

Spacing Decoloniality: De-figuring the Coloniality of Space and Subjectivity in the Caribbean and Oceania

Ricardo J. Arribas

University of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico

Abstract

When juxtaposed with more classical Benjaminian concepts, such as aura and the role of storytelling in industrial modernity, the archipelagic vision, which is preeminently spatial and therefore impinges directly on the interface between objective and subjective concerns of ekistics, is emblematic of the political role that art and literature play in refiguring the coloniality of space in the Caribbean and Oceania. The argumentative crux of this article hinges on the premise that, considered as the specifically spatial expression of the cosmological sphere of experience whose generic name is Glissant's Relation, and taken within the specific historical context of imperial cartographic practices in both regions, the archipelagic is a useful guiding principle that could inform decolonial ekistics policymaking. With that purpose, the author discusses the work of several artists and writers from the Caribbean and Oceania, in order to illustrate how an archipelagic understanding of space and subjectivity inform their practices. By examining the work of Ibrahim Miranda, John Puhiaatau Pule, Epeli Hau'ofa and Eduardo Lalo the essay shows that their work constitutes a reactivation, at the transnational level, of the classical modernist motif of re-forming what Walter Benjamin called the human sensorium. Moreover, it is argued that these artists do so in order to challenge and undo the cartographic paradigms that were imposed in the region by successive Western empires. Such acts of cartographical undoing and reformulation under an archipelagic paradigm are important to force Caribbean and Oceanian subjectivities to dissolve the weight of colonial history, as it overdetermines their relationship with their space.

Introduction

Then it is discovered that
there are no *zil piti*,
small islands,
and that insularism
persists because
the archipelagos have
not been conceived.
Because everything,
even the smallest island,
is a huge archipelago.

Eduardo Lalo, *Intervenciones* (2018, p.147)

More than thirty years have passed since Marxist literary critic Marshall Berman's celebrated *Everything Vanishes into Thin Air: The Experience of Modernity* was published in 1982. Yet today, Berman's transhistorical analysis of the neoliberal gentrification of New York's urban spaces and its deleterious effects on the social texture of Afro and Latino communities remains, if anything, as pertinent as ever. Land speculation, predatory privatization, and the implementation of policies that blindly obeyed the dogma of 'market forces' are indissolubly associated in the book to the hyper-modernization of the city under the adventurist and mercenary logic of construction moguls like Robert Moses. All these phenomena have reached, both in their causes and effects, global proportions, as every single corner of the planet is today in one way or another implicated in the same predatory mechanisms that were implemented in the urban centers, first in Europe and later in North America, to which Berman's analysis constantly refer. Berman's greatest insight has

been to tangibly demonstrate the intimate relationship between modernization and the eclectic proliferation of aesthetic practices and various other cultural movements that arose as a response to those processes. Not only does his analysis concretely show how those practices gave effective content to those movements, but it also explains why they became integral to the city's modern tradition.

Berman's work also provides an excellent example of how modern literary institutions, and literary criticism most significantly, can contribute to a critique of neo-liberal urban practices and their effects on dwelling. It does so by shedding light on how literature and its institutions are inextricably linked to the aesthetic (sensorial, corporeal) dimensions of communal experience. After all, it can be affirmed without much space for argument that literary and visual modernisms began as a preeminently spatial concern, since it was their increasingly vexed relation to the industrialized modern city, replete with its new architectonic and urbanistic practices, that prompted poets and artists like Baudelaire or Monet to engage in the aesthetic quests that led them to develop literary and visual languages which are now recognized as being distinctly 'modern'. It is therefore not surprising that today a similar relation between decolonial critiques of space, and the implicit search for a new language to give voice to its corresponding aesthetic practices is being suggested by many Caribbean and Oceanian intellectuals, writers and artists. Fijian critic Cresantia Koya, for instance, connects such practices with the Samoan/Tongan concepts of *Va* *Tapuia/Veitapui* (relational spaces), *mana* (spiritual energy) and *tapu* (sacred space), when she asserts that:



Fig. 1: *Noche Insular*.

Sustainability conversations must begin from a deep understanding of the Mana/Tapu and Va/Sautu, and the (traditional) arts can enable that dialogue. It will be essential that difficult conversations are facilitated within Pacific communities themselves, as well as with those who represent and perpetuate oppressive western systems of practice (Koya, p.3).

