or resurrected in generations of Dominicans.<sup>9</sup>

In this chapter I interrogate the modern-day maroon as s/he is found in works from the Dominican diaspora. In an analysis of *Let it Rain Coffee* (2005), I argue that Angie Cruz crafts modern-day maroons who preserve the Black Radical Tradition by practicing marronage, engaging in physical combat, or creating collectivities. Of particular interest to me is Cruz’s protagonist Don Chan, who rewrites the story of the island through his migration. Don Chan transforms into an invisible and invincible man, but the even greater transformation happens in what readers can consider a second protagonist, History. In his active rewriting and construction of history, Don Chan articulates a vision that erases the border between D.R. and Haiti, and expands the island’s boundaries by acknowledging the roles played by maroons such as the indentured servant, Chinese Dominican, rebel woman, and those on and off the island who form the diaspora.

Though Cruz’s protagonist is male, the author foregrounds the centrality of rebel women to the reinterpretation of the Black Radical Tradition in the twenty-first century. Women take center stage if the novel is read as a story of the island. Working within a tradition of literary

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>8</sup> Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 170.

<sup>9</sup> Myriam J. A. Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution : Women's Visions of Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic*, (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 61.

marronage occurring off the island in the twenty-first century, Cruz joins writers like Nelly Rosario and Junot Díaz. This chapter also examines *Song of the Water Saints*, and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Both of these novels celebrate rebel women who work within the Black Radical Tradition, and they both interrogate the contradictions present in the island and its diaspora. Like Lisette and other maroon women, these women in these novels engage in marronage through flight, confrontation, and spiritualism.

### Modern-Day Maroons in Hispaniola

All of the aforementioned texts magnify the lives of modern-day maroons. Like their historical counterparts, they must contend with colonial legacies and neocolonial forces including the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo and the U.S. occupation of the island. The Dominican Republic was occupied from 1916 to 1924 by the United States. Haiti was also occupied by American troops between 1915 and 1934. U.S. Marines faced guerilla resistance on both sides of the border.

Metamorphosis and myth-making accompany twentieth-century figures like Olivorio Mateo Ledesma (1876 – 1922) and Charlemagne Peralte (1886 – 1919). Historical figures like Olivorio and Peralte are paradigms one can use to uncover twentieth- and twenty-first-century modern-day literary maroons. They are figures who resist oppressive forces within the Black Radical Tradition, and whose metamorphoses expand our views of the island. Mateo and Peralte did not seek freedom from traditional colonial forces, but rather from U.S. occupying forces. Their struggle involved waging ideological, spiritual, and physical battles, border crossing, and establishing groups of followers in rural or borderland communities under constant threat. Mateo and Peralte are recognized as leaders of oppositional peasant movements. Mateo led a spiritual

and social movement that would later be called Liborismo. Similarly, Péralte led the “Cacos” insurrections, which at one point involved an estimated 40,000 Haitian and Dominican men, and forced the U.S. to increase its presence. He utilized vodou songs to inspire his followers.<sup>10</sup> Evidence suggests that opposition groups fighting for self-government collaborated across the border. This collaboration not only made it difficult for the U.S. to suppress these movements, but also challenged notions of nationalism because it took place in and around the border, which possessed bicultural, biethnic, and bilingual areas.<sup>11</sup>

Jan Lundius’s and Mats Lundahl’s research bolsters this last assertion. Utilizing oral history, Lundius and Lundahl trace the connections between economics, politics, and religion through Olivorio Mateo (1876 – 1922) and the 60s-era Palma Sola Movement, which he inspired. The introduction of modern capitalism into the San Juan Valley destroyed “economic relations [spanning] four centuries.”<sup>12</sup> The shift from communal lands to individual ownership devastated this region, as did the introduction of modern sugar production in an area where inhabitants made their living from cattle raising. These modernizing forces were further enhanced during the U.S. occupation of the country, particularly when the U.S. took control of the Haitian-Dominican border in 1907 to ensure that the Dominican government paid back loans it had accepted from its neighbor and European countries. The agreement ended the tradition of open trade across the border.<sup>13</sup>

As modernizing forces infringed upon the community of San Juan de La Managua, Olivorio Mateo rose as a socio-political and religious leader opposed to the U.S. invasion and occupation. He exercised different forms of resistance and evaded U.S. Marines through an

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 60, 104.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 59, 63. See also Jan Lundius, and Mats Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1999), 103-112. Lundius and Lundahl discover this connection between Olivorio and Péralte before Chancy.

<sup>12</sup> Lundius, and Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion*, 26, 442-447.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 81.

intricate chain of sympathizers and partnerships on both the Dominican and Haitian sides of the border.<sup>14</sup> He preached “tolerance, compassion, and solidarity,” and gave speeches that incorporated “proverbs, personal testimony, fragments of hymns and biblical texts, as well as impressive descriptions of extraordinary visions mingled with scattered bits of invented words and expressions borrowed from the worldly authorities.”<sup>15</sup> Like maroons from the seventeenth century he inspired the oppressed with his words.

Olivorio’s movement was as much spiritual as it was social and political. As a “thaumatruge” (faith healer) in La Maguana, he was believed to cure diseases by utilizing a *palo de piñón* (“a stick made from the branch of a tree”) by immersing believers in watercourses, by baptizing and blessing, and by *pabilos* (“cords made out of raveled cotton”).<sup>16</sup> He never charged for his services, and was known popularly for his generosity and humbleness. La Maguana, the site most often associated with Olivorio, was already a spiritual center before his rise. It connected him to Saint John the Baptist, who was said to have appeared in the Spring of San Juan.<sup>17</sup> Olivorio would later be known as a savior and prophet, earning names like Papa Liborio, Dios Olivorio (God Olivorio), and El Gran Maestro (The Great Master).<sup>18</sup>

Like Olivorio, history and myth surround Peralte, who led the Caco uprising that began in 1918.<sup>19</sup> Jerry Philogene provides the following description of Peralte: He was an “energetic young heir of a celebrated family of caco chieftains . . . handsome, brave and intelligent and a devoted voodooist [sic] and a patriot according to the standards of the class of black Haitian warlords from which he had sprung, ninety percent of whose patriotism consisted in hatred for the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 105-107.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 62-65.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 60. Like St. John and like Amerindian chiefs, Olivorio is connected to water and fertility.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 62 and 65. *Dios Olivorio* was first used as early as 1909.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 103.

whites.”<sup>20</sup> Péralte, who was educated and had established a career as an army officer, strongly opposed the U.S. Occupation. American forces had established a puppet president from 1915-1922, and influenced the writing of a Haitian constitution supportive of American foreign investments.<sup>21</sup> The U.S. controlled Haitian finances throughout the duration of the occupation. Yet, other factors motivated Péralte’s resistance. For example, U.S. forces tried to impose an “old *corvée* law” that legalized forced road work.<sup>22</sup> Notably, U.S. control of the Haitian-Dominican border also instigated rebellion as it altered the bicultural, biethnic, and bilingual community that had traditionally traded openly and “intensely.”<sup>23</sup>

The border area had been the site of cross-collaboration and cooperation, “a mainspring of political combinations used by Haitian or Dominican revolutionaries to provoke attempts at insurrection.”<sup>24</sup> Péralte, in fact, was the brother-in-law of Oreste Zamor. Zamor and his brother, Charles, were Haitian generals who offered Carmito Ramirez and his troops refuge during the 1912 Dominican Civil War. The Ramirez family returned the favor in 1914 when Charles and Zamor participated in the Haitian Civil War.<sup>25</sup> Péralte very likely knew of the ties binding the Zamor and Ramirez families; Olivario was said to be a “great friend to the Ramirez family.”<sup>26</sup> Opposing “reenslavement,” Péralte and his followers rebelled for three years, participating in across-border tactics.<sup>27</sup> Like their Dominican counterparts they moved methodically through the

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<sup>20</sup> Jerry Philogene, “‘Dead Citizen’ and the Abject Nation: Social Death, Haiti, and the Strategic Power of the Image,” *Journal of Haitian Studies*, 21.1 (2015), 109. Philogene is citing John Houston Craige, *Cannibal Cousins* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1934), 64. Philogene includes the following note: “The author is aware of Craige’s penchant for a primitivistic narration of Haiti and its various cultural traditions; thus this quote is used, along with others, to present the various perceptions of Péralte.”

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 109, 37n120.

<sup>22</sup> Lundius, and Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion*, 103-105.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* The scholars note that Charles Zamor had a son with a woman from San Juan de la Maguana, the site of Liborismo.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

Cordillera Central, utilizing mountain streams and valleys and establishing defense sites near river sources.<sup>28</sup> In addition to being a strong leader, Peralte has been described as a messiah or prophet of sorts. Some believed he could cheat death if it came in the form of a bullet.<sup>29</sup>

Interestingly, Lundius and Lundahl suggest that Peralte had a Dominican mistress who was “versed in the magical arts.”<sup>30</sup> One of his most devoted followers was Pèdre, a Dominican disciple and spiritual advisor who, like Olivorio, could predict the future, and could “distinguish between God’s will and chance.”<sup>31</sup> Another interesting connection linking the two leaders is a prayer printed in Spanish and from Higüey. Found on Peralte’s body when he was killed, it echoed the common Olivorista prayer, “The Great Power of God.”<sup>32</sup>

Olivorio and Peralte are meaningful to Angie Cruz and other writers in Hispaniola’s diaspora because their rebellion cut across the national lines that divide Haiti and the D.R. Myriam Chancy argues that the U.S. Marines might have even considered Mateo’s and Peralte’s groups as forming a single entity.<sup>33</sup> She examines photographic evidence connecting the two leaders. According to Chancy, reconciliation between Haiti and the D.R. is not possible without acknowledging and interrogating the trauma both countries suffered under U.S. occupation, as well as the trauma produced by years of violent dictatorships that “[relied] on intensified notions of blackness.”<sup>34</sup> In particular she highlights the “general amnesia regard[ing] slave/grassroots resurrections” and cross-border connections between such resurrections.<sup>35</sup> She draws a parallel between Olivorio and Peralte, the Caco leader who was killed by U.S. Marines in 1919, four

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>29</sup> Philogene, “‘Dead Citizen’ and the Abject Nation...,” 109. Philogene is citing John Houston Craige, *Cannibal Cousins* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1934), 64.

<sup>30</sup> Lundius and Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion*, 107.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution*, 60

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 64.

years before Olivorio's execution.<sup>36</sup> Analyzing the "death photographs" of each man, she observes how U.S. Marines tied Olivorio's and Peralte's bodies and displayed them in hopes of discouraging opposition. In the images, both Olivorio and Peralte appear crucified.

Peralte and Olivorio are modern-day maroons whose crucifixions underscore their metamorphosis.<sup>37</sup> Peralte's crucifixion transformed him into a *loa* associated with Ogun, the Vodou warrior god. Similarly, Olivorio's crucifixion facilitated his rebirth in the minds of generations of Dominicans who participated in the Palma Sola movement. The Palma Sola movement revived the teachings of Olivorio, and was suppressed in 1962 when the Dominican government conducted a napalm airstrike that killed hundreds of members. Olivorio Peralte are not runaway slaves or leaders who contributed to the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), but they evaded capture and led rebellions against oppressive forces. While Peralte is closely associated with Vodou, Olivorio's religion (Olivorismo or Liborismo) is described as a mixture of Catholicism, Taíno religion, traces of African religion(s), and Vodou.<sup>38</sup> This mixture in some ways it reminds us of Romaine's "truth" which appropriated the Virgin Mary and reflected African Domingois. Moreover, Mateo and Peralte are remembered and mythologized through music: Mateo through salves, and Peralte through folksongs. A musical element draws attention to the use of oral and written language in rebellion. Mateo's and Peralte's movements were linked ethnically and spiritually.<sup>39</sup> Aspects of these modern-day maroons make their way into Dominican American Literature, where characters reinterpret the Black Radical Tradition and articulate multiple views of the island.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 60-61.

<sup>38</sup> Lundius and Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion*, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution*, 63.

The modern-day maroon has been defined as a literary rebel; an outcast; a “traveler-narrator”; an “accidental or purposive” immigrant; an individual from a new generation with roots in the Caribbean but born outside of this space; a refugee immigrant; and a woman rebel.<sup>40</sup> Neil Robert explicitly utilizes the term *modern maroon*.<sup>41</sup> Yet, in the early 1980s, Robinson uncovered black renegade thinkers working within the Black Radical tradition. Additionally, Cynthia James’s understudied work devotes considerable attention to modern-day maroons in Anglophone Caribbean literature.

Cynthia James’s seminal work *The Marron Narrative: Caribbean Literature in English Across Boundaries, Ethnicities, and Centuries* (2002) encourages scholars to consider multiple forms of marronage among indentured servants, women, or immigrants in the Anglophone Caribbean or its diaspora. According to James, the maroon paradigm is used to create a narrative whose thematic focus develops from the seventeenth to the twentieth century and involves more than flight, resistance, and survival.<sup>42</sup> The maroon narrative has been used to explore European attitudes and fetishization; the experience of “being lost at sea”; colonial exploration turned exploitation; the ostracization of non-Europeans; profound displacement; “piracy”; the mulatto’s revenge”, the experiences of more indentures from East India, China, or Portugal; as well as feminist resistance.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, it has traced flight from rural areas to cities or towns, “the search for Caribbean-ness,” and diasporic experiences.<sup>44</sup> By the late

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<sup>40</sup> Cynthia James, *The Maroon Narrative: Caribbean Literature in English Across Boundaries, Ethnicities, and Centuries* (Heinemann, 2002), 15, 71, 15, 103-116; Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), 25.

<sup>41</sup> Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*, 25.

<sup>42</sup> James, *The Maroon Narrative*, 1-4. James examines Caribbean literature over four hundred years. She focuses primarily on texts by British writers, with the exception of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789); *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Related by Herself* (1831); and *Emmanuel Appadocca; or, Blighted Life: A Tale of the Boucaneers* (1854). In the chapters focusing on literature from the twentieth century, James’ focus shifts primarily to narratives written by Anglophone Caribbean writers.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 26, 56, 103-116.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 26, 56, 103-116.

twentieth century, marronage comes to involve linguistic and societal rebellion, as well as “self-renewal” and “accommodation.”<sup>45</sup> The maroon narrative interrogates the theme of homelessness where the maroon is a ‘foreigner’ or outsider within their current culture and in the “the culture [s/he] left.”<sup>46</sup> The Caribbean in this view is “a distributive, migratory, and itinerant concept.”<sup>47</sup>

James suggests that maroons in late twentieth-century narratives are modern-day maroons, especially when highlighting the position of contemporary Caribbean writers.<sup>48</sup> She argues that during the eighteenth century, the African-Caribbean writer emerged with Olaudah Equiano. James says that Equiano, who returns to the Caribbean even after he has bought his own freedom, possesses an “ambivalent psychological attachment . . . toward his first overseas home.” His ambivalence marked him as the “archetypal Caribbean immigrant, recreated . . . in twentieth-century Caribbean literature.”<sup>49</sup> Migration has characterized the maroon narrative since its inception. In the twentieth century, the maroon must contend too with the legacies of colonialism, particularly discrimination and institutionalized racism.<sup>50</sup> The narrative emphasizes psychological conflicts: rootlessness, and the struggle that comes when a person cannot reclaim a lost home; the challenges of coping with assigned inferiority; and the experience of the “double exile” of racial and class marginalization.<sup>51</sup> According to James, the ‘modern-day’ maroon is an individual who must maneuver the cultural plurality of the Caribbean, a “traveler-narrator,” an “accidental or purposive” immigrant, individuals from a new generation with roots in the Caribbean but born outside of this space, and the Caribbean writer or literary maroon.<sup>52</sup> The

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 67, 73.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 73, 67, 71, 69.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 3. James doesn’t use the term ‘modern-day maroon,’ but she is certainly engaging this idea.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 58-61.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 56, 58-59, 61.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 71, 15.

maroon narrative evolves to include “living in a fabricated home elsewhere.”<sup>53</sup> This is certainly applicable to the literature of Hispaniola’s diaspora, and more broadly the Hispanophone and Francophone Caribbean.