By blurring the separation between the use and cultural value that models modern Western attitudes towards art and literature, Koya goes to the heart of the matter. Identifying the specific place and function that aesthetics holds in modernity, their ambiguous implications within colonial structures can be examined. Indeed, the revolutionary nerve of modernist movements, in spite of its well-known fascist co-optations, can be captured in their attempts to disrupt the tyrannical dynamics of sensorial assault that late Capital perpetrates against space. They ultimately aim, - in the messianic terminology of Walter Benjamin -, at liberating art objects from their auratic cage, but only in order to liberate aura from its fetishist entrapments. (Let us recall that for Benjamin, aura was 'everywhere'; defining the condition of the dyad subject-world as a synaesthetic perceptual whole, and not just of a particular art object. More on this later). In that sense, the Marxist tenets of Berman's literary analyses resonate strongly, however indirectly, with the kind of later anti-colonial critiques of space that one sees at work in the Caribbean and Oceanian debates around Relation, the archipelagic, and (perhaps to a lesser degree) tidalectics.

It is in this context that questions of archipelagic spaces acquire prominence as the most coherent contestation of the concept of the 'Island', understood as the privileged spatial trope by which successive European empires unloaded their cultural baggage onto archipelagoes encountered in their

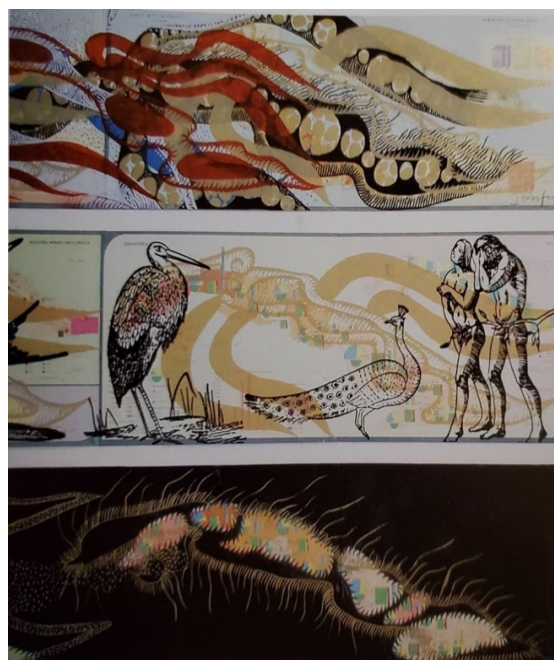


Fig. 2: *Noche Insular* (detail)

mercantile ventures in the Caribbean and the Atlantic. In turn, these questions connect directly to those surrounding what Edouard Glissant calls a 'poetics of Relation', since it is, ultimately, through the invention of a new language that humans can relate to modern spaces, and through which they

will potentially be able to overcome the forces whose unprecedented dynamism challenges every conceptual and representational tool at their disposal.

Glissant's Poetics of Relation and Antonio Benítez Rojo's The Repeating Island figure prominently as referents in a long list of research completed by writers of the region. This body of research invokes the Martinican and Cuban thinkers in order to illuminate aesthetic and social phenomena whose common denominator is a way of conceiving space, time, and subject as existing within a matrix of relations whose fluid, oscillatory, baroque, syncopated and fractal nature is captured by the term 'archipelagic'. This adjective has come to designate the manifold field of meanings in which subjectivities co-exist and interact, influencing one another in a co-constituting poetics of Relation.

The more recent appearance in 2018 of Juan Quintero Herencia's Hoja de Mar (:) Efecto Archipiélago, Tidalectics: Imagining an Oceanic Worldview Through Art and Science ed. (Stephanie Hessler), as well as a forthcoming book titled Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations, (eds. Michele Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel), highlight the growing interest in the concept of the 'archipelagic' as a way to account for subjective formations that challenge the currently dominant forms of relating to space. Further, aesthetic practices that have been the object of study by a multitude of writers and artists from both regions throughout this and the preceding century, show that the archipelagic, as it has been elaborated by these writers over sixty years of debates and theorizing, is inherently relational in the Glissantian sense. Archipelagic is a concept which invokes human practices and rituals that signify an understanding of space that emphasizes the diverse, mutually influencing interactions between individuals. It is, moreover, suggestive of a sense of dwelling that connotes a possible community in the kind of constant, fluid mobility which is driven by the forces of capital. This oceanic worldview therefore challenges deeply rooted notions of dwelling as 'taking place' within a subjective cosmos of a fixed and taxing set of sedentary confines, such as nation, race, ethnicity and so forth.

An unavoidable question framing (and to a good extent haunting) the queries in this article is the degree to which the critical literary concept of the archipelagic represents a more appropriate spatial paradigm for informing more technical and objective ekistics criteria. Though beyond the scope of this article, how the archipelagic relates to the five ekistic elements and practical concerns such as efficient transportation, optimal population for a given geographical area and its corresponding rate of growth, appropriate use of building materials given climatological and geological factors, sustainable disposal of waste, etc. could be addressed in future to understand how they would inflect urbanistic policies, not only in the Oceanian and Caribbean contexts, but in the world at large. While the article falls short of providing specific answers to this question, its critical rehearsals around these concepts do bring to light for further discussion the intimate link which has existed since the inception of modernity between aesthetic practices and questions of dwelling, space and urban settlements.

The science of Ekistics was conceived by Constantinos A. Doxiadis in the 1940s and developed throughout the

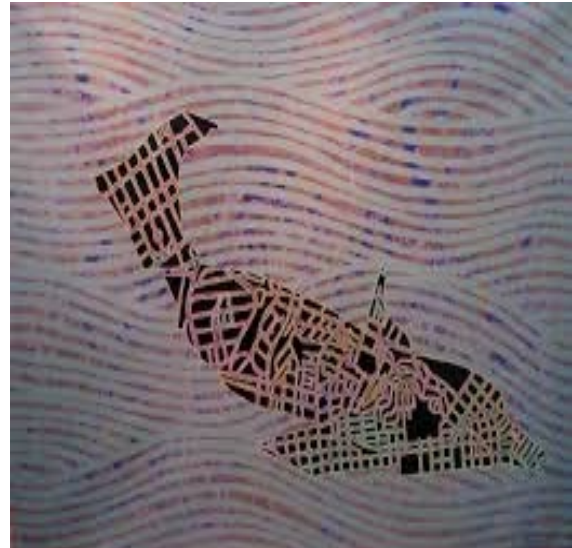


Fig. 2: *Untitled*.

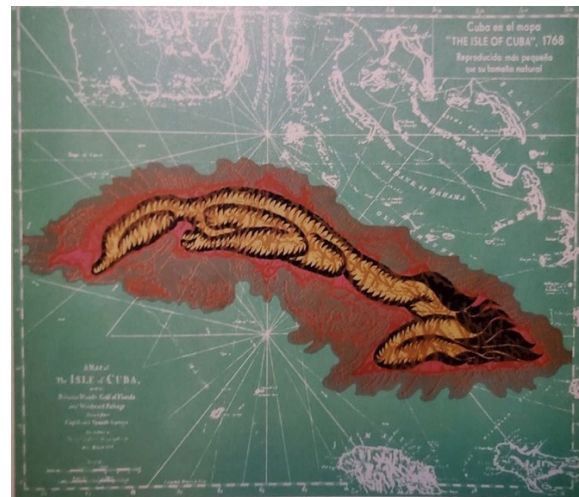


Fig.4: *Atzolotl*, 2002.

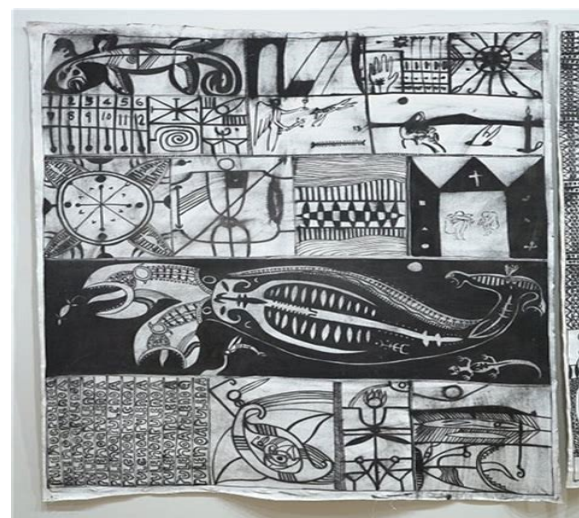


Fig. 2. *Pulanoea Triptych (1st plate)*, 1995.

following two decades. Although it allowed room for the arts in its holistic approach to human settlements, it nevertheless focused on urban design, engineering, city planning, and architectural concerns (Doxiadis, 1968). The five fundamental elements of Ekistics – Man, Nature, Shells, Networks, Society – provide a framework within which the arts can be studied. Ideally, they occupy a place on the Ekistics grid and within its time scales, so that artworks can be understood in terms of their relationships to the different ekistic elements. For instance, a publicly-funded mural in an urban setting can be analysed in terms of its relationship to the wall (Shell) and the street (network) in which it is located. It can also be understood through its relationship to society in terms of its content (Society), and also at the level of the individual artist or viewer (Man). Some forms of street art incorporate elements of public parks and gardens, or depict nature in places where it has been destroyed (Nature). Hence, the science of human settlements aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the world's settlements, with a particular focus on grasping and solving their problems.