Neil Roberts’ *Freedom as Marronage* (2015) builds upon James conceptualization of the maroon as “accidental or purposive immigrant.” He examines the implications of Edouard Glissant’s and Patrick Chamoiseau’s literary manifesto *Quand les murs tombent: L’Identité nationale hors-la-loi? (When the Walls Fall: National Identity outside of the law?)*.<sup>54</sup> Glissant’s and Chamoiseau’s text criticizes government policies that increase the policing of migrants and obstruct assimilation. The writers challenge the concept of a national identity, arguing for the recognition of identity as fluid and migratory. Roberts writes: “Refugee immigrants deny isolationism and perpetual domesticity, and they desire movement across borders through the island-regions of the globe.”<sup>55</sup> He identifies the “involuntary or stateless immigrant” as an individual who reflects Glissant’s and Chamoiseau’s vision. This individual not only takes flight and challenges the idea of impermeable borders and of sameness, but also illustrates how marronage involves “an economy of survival.”<sup>56</sup>

#### *Don Chan, The Chinese-Dominican Maroon*

Angie Cruz’s novel *Let it Rain Coffee* (2005), follows the Colón family during the early 1920s, 1960s, and 1990s in the Dominican Republic and New York City. Ultimately, Don Chan is the protagonist of this story; his perspective is threaded from the beginning to the end of the novel. The opening pages of the text foreground the main character’s isolation and memory. For three days, Don Chan remains with the body of his wife in Los Llanos, until Miraluz (a close

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>54</sup> Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*, 169-171.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 171.

friend and ally) checks up on him. With his only immediate family living abroad, he leaves for New York. The protagonist, who appears to be Chinese in origin, perplexes U.S. immigration officials. He explains how a four-year-old Caridad found him on beach in Juan Dolio, a coastal community in San Pedro Macoris, not too far from the Dominican Capital: “And as if I was some kind of alien, she poked at my hair and said... *Who are you?* And I said, --*Chan Lee, yo soy Chan Lee.*”<sup>57</sup> Six-year-old Chan has no recollection of his past, and is adopted by Don José Colón de Juan Dolio, Caridad’s father, who teaches him Spanish, “the language of the water,” sea stories, and a history of resistance.<sup>58</sup> Don José is motivated to move the family after a man in the city asks to buy little Chan. The family moves to Los Llanos, a province of San Pedro de Macoris known for a “bloody” insurrection during the first U.S. occupation of the D.R. (1916-1922).

The protagonist remains in Los Llanos, rising as leader of The Invisible Ones. He stresses non-violence and organizes in the early 1960s for the first democratic election in the Dominican Republic. He even gains a mythical status, when members of the community come to believe he has the power of invisibility and to cure ailments. Don Chan shares his father’s stories including anecdotes about the Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint L’Ouverture, and he inspires residents to organize.<sup>59</sup> Early on in the novel, he is tied to the Black Radical Tradition through these stories and through his message of resistance, as well as through the circumstances of his arrival to the island.

Don Chan’s is deeply attached to his wife, Caridad. The two grow up and build a life together in Los Llanos. A very limited part of the narrative focuses on Caridad, but with her death her husband begins to lose his memory. Once dependent on his wife, Don Chan becomes

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<sup>57</sup> Angie Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee* (Simon & Schuster, 2005) 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-97.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

reliant on routine, his “savior,” especially in the New York City landscape.<sup>60</sup> Don Chan’s arrival, like his arrival to Juan Dolio, brings changes to his family in New York. His son, Santo, revisits the past with him, and rediscovers his love for music. Santo introduces the idea of visiting the D.R. to his wife, Esperanza, who shoots the idea down because she feels she is “los[ing] Santo to the island.”<sup>61</sup> Although Don Chan is the protagonist in the novel, the author often interweaves his perspective and Esperanza’s. As part of the Dominican diaspora, Esperanza, or “hope,” lives up to her name.

Esperanza’s desire for her family to get ahead motivates her actions. Rather than looking at the past as her father-in-law does, she fixates on the future, hoping for economic stability even as she is sinking more and more in debt. What links these characters, though, is devotion to family and community. Shortly after Don Chan’s arrival, Santo is stabbed to death in his taxi. The death profoundly impacts the entire family. Don Chan ages, and experiences memory lapses more frequently. Esperanza provides homecare, and works more hours to pay off her debt and to support the family. Bobby and Dallas, Esperanza’s and Santo’s children, are less supervised and must contend with challenges that come with adolescence. After a series of conflicts with her children, Esperanza realizes you can only run so far from the past. The family finds its way through their conflicts by rallying around Dallas’s friend Hush and eventually by returning to the island. Women play an important role in Don Chan’s life. Despite the riffs between the protagonist and his daughter-in-law, it is Esperanza who brings him back to the island, back to Miraluz, a rebel woman in her own right, and back to Caridad’s spirit.

Don Chan’s oratory skills, organizing ability, and his penchant for metamorphosis make him a modern-day maroon in the tradition of Mateo and Peralte and their predecessors. The

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 29.

storyteller uses invention to bring residents together and to form The Invisible Ones, a rebel group that undermines the Trujillo dictatorship and later organizes to reinstall Juan Bosch.<sup>62</sup> Through his story of the Invisible Man, Don Chan rises as a leader in Los Llanos. The protagonist relays a story of an impossible feat, and convinces his followers of his power of invisibility. His listeners examine him, for Don Chan describes how he was able to walk into the presidential palace, steal a letter opener, and come out without a scratch. Similar to Trouillot's Lisette, the main character hides among those who pose real danger. He hides in plain sight, seemingly aware of how he's perceived as an anomaly among the population. He describes the ease with which he enters the palace, for the guards mistaken him for "the president of Japan . . . ambassador of China . . . the owner of Mitsubishi."<sup>63</sup>

Like Makandal's followers, the people of Los Llanos come to believe in Don Chan's abilities and in their own ability to "rise together."<sup>64</sup> Readers discover that Don Chan did not in fact go into the palace. A trucker misled him by redirecting him to another palace. Here we can draw a connection between the protagonist and Babouk from Guy Endore's novel. Babouk's stories enable him to cultivate a revolutionary consciousness among slaves across Hispaniola. Don Chan's deceit ultimately motivates the expansion and resistance of a twentieth-century collective, while underscoring their belief in his invisibility and the realization of their own political and social invisibility. Both Babouk and Makandal convinced their followers of the power of the masses. The community of Los Llanos rallies around Don Chan as he champions for laborers' rights and stresses the importance of owning the land they work.<sup>65</sup> With time, The Invisible Ones gain more members across the island, from Los Llanos to Dajabón.

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<sup>62</sup> Bosch was the first democratically elected president in the Dominican Republic.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

The narrative tells of how Don Chan finds a cement-sealed pot after a hurricane. The pot contains enough money for the land titles of Los Llanos, granting the protagonist and residents more agency and ushering in a period of abundance. The discovery is further evidence of the maroon's rise as a leader. It pushes him further into fulfilling a mythical role because it instigates more archaeological discoveries of items associated with Hispaniola's history of both rebellion and corruption.<sup>66</sup> As with his predecessor Olivorio, Don Chan is made into a myth following a natural disaster. The names "Los Llanos" and "Don Chan" echo throughout the D.R. In the following passage, naming signals the character's transformation:

Fights broke out between drunkards over the name. Was it Invincible or Invisible? Don Chan himself was no longer invisible. And people were wise enough to keep him a secret because being the only Chino in Los Llanos made him vulnerable. Instead, they called him a medicine man to explain the crowds that sometimes gathered in the small town park filled with processions for saints and dances of palo. So popular had the parties of Los Llanos become, high government officials and television celebrities called on him to cure their ailments. Don Chan cured everything from bleeding rectums to impotence, and as a natural entertainer, he created a show for all to see and singled out the richest of his guests, placing his hand on their foreheads and saying words as if they were being fed to him from the heavens.<sup>67</sup>

The names "Invisible" and "Invincible" underscore that the protagonist is an unconquerable man, and a man who can elude and even ambush. As he gains power through an expanding following, Don Chan gains the ability to heal the sick. Similar to his maroon predecessors, he brings healing with his social message. Through its reference to "saints" and "palo dances," the excerpt is also a reminder of the importance of religion to the Black Radical Tradition.

Myriam Chancy identifies a number of Cruz's interventions in *Let it Rain Coffee*. While these interventions highlight a shared history between Haiti and the D.R., they also map the Black Radical Tradition and the emergence of the modern-day maroon. Chancy argues that the text acknowledges Haitian's and Dominican's joint struggles as it reimagines the Dominican

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

trinity of founding fathers.<sup>68</sup> For Don José, the founding fathers are not the traditional Dominican trinity of Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, Juan Pablo Duarte, and Matías Ramón Mella. Rather, he describes “the adventures of [the Cuban poet and politician] José Martí . . . the Haitian Revolution in his blood, [and] the stories of all the ancestors who washed up onshore.”<sup>69</sup> According to Chancy, scholars often interpret the “Haitian revolution in [Don José’s] blood” too literally. Don Chan’s father can be viewed as being of Haitian descent. However, Cruz’s language reflects the majority of Dominicans.<sup>70</sup> In other words: “When Don José speaks of the Haitian Revolution, he speaks as a descendant of the island of Ayiti/Haiti rather than as a Haitian who somehow scrambled over an invisible border to become Dominican.”<sup>71</sup> Chancy locates a moment in the novel that undoes the cockfight narrative and offers a vision of Hispaniola’s people joined through the fight for freedom. In doing so, she highlights how the author traces the manifestations of the Black Radical Tradition, tying its emergence during colonialism with its reemergence in the twentieth-century. By reimagining the founding fathers, Cruz is also acknowledging the historical ties not just between Haiti and the D.R., or between these nations and their African ancestors, but also between the island and Cuba, and to the Antilles—Puerto Rico in particular. Importantly, Chancy points out an allusion to the Middle Passage in Don José’s description of himself as “emanating from the sea.”<sup>72</sup> She also notes how the novel illustrates a shared history of trauma when alluding to the 1937 Massacre. The massacre is alluded to through two pivotal moments: the main character telling Santo how Trujillo ordered the killing of thousands of Haitians, despite his own Haitian ancestry; and fearing he’d be Don Chan remembering teaching his son how to say *perejil*, so that his son would not be mistaken for

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<sup>68</sup> Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution*, 80-82

<sup>69</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 97.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>71</sup> Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution*, 81.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* See also, Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 101.

a Haitian.<sup>73</sup> According to Chancy, race is at the heart of “the schizophrenia of the split Dominican soul.”<sup>74</sup> It is what drives “the fear of Haitian immigration.”<sup>75</sup> The second allusion, in particular, underscores the “fallibility” of the shibboleth, and highlights the fiction of Dominican national identity, for the Spanish language (some claim) was a way to distinguish Dominicans from Haitians, not race.<sup>76</sup>

An important point unexplored by Chancy is Don José’s decision to move. The move is motivated by his experience with an American man who offers to purchase little Chan because “China boys are not lazy or cause trouble like the Haitians . . . [They] can go for hours and never say no to anything.”<sup>77</sup> The man’s attitude aligns with American perspectives found in travel narratives about Hispaniola. The U.S. expanded its influence in the Caribbean through the Monroe Doctrine, and travel narratives from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. Translated and distributed in the D.R., travel narratives of Hispaniola “formed part of an evolving geopolitical racial project that did the “ideological ‘work’” of both U.S. imperialism and Dominican nation building through anti-Haitianist discourses.”<sup>78</sup>

Cruz examines how U.S. attitudes shaped anti-Haitian ideology and affected individuals like little Chan. At six years old, Little Chan is marooned on the island of Hispaniola when he washes up on its shores. With the U.S. occupation of the country, he is also threatened with enslavement. The author alludes to the Middle Passage here, but she is also pointing out policies of U.S. imperialism that shaped the island and impacted individuals like Chan. She draws

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. See also Richard Lee Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* (Duke University Press, 2002).

<sup>77</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 100. The man who approaches Don Chan talks to him with ease; it’s unclear, at first, whether he’s American. Yet, he makes a reference to the U.S. (“You should see what the China boys did in America”). This, coupled with the start of the U.S. Occupation, seems to suggest he might be American. Moreover, he’s described as “red from too much sun,” as though he’s been on the island a short while.

<sup>78</sup> Ginetta E.B. Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears* (Duke University Press, 2007) 35-82.

attention to the indentured servant as a maroon figure, expanding ideas of nation to include both Chinese indentured servants and Chinese-Dominicans. Little Chan has total amnesia about his past, but “travelling workers” say he looks like the “Chinos from Panama . . . Cuba . . . in Jamaica.”<sup>79</sup> Chinese workers were recruited to countries like Cuba in the mid-1800s to replace or work alongside slaves. Unlike Cuba, Peru, Jamaica, Trinidad, and the United States, the Dominican Republic did not actively recruit Chinese contract workers.<sup>80</sup> Rather, these workers migrated to the D.R. with the impression it was “less oppressive” and was a gateway to the U.S. They also migrated to the island during the first U.S. occupation of the D.R., and after the 1937 Japanese invasion of China.

Don Chan also envisions his father as an indentured maroon. Before dying, the protagonist recalls mapping Chinese migrations to the Americas through history books, “people’s lips,” and in his imagination.<sup>81</sup> He thinks of his biological father as “indentured, trapped in a [Cuban] credit system where he worked forever to pay landowners back.”<sup>82</sup> Although he imagines his father working the cane, he prefers imagining him “doing the impossible and fleeing”:

He was convinced that his poor old father found so much ill-paying work, he could no longer feel his hands, his body, his tongue. That’s why his father fled and never looked back, fearing that if he did, he’d get killed for it. He fled to the ocean, yes the ocean, because the ocean seems infinite, vast, and cleansing. He found work on a big warship. And to his father, it was the most impressive ship he’d ever seen. It had a sail as tall as a palm tree, which ballooned out against the sky’s canvas and sang a song, large conch seashells whistled into the ear. The ship had a calling to another place, an urgency to chase the song of the wind.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 96.

<sup>80</sup> Edith Wen-Chu Chen, “You are like us, you eat *plátanos*”: Chinese Dominicans, Race, Ethnicity, and Identity.” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 27.1 (2008): 23-24.

<sup>81</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 287-288.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

Don Chan imagines his father as a maroon. Ironically, U.S. intervention—if we assume the warship is American—creates an opportunity to escape his harsh working conditions. The ocean offers release. The release, though, does not include a return to a mother country.

The maroon will “create a reasoned argument for attachment to his place of birth,” and will break the cycle of displacement and the feeling of being “stranded in the Caribbean.”<sup>84</sup> This “reasoned argument” is present in Cruz’s novel. The protagonist’s reasoning takes the form of imagining the forces that leave him marooned on the island, not only physically stranded and isolated, but also ripped away from his family and his past. Rootless, Don Chan constructs a past that imagines Hispaniola as a new horizon, a place of refuge and attachment. The protagonist only dwells on a past before Hispaniola a few times. With no memory, he is forced to construct a history and to attach himself to the island, the only home he knows and remembers. Notably, the narrative he constructs does not explicitly identify the D.R. as his father’s destination, but rather alludes to the island itself.

Don Chan’s “reasoned argument” evolves into an active reconstruction of the Black Radical Tradition. Unable to physically run, the main character takes flight in his mind, where “running [is] possible and more.”<sup>85</sup> Cruz’s novel fluctuates from the past to the present through Don Chan’s memory lapses. By crafting Don Chan’s memory lapses, the author places him in a history of Dominican resistance to U.S. occupation and to the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. A history of resistance emerges and includes Chan Lee’s formation and expansion of the maroon group, *The Invisible Ones* (1961, 1962-1963); the rebel woman, Miraluz, predicting the death of the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo (May 29, 1961); Juan Bosch, the presidential candidate visiting Los Llanos, promoting “ideas about cooperative stores, agrarian reform, improve[d]

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<sup>84</sup> James, *The Maroon Narrative*, 55, 62.