Given this ambition, Ekistics cannot dispense with the kind of radical sensorial quests that only artists and writers in modernity have accomplished. The artists and their works analyzed below are but a few emblematic instances. However, our analysis serves to correct the bias in Ekistics research, which leans towards the more 'solid' terrain of objective and quantifiable data-based research, by presenting textual and visual analyses which engage more subjective concepts, such as self and personhood, citizenship, affect, community, belief, and storytelling, among others. This sustained focus aims to illustrate that modern aesthetic practices constitute symbolic interventions which reveal the archipelagic as the historical realization of what has always been, perhaps, the most natural realm of humans' relation with their spaces.

Ibrahim Miranda, John Pule: Reimagining Archipelagic Spaces through Art

Now we map ourselves for others.
Consequently we find it difficult to locate ourselves.
Where do we find the map we so desperately need?

Annalee Davis, Barbados in a Nutshell, 2007.

There is a territory wider than this- wider than the limits made by the map of an island- which is the illimitable sea and what it remembers.

Derek Walcott, *The Antilles*, 1992.

Scientific cartography is never an ideologically neutral act. Under the institutional constraints imposed by the triadic political configuration of the capitalist nation-states, it more often than not entails the unilateral imposition of one's own particular agenda, in the pursuit of sequenced, rationally instrumentalized, and self-interested goals (Stone (1988); Thrower (2008)). Mapping presupposes a knowing subject who assumes a set of hermeneutical fictions, not only as ways to translate and construct a narrative around given data, but also as criteria to decide in advance what constitutes a

valuable piece of information. These hermeneutics, however scientific in their claims, or perhaps even because of such claims, result in a panoptical gaze that uncritically projects its light onto that which is to be mapped, thereby imposing upon it a regime of visibility and intelligibility, which in turn excludes those other aspects that somehow contradict, undermine, destabilize or otherwise negate the order of things they intend to impose.

However, scientific cartography and related disciplines share with aesthetic practices a common historical link (Cartwright (2009)). Both intend to transform that which they map - a transformation that becomes inextricably linked to the process of mapping itself. Artists and geographers alike take "raw material [...] transforming it in different ways and for different purposes" (Fairbairn, p.34). Both have mobilized diverse bodies of knowledge that interweave their textual and visual procedures in constitute "complex work(s) of epistemology and practice" (Downton, p.327). But among those similarities, the most prominent (and the one that goes against the grain of Fairbairn's stated argument), underlies the fact that they both engage in exercises of illusionism. The latter often does so with the more or less implicit aim to ludically expose the artifices, also historically determined, available to them that go into creating an effect of spatial 'totality'. They do so ultimately in order to check the limits of a given spatial configuration of things by provoking the questioning on its inhabiting subjects.

This is precisely the concern of Michele Stephens in her discussion of recent Caribbean art and what it has to say about the archipelagic as a realm of experience resulting from this kind of dialectical entwinement of space and subject. Echoing Édouard Glissant and Derek Walcott's insistence on the need to visually challenge colonial regimes, that is, to systematically question and dismantle the perceptual self-transparency of a spatial order (Lefebvre), revealing its cartographic overdeterminations, Michelle Stephens (2013) asserts that

it is in the visual arts that we find an active wrestling with embedded images and tropes of the tropical insular Caribbean, as well as artistic strategies that aim to touch upon and problematize the past very much from the perspective of the now (p.8).

The work of Cuban artist Ibrahim Miranda, titled 'Noche Insular' (Figures 1-2) is an excellent example of such practices. It takes the silhouette of the Cuban island and makes it the foundational object for his artistic transformations. Miranda takes the map of Cuba and transforms its meanings as an exclusively geopolitical enclave, filling its interior with different objects, colors, patterns and forms (Mosaka, 2007, pp. 160-163). Further, his refiguring of the Cuban map does more than merely capture the shape of the island as a pretext for his poetical metamorphoses. Miranda prompts us to rethink and re-imagine Caribbean people's relationship with their geographical space. In doing so, it disrupts our tacit acceptance of the European colonial spatial legacy. This nomadic violence on the usual cartographical conveyances of the Cuban island, his poetic derangement of the traditional referential domains to which we as Caribbean subjects cling, forces us to see the historical contingency and arbitrary nature inherent to the historical materials through which we view the region. Like many of his Caribbean contemporaries,

Miranda's work disrupts our projections of who we are and where we are, as these indeed reflect and are modeled after the place in the world accorded to us by European early modern cartography and navigational sciences.