<sup>85</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 142.

education and health facilities”; and a natural disaster that turns up treasures used to buy Los Llanos’s land titles (February 1963). A history of resistance also includes the disappearance of two of the Invisible Ones (1963); the burning of the Los Llanos communal gardens by right-wing repressors (1964); rebels from Llanos and from the military organizing and removing the junta from power in the April War (April 24, 1965 - September 3, 1965); mass *maroon-refugee* flight to the U.S. and Puerto Rico, including hundreds of thousands legally immigrating to the U.S. and many fleeing in *yolas* (small boats) to Puerto Rico (1961-1986); and the formation of women’s collectives like El secreto de la victoria.<sup>86</sup> Through the protagonist’s memory lapses, the Black Radical Tradition emerges in the twentieth century with Chan Lee leading a group of rebels who have “Haiti in [their] blood.”<sup>87</sup>

Cruz’s narrative rewrites history so that a past and present is acknowledged as actively shared between the D.R. and Haiti, between these countries and Cuba, and the United States as well. The novel also expands the boundaries of the island, at times transposing the U.S. onto the island. Don Chan is a time-traveling transnational maroon, not just moving between different moments and spaces, but also experiencing these moments and inhabiting these spaces simultaneously, for even present-day experiences influence the way he reads the past, as shown in the allusions to the 1937 Massacre. Visiting Bobby (Santo) in the Spofford Juvenile Detention facility instigates time travel: the protagonist straddles the past and present, forced to reflect on how “wrong” he was for “pushing [Santo] so hard” and “filling [his] brain with hate,” and even making him “pray out loud” for Trujillo’s death.<sup>88</sup> Time is collapsed in the passage in a way that makes past and present contend with one another, and mirror the character’s inner turmoil.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 16-17, 41, 61, 42, 62, 64, 147, 154-155, 163-167, 170-171, 173, 176. See also Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire* (Penguin, 2011) 118), 221-229..

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>88</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 160.

A collapse in time and space is also illustrated in the passage preceding Don Chan's death. Importantly, it includes both a traumatic past as well as experiences of life, rebirth, and healing. The passage parallels centuries, from "hurricanes, tornadoes, rainbows, and block of ice drifting in the sea" to "naked women displayed in store windows, for sale".<sup>89</sup> It includes violent images that invoke the 1937 Massacre, including scenes of "People being cut up with machetes and tossed into rivers" and "people's bodies, sprouting tobacco, sugar, and coffee."<sup>90</sup> There are scenes of slavery with "whips and chains" and "people cutting off their own limbs out of desperation," but also of free-wage labor, with "children buried in unmarked graves after their lungs gave out from working in the mines."<sup>91</sup> Having returned to the Dominican Republic, Don Chan also sees images related to the Klu Klux Klan and racial violence in the U.S. with "armies in white cloaks" and "men hanging off trees."<sup>92</sup> The images point to American imperialism, and to a common history of white supremacy between the island and its neighbor. Imagery like this also begs the following question: Where is Don Chan? In Hispaniola or the U.S.? The narrative suggests a collapse in time and spaces, so that Don Chan exists simultaneously in these realms. Don Chan also recalls positive experiences, among them "women nursing their sons . . . people making love . . . rainbows . . . communities offering the sea fire, flowers, sweets, wishing for forbidden love, the resurrection of the dead, the return of the lost."<sup>93</sup> While magnifying violence and the unnatural, Cruz's novel underscores the cyclical nature of life and nature. What happens to the "soul" if the past has been imagined, falsified, or silenced? If it has been disavowed (as Chancy suggests), or *scratched out*, to borrow from Doris Sommers? What are the repercussions

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

of this over time? Through Don Chan, the author encourages us to redraw the boundaries of Hispaniola.

Notably, the history Don Chan constructs also includes the indentured servant as maroon, as well as the rebel woman. Don Chan is an example of a character wrestling with a history reinserting itself in the present-day. Cruz is also interested in how a silenced history, one that includes the Black Radical Tradition, is preserved and still reverberates within the world. The novel suggests that in order to heal, the modern-day maroon must actively contend with an official history, a history recovered in what Patrick Chamoiseau refers to as trace-memoires (trace memories), “memories that fall outside the annals of official History” and go beyond “the written trace or the spoken word.”<sup>94</sup> Edouard Glissant says something similar: “The struggle against a single History for the cross-fertilization of histories means repossessing both a true sense of one’s time and identity: proposing in an unprecedented way a revaluation of power.”<sup>95</sup> Cruz joins other Caribbean writers in the quest of reimagining histories that oppose to History. Her crafting of time and space is deliberate and methodical. Time travel only starts after Don Chan leaves the D.R., and ends when he returns to the island. This movement encourages both Don Chan and the reader to think outside the confines of the island’s physical space. The protagonist says: “That’s good to travel. It’s the best way to learn.”<sup>96</sup> Although the character’s journey to New York is in some ways voluntary, his displacement is necessary for Don Chan to find his way into a history that reflects his experiences and the island he knows.

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<sup>94</sup> Bonnie Thomas, “Memory is an Archipelago: Glissant, Chamoiseau, and the Literary Expression of Cultural Memory,” *Biopolitics and Memory in Postcolonial Literature and Culture* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016).

<sup>95</sup> Edouard Glissant, “History – Histories – Stories,” *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996) 93.

<sup>96</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 184.

With this in mind, Cruz seems to expand the definition of maroon to include *Dominican Yorkers*, or more specifically, *dominicanos ausentes*. These are individuals with roots in the island and the United States, but who do not possess full representation in either home. Their migrations are characterized by exile. They move because of “material urgency” and contribute to the U.S. while sending remittances to the D.R.<sup>97</sup> *Dominicanos ausentes* are also “racexiles,” “expunged from the Dominican nation because of their race yet . . . inadmissible in the United States for the same reasons.”<sup>98</sup> They occupy a transnational space that is also a place of “historical rejection.”<sup>99</sup> As they are pivotal to revising Hispaniola’s story, and, more specifically, the story of the Dominican nation because they force us to think about the boundaries of Hispaniola and also who is and who is not Dominican.

A character like Esperanza is more readily identified as a *dominicana ausente*. Esperanza takes flight out of desperation. Despite her family’s ties to the Trujillo regime, she refuses to live in fear like her father. She makes her “way to the small town of Los Desesperados [the desperate or hopeless]” where she takes a *yola* to Puerto Rico, a middle point she eventually leaves for New York.<sup>100</sup> Leaving the island in 1965, she does not return until 1999.

Later in the novel, Dallas discovers that her mother sends “money and supplies” to her immediate family and extended family.<sup>101</sup> Esperanza “pays her dues for leaving family behind,” unpacking seventy-two pound suitcases heavy with secondhand clothes . . . canned foods, candy

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<sup>97</sup> Lorgia García-Peña. *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016) 172-173. She is citing Silvio Torres-Saillant, *El retorno de las yolas: Ensayos sobre diáspora, democracia y dominicanidad*, (República Dominicana: Librería La Trinitaria, 1999), 18. To read more regarding exile as an expatriation see 17-50.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 281.

and cereal, electronics, and accessories.”<sup>102</sup> She becomes more and more tired as she hands out gifts, and at one point she begins to cry. Dallas takes over the job of divvying out the gifts. She realizes the weight her mother has had to bear, and that she will inherit this weight. The circumstances of Don Chan’s migration are different than his daughter-in-law’s. He leaves out of necessity because he is elderly and isolated after Caridad’s death. He has no immediate family left in the D.R., for his son followed Esperanza to New York. The protagonist never intends to remain in the country for very long, but he spends nearly a decade in the United States. Yet, as previously shown, he travels in his mind, always negotiating both spaces, even as he remains with Esperanza and his grand kids in the U.S. for most of the novel.

Readers witness how Don Chan is viewed as an anomaly in the D.R., both when he is a child and when he is older and thought to possess “a gift of knowing things” as someone “born in China.”<sup>103</sup> As a dominicano-ausento maroon, Don Chan encourages us to think about individuals left out of the dominant story of Hispaniola including Dominican citizens of African, Chinese, or *Ayiti* heritage.

### *The Modern-Day Maroon Woman*

Cruz’s fictional interventions include the magnification of the modern-day maroon woman and the problem of women’s invisibility on and off the island. Although Haiti is often depicted as its own locale, Santo claims he possesses Haitian blood in a show of solidarity with those across the island who, like Miraluz, “visibly” possess African heritage.<sup>104</sup> This scene takes place after a meeting with the potential president, Juan Bosch. Initially, Miraluz points out a

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 279, 266.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>104</sup> Chancy, *From Sugar to Revolution*, 82.

shared heritage and solidarity through her open distrust of Bosch, “whose hands looked like alabaster,” and her assertion that the country needs a man like the Haitian revolutionary leader, Toussaint L’Ouverture.<sup>105</sup> Cruz calls attention to the role of the rebel woman in actively preserving and reinterpreting a tradition of black resistance. She does this through characters such as Miraluz and Esperanza, and more broadly, through women as a collective.

Miraluz is recognizably synonymous with resistance. Like Lisette from *The Infamous Rosalie*, the character values an oral tradition. She encourages Don Chan to tell “stories that provide inspiration.”<sup>106</sup> She also knows how to read and write, and has influence in Los Llanos and among The Invisible Ones.<sup>107</sup> Miraluz fulfills the role of a modern-day maroon more noticeably by imploring Don Chan and other residents to engage in physical combat, and by reminding them of their legacy of resistance. Don Chan tells that she is the daughter and daughter-in-law he always wanted. He also confesses seeing her as “the son he’d wished Santo had become.”<sup>108</sup> Don Chan emphasizes community organizing and non-violence both before and after the 1963 military coup ousting Juan Bosch. In contrast, Miraluz stresses the need for armed resistance and is unafraid to challenge her mentor. The relationship between these individuals evolves from a mentor-novice relationship to camaraderie. As Don Chan and Miraluz discuss ideas and openly disagree, they gain a deep admiration for one another. This admiration at time evolves into sexual desire, though neither one ever initiates a sexual relationship.

Cruz offers an alternative to “marriage relationships” through Miraluz’s and Don Chan’s relationship.<sup>109</sup> In Anglophone Caribbean texts, the rebel woman gains “the authority of

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<sup>105</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 63.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 172.

<sup>109</sup> James, *The Maroon Narrative*, 107. James uses this phrase when discussing Paule Marshall’s *Daughters* (1991).

community conscience when the partnership between the male and his female partner fails.”<sup>110</sup> The partnership between the two characters does not fulfill a “marriage relationship” but rather takes the form of camaraderie. In *Let it Rain Coffee*, Miraluz gains authority on her own. She demands she be treated fairly and expresses her ideas, even if they challenge Don Chan’s position. She suggests “storming the palace,” when the country is in “flux” and those loyal to Trujillo threaten to take over.<sup>111</sup> She asks Don Chan: “Why do you bother and tell us stories about Toussaint, who fought for freedom of his people, or Martí, who died in battle for Cuba?”<sup>112</sup> In a reversal of roles, the rebel reminds Don Chan not only of what they have worked for, but also of the legacy they have inherited; she does this repeatedly. The rebel woman explains her reasoning for armed resistance:

When in history have we seen people like us win their freedom without some bloodshed . . . You [Don Chan] want us to wait here defenseless while they capture and torture each and every one of us, chop off our heads, and put them on a twenty-foot pole as an example . . . Explain to me why I don’t sleep at night and can think of nothing else but ripping the tongues out of men who lie and cheat and steal, and rape. I’ll make a necklace of tongues to wear around my neck, with every one of them.<sup>113</sup>

Miraluz addresses Don Chan directly and reminds him of their ancestors who fought against the first U.S. occupation and before. The image of heads on pikes alludes subtly to maroons like Boukman Dutty, whose head was displayed in order to send a message to slaves contemplating rebellion. The image also recalls twentieth-century leaders Olivorio and Peralte, whose bodies were displayed by the United States military as a message to those who tried to test American might. Miraluz’s “necklace of tongues” lets Don Chan know she will carry out justice as ruthless as the injustices men have committed against her people. Miraluz vehemently opposes the Dominican political system after the ousting of Bosch. She takes the discovery of “guns buried”

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>111</sup> Cruz, *Let it Rain Coffee*, 51.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

as a sign from her ancestors to wage armed resistance.<sup>114</sup> Later, she fights alongside Santos and Don Chan in the April War of 1965. Unlike male counterparts who cease their political activities after the 1965 war, she continues fighting. The rebel later forms a cooperative, securing rights and wages for women who once worked in a Victoria's Secret factory.

In a novel so conscious of the power of history and history-telling, the idea that colonial legacies resurface in the twentieth century is not farfetched. In the concluding paragraphs, readers witness Don Chan entering the cane with Miraluz. He walks away, telling her "It's my time."<sup>115</sup> Similar to his father, who listened to "large conch seashells whistled into the ear," the protagonist listens "to the songs of the earth" as they call out "Chan Lee," Olivorio, and the Taíno cacique leader Guacanagari.<sup>116</sup> As the main character "falls into the earth," he catches "glimpses of women nursing their sons . . . women setting themselves on fire . . . women killing their children. . . women protecting their homes with swords."<sup>117</sup> As mentioned before, the final passages of the novel collapse time with surrealist quality. The imagery alludes not just to a pre-Columbian and colonial past, but also to a history that includes women's resistance. Death brings our protagonist peace in the form of a woman, for it is "a woman with features that change with the movement of the sun," who throws him up to the sky. Afterward, he finds himself "surrounded," or, better said, cradled by "hundreds of women."<sup>118</sup> In addition to connecting a colonial past with the twentieth century, Cruz elevates Miraluz and women in

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>116</sup> Cruz, 288-289. See also Eric Roorda, et al., *The Dominican Republic Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2014. 389. Guacanagari (Guacanagarix or Guacanacari) was the Taíno cacique leader of the Marien settlement (northwest Hispaniola), who received Christopher Columbus in 1492, after the Santa María ran aground. According to *The Dominican Republic Reader*, Guacanagari joined forces with the Chieftain, Guarionex, after the Cacique leader, Caonabo, was captured in the Vega Real Battle of 1495. Ultimately, the Spaniards were able to defeat the Taínos; the Vega Real Battle is credited as significantly reducing Taíno resistance. Note: Some accounts underscore Guacanagari's early alliance with Columbus.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 289-290.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 290.

general as individuals who wrestle with impossible decisions, and who possess the power to sustain and take life.<sup>119</sup>

Cruz draws attention to how female resistance regenerates itself in different generations, a process most notable in the way Don Chan thinks of Hush as Miraluz. Hush has been raised in the U.S., and has roots in El Salvador. She was in her mother's belly when smuggled across the border. The author expands the network of women to include women in Hispaniola, the U.S., and across Latin America. With a name like "Hush," a reader might expect the character to be silent, but her name means quite the opposite: "The man being smuggled into the U.S. with them kept saying hush every time [Hush's mother] cried. Hush like a rude comment, an onion burp."<sup>120</sup> Hush demands attention in a more subtle manner than Miraluz; her name draws "curiosity" whenever uttered.<sup>121</sup> Like Miraluz, she physically resists. Hush refuses to abandon her friend after a man puts a gun to Dallas's neck and assaults her. She resists verbally and even with her body, "moving around [as though] cranking up her power, as if she was contemplating a superhero move."<sup>122</sup> On another occasion, she tries but fails to defend herself against a sexual assault by her stepfather.