For Miranda, Cuba could be a reptile where a series of icons would suggest vignettes that follow one another from left to right, inviting us to re-create stories that do not correspond to the official sanctioned histories of the region; but instead ones that project us into the future, and thereby liberating us from an already interpreted past. In other images from the same series, Cuba can sometimes be seen as a tapestry that is reminiscent of the familiar topography of cultivated hills or of urbanized zones as seen from the sky (Figure 3). Or even an embryo-like form on the cosmic blackness of the sea, that extends its small appendages outwards, beyond its geographical confines. (Figure. 5)

Similar gestures that contest conceptions of selfhood which reflect enduring colonial paradigms of space, together with their correlative organizing and policing effects on places, can be found in the works of Niuean writer and visual artist John Puihiatau Pule. Pule's The modernist appropriations of the traditional hiapo technique - a Niuean version of an ancient bark-clothing craft, tapa, that used to be widespread in Southeast Asia, Oceania, as well as some parts of East Africa - constitute pictorial re-appropriations of natural and human objects from Pule's native island (Klarr, 2015). Like Miranda's works, they can also be conceived as imaginative invitations to re-map our sensorial relations to our archipelagic reality: 'island' here becomes a signifier that is reconceived as being embedded within a complex historical web of different traditions, intersecting at crucial junctures of modern Oceanian history. His modernist emulations of hiapo textiles invite the viewer to see those objects - and the places they configure - outside of the semantic confines to which official discourses of touristic friendliness and self-infantilization submitted them. Much like Miranda's poetic transformations of the Cuban archipelago, Pule's hiapos are in their own way attempts at reconfiguring islanders' relation with their natural spaces, and thus provide the viewer with a critical foothold to break away from the colonial legacy of 'mapping ourselves for others'.

When analyzed through the prism of cartographic spatializing practices, this thematic resemblance in spatial concerns between works of artists from the two regions, functions in two opposite yet mutually influencing ways: on the one hand, they more or less directly invoke pre-modern forms of togetherness. On the other hand, Pule's representations of humans interacting with their natural environment feature contour lines that contain and separate one from the other; they appear to be part of the same trace. This hinting at a sense of figural continuity and adjacency blurs conventional binary oppositions such as land/sea, animal/human. Such gestures of the erasure, retracing, and interweaving of boundaries imply a subjectivity whose spatial imaginary undoes hard and fast conceptions of an island as a fixed and isolated domain. Instead the gestures reorient the viewer towards a spatial sense of fluid and fractal-like states that exist as part of a constant process of self-differentiation; harking back, in fact, to pre-modern world-views, such as Edmund Winduo has noted in the essay 'Reconstituting Indigenous Folktales' (2000).

In Miranda's case, his representations of the Cuban archipelago and its surrounding waters are rendered using

traces that evoke life-like fluidity and resonate with Taino myths. In such stories, as recounted by Fray Ramón Pané, both the flora and fauna, as well as specific topographical features such as the islands' littorals themselves, are envisioned as living organisms, changing their shape through time, evolving in constant interaction with the ocean. In the Niuean artist's work, a tribal symbolism as performative as it is thematic is evoked through the use of zoomorphic figures connoting animistic totemic worldviews, submerged human figures interacting with marine animals, and traditional scenes of fishing or cooking. The material transformation of natural and artificial objects, which are originally endemic to the island, conjures links to the artist's ancestral past. And yet, these mythic, cosmological (re-)mappings are thoroughly inserted within the modernist practices characteristic of his European predecessors.

In emblematically modernist fashion, both Pule and Miranda treat creation as a process of engagement with matter that transcends mere production, and adopt a process of making / becoming? a work of art itself. This deeply modernist stance becomes a constant referent, which in turn indexes the tropes to which Pule and Miranda owe their visual projects: immigrational fluxes, geographical delocalization, bodily sensorial reconnection with the oceanic world, exotic romanticism of 'far off islands', and the Edenic fall.