Hush is limited physically and cut off from an oral tradition, but she cultivates her mind by reading and eating her favorite passages from books. Don Chan's family invites her to stay in their home after learning she was raped and impregnated by her stepfather. Soon after, Don Chan begins to mistake her for Caridad, his deceased wife. Later he mistakes her for Miraluz and says that it's up to "women to help men remember what history has taught [them]."<sup>123</sup> Hush rushes to preserve Don Chan's words. Although her entrance into the family is gradual, she makes a

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

permanent impact through the birth of Consuelo. She does not survive the birth, but her newborn daughter gives Bobby purpose and brings new joy to the family. Perhaps the most notable characteristic Hush possesses is her ability to inspire by nurturing and coaxing. On one occasion, she unexpectedly appears to Esperanza, who struggles emotionally and financially to keep afloat after Santo's death. The narrative emphasizes how Esperanza moves through life "running" and feeling "numb," without time to take care of herself or even properly grieve the loss of her husband.<sup>124</sup> She stops feeling numb when she "pauses" and is "startled" by Hush's voice.<sup>125</sup> Hush combs and gently tugs Esperanza's hair, and the ritual allows the widow to pause, feel, and release some of her pain. Her crying is not a sudden outburst, but rather an "explosion," a shattering of her external façade and an outward expression that contrasts the numbness she felt before. Hush tells Esperanza that everything will be fine and encourages her to rise: "Mami says that in this world, women with nappy heads don't got the luxury of not fixing their hair. Someone gonna think you a homeless or something."<sup>126</sup> The text magnifies Hush's soothing voice, her bread-and-clove scent, and her expansive embrace. Hush elicits Esperanza's ability to express and feel her grief. It marks the beginning of her healing and a turn in her relationship with her daughter's best friend.

### Rebel Runaway Mothers

Nelly Rosario's *Song of the Water Saints* (2002), which also features a modern-day rebel woman, plays with time and presents the regeneration of the Black Radical Tradition. Rosario's novel focuses on Graciela, a modern-day maroon whose strength lies in her persistent desire to

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-87.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

flee familial duties, community, and the island. Like Cruz's novel, this text devotes considerable attention to the U.S. occupations of the island between 1916-1924 and 1915-1934, as well as to the presidency of Horacio Vasquez (1924-1930) and the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo and his successor Joaquin Balaguer. The United States is ever present, represented at one point as Peter West, a photographer who reduces Graciela and her "sepia prince" Silvio to exotic hypersexualized objects in a postcard.<sup>127</sup> The U.S. is more frequently represented through the recurring image of Marines, or *yanquis*. Marines appear armed with "rifles and giant bodies."<sup>128</sup> They call the protagonist a "Negro wench," and rape another woman.<sup>129</sup> During a "mandatory disarmament" period, they barge into Graciela's family's home, demand hidden pistols, and leave with bottles of cane rum.<sup>130</sup> Marines also train and order Silvio to hang his own friend shoot Silvio.<sup>131</sup> After their departure, the U.S. armed forces leave behind: "a corps of locals well trained in the tactics of repression . . . an appetite for American goods . . . baseball . . . a trail of deaths and births: mourning mothers and mothers with fair-haired children."<sup>132</sup> Multiple generations of Dominicans suffer the political, social, and cultural effects of American "barbarism."<sup>133</sup> Although the United States is associated with economic opportunity, memories of violence associated with the occupation are present through much of the novel. Rosario expands the boundaries of the island and especially the Dominican Republic. She ties the nation's fate to other nations in the "battle between lion and ant" by alluding to the border war

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<sup>127</sup> Nelly Rosario, *Song of the Water Saints* (New York, Vintage Books, 2002) 9-12.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-16.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 31-33.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 192, 15.

between the U.S. and Mexico, the building of the Panama Canal, the U.S. intervention in Cuba, and its occupation of Haiti.<sup>134</sup>

Graciela's life is a persistent flight. As a young girl, she is fascinated by a globe and revisits its animal-shaped lands. She pleads to go with her first husband Silvio on a fishing fleet but remains in her town with dreams of "riding a ship."<sup>135</sup> After receiving news that Silvio and other fishermen were lynched or 'riddled with bullets' by marines, Graciela does not accept her husband's fate. During a hurricane, she gives birth to her daughter, Mercedes, still expecting her husband to appear. Ultimately, she never properly grieves his death.<sup>136</sup> Despite possessing a "head in the clouds," "idle hands," or being "absentminded," she begins to tend a plot with her brother and advertises her skills as a washerwoman.<sup>137</sup> Soon, the main character meets Casimiro, a man with extra fingers like "black lima beans," and who goes to live in the home Graciela had built with Silvio.<sup>138</sup> Casimiro raises Mercedes as his own, sharing a more intimate bond with her than the protagonist.<sup>139</sup> Graciela becomes restless again after hearing about an "iron serpent" train traveling from La Vega to Santiago.<sup>140</sup> Casimiro tries to satisfy his wife, taking her on a trip to Puerto Rico. The main character believes she lands on the island, only to discover Casimiro has deceived her in an attempt to appease her. He takes her down the Ozama River to the home of the Falús who'd left Puerto Rico in 1902.

Shortly after, Graciela becomes a runaway mother. She escapes her rural community for La Vega, and all the while dreaming of riding a ship and also learning how to read.<sup>141</sup> She comes

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 41-42, 199.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

in contact with a number of characters, all of whom who exploit her. Among them are Eli, a “Germanfrench” who reduces her to a hypersexualized object and takes her to a brothel managed by a Haitian madam, La Pola, and Humberto Álvamos, who hires her as a maid and accuses her of theft.<sup>142</sup> Sensing impending danger, the protagonist never stays long in either place. She realizes her mother was right to say that men are not a guarantee of freedom and that “white skin doesn’t promise gaiety.”<sup>143</sup> She returns home, but leaves once again for the capital where she lives in a convent for a year. Graciela’s body bears the memory of her encounters, and these encounters cost her dearly. She returns home to die after contracting syphilis from her encounter with Eli.

The novel reveals characters who push against any fixed ideas about the nation or the island’s stories. It illustrates the lives of those most invisible in society, including the protagonist’s.<sup>144</sup> The text explores anti-Haitiansimo through characters such as Mercedes, the protagonist’s daughter, and Mustafa, “a lanky Syrian man with violet skin.”<sup>145</sup> The text also presents an individual of Haitian descent whom Graciela befriends in a market, as well as La Pola, a Haitian woman who possesses some power as the madam of an Inn.<sup>146</sup> Language distinguishes the protagonist from Haitian individuals, not race. At one point in the novel, the main character tries to gain her daughter’s trust after being absent. During carnival, Mercedes joins other kids “dressed as devils and painted in traditional blackface.”<sup>147</sup> The mother finds her daughter “pounding away at a [Dominican] girl” as others chant “Beat the Haitian, beat the

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 77-80, 90-95.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 11-112, 157, 165. These individuals also include: La Gitana (i.e. The Gypsy, born Lorenzo Baez), a transgendered individual who is ‘anti-yanqui’ and spends his days “translat[ing] fates and selling sage advice”; and Mercedes’ long-term partner, Andrés, a little person who believes in God but not in religion.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 105-107.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 43, 73-75.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 101.

Haitian.”<sup>148</sup> Appalled, Graciela confronts her child. The children turn their attention to her and she becomes the target. She is “beat[en] with their cow stomachs,” as they continue chanting.<sup>149</sup>

The scene can be read as an illustration of Mercedes’ internalization of anti-Haitianismo. It calls attention to the character’s anger towards her runaway mother, manifested as a series of violent acts.<sup>150</sup> The scene also points to language as the element distinguishing the protagonist from Haiti. Ironically, Graciela is taunted and beaten like “the Haitian” by individuals from a predominately black and mulatto nation; the scene is a scene of self-hatred. As an Afro-Dominican woman, the main character is particularly vulnerable to forms of violence long associated with a colonial and neocolonial history. This is also seen in how she is photographed naked with Silvio at the start of the novel, and in La Pola’s Inn. Her value is deemed less than “fairer girls” but is “appealing to foreigners” like Eli, who believes that “the black woman acquire[s] an extremely erotic perfume, quite apart from the insipidness of the white woman.”<sup>151</sup> Rosario’s text makes readers read intersectionally through Graciela, who grows up in an environment where she must contend with American oppression and at the same time resist racism, sexual exploitation, assigned gender roles, and classism.

The protagonist never discusses explicitly a shared history of resistance across Hispaniola, but through her ancestry she is associated with a maroon that joins Haiti and the Dominican Republic together. Graciela is described as being “born with the hot leg, like [her] maroon grandpa.”<sup>152</sup> She is a restless character, who perpetually flees or thinks about fleeing. She rejects traditional family duties and instead pursues more economic opportunity and political action. Hers is a psychological marronage. It manifests as practices of inward resistance, self-

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* 159.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, 68.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

affirmation, and self-assertion, all of which can take the form of outward rebellion and internal flight, as seen earlier in *Babouk*, and *The Infamous Rosalie*. The use of the third person point of view, as well as shifts from past to present tense, allows Rosario to move in and out of different perspectives. Readers learn about Graciela and her motivations, but never hear directly from her.

Although the narrative focuses on internal flight, it emphasizes the “intransitive act of marronage” that is captured in Aimé Césaire’s creation of the verb *marronner* (to maroon, or to flee), or what Neil Roberts calls a “multi-dimensional constant act.”<sup>153</sup> Marronner involves distance, which in Graciela’s case means putting space between her and her hometown, or the conditions of La Pola or the Alvaros’ home. It involves movement as the character flees towards La Vega, the capital, a convent, and home. Property is important, seen in Graciela’s acquisition of physical objects like the protagonist’s home, La Pola’s rosary, a Sears catalogue, a teacup and saucer, photograph, or amber crucifix. Finally, marronage requires intentionality as seen in the protagonist’s goals to see a bigger world, ride a ship, and learn to read.<sup>154</sup>

Like her historical counterparts, Graciela comes to possess a mythical presence, marking her transformation into a messiah. Before dying, she is seen as a “prodigal daughter” who becomes a sage by predicting the rise of Trujillo, “a demon who claims the cloak of God and feeds the nation to the wolves.”<sup>155</sup> Rosario draws attention to the power of an ordinary woman while crafting a character who gains a mythical status. Like Makandal, who lost his arm, Graciela loses her sight before predicting Trujillo’s rise. Her “illness signals her transformation into a messiah . . . as she enters a liminal space.”<sup>156</sup> Unlike Trouillot’s Lisette there is no doubt about the protagonist’s ability to predict the future. She predicts Trujillo’s rise and absolute

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<sup>153</sup> Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*, 6-10.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10. See also, Rosario, *Song of the Water Saints*, 93, 172.

<sup>155</sup> Rosario, *Song of the Water Saints*, 171.

<sup>156</sup> Thomas O. Beebee, “Hybrid Messiahs,” *Millennial Literatures of the Americas, 1492–2002* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 49.

power correctly as she echoes the famous slogans “God and Trujillo, and “Trujillo on Earth. God in Heaven.” The “wolves” in this case evoke the American occupying forces who created the Guardia Nacional Dominicana, a standing army used by Trujillo to exercise absolute control.<sup>157</sup> Rosario foreshadows Graciela’s prediction by referring to the disarmament period and to Silvio’s entrance into the Guardia Nacional Dominicana at fifteen. U.S. Marines train him and order him to hang his friend.<sup>158</sup> While the protagonist’s prediction highlights a stage in her transformation, a more stunning metamorphosis happens after her death when she is resurrected.

Although her encounters cost her dearly, Graciela’s flights push future generations forward towards greater freedom. Readers encounter the protagonist confronting U.S. Marines and fleeing a cultural oppression that would have her confined to “the market, the river, and neighboring households.”<sup>159</sup> Readers also witness Graciela fleeing immediate danger after her face is cut at La Pola’s and after she is accused of theft by Humberto Alvaros. The main character never stops running:

Running. The pillow was cool against her copper hands – copper turned green from the sea, the evil sea. Pillow, cotton softness smelling of the cane field where her forgotten grandfather held her hand as a child. Long stalks that hid him once from torches running in the night. Graciela’s leg cramped under the sheets. “Graciela, her marooned grandfather’s words returned to her” – Goat that breaks the drum pays with his skin.<sup>160</sup>

Like Don Chan’s death, the passage leading to the protagonist’s death takes a surrealist tone. The cost of living an unfettered life is an early death for a thirty-year-old Graciela, whose “hands follow their own laws.”<sup>161</sup> Rosario’s novel mirrors the idea of regeneration in Cruz’s work, but

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<sup>157</sup> Richard Lee Turits, *Foundations of Despotism* (Stanford University Press, 2003) 80-81. During the U.S. withdrawal of the island and Vasquez’s presidency, Trujillo became Commander-in-Chief of the Guardia. Three months after backing a revolt against Vasquez in February of 1930, Trujillo utilized military force “against his opponents, and stole the presidential election.”

<sup>158</sup> Rosario, *Song of the Water Saints*, 15, 20-21.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

Rosario's protagonist is not as nurturing as Cruz's. Rather, the runaway mother becomes "the goat" so that a new generation can continue a tradition of flight. This perpetuation is apparent in the narrative structure, which shifts dramatically across seven decades. It is most apparent, though, in Mercedes's granddaughter Leila, whose mother Amalfi is a runaway mother. She possesses Graciela's "same absentmindedness."<sup>162</sup> By remaining in the D.R. she essentially "runs away" from motherhood.

Marronage remains dormant in Mercedes. Despite this fact, she is pivotal to ensuring that a tradition of resistance continues in a younger generation. The narrative says that she prefers "private, internal journeys."<sup>163</sup> Mercedes enters into a traditional marriage of her choosing. She partners with a man who cannot physically overpower her or manipulate her. Despite her many suitors, she prefers Andrés, whom some reduce to "that thing" because of his frankness and genuineness.<sup>164</sup> Her marronage is not without its flaws and contradictions, though. These flaws are most evident in the value she places on her "royal white blood" and the aggression she exhibits towards Haitians, including her support of the 1937 Massacre, which she sees as God's way of "exterminating heathens."<sup>165</sup> The character begins to change when she discovers Mustafa's mutilated arm, its hand taken when he could not pronounce *perejil*.

Graciela's flights come at a cost to her daughter, a cost most obvious in the way they limit her interactions with her mother. Mercedes learns to be a nurturer in ways her mother never learned. She gives birth and takes care of Ismael, who is named after Mustafa's father, and then Amalfi, born a decade later on the day of Trujillo's assassination.<sup>166</sup> Like Cruz's Esperanza, she becomes a *dominicana ausente – maroon* who flees "a seesaw economy" and an island where

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<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-200.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 108, 158-162, 164, 199.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 162, 181-183.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 186,191.

“tourism is the new sugar.”<sup>167</sup> Mercedes becomes critical of Joaquin Balaguer, Trujillo’s successor and a writer who promoted anti-Haitianismo. This new attitude suggests a shift in the character. Mercedes also raises her granddaughter, Leila, in New York, and tells her stories about her great-grandmother.

Although Leila is raised in New York and inherits a penchant for flight, she shares some of Graciela’s struggles. The novel’s final chapters mirror the book’s beginning, and magnify the life of a fifteen-year-old girl, who (like her great-grandmother) leaves home. Leila spends a night dancing with her friends at The Pavo Real. Like Graciela, who was sexually assaulted in La Vega, Leila also suffers an assault. Initially, the young girl is drawn to Miguel, an older, married man and does not sense the danger in this relationship, even after being cautioned by Mercedes. After a night of dancing, Miguel takes her to the Jardín Motel, where he rapes her. Stepping outside of herself, she “witnesses the man on top of the girl, her legs twisted under him, her brand-new breasts crushed.”<sup>168</sup> In the scene that follows, Rosario creates tension between Miguel’s “gentle kisses” and roughness, between the threat that he could throw her out the window and his lack of “scariness” when he sleeps. The experience leaves Leila crying, “washing away the clotted blood,” and imagining herself gaining power by “easing” a needle into Miguel’s heart until his “valves creak like the gears of a broken clock.”<sup>169</sup>

Leila remains silent about the experience. She fabricates a more romanticized version of the night for her friends, despite the “ulcer of disgust,” her fear of disease, and a possible pregnancy.<sup>170</sup> On the surface Miguel is a means to gaining more freedom, of to the power to

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 233 – 237.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 234-235.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 235, 237.