Pule's recourse to traditional objects - canoes, fishing tools, human or zoomorphic silhouettes, natural landscapes - intermingle with abstract geometric figures in addition to shapes suggestive of animals and plants endemic to the region. Together they form a tapestry that, despite being suggestive of European 'primitivist' movements, are actually more deeply reflective of Pule's political concerns over residual colonial practices and their effects on dwelling space production. While their earlier European counterparts' modernist instances of primitivist Orientalism or Africanism could be considered as imaginary inscriptions of a primal desire for African and Oceanian tribal-art practices, and as deceptively evocative renderings of archetypal enclaves of paradisiacal innocence, Pule's textile art should be viewed as a form of political intervention into the contemporary ways Oceania is currently envisioned; as these contemporary visions remain instrumental in reinforcing neocolonial practices of spacing, whether of dwelling or building.

Originally associated with women's roles in Oceanian tribal organizations, textile making, after disappearing from Niue at the end of the nineteenth century, has become today a more prestigious artistic medium than other 'harder', more 'consistent' crafts, such as carving stone or wood. Accordingly, it is frequently privileged by many Oceanian artists precisely because of its being a more ephemeral and pliant haptic support that eloquently conveys the sense of organicity and life-likeness that subjective and spatial boundaries in archipelagic contexts display (Klarr, 2020). Hiapo making has close connections to the living body through its direct links to attire, body ornamentation, rituals of initiation, social status. In addition, it is linked to communal space, as well as textuality through its intrinsic fabric-like quality, which is implied in the process of its making that involves weaving and knitting as a collective. It therefore elicits linkages to narration and subjectivity.

Precisely because of the above qualities, hiapo techniques allow artists like Pule to bring these connections to an expressive domain that brings together space (as the

ontological receptacle where things phenomenologically take place), body (qua perceptual/cognitive membrane for intersubjective spaces) and text (as the iconic-symbolic tissue that also serves as an interface between the two). In fact, these three aspects- space, body, and text- can be seen coalescing in much of Pule's work, offering a sense of archipelagic space and time that defies, much like the poetic cartographies of Miranda, the fixity and static nature of spatial and subjective boundaries which are often associated with the European legacy of conceiving of islands as remote, self-enclosed, autonomous unities. Indeed, it is through the tethering of the realms of space, body, and text, that dwelling attains any empirical significance.

Pule and Miranda are thus emblematic of a recurring concern within artistic communities from both regions: The mutual implications between subjects and spaces in which colonial tropes continue to take effect. Regardless of the obvious differences in these two artists, spatial concerns invite perceptual immersions in the space occupied by the ocean in the experience of those dwelling in archipelagoes. Belonging to the ocean is a recurring motive in both artists. Hence the words 'island' and 'archipelago' acquire for them altogether different meanings from the ones sanctioned by official narratives. Instead of being a mere conglomerate of island-states with fixed geographic and identity-based demarcations, archipelagoes are conceived as living spaces that constantly defy any attempt to make them conform to any set of particular identities. To the contrary, they persist in time, revealing themselves as being in a state of constant geographical and historical becoming.

The early-modern European figured the Caribbean geographically in such a way as to serve their mercantilist and expansive purposes. As a science that was born concomitant to the processes of conquest and resource exploitation, also one that was crucially instrumental to the region's colonization and its construal as one of the first constitutive peripheries of modernity, European cartography pins archipelagic subjectivities to a whole web of other modes of representation that reinforce one another. We as archipelagic subjects still tend to think of our physical space from this perspective, and subordinate other representational modes - necessarily poetic and inherently political - to a paradigm that was, and still is, the enabling one for the geopolitical interests of Asian, European and North American governments.

What these and many other artists from both regions achieve is to confront us with the very means of representation of the two regions considered at large, compelling the viewer to denaturalize these paradigms. This in turn prompts us to pose seemingly naïve, or unscientific questions: Why not reconceive the Caribbean (and Oceanian) archipelagos as an "unrecognizably microscopic animal that constantly mutates, [or as] a metaphor for sociopolitical transformation"? to use the words that Miranda himself uses to refer to Cuba. Or why not re-inscribe the multiple layers of Niuean histories in a palimpsest-like surface made of objects taken from its diverse moments, thereby actualizing them in the same space? Why should the Caribbean and Oceania be primarily figured by us in terms of degrees, numbers, parallels and latitudes, the meridian of which lies somewhere far off in the Atlantic East? Is this not the kind of spatiotemporal centrism that we unwittingly replicate by referring ourselves to it? Why not rather spatialize both regions as literally the materialization of modern historical time in all its

detrterritorialized, flux-like qualities, a place where all times coalesce in a residual now that is as unstable and spectral as the actualizations upon which they are based?