“bloom now.”<sup>171</sup> But when Miguel victimized her, she is forced to realize, like Graciela, that men don’t guarantee freedom. The novel ends with both Graciela’s and Leila’s voices. Graciela says:

Always tried to live what I wanted. Never pretended to be a good woman. Never tried to be a bad one. Just lived what I wanted. That’s all my mystery. Forget dirty tongues. They’re next door, in the soup, even in your own head. Some weak soul always trying to slip their tongue inside your mouth, clean as a baby’s pit. You, listen. My life was more salt than goat. Lived between memory and wishes . . . but how much can a foot do inside a shoe? Make something better of it than me.<sup>172</sup>

Included in her warning about “weak souls” is a description about her troublesome life, a life more bitter than sweet. Graciela implores Leila to build upon her legacy and make a life including travel, dreams, and family. The final image in the text is of Leila with Graciela’s amber crucifix in her mouth, riding the subway train, or “iron serpent,” back home. Home is embodied in the emotional space of her family and in the “desire to love them,” rather than the physical markers of the island or of Dominican New York.

### Modern-Day Maroon Woman: Empress of Diaspora

Like other texts discussed in this chapter, Junot Díaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), interrogates the politics of historiography by elevating rebel women on and off the island. In this novel, Hispaniola is defined as the gateway to the “New World” and the “Ground Zero of the New World.”<sup>173</sup> Yunió, the narrator, opens the story by describing a popular Dominican superstition fukú, “a curse or doom of some kind” upon the “New World,” and more narrowly upon the de Leon-Cabral family:

They say it came from Africa, carried in the screams of the enslaved; that it was the death bane of the Taínos, uttered just as one world perished and another began; that it was a demon drawn into Creation through the nightmare door that was cracked open in the

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>173</sup> Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007) 1-4, 80-81.

Antilles. Fukú americanus, or more colloquially, fukú . . . specifically, the Curse and the Doom of the New World. Also called the fukú of the Admiral because the Admiral was both its midwife and one of its great European victims . . . Santo Domingo . . . might be its port of entry, but we are all of us its children, whether we know it or not.<sup>174</sup>

The fukú is rooted in the European exploitation that brutalized indigenous peoples, Africans, and their descendants. Although Hispaniola is its initial site, as Yunior explains, it exists throughout the Americas. The fukú regenerates across time, manifesting itself as the dictator Rafael Trujillo, “the Curse’s servant or its master, its agent or its principal.”<sup>175</sup> Rather than focusing on the U.S. occupation, Díaz’s text explores the generational repercussions of the Trujillato, which helped create an “Island of . . . eviction.”<sup>176</sup>

Yunior’s narrative offers a “counterspell” to the fukú which is a “zafa” many conjure by crossing their fingers, hoping to counter bad luck or the curse. This zafa takes the form of the story of Oscar Wao and his family, a story that uses elements of science fiction, magical realism, Dominican folklore, and many other genres. Yunior offers his version of history by incorporating footnotes. He also interjects and talks directly to the reader like the narrator in Guy Endore’s *Babouk*. Like *Let it Rain Coffee*, and *Song of the Water Spirits*, the narrative is acutely aware of the cyclical nature of time, and frequently moves forward and backward in chronology.

Díaz magnifies the life and struggles of the de Leon-Cabral family, especially Oscar and his mother, Beli. The first protagonist is an overweight Dominican American who is the antithesis of Dominican masculinity. Ostracized by his fascination with sci-fi and fantasy, the protagonist attempts to navigate the worlds of New Jersey and the Dominican Republic. Oscar tries to become a writer while struggling through bouts of “the darkness” brought on by socially

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

ostracization and by a lack of sexual intimacy.<sup>177</sup> As an Afro-Dominican American, he is a “raceexile.”<sup>178</sup> The narrator says: “White kids look at his black skin and his afro and treat him with inhuman cheeriness. The kids of color, upon hearing him speak and seeing him move his body, [shake] their heads. You’re not Dominican.”<sup>179</sup> Yet, Oscar inhabits more than a “dual border space of marginality.”<sup>180</sup> Rather, he struggles within a space of multiple marginalities, where he must contend with racial, gender, and sexual constructs.

Díaz devotes a large portion of the text to Oscar’s mother Hypatía Belicia, or Beli, a complex figure who embodies the modern-day maroon through her actions and connection to a broader network of women. As “the darkest character in [the] story,” the protagonist is marked both by her will to survive and her refusal to ‘serve.’<sup>181</sup> At a young age, she is “sold to strangers in Azua” and made a modern-day slave.<sup>182</sup> In the chapter on “The Heartbreaks of Belicia Cabral: 1955-1962,” the character’s adopted father pours hot oil on her back, and forever disfigures her. The violence in this scene conjures violence associated with slavery. Like Babouk, Beli goes through a period of silence; this period of silence helps her “forge herself anew.”<sup>183</sup> Similar to other maroons, Beli acquires different names throughout the book that signal her transformation as a character and shifts that are happening on the island. She is defined as an Oyá Soul or a shaper of storms, the opposite of a Ciguapa, Child of the Apocalypse, as well as the Empress of Diaspora.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>178</sup> Lorgia García-Peña, *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 173.

<sup>179</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 49.

<sup>180</sup> García-Peña. *The Borders of Dominicanidad*, 173. See also Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 49, 295, 321-322.

<sup>181</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 78, 103.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 258-259.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 79, 81, 250, 106.

The last of these names stems from Beli's near-death experience in the cane fields before her migration to the U.S. After having an affair with a man nicknamed The Gangster, the protagonist is taken to a cane field and beaten within an inch of her life. Díaz says that she was "plunged 180 years into rolling fields of cane . . . They beat her like she was a slave. Like she was a dog."<sup>185</sup> In this scene, Beli undergoes a physical transformation and a rebirth. She finds herself sliding into "a loneliness that obliterated all memory," and in this space she "scratches the dust with a stick, pretending that the scribble was letters, words, names."<sup>186</sup> A singing mongoose appears beside her. It possesses the "lilt" of a woman, and "chabine eyes."<sup>187</sup> The mongoose commands her to rise and tells her of the son and daughter that await her. The character is able to get out of the cane maze and to reach a truck on the tarmac, where traveling musicians mistake her for a baká, a ciguapa, a Haitian.<sup>188</sup> Under order of the lead singer, a woman who possesses "chabine eyes" like the mongoose, the musicians agree not to leave her. Beli flees the island with help from La Inca, her adoptive mother. She meets Oscar's and Lola's father on the plane.

The birth of Beli marks the birth of a powerful zafa, while also underscoring the obstacles she will repeatedly have to overcome. Similar to Oscar, Beli is ostracized, but from the moment she is born. The novel's fifth chapter tells of her father, Abelard Luis Cabral, who was tortured and perished in prison because he would not hand over his first daughter Jacqueline to Trujillo, and also because he had written a book critical of the dictator. Less than two months after giving

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 146-150

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 147-148.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 151. See also Guaroa Ubiñas Renville, *Mitos, creencias y leyendas dominicanas* (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom.: Ediciones Librería La Trinitaria, 2000) 25, 29. Translation: In Dominican folklore, bakas can take the form of a different animals or dolls; their eyes possess a curious light, lit intensely, and they drag chains with an inexplicable strength. Bakas are a product of a deal with the devil or evil forces; those who enter into such a pack must pay with their souls and children. Ciguapas are women often found near bodies of water . They are characterized by their long jet-black hair, which covers their bodies and their feet that face the opposite direction. Some are said to lure those they find attractive. They are also hard to capture. The author makes the connection between ciguapas, and the Taínos who would leave footprints, walking backward to confuse their persecutors..

birth to Beli, Socorro (the protagonist's grandmother) "stepped in front of an ammunition truck" and was dragged to her death.<sup>189</sup> Grief, her husband's disappearance, isolation, fukú, and postpartum depression all contributed to her passing. Beli is orphaned not just in the sense of losing her parents, but she also loses her sisters, Jacki and Astrid. One girl drowns in her godparent's pool, and the other sister is hit by a stray bullet in church. Beli loses most of her immediate family before she can even speak—a profound alienation from family history.

The narrator says Beli's birth had prophetic significance. Named the Third and Final Daughter and Child of the Apocalypse, she is believed to be an ill omen, the first sign of Trujillo's fukú on the family, because she is black. Richard Perez writes:

Díaz explains, she was not an easy orphan to place because "she was born bakini – underweight, sickly. She had problems crying, problems nursing, and no one outside the family wanted the dark child to live." For the community, Beli comes to embody the fukú, and therefore fails to elicit empathy or the primal desire to save the young girl . . . The community sees in the abandoned girl a reflection of its own monstrous state.<sup>190</sup>

Ironically, Beli is alienated by a community that reflects her physically and racially. Yes, she "fails to elicit empathy because she's seen as the embodiment of the fukú," but the community does not necessarily recognize the girl in its "monstrous state." This is a factor that perpetuates the fukú. Silence and rejection contributes to Beli's social death and profound isolation. Much like Oscar, the protagonist is ostracized because she is undeniably Afro-Dominican. Revising ideas of nation, the author leaves no doubt regarding the character's African ancestry, despite "the light early on in her father's capsulization."<sup>191</sup> Díaz writes: "Abelard's third and final daughter . . . was born black. And not just any kind of black. But black black – kongoblack, shangoblack, kaliblack, zapotoblack, rekhablack – and no amount of fancy Dominican racial

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 248-250.

<sup>190</sup> Richard Perez, "Flashes of Transgression: The Fuku, Negative Aesthetics, and the Future in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz," *Moments of Magical Realism in US Ethnic Literatures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 96. See also Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 252.

<sup>191</sup> Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 248.

legerdemain was going to obscure that fact.”<sup>192</sup> Beli does not “elicit empathy” because she is black within a community that minimizes its African ancestry, and in turn, its own history. This minimization is part of what the narrator identifies as a greater amnesia.

This negation ultimately leads to the community’s “monstrous state.” Yunion confronts this when he states: “That’s the kind of culture I belong to: people took their child’s black complexion as an ill omen.”<sup>193</sup> Perez underlines the community’s rejection of Beli, but the child also experiences this rejection inside her family, a rejection rooted in the same self-hatred and denial readers witness in *Song of the Water Spirits*, where the community projects its self-hatred onto Graciela during carnival.<sup>194</sup> The child’s “abandonment” is on a grand scale that involves the silencing of family history and the island’s story, including its Black Radical Tradition. Beli’s mother is described as “dark-hued Dejah Thoris,” a reference to the red Martian princess of Helium in Edgar Rice Burroughs twentieth century sci-fi novels.<sup>195</sup> She is also described as “the family’s first catastrophist.”<sup>196</sup> She grows up anxious within a struggling family whose mother was “mute” and whose father was a drunkard haunted by the murder of his own father at the hands of a neighboring sergeant. These factors are seemingly ignored or never taken into account in relation to Beli. Interestingly, the description of Socorro not only acknowledges how she possesses a different complexion than Abelard, but also how she can appear to be submissive and also act warrior-like, for Dejah Thoris defends herself and even at one point saves her husband’s life. The text suggests Socorro doesn’t have the means to “save” Abelard from prison and torture. However, she manages to conceive a third daughter with Abelard and give birth to Beli before taking her own life. Beli becomes a child who can blend her father’s textbook knowledge

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 241.

with her mother's knowledge of folk cures, her sister Jackie's academic intelligence with Astrid's spirituality.

Beli's silencing evolves when she is sold and enslaved, and even after her adoptive mother rescues her. Orphaned, Beli's distant relatives sell her to "strangers."<sup>197</sup> On numerous occasions Díaz connects his protagonist to her enslaved ancestors, and this is one of these instances. The novel identifies her as a *criada*, a *restavek*. These terms indicate that she is used as free-wage labor, and that her circumstances can occur on both sides of the island. The character not only loses her family and freedom, but she is also "lost" for nine years and becomes anonymous like so many maroons and slaves before her. While emphasizing her isolation and silencing, the narrator describes the locale she struggles to survive in. Azua is one of the poorest and harshest areas in Dominican Republic. It is a "wasteland . . . Outland, the Badlands, the Cursed Earth, the Forbidden Zone, the Great Wastes."<sup>198</sup> Azua is not the "End of the World," but it resembles a postcolonial hell that guarantees death. The "strangers" who control this space and Beli's access to education, splash "a pan of hot oil on her back."<sup>199</sup> The child is mutilated for being "immensely stubborn" and "skipping out on work" to learn how to read and write.<sup>200</sup> The strangers then imprison her in a chicken coop. Beli's survival in Azua is miraculous.

With the maroon figures examined in previous chapters, mutilation signals flight and metamorphosis into a messiah figure. The word *messiah* comes from a Hebrew word meaning an "anointed one" or "to apply oil to."<sup>201</sup> It refers to a savior or leader who "possesses a saving

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 253 – 256.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>201</sup> Beebee, "Hybrid Messiahs." *Millennial Literatures of the Americas, 1492–2002*, 48.

message or technology.”<sup>202</sup> Díaz crafts Beli as a character with messianic qualities. Beli can also be seen as a messiah figure through her “anointment,” which is both suffering and miraculous survival.<sup>203</sup> The birth of Díaz’s heroine is proof of Trujillo’s fukú. It signals the demise of the family, the end of fukú with the birth of a rebel girl, and, in turn, the birth of a zafa. The protagonist, who is “the darkest character in [the] story,” and a girl from “a city famed for its resistance to blackness,” carries a zafa through her “will to survive,” but also through the Black Radical Tradition.<sup>204</sup>

She is tied to this tradition not just through her ancestry. The text underscores Beli’s invisibility as a black girl, as the “tiniest negrita on the planet.”<sup>205</sup> The label reinforces her connection to rebel women who precede her and highlights gender as an important factor in the zafa. Beli’s connection to the divine also reinforces her connection to the Black Radical Tradition. In Christianity, the messiah is considered to be the son of God, a male. Díaz subtly links Beli as a woman to God. For example, a character compliments the protagonist as “the most beautiful girl . . . proof that God is Dominican.”<sup>206</sup> Beli’s physical beauty is viewed as a manifestation of God. The mongoose who appears to sixteen-year-old Beli after she’s been savagely beaten and left for dead a second time is also an indication of divine intervention. The mongoose’s “chabine eyes” are replicated in the lead singer, a woman, who directs her bandmates to save Beli. During her beating, Beli loses consciousness; the Gangster and then her adoptive mother, La Inca, appear to her as in a dream. The protagonist has a revelation of “La

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> This reading supports Perez’ view that “Beli’s life, through her sheer will to survive, will not only carry out the curse anew, but also the possibility of its subversion.” See Perez, “Flashes of Transgression” 96.

<sup>204</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 78.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 113.

Inca, The Divine,” putting an “A-plus zafa on the Cabral family fukú.”<sup>207</sup> La Inca saves her daughter’s life through prayer, through friends who are doctors, and also through spiritual assistance from her bible group. The narrator says, “If these serendipities signify anything . . . it is that our Beli is blessed.”<sup>208</sup> If Oscar is the hero of the novel, Beli is its superhero.

Mutilation sparks a psychological marronage that is manifested as a long period of silence and an acquisition of language. In Endore’s text, Babouk’s silence affords him the internal and physical detachment he needs to heal, acquire language, and to see himself as part of a collective. This internal flight spans years, and is impeded by isolation and fear. The period where Beli acquires language and slowly heals is profoundly marked by silence to the point where the protagonist acquires a new name. Beli’s title, Forget-Me-Naut, conveys that a part of her is forgotten, and also suggesting that she has become quite adept at suppressing her pain. Beli is similar to her counterpart, Babouk, whose “whole being [is] shut” at one point.<sup>209</sup> In fact, the narrator underscores how she actively “embraced the amnesia . . . so common throughout the Islands, five parts denial, five parts hallucination.”<sup>210</sup> Beli’s silence is defined as a denial, and yet it is something she relies on in order to construct a new self. This silencing is habitual in Hispaniola and the greater Caribbean. Even La Inca pretends the Burning “didn’t exist” and doesn’t “probe” her daughter for more information.<sup>211</sup> The protagonist does not reveal anything about her time in Azua for forty years. Internal flight is a double-edged sword that can be healing, but it takes decades. In Díaz’s narrative, the move from inward resistance to acts of outward rebellion develop gradually into an act of grand marronage facilitated by La Inca. Acts of literary marronage will only be realized in another generation.

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 143, 155.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>209</sup> Guy Endore, *Babouk* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), 83.

<sup>210</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 259.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 260.

Like the women who intervene in Makandal's, Babouk's, and Lisette's lives, women intervene in Beli's life. Yes, "vulnerability conditions [the protagonist's existence," but women in particular try to shield Beli's vulnerability.<sup>212</sup> Díaz writes that "no one outside and inside the family wanted the darkchild to survive," but someone did and she comes in the form of a "darksinned woman named Zoila," whose name means life.<sup>213</sup> Zoila literally nurtures Beli at her most vulnerable moment by giving Beli own baby's breastmilk. Although Zoila only appears briefly, she represents a collective of women who together are part of the Black Radical Tradition. La Inca is more readily identified as intervening in the protagonist's life as a "savior, nurturer, and family stabilizer." As a child, Beli's flight depends on her adoptive mother. Driven by guilt for her inaction and hearing rumors about her relative, La Inca saves Beli. She dismisses the idea that the child is too dark to be her relative when she looks into Beli's eyes and sees the eyes that once belonged to Abelard and Socorro. The mother-aunt works within a tradition of healing established by Beli's parents, one a "brilliant doctor" and another "the finest nurse practitioner" with "encyclopedic knowledge of folk cures and traditional remedies."<sup>214</sup> La Inca sees that Beli receives medical attention, and attempts to heal the girl's invisible wounds.

She also files documents attesting to Beli's identity, and she gives the girl another important document, a newspaper picture of her parents. Attempting to recover Beli's lost past, La Inca relays stories about the girl's parents and her sisters. She also tell Beli about Casa Hatüey, the family home and a symbol of wealth and intellect, a place where the sisters were encouraged to read and learn languages. Casa Hatüey is named after the first fighter against colonialism, a man who left the D.R. for Cuba to get reinforcements and to warn the indigenous of the Spaniards.

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<sup>212</sup> Perez, "Flashes of Transgression,"96.

<sup>213</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 252.

<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*, 213, 219.

La Inca becomes synonymous with *sanctuary*. She creates a space where her adoptive daughter heals, feels safe, and develops as La Inca teaches her to “read, write, dress, eat, behave normally.”<sup>215</sup> Beli is also encouraged to attend school. At nine years and eleven months, she is asked to write the date on the board, an act reserved for the best students. This moment becomes a memory she cherishes when in the United States. Education in and out of La Inca’s home enables Beli to develop a sense of herself:

Beli attended the dusty, fly-infested public school with children three years younger than her, made no friends (she couldn’t have imagined it any other way), and for the first time in her life began to remember her dreams. It was a luxury she’d never dared indulge in, and in the beginning they seemed as powerful as storms. She had the whole variety, from flying to being lost, and even dreamt about the Burning, how her “father’s” face had turned blank at the moment he picked up the skillet. In her dreams she was never scared. Would only shake her head. You’re gone, she said. No more.<sup>216</sup>

Beli’s isolation within the school, in this case, seems to be empowering, for it gives her the space to take flight in her thoughts. Díaz calls these dreams “as powerful as storms,” because of their unpredictability and their capacity to alter her state, in both negative and positive ways. She is haunted by the past, but internal flight offers her space to confront the abuses she suffered. The last line in the excerpt is particularly significant because it contains a contradiction. In dreams, Beli is able to express herself and to banish her “father.” But while she says she he is gone, he is still present in her dreams and through the scar on her back. The narrative suggests that only by confronting this amnesia can the protagonist fully heal.

Beli remains in a process of psychological marronage within the novel. She eventually leaves the D.R. but her flight depends on La Inca. After Beli is nearly beaten to death for her relationship with the Gangster during her teen years, La Inca saves her through prayer and her

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<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

medical connections. The mother-aunt dispels the role of fukú in her daughter's beating, believing "she met God out in [the] canefield."<sup>217</sup> The death of Trujillo on the night of the beating seems to support La Inca's assertion, despite the fukú's reemergence. Moreover, La Inca, leaning on her ancestors and on her Catholic faith, experiences a dream in which her late husband tells her that Beli must go to New York for safety. Having protected her daughter from Trujillo's henchmen, La Inca encourages Beli's departure. Beli's survival and figurative resurrection is a miracle that elevates her and the network of women that support her, much like the women who support characters like Don Chan or Lisette.

Díaz suggests that the fukú can only be countered by a new generation, and particularly by a female rebel who practices literary marronage. The act of writing becomes synonymous with transgression or marronage. Transgression is indicated in Beli's first name which conjures "Hypatía [the] Greek mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer, [who was] murdered by...Christians for her openly feminist and pagan views."<sup>218</sup> Beli's transgression is also indicated in the way she engages language.<sup>219</sup> Perez points out that Beli refuses to profess or admit she seduced Jack Pujols after they are caught together in a broom closet. Instead, she shakes her head "No" sixty-six times.<sup>220</sup> Afterward, she insists "I will not serve." Perez suggests her refusal is a counterspell, proof not just of Beli's resistance but of the "generative power of language."<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>218</sup> Richard Perez, "Flashes of Transgression," 96.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., Perez writes: Beli, of course, meaning beautiful conforms to the brutal masculinity that pervaded the island . . . Conversely, 'Hypatía was a Greek mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer, murdered by a group of Christians for her openly feminist and pagan views...La Inca urges Beli to be aware of her privileged past . . . one that not incidentally calls attention to the medicinal properties of literacy as a symbolic antidote to the curse.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 98 – 101.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

Language in this novel is an act of literary marronage, for it is a form of resistance against what Perez describes as “the machista laden curse” perpetuated by the “New World Gods of masculinity, whiteness, and capitol.”<sup>222</sup> The power of language is illustrated when Beli is left for dead after a beating ordered by the Gangster’s wife, Trujillo’s sister.<sup>223</sup> As she struggles to survive, the protagonist “revive[s] herself . . . by tapping into the magical dimensions of “letters, words, names,” as she “scratches at the dust with a stick.”<sup>224</sup> Language, again, is a means of revival. In the maroon narrative *Babouk*, for example, readers witness how language is used not just for self-affirmation, but also for outward acts of rebellion. In *The Infamous Rosalie*, both a written and oral language is used to cultivate inner resistance, which eventually takes the form of grand marronage. Examining Beli’s near-death experience in the cane, Perez argues that “language animates rage against injustice.”<sup>225</sup> The rage that flows throughout the protagonist’s life is produced through an “insistent search for love [and] its failure.”<sup>226</sup> It becomes “an antagonistic mode of resistance, a brazen contestation against the adulterated masculinity that comes to impose itself on her life.”<sup>227</sup> Beli’s resolve is underscored in the following passage:

She found herself one last reservoir of strength: her Cabral magis – and all she had to do was realize that once again she’d been tricked, once again she’d been played, by the Gangster, by Santo Domingo, by her own dumb needs, to ignite it. Like Superman in *Dark Knight Returns*, who drained from an entire jungle the photonic energy he needed to survive Coldbringer, so did our Beli resolve out of her anger her own survival. In other words, her coraje saved her life. Like a white light in her. Like a sun. She came to in the ferocious moonlight. A broken girl, atop broken stalks of cane. Pain everywhere but alive. Alive.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 148.

Like Graciela from *Song of the Water Saints*, Beli realizes that men don't guarantee freedom. The epiphany contributes to her rage and her *coraje*. Although Díaz utilizes rage and *coraje* interchangeably, *coraje* conveys rage or anger, but also bravery and guts. The term compounds ideas, making Beli synonymous with feminine formidability. She is linked to the image of the mongoose, a symbol of "indomitable female strength fueled by "hope," "hate," and an "invincible heart."<sup>229</sup>

Like Cruz and Rosario, Díaz draws attention to how female resistance regenerates itself in different generations. Perez argues that another generation will be "charged with the responsibility to create a zafa that might change the course of the curse's power."<sup>230</sup> The novel makes clear that it will be a woman in a later generation that will create one, drawing from previous generations and practicing literary marronage. At the end of the novel, Lola is the only survivor in the Cabral family. As the narrative progresses, it hints at Oscar's death in the cane fields. Beli also dies, shortly after, from cancer. As in *The Infamous Rosalie* and *Let it Rain coffee*, Díaz's text ends with the birth of girl, Lola's daughter.

### Ciguapeando: The Maroon Woman Zafa

*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is told primarily through Yunió's voice, with the exception of Chapter 2 and the beginning of Part II, which are told through Lola's perspective. The shift in point-of-view underscores the rebel woman's importance to the story. Lola fulfills the role of a modern-day rebel woman on a number of levels. She moves beyond her mother's rage and her own pain and transform her psychologically and physically. A young Lola is forced to navigate Beli's rage and the silence surrounding her rape, a trauma that's "common

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<sup>229</sup> Perez, "Flashes of Transgression," 102.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

knowledge throughout the family,” but only briefly mentioned in the text.<sup>231</sup> On pages 56 and 57, the Forget-Me-Naut tells her daughter to “shut her mouth and stop crying.”<sup>232</sup> Amnesia, so pervasive in the protagonist’s life, threatens to dominate Lola’s. Díaz uses the first person when writing from Lola’s perspective to reveal her awareness of her “clenched legs, and mind,” and also her knowledge of the degree to which her mother’s influence has hindered her. This awareness illustrates a process of internal transformation, a period in which Lola gains self-affirmation and inner-resistance. The young girl admits she reacted when she was told she was “ugly, worthless, an idiota.” Despite the love existing between these two characters, Lola views her mother as a kind of tormentor, as someone who never said “a positive thing to her, tore her down, split her dreams . . . who could wipe her out if she let her.” Yet, like Lisette, Lola is aware of her public persona of “the perfect Dominican daughter, the perfect Dominican slave.” Lola refuses servility:

And then when I was twelve I got that feeling, the scary witchy one, and before I knew it my mother was sick and the wildness that had been in me all along, that I tried to tamp down with chores and with homework and with promises that once I reached college I would be able to do whatever I pleased, burst out . . . It was a message more than a feeling, a message that tolled like a bell: change, change, change.<sup>233</sup>

The wildness that Lola describes in some ways mirrors her mother’s desire to escape La Inca’s grasp, and with it the bakery, school, her town, the death of her parents, her childhood, and ultimately, the island. Not without some irony, the daughter desires to escape her own mother. The excerpt is just one part of a lengthy passage dominated by memories recounting how Beli “kept Lola crushed under her heel,” physically and emotionally. However, a significant difference between these two characters is that while Beli seeks to escape “her own despised

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<sup>231</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 25, 56-58, 80.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-57. All quotation that following in this paragraph can be found on pages 56-57.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

black skin,” Lola seems capable of embracing her African ancestry.<sup>234</sup> She says “Yo soy prieta . . . pero no soy bruta” (I am dark-skinned . . . but I’m not dumb), and dreams of disappearing and “letting [herself] grow dark in the sun, no more hiding from it, [letting her] hair indulge in all its kinks.”<sup>235</sup> Unlike Beli, who once desired to be called *india* instead of *morena*, Lola likes it when a boyfriend calls her “his morena.”<sup>236</sup> The evidence suggests an inner evolution in which she undoes her mother’s *fea* with her own definition of beauty. The passage above uses the term “burst” to describe how Lola’s need to escape breaks forth forcibly under the weight of her mother and the realization that Beli, despite her power, is mortal. Lola precedes her confession with memories of her mother, memories that accumulate to the point where readers visually and figuratively sense their weight. Like Lisette, who struggles to hide the fire in her eyes, Lola finds it difficult to suppress her true vision. This struggle manifests itself both emotionally and physically.

Lola inherits her mother’s defiance, and develops the means to take flight and to resist physically and through language. The character undergoes both internal and physical transformation like her predecessors. Embracing a “punk chick” outsider persona, she shaves her head and associates herself with an anti-establishment musical genre.<sup>237</sup> She is forced to cope with cancer’s physical toll on her mom, a *diosa* who is forced to wear wigs after losing her hair. Lola knows her mom will disapprove of her decision to shave her head. The narrative does not resolve whether she cuts off her hair in solidarity with her mom, or out of rage.

Lola’s actions represent a rebellion against her mom and a psychological marronage. She does not face Beli in dreams or forget about her, but rather confronts her in the present. Beli

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 73, 115.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 54, 58, 75.

threatens to kill her daughter if she doesn't wear a wig. Defiant like her mother, the young girl burns the wig. The protagonist slaps her daughter, but Lola "strikes" or "punches" her hand.<sup>238</sup> Drawing a parallel between Lola and fire, the narrative describes Beli's swift response: "She snatched her hand back, like [Lola] was fire."<sup>239</sup> In *the Infamous Rosalie*, readers see the protagonist struggle not just to hide her concern, but also the fire in her eyes. Fire in the novel is synonymous with rebellion, destruction, defense, power, and strength. It is also symbolic of transformation, signaling the evolution of Lisette's inner-resistance into more outward acts of marronage. The parallel between Lola and fire not only emphasizes her power in confronting her mother, but also foreshadows her confrontation with the past and with fukú.

Lola moves from inner resistance to more active acts of marronage, including physical flights to the Jersey Shore, to Spain, and to Japan. Lola takes flight with more intention than Beli, who was never sure "where she wanted to [escape]."<sup>240</sup> In fact, shortly after her confrontation with her mother, the young girl runs away in an act she has cultivated through language: "All my favorite books from that period were about runaways. *Watership Down*, *The Incredible Journey*, *My Side of the Mountain*, and when Bon Jovi's "Runaway" came out I imagined it was me they were singing about."<sup>241</sup> Lola's references illustrate flights of impossible journeys. The allusion to Bon Jovi's song highlights a mother's neglect rather than a father's, and perhaps suggests the importance of a mother's love in shaping her daughter's fate. Throughout the novel, readers encounter Oscar's discipline as a reader and a writer. Yet the narrative also shows Lola as a voracious reader who teaches English and who also writes poetry.

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 55, 59.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 57. See also, 56, 62, 197.

For Lola, fukú is not a curse but rather is life. Through “the generative force of language” she renders the fukú powerless, at least temporarily.<sup>242</sup>

Lola’s punk persona is but one physical transformation in a series. Her first flight is short lived. Once Beli catches her, she sends her to the D.R., where Lola dresses like “a real Dominican girl.”<sup>243</sup> At college, Yuniór as having “ill long” hair with “cheap blocky glasses, the kind an alternative whitegirl would wear.”<sup>244</sup> A more adult Lola is also described as having long hair that’s “never straightened . . . heavier and less guileless”: She is still the “ciguapa” of Yuniór’s “dreams.”<sup>245</sup> Lola seeks alternative spaces, either in schools or in other countries. Her outward appearance is symbolic of her willingness to change and the development of her inner world.

Yuniór associates Lola with the mythical Ciguapas, women in Dominican folklore who are found near bodies of water, clothed only in their jet-black hair. Captivating men, ciguapas’ victims follow them into these waters without noticing their backward feet. Ciguapas are elusive. Their myth is influenced by accounts of the footprints the indigenous Taíno would leave as they walked backward, to confuse their persecutors.<sup>246</sup> Ginetta E. B. Candelario argues that “the ciguapa can be understood as embodying the simultaneously progressive and regressive sovereignty strategies and sentiments of a people whose ancestors were both colonizers and colonized, enslavers and enslaved, (im)migrants and native born, navigating landscapes ruled by caudillos jostling for personal power in a nation born ‘beneath the United States.’”<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Richard Perez, “Flashes of Transgression,” 95, 98-101.

<sup>243</sup> Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 71.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>246</sup> Guaroa Ubiñas Renville, *Mitos, creencias y leyendas dominicanas* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Librería La Trinitaria, 2000), 25.

<sup>247</sup> Ginetta E.B. Candelario, “La ciguapa y el ciguapeo: Dominican myth, Metaphor, and Method.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*. 20.3 (2016): 102.