This set of questions relates to an undoing of the perverse knots that are tied to particular representations of the region, as well as to our collective and individual self-perception, as materially inscribing the region within ourselves, as much as they impinge on the forces and mechanisms by which we have been symbolically inscribed in the region. What the work of Miranda and Pule forces us to realize is that reducing and delimiting the representation of our physical space to the preeminent objectification that is inherent to cartographical, expansionist, profit-oriented paradigms, condemns us to forever seeing ourselves in terms of a set of organizing referents that frequently undermines our agency and our self-worth. Moreover, by focusing our attention on an ungraspable 'beyond' and 'outside' of our sensorial here and now, the supposed permanence and fixity of the islands' borders becomes a precondition for the regions' historical balkanization into geopolitical enclaves, and their dissection into regions according to marketable linguistic, racial, historical and other identity divides. Further, their zoning into spaces is often according to foreign economic imperatives, sociological and other statistic markers of 'development', if not into ostensible signs of potential touristic 'productivity'. In other words, the underlying cartographic structures challenged by Pule and Miranda shape perception and condition archipelagic people to see themselves and their islands as limited spaces only fit for consumption by wider external powers. These artists' works therefore provide a means of untying these conceptual knots that bind our imaginaries and potential.

This leads us to the conclusion that it is not that Western cartography has enabled us to see ourselves for what we have become, that is, in terms of marginality, underdevelopment, ghettos of identities, smallness, fragmentariness and isolation, but rather, and to the contrary, that it is cartography and its adjacent sciences that condemn us to see ourselves according to those terms. As a result, we stubbornly remain blind to ourselves, not because of our failed encounter with modernity, but because we insist on seeing ourselves from and for capitalistic paradigms of modernity. In actual fact, however, the case is that Oceanian and Antillean realities have always been European's modernity's constitutive and foreclosed blind-spots, where amnesia, constantly reiterated as Edenic idyll or apocalyptic dystopia, is a defense against the threat of history's unraveling return.

Epeli Hau'ofa's Tales of the Tikongs: Taking colonial space from behind

Hau'ofa's interest in the re-conceptualization of colonial space is a recurring motif throughout his essays and monographic works. In 'Our Sea of Islands' (1994), his most oft quoted essay, the modern history of space is treated as the epistemic product of colonial devices of subjection. The reconceptualization of space also figures as an overarching theme that pervades his other sociological and earlier anthropological work, framing as it does, his central concern with the colonality of space within Oceanian archipelagoes. For Hau'Ofa, space has been a key concept at the center of his attempts to reimagine spatiality in Oceanian islands since his ethnographic research on the Mekeo, in which it figures prominently as an organizing trope structuring hierarchical social relations. Yet, in spite of this interest in the historical,

colonial, and spatial overdeterminations of the Oceanic modern imaginary, Hau'ofa's fictional works are more attuned to subjective temporal concerns; both in terms of their structuring function of the plot, and the ways in which these stories narrativize the systems of knowledge inherited from an ongoing history of colonialism. At the same time, the stories also provide eloquent documentation of the underlying religious beliefs that subtend, and thereby impart legitimacy to, colonial bodies of knowledge.

It is my contention that the centrality of Christian religion in Hau'ofa's tales allows for their critical reading. Such a reading begins by exposing the obscene undertow to which Capital submits its periphery. It then articulates the dialectical relationships between Christian belief systems as they correlate to the epistemic formations that inform Western Modernity, and their tactical appropriation by Hau'ofa's characters. Finally, it is suggested that although these dialectics keep colonial spatial regimes in check, they do not overturn them completely. This last situation reveals itself to be particularly evident when such overturning is examined in the light of the self-contradictory relationships that characters sustain with respect to official narratives of progress and development, particularly when the latter are revealed by the characters' actions to be influenced by local pre-modern paradigms and practices (as well as their corresponding linguistic usages). Accordingly, I contend that this signals in Hau'ofa's tales an opening up to the possibility of the transformation of colonial space, which forces readers to examine the intimate relationship between subjective belief systems - such as organizing narrative temporalities - and their effects on the colonality of space.

Johannes Fabian's critique of what he termed the 'denial of coevalness' - an attitude typical of the ethnographic and anthropological gaze that is rhetorically impregnated with discursive remainders of colonialist supremacy - acquires here its full import (Fabian 1983, pp.25-35). Very much present in, and constitutive of, a certain literary and critical gaze in both regions, the denial of coevalness characterizes a literary and visual current belonging to Oceanian and Caribbean cultural traditions.