Díaz ties Lola to the Black Radical Tradition and to marronage when he describe her as the daughter of one of her predecessors, as “Hija de Liborio” (daughter of Liborio).<sup>248</sup> This description also reinforces Lola’s connection to Afro-Christian belief. Above, we saw that Beli is made into a messiah figure who develops her connection to a God-like or spiritual force via the mongoose. By contrast, her daughter possesses this force internally through what is referred to as her bruja ways, a “message that tolled like a bell” or a “feeling in blood, a rattle.”<sup>249</sup> At the beginning of the second chapter, the author uses the second person to put readers in an intimate moment where Lola feels the lump in her mother’s breast and is overwhelmed by a “premonition” of change.<sup>250</sup> The moment is so described as Lola’s beginning.

The feeling of dread persists during the fourteen months that Lola is exiled to the Dominican Republic, where she dates a boy named Max. On the surface, the character’s bruja feelings foreshadow Max’s death. Yet, the feeling “hits with the force of a hurricane” when La Inca brings up Abelard and stops herself short: Chapter 2 ends where it begins, with Lola asserting, “I was waiting to begin.”<sup>251</sup> The narrative then shifts dramatically to a pivotal chapter on “The Three Heartbreaks of Belicia Cabral,” the lengthiest in the text. These turns suggests that despite Beli’s amnesia, La Inca reveals the past to her granddaughter, a past countering Beli’s amnesia. The use of the first person in the second chapter supports this assertion for Lola summarizes her mother’s story. If Beli is her daughter’s tormentor, her hell, she is also Lola’s salvation. As Lola puts it: “But if these years have taught me anything it is this: you can never run away. Not ever. The only way out is in.”<sup>252</sup> Rather than flee, Lola chooses to fight. Lola breaks the cycle of amnesia because she possesses the family’s history. Yuniór cannot offer his

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<sup>248</sup> Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 56.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 53, 58, and 73.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

“zafa of sorts” without Lola’s voice for she knows and preserves this history. Lola runs away often, but she often returns back to the beginning, to her mother. If Beli is Lola’s beginning, Lola is her daughter’s beginning, a role she’s cultivated through both her mom and Oscar.

Each generation of the Leon-Cabral family improves the zafa, the cure. An even more powerful zafa is born through the birth of Isis, who will draw from Oscar and Beli and her mother, Lola. The child, who has Beli’s hair and Oscar’s eyes, is named after a goddess who took the form of a halcyon and who found her husband and brother Osiris’s floating body.<sup>253</sup> She was able to restore him through her breath. Notably, Isis’s association with this goddess conjures the nobility of the African civilizations. Throughout history, Isis has been called the Queen of the Gods, Mother Goddess, and Queen of the Throne. Through naming, Lola’s daughter has the potential to embody the all-powerful, universal goddess Isis. Her name suggests she might be the one to truly undo the zafa through powers of flight, maternity, and metamorphoses. Described as a “dark and blindingly fast” child who speaks Spanish and English, she is protected by her family’s “azabaches.”<sup>254</sup> But Yuniór notes how she is a reader like her mother. Language will be her ultimate weapon against the fukú. Isis will carry out a literary marronage, working within a tradition of resistance sustained by generations of women and armed with Oscar’s manuscripts, which Yuniór preserves for her. If her writing does not put an end to the fukú, the narrative suggests a new generation will continue the fight.

All of the novels I have discussed illustrate Neil Roberts’s argument regarding the limitations of a concept like diaspora. The concept of diaspora is able to describe flight in a single, unchangeable direction or “flight and return over time . . . in a boomerang trajectory.”<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, “Isis,” *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Trans. John Buchanan-Brown. (New York: Penguin Books, 1994) 464 and 544.

<sup>254</sup> Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, 330-331.

<sup>255</sup> Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*, 11. See also 6-10.

In contrast, marronage takes into account “evanescent flight, modes of fugitivity, and intrastate flight.”<sup>256</sup> These texts capture Césaire’s *marronner*, illustrating flight as a “multi-dimensional constant act” that happens over time through different generations.

Cruz, Rosario, and Díaz novels also capture what it means to *ciguapear*, a verb rooted in the myth of the Ciguapa that has been revisited through various art forms, including literature. Candelario defines *ciguapear* as a “liberation strategy” preserved through an oral tradition. *Ciguapear* means “to act, to call into being a method for political, intellectual, and cultural strategies of undoing imperialism and racism throughout the hemisphere . . . [to reject or undo] the seductive perils and pitfalls of nationalism in a distinctly Dominican way; [and to] enact and discern disidentification and dissemblance in Dominican history, society, culture, and politics.”<sup>257</sup> Through time travel, time collapse, and regeneration, these novels all trace acts of marronage through a feminist lens. *Ciguapeando*, they revise the story of the island, acknowledging a shared history of resistance while expanding the conceptual and physical boundaries of the island.

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<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>257</sup> Candelario, “La ciguapa y el ciguapeo...,” 107

## Conclusion: Future Marronage

Today Quisqueya awakens. . . / I see that I am your  
majority /and I see that if I want /I can even change your name /  
I can even call you Haiti / I can tell you what pleases me /  
because without me /without me you are not Quisqueya.  
-Blas R. Jiménez, “Exigencias de un cimarrón” (A Maroon’s Demands)

In “Exigencias de un cimarrón” (A Maroon’s Demands), Dominican poet Blas R. Jiménez assumes the rebel’s voice, calling the maroon Quisqueya’s “majority.” This dissertation approaches Hispaniola as a whole island with the maroon as a symbol of its majority. In doing so, it gestures towards a Black Radical Tradition of resistance stretching across the Dominican Republic, Haiti, the United States, and other parts around the globe. The texts examined in the dissertation are inspired by historical figures or foreground historical allusions. However, the rebels they magnify do not exist solely in a romanticized realm of heroes or freedom fighters. These are complex, imperfect characters, often faced with impossible decisions and forced to endure psychological and physical trauma while resisting, whether internally or physically. They teach us about different forms of marronage, and in doing so they offer new histories and expand our understanding of what constitutes a maroon and what motivates their metamorphosis across space, time, and generations.

This work was conceived primarily as a response to the plethora of scholarship surrounding Hispaniola’s border, which involves the humanities and social sciences and almost always revisits Dominicanidad, anti-Haitian ideology, and “foundational fictions.”<sup>1</sup> I was interested in uncovering different visions of the island, and specifically, narratives imagining a

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<sup>1</sup> Doris Sommer, “Starting from Scratch: Late Beginnings and Early (T)races in Enriquillo, Cumandá, and Tabaré.” *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 233-256.

whole island, an island pushing against a present-day border that geographically and culturally resist the polarities assigned to it. My dissertation set out to find a new way to read the island beyond the border, beyond the fatal-conflict narrative, and beyond Dominican identity. Recent scholarship has made great strides in viewing the relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti as a relationship that yes, involves conflict and differences, but also involves partnership, cross pollination, interdependence, and similarities. Scholars have examined history and oral histories, literature and folklore, cultural institutions, visual art, and more recently, music and popular religions. The maroon appeared sporadically in my preliminary research, and almost always as a historical figure.

My central question asked: What happens to the story of the island if we place the maroon at the center of Hispaniola, if we see the maroon as majority? Another way I approached this question is through my own experiences as someone who is first-generation American, Argentine, and Afro-Dominican. As a child, Makandal was not *el cuco*, a boogiemán to be feared. Rather, he was a superhero with powers of invisibility and mutability, like the gods Zeus or Poseidon. Additionally, he possessed the wit and resourcefulness of an ordinary, legendary blacksmith like Miseria, who outwits the devil in the legend “Miseria and the Devil” from the Argentine novel *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926). Makandal was not a cruel or violent *galipote*, or simply a mythical being who roamed at night and turned into cat, pig, bird, horse, or butterfly. Rather, he was a shapeshifter, changing his form to survive and fight the island’s real devil, slavery. This Makandal could confuse and outwit his persecutors, and even cheating death by taking the form of a mosquito. What if more people with roots in Hispaniola embraced this

maroon leader as part of their past, or grew up reading or listening to stories about Makandal, rather than Galván's version of the cacique leader Enriquillo?<sup>2</sup>

I highlight my personal stake in this project not to romanticize the maroon, but to underscore how the histories and the mythologies of these individuals possess political, social, and cultural weight, despite the exaggerations or idealizations that come with mythmaking. Part of this project is a quest to understand the power of a belief in a mosca-dios who can cheat death, and how and why that belief replicates itself. Drawing from Robinson's methodology, this project also asked what does a history of marronage look like on the island of Hispaniola? Can it be placed in what Robinson calls the Black Radical Tradition? My study relies on history and literature. The methodology I drew from makes the case for the Black Radical Tradition by tracking it through these two disciplines.

Tracking a tradition of resistance in Hispaniola is a viable way to show marronage across the island. It uncovers a suppressed version of Hispaniola's story because it challenges the fatal-conflict narrative, a version of the island's history that often neglects how New World slavery was conceived, the first maroon revolts, maroon collaboration, or the Dominican Republic's place in the Black Atlantic. In other words, it is important to view someone like Makandal or even anonymous maroons as part of a *Hispaniolan* past and future, a past and future belonging to both the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

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<sup>2</sup> Manuel de Jesús Galván, *Enriquillo* (Santo Domingo: ABC Editorial, 2005). Doris Sommer, "Starting from Scratch: Late Beginnings and Early (T)racés in Enriquillo, Cumandá, and Tabaré," *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 233-256. Ginetta E.B. Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Duke University Press, 2007), 59. Galván's fiction novel *Enriquillo* elevates a Christianized European version of the cacique leader, Enriquillo, and "erases" and/or "scratches out" blacks from Dominican history. While elevating Bartolomé de Las Casas to sainthood and ignoring his promotion of black slavery, Galván writes a narrative where Africans appear to have had no part in Dominican history. Galván was successful in promoting a fictionalized history. Because *Enriquillo* is part of the public schools' reading curriculum, Galván's erasure has been perpetuated throughout generations.

This study also distinguishes itself from other scholarly works not just in its focus on the border and its methodology, but also in what it uncovers in relation to the maroon. Chapter 1 in particular examines the many versions of Makandal reimagined by the Trinidadian writer, C.L.R. James; the Cuban author, Alejo Carpentier; and the Dominican poet, Manuel Rueda. Yet, it also draws from Robinson's work, as well as the cultural anthropologist, Joan Dayan. Makandal becomes grounded in the Black Radical Tradition through his ancestry; his rebellion; his power of persuasion and storytelling; his metamorphoses; and his relationship with Islam and Vodoun. All of these texts to varying degrees highlight this figure's ability to inspire. His powers of inspiration serve as a means to reimagine the maroon and the island.

Rueda's text, in particular, is pivotal to thinking of the maroon as way to reenvision the island and its multiplicity. Utilizing pluralismo, the poet imagines a cosmic maroon in the island's history, cosmic in the sense that this version of Makandal is boundless. A figure of multiplicity, he undoes ideas of nation but also of gender and sexuality. Rueda's Makandal transforms into Anaïsa-Ezili, which on the surface assumes the fusion of two entities. Reimagining the maroon becomes a means to reimagining the island, its histories, and also its artificial binaries and boundaries. Often, I find myself returning to the final movement in *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, a sequence of prose poems that shift the collection tonally. The reader senses there the maroon's importance not just in the poet's imagination but in his childhood.

Like Makandal, Boukman is imagined as a great orator in C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*, and Endore's *Babouk*. However, Endore imagines Babouk in a way that tries to piece together the fragments of the maroon's story and fill in the silences surrounding the figure. Although he incorporates a plethora of historical allusions,

the author does so to invalidate official history and to contrast its account with Babouk's experiences during the Middle Passage, enslavement, seasoning, petit-marronage, psychological-marronage, grand marronage, and death. In showing the reader the protagonist's experiences and incorporating an intervening narrator, the novel challenges traditional historiography, and critiques slavery and capitalism. In the same instance, the main character becomes associated with the Black Radical Tradition through ancestry, inner resistance, ties to Islam and Vodou, rebellion, and, most notably, his inventiveness, which is seen not only in his acquisition of language, but also in his storytelling and improvisation. Endore illustrates marronage as a non-linear process and sees invention as part of this process. As a tool of resistance cultivated throughout time, invention allows Babouk to exercise agency. Invention on the part of the author and on the part of Babouk underscores literary marronage, which involves the interrogation and rewriting of dominant historical narratives. Additionally, this form of marronage draws attention to the crafting of a narrative structure that magnifies an internal metamorphosis and the move from psychological marronage to physical rebellion. Literary marronage is seen not just in narratives taking place during a colonial era, but also in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Endore's text is relatively silent about the role of the rebel woman. The maroon woman is not a secondary character in Trouillot's *The Infamous Rosalie*. Rather, the author dedicates her novel to female agents of change and their unique circumstances. Rebel women in Trouillot's novel are "savior[s], nurturers, enduring family stabilizer[s], non-abdicating provider . . . [and] authorities of community consciousness."<sup>3</sup> While Trouillot illustrates these roles, she also depicts diverse forms of resistance. For example, women are "authorities of community consciousness." Yet, they also preserve a cultural past, cultivate self-worth in others, impede

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<sup>3</sup> Cynthia James, *The Maroon Narrative: Caribbean Literature in English Across Boundaries, Ethnicities, and Centuries* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), 105-106.

psychic annihilation and social death, and preserve, reinterpret, and pass down a tradition of resistance. Trouillot's protagonist adds to our understanding of the rebel woman in the many ways she inherits and engages the Black Radical Tradition.

The protagonist Lisette is connected to this tradition through ancestry and heritage, as well as her inner metamorphoses, which involves cultural marronage and psychological marronage, manifested in her determination to refuse all servility, probing of the past, and the manipulation of her public persona and cultivation of her inner self. Lisette also engages orality and literacy by actively recovering stories of individuals from her community, stories that testify to forms of resistance that include confrontation, suicide, abortion, or infanticide. Additionally, the stories Lisette uncovers humanize slaves who preserved cultural values and traditions, a sense of community, and familial and communal bonds despite the everyday brutalities of slavery. Importantly, the protagonist has the power to inhabit individuals and their pain. Like Makandal, she has the potential to prophesy. Trouillot leaves this latter power unresolved, though. Her character is representative of an invisible mass, and in this way her representation diverges from typical accounts of female rebel leaders endowed with spiritual powers. Women writers from the Anglophone Caribbean and its diaspora lead the way in imagining maroon narratives within the twentieth century. This phenomenon is also true with respect to Hispaniola, and particularly in Dominican diasporic works that feature rebel women who work within the same Black Radical Tradition as Lisette.

The final chapter conceptualizes marronage in present day literature: modern-day maroons not only attest to the preservation and reinterpretation of the Black Radical Tradition in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but also expand who we may consider a maroon and what are the boundaries of the island. Analyzing Dominican diasporic literature, this study

expands our understanding of the modern-day maroon through a tracking of the Black Radical Tradition. Maroon flight is multidimensional and continuous, as exhibited by characters in novels by Cruz, Rosario, and Díaz. In these novels, we meet maroons like the time-traveling and Chinese-Dominican maroon, the runaway mother, the protean goddess, the ciguapa, and, in a broader sense, *dominicanos ausentes*, or diasporic maroons. The Dominican diasporic writers whose works are examined in this chapter are renegade thinkers who work within the Black Radical Tradition. Their narratives push up against the nation and undo the fatal-conflict narrative.

The real world implications of this project can be found on and off the island, especially if we consider the following: the 2013 ruling that retroactively revoked the citizenship of anyone born in the Dominican Republic to noncitizens after 1929; the current anti-immigration policies of the Trump administration, policies that put an end to a humanitarian program that granted Haitians Temporary Protected Status after the 2010 earthquake; and the recent termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which aimed to protect young undocumented immigrants from deportation. The maroon enables us to grasp, on some level, the circumstances that have led and will lead to more flights and fights. The maroon also enables us to imagine forms of survival and sometimes victory for the dispossessed in Hispaniola, the United States, and around the world.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### **Cimarrones in Eastern Hispaniola**

Historically, “maroon” is synonymous with revolt. Enslaved individuals began resisting colonialism and its mechanisms decades before the first reference to “cimarrón” was documented in 1528. Described as a “seasoning ground for slaves in the new world,” Hispaniola was the first European colony.<sup>1</sup> The first Africans transported to the island consisted of “illegally imported slaves and free ladinos.” Brought directly from Spain, free ladinos had been baptized, possessed Spanish names, and knew Spanish customs. As such, they exercised a great deal more of freedom and agency than illegally imported slaves<sup>2</sup> and/or bozales (Africans brought directly to Hispaniola from Africa after 1505).<sup>3</sup> On the island, slaves became “seasoned,” a period of acclimating to the climate, foods, and diseases before potentially being sent to another expedition and/or colony. This “seasoning” also included learning how to survive among the Spaniards. The demand for African slaves increased as the Taíno indigenous population was decimated and the cane sugar industry grew rapidly. Slaves were also been brought to toil on “livestock ranches and

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<sup>1</sup> Lynne Guitar, “Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-1545),” *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*, Eds. Jane Landers, and Barry Robinson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 41-45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 75n19. See also: Landers, “Cimarron and Citizen: African Ethnicity, Corporate Identity, and the Evolution of Free Black Towns in the Spanish Circum-Caribbean,” 117. Guitar also mentions that within historical records, Ladinos “are often indistinguishable from Spaniards in historical records,” emphasizing that they possessed a great deal more of freedom and agency than “illegally imported slaves” and/or bozales. Landers underscores differences in power and/or agency between ladinos and slaves in her essay.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 75n20. Guitar cites Carlos Esteban Deive’s *Los guerrilleros negros: Esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1997). She notes that Deive, the leading historian on the subject, located documentation indicating that 17 bozales, originally from Guinea, were purchased in Lisbon and brought to Hispaniola in 1505.

in the mines.”<sup>4</sup> From the moment Africans stepped foot on Hispaniola, they tried to escape the harsh working conditions, often by taking refuge among the Taíno people and in the mountains.<sup>5</sup> The first record of African maroons is in 1503 and in the Dominican Republic.<sup>6</sup> Nicolas de Ovando, the governor at the time, wrote to the Spanish crown requesting that no more Africans be sent to the colony. Ovando was particularly concerned about a joint rebellion between runaway slaves and Taínos, as well as the potential influence of Muslim runaways on the indigenous.<sup>7</sup> After 1503, *maineles* or *palenques* (maroon settlements) were established in “Ocoa, Neiba, Baoruco, Cotui, Buenaventura, Samana, Higüey, Azua. . . San Juan de la Maguana, [and] the province of Altagracia.”<sup>8</sup>

Although ladinos had more agency than slaves, they too revolted. In 1513 ladinos had run away and organized attacks so often that the colonial treasury requested to “restrict licenses to import them.”<sup>9</sup> At first, the Spanish hesitated to import bozales, and viewed them as “non-Christian [and] uncivilized, [with] corrupt public morals.”<sup>10</sup> Ladinos disturbed plantation owners and planters so much that the Spanish reconsidered importing bozales because they wrongly believed the bozales were more malleable.<sup>11</sup> In 1521, Ovando’s concerns were validated when

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<sup>4</sup> Landers, “Cimarron and Citizen,” 117.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2006), 113. See also Guitar, “Boiling it Down,” 45; Landers, “Cimarron and Citizen,” 117; and Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness* (New York: CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, 2010), 37. Torres-Saillant cites Deive’s *Los guerrilleros negros: Esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo* (1989).

<sup>7</sup> Jane G. Landers, “Cimarron and Citizen,” 117. See also Erin Woodruff Stone, “America’s First Slave Revolt: Indians and African Slaves in Española, 1500-1534,” *Ethnohistory* 60.2 (2013), 195-217. Spain had only recently regained control of Granada, and driven out all Muslims who would not convert to Catholicism; this coupled with the fact that many slaves (in Hispaniola) were in fact Muslim contributed to Governor Ovando’s 1503 complaint to the crown. Ovando’s fears were validated in 1521 with the first slave revolt, led by Wolof slaves. Like Erin Woodruff Stone, Landers suggests that this revolt was a joint effort between the Wolof slaves and Taíno people.

<sup>8</sup> Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness*, 36. See also: Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1989), 19-54.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 112.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Importantly, Thompson is drawing from Carlos Esteban Deive’s *Los guerrilleros negros*.

bozales led the first slave revolt. The severe and cruel conditions of slavery instigated African flights, contrary to the belief that flight was the result of a lack of civilization.

On Christmas Day of 1521, twenty Islamic Wolof slaves from Senegambia carried out the first slave revolt on the ingenio (sugar plantation) La Isabela, which was owned by Viceroy Diego Colón.<sup>12</sup> Most of these slaves found refuge in the Bahoruco Mountains and among the Taínos. Erin Woodruff Stone stresses that scholarship fails to focus on the event as joint effort between Wolof slaves and Taínos led by Enriquillo.<sup>13</sup> As mentioned, Enriquillo (Guarocuya), was one of the last remaining caciques or indigenous chiefs of Hispaniola. He led a rebellion against the Spanish in 1519.<sup>14</sup> Woodruff's point is not necessarily new.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the writer reinforces the claim of a partnership with archeological evidence confirming that both Taínos and Africans lived within the same caves in the Bahoruco Mountains.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Woodruff Stone cites Spanish accounts that confirm this alliance, such as a declaration of war (October 19, 1523) that attests to how the Spanish were fighting groups of Amerindians and Africans. This is an important point that suggests the Wolof revolt was not only the first slave revolt, but also the first recorded instance of Africans and Taínos fighting together against the Spanish colonist. Although Enriquillo would eventually strike an agreement (1534) with the Spaniards and help them capture runaway slaves, African and indigenous maroons lived free amongst each other, and led assaults against Spanish authorities and towns.<sup>17</sup> An estimated seven thousand slaves

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<sup>12</sup> Stone, "America's First Slave Revolt," 196. See also Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros*, 33 – 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-198.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 197. Woodruff Stone suggests that historians such as Carlos Deive ("the most prolific writers on the subject") and Ida Altamn fail to mention and/or examine in depth the collaboration between the Wolof slaves and Taíno people.

<sup>15</sup> Landers, "Cimarron and Citizen," 117.

<sup>16</sup> Woodruff Stone, "America's First Slave Revolt," 209.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

escaped and ran away after the first recorded revolt.<sup>18</sup> For much of the 1500s, maroon raids successfully choked the colony and its resources. By the early seventeenth century, they succeeded in restricting residents' movements to the capital, contributing to the "collapse of the cattle trade," and helping halt exports.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the "maroon wars," Silvio Torres-Saillant notes how many of the leaders of these revolts have remained nameless in Dominican historiography.<sup>20</sup> He names some of them: "Diego de Guzmán (1545) in Baoruco, Juan Vaquero (1546) in Santo Domingo, Sebastián Lemba (1548) in Higüey, Diego de Ocampo (1555) in La Vega, and the mid sixteenth-century rebel leader Juan Criollo."<sup>21</sup> In her chapter, "Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commerical Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-45)," the historian Lynn Guitar, focuses on Lemba (d. 1547), one of the few named maroon leaders from the Dominican Republic. She reveals that Lemba likely ran away from a sugar *ingenio* at the end of the 1520s or early 1530s, when the sugar industry experienced significant growth and the Spanish began importing more and more slaves to the island.<sup>22</sup> Lemba led an army of approximately 400 rebels; together, they joined Enriquillo's rebellion (1519-1534). Unlike Enriquillo, Lemba refused to negotiate and/or concede to the Spanish crown. For almost a decade after Enriquillo's peace treaty with the

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<sup>18</sup> Landers, "Cimarron and Citizen," 117.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 113. See also Landers, "Cimarron and Citizen," 117; Woodruff Stone, "America's First Slave Revolt," 209. Thompson is citing Deive. Notably, Thompson asserts that the colony experienced "extreme deprivation and misery" in the early 1600s because of the "northern band of Maroons." Landers notes that the colony reaches this state of deprivation and isolation during the 1540s. Woodruff Stone asserts that the colony was restricted to the capital by the mid-1520s. We can draw the conclusion that for much of the 1500s, maroon raids successfully choked the colony and its resources.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. Landers cites Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros*, and her own essays: (1) "Cimarron Ethnicity and Cultural Adaptation in the Spanish Domains of the Circum-Caribbean, 1503-1763"; and (2) "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Communities." The historian confines the maroon wars to the 1540s, despite claims by other historians such as Thompson and Woodruff.

<sup>21</sup> Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness*, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Guitar, "Boiling it Down," 40-41.

Spanish, Lemba and his men continued fighting, even against men who were once their allies.

Guitar provides the following account:

Lemba raised his arquebus in the air and rode forward as the sun's rays brushed the tall watchtower's palm-thatched roof with golden strokes. He looked to the right and left and thought about how Spaniards always rode to battles shouting, "Santiago!" with the clanging of their steel swords and metal shields adding to the chaos. But the two hundred-plus dark-skinned warriors who accompanied him, more than half of them mounted on horses they had stolen in previous raids, poured silently out of the forest like a black tide, the soft snorting of the horses the only sound out of the ordinary.<sup>23</sup>

The vivid narrative elevates Lemba to his rightful status as one of Hispaniola's greatest and most tactful leaders. We get a sense of Lemba's organized and massive army, and also his acute sense of strategy and capacity for ambush. "Like a black tide," his army advances soundlessly. The image mirrors the description of Makandal's weapon ("poison") and how it creeps or crawls ("reptando") surreptitiously but with purpose, seemingly undetected by the colonist. Much like Makandal's rebellion, which was a collective effort to poison oppressors, the weapon in this narrative is a maroon army, led by a leader who embodies the power of this mass.

Lemba was betrayed and stabbed by an African slave working for Captain Villalpando's Spanish patrol in 1547. To send a message to the slave mass, Lemba's head was cut off, and displayed at the docks along the Ozama River.<sup>24</sup> Slaves continued to rebel and resist the colonist. Only a few months after Lemba's death, they rebelled on the La Vega *ingenio*, potentially influenced by those among Lemba's men who evaded the Spanish patrol. Maroon rebellions and raids caused significant damage to sugar mills so much that only ten out of more than thirty *ingenios* were running in 1548.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Guitar begins her chapter with a narrative that magnifies the maroon leader, Lemba. The narrative is created by Guitar, influenced by her research, which appears on page 41; pages 39-40 do not mention that this narrative appears in another text.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. See also Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 32.

Africans continued to resist well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Citing Fradique Lizardo, Eugenio Matibag affirms that slave rebellions on the eastern side of Hispaniola foreshadowed the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) by 267 years.<sup>25</sup> Torres-Saillant notes that a well-known maroon community was decimated in the maniel of San José de Ocoa in 1666.<sup>26</sup> Another account comes from 1783, and attest to how the maroon society of Neiba (part of what is now known as Barahona) negotiated with the Spanish, and eventually agreed to become incorporated into colonial society. Moreover, maroons cooperated and collaborated across the border since the early 1500s, “linking remote corners of the island together.”<sup>27</sup> For example, the settlement of San Lorenzo de los Mina, located on the eastern bank of the Ozama, had approximately seventy Haitian runaways, whom the D.R. declared free in the late seventeenth century.<sup>28</sup> By the late 1600s the sugar industry had been decimated by “marronage, piracy, and contraband trade.”<sup>29</sup> During this period, the Spanish dealt mostly in tobacco, cacao, and cattle. The Spanish were significantly poorer than the French, who cultivated sugar.<sup>30</sup> Some scholars suggest that cattle-rearing seemed to promise less harsh conditions than the cane fields. Yet competition between the Spanish and French played a hand in instigating desertion, especially from western Hispaniola. The following sites were particularly important to maroons from both the Dominican Republic and Haiti because of their locations: Bahoruco, Higüey, Cotuy (Cotui), Buenaventura, Samana, Puerto Plata, San Francisco, Azua, and San Juan de la Maguana.<sup>31</sup> The Bahoruco Mountain Range, located in the southwestern region of the D.R.,

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<sup>25</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 32. Matibag cites Fradique Lizardo’s *Cultura Africana en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Taller, 1979), pp. 43, 47-48.

<sup>26</sup> Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness*, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 274.

<sup>29</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 275.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

offered an ideal site; the towering and steep mountains were difficult to cross, but offered excellent hideouts.<sup>32</sup> As noted, in the early sixteenth century these mountains offered refuge to Enriquillo and his followers, as well as the Wolof rebels. The mountains would also serve as refuge for the spiritual leader, Michel, and his followers.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, they offered protection for the Bahoruco Maroons or border maroons who lived freely for much of the eighteenth century. French and Spanish authorities worked together to capture this group of approximately 130 individuals. Originally, this effort included 180 French soldiers but was reduced to 80 in three months.<sup>34</sup> In 1785, the Bahoruco Maroons struck an informal agreement with the Spanish.

Clearly, the Dominican Republic has a rich history of marronage, and one it shares with its neighbor. Although I've only provided a brief history of marronage in the D.R., the historical accounts I've mentioned show how from the moment slavery was conceived in Hispaniola, Africans fought tirelessly for freedom, under a system that so brutally and methodically ripped them away from their families and communities. These accounts also attest to how maroons from the D.R., as well as Haiti practiced different modes of resistance, formed new communities, and possessed great power when they joined together.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Thompson cites Deive's, *Los guerrilleros negros*.

<sup>33</sup> Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint*, 47.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson, *Flight to Freedom*, 114.

## Appendix B

Makandal acquires the following names: Man of the islands (Hombre de las islas); sembrador de vida (sower of life); brujo mandinga escrutador del celaje de los muertos (mandingo sorcerer – scrutinizer of the dead’s skylight); Dios de alas grandes (great-winged God); Anaïsa; paridor de dioses (child-bearer of gods); Padre andrógino (androgynous Father); Makandal de todos los colores (Makandal of all colors); Makandal de los seres y las cosas del dolor (Makandal of beings and painful things); Makandal de los barrancos (Makandal of the ravines) ; Guaraguao de todos los cielos (Guaraguao-bird of all the heavens); joven guerrero (young warrior) ; mendigo de mis horas (beggar of [the poet’s] hours) ; Mosca-dios (Fly-god); Makandal-nadie (Makandal-no-one) ; Makandal del/sol y de la luna (Makandal of / the sun and moon) ; milagroso rayano (miraculous *rayano*) ; dios desnudo de los laberintos (naked god of the labyrinths) ; viejo de todas las edades y todos los sexos (old man of all ages and all sexes) ; Principe de lo incierto (Prince of uncertainty); nacedor (man who is born [and unborn])<sup>1</sup>; Makandal del rocío (Makandal of the dew); tronador (thunderer); and envenenador de todas las Corrientes (poisoner of all streams).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rueda, *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*, 191. Rueda writes: “Tú no has nacido nunca, nacedor.” Makandal is ‘a man who is born’ and ‘an unborn man.’

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 25, 25, 40, 46, 53, 54, 57, 65, 107, 108, 123, 127, 128, 134, 137, 178, 179, 190, 191, 191, 193, 196, 211.

Appendix C

The third stanza of “Initiation of Flight (Iniciación del vuelo)” from *Las metamorfosis de Makandal*:

White tomb upon black tomb, where I hear  
the island’s hips move  
    the seasons - only sun and *guazabara* -  
seared in the skin of the sorcerer who has sold  
his powers in the smuggler’s saddlebags. Standing  
upon the sea, as though upon my last teardrop,  
    I, Makandal -  
sower of life in women’s wombs,  
protector of naivetés  
bull hoof and serpent head,  
trotter of horses in the wind’s accolades,  
mandingo sorcerer – scrutinizer of the dead’s trace -  
in the juice of leaves and mix of sacrificed animals.

Tumba blanca sobre tumba negra donde oigo mo-  
verse los flancos de la isla  
    las estaciones – sólo sol y guazábaras –  
quemadas en la piel del brujo que ha exportado sus  
poderes en la alforjas del contrabandista. De pie  
sobre el mar como sobre la última de mis lágrimas  
    yo Makandal  
sembrador de vida en el vientre de las mujeres  
apañador de inocencias  
pie de toro y cabeza de serpiente  
trotador de caballos en los espaldarazos del viento  
brujo mandinga escrutador del celaje de los muertos  
en zumo de hojas y mixtura de animales sacrificados.

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