Within this discursive current, the reality represented, either in verse or in prose, is the effect of two superimposed, but never actually coalescing temporalities. On one hand, there is the time of the ethnographer / narrator, which is, almost without exception, equated to contemporariness and a diegetic time of a 'now' that is synonymous with a synchronicity between one's body and the rhythms and tempi of change in objective reality proper to capitalist modernity. On the other hand, there is a pre-modern time, the time of the characters' being localized in a past that is often spatialized as 'underdeveloped', 'third-worldly', and carrying the traces of many other historical markers of 'backwardness'. The modern and the pre-modern temporalities do not map neatly onto one another, but co-exist awkwardly. Thus, at the core of Fabian's argument lies the insight that, rather than having ontological consistency, these two times, and most important for our analysis, the differences they display in their spatializing power, presuppose one another, as much as, far from being a given, they are the retroactive effect of this denial of coevalness; a denial that, I would claim, is constitutive of the modern narrator, and not only of the ethnologist's gaze.

Recognising this productive misalignment is of vital importance to properly understand colonial spatiality as it unfolds in the tales. In fact, it is this denial of coevalness that underpins the conflicts in Hau'ofa's narrative, and ultimately what the narrator purports to expose and subvert, usually by way of Manu's skeptical remarks. The subversion of the denial of coevalness marks the moment when colonial space, understood as the materialization of the temporalities put in motion by such dialectics, is 'taken from behind', which is to say, subverted through the explosion of the metaphysical hypostases of time differentials that lie at the heart of the subjective practices inherent in its (per-)formation. In other words, Hau'Ofa uses Manu's skepticism to reveal the gap between the two temporalities and their corresponding spatialisations that would appear to correspond to one supposedly agreed upon reality that feature a pre-modern past and a modern present. And yet, the exposure of the gap, the exploding of the denial of coevalness, exposes a present infused with the past; one that inherently and effortlessly undermines colonial modernity through its very persistence. Manu's skepticism rips through the pretence of the modern and reveals an alternative now steeped in an immanent past.

This kind of narrative intervention must be related to the practices that spatially reflect this kind of disruption. What follows is a description by Michel de Certeau of the art of 'making-do', which he calls 'availing oneself of' (invoking incidentally the Lacanian distinction between *savoir* and *connaissance* - also rehearsed by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*), in order to highlight how individuals subjected to the regimes of capitalist production and consumption, derange the spatial dispositions prescribed by the administrative and urbanistic rationality of the State:

Unrecognized producers, poets of their own affairs, trailblazers in the jungles of functionalist rationality, consumers produce something resembling the "lignes d'erre" [wandering lines] described by Deligny. They trace 'indeterminate trajectories' that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move. They are sentences that remain unpredictable within the space ordered by the organizing techniques of systems (de Certeau, 34).

If strategy, following closely upon de Certeau's remarks, is a science of (ideological) illusionism (closely related to cartography), tactics is an art of constant camouflage, disappearance and escapism that undoes the cartographer's codes. They are ways to avoid a direct confrontation that would inevitably entail someone's obliteration.

Returning to Hau'ofa. Each of these tales are in fact emblematic of a spatialization of their narrative settings, as it unfolds to the reader following the description of characters' displacements through them. They are indeed a function of an unresolved tension between two systems of belief, and therefore between two worldviews.

In the following pages, I will narrow in on two tales from the collection, 'Paths to Glory', and 'The Glorious Pacific Way', in order to highlight what the spatial source of the conflict is in both of them. This will enable a discussion around what kind of knowledge and ideological subject are disrupted, of which the different characters are the expression.

In the ambivalent figure of Tevita Poto, 'Paths to Glory' captures the predicaments in which many Caribbean and Oceanian subjects find themselves after returning from

advanced academic training in metropolitan centers. The tale can be divided into two clearly discernible parts. The story opens with a disaffected and unkempt Tevita Poto being constantly rebuked by his uncle and father for not being a useful and productive citizen, after having returned with a PhD from “the lands of learning and wealth” (Hau’Ofa 1994, p. 43). The second part shows Tevita, who now appears to be a well accommodated government official, having a conversation with a fellow islander in a bar. The interlocutor dismisses Tevita’s progressive ideals and his criticism of the unequal exchange of products taking place between Tiko and New Zealand. He does so on the grounds that privileged people like Tevita do not know how poor people live. Tevita then experiences the proverbial contempt barely masked as admiration that locals feel for their counterparts. For intellectuals like Tevita there seems to be no place and at the same time, no way out of the impasse described; other than either playing along to the scripts of clientelist cronyism and corruption that keeps Tiko mired in misery, and forces him to gradually renounce the more noble goals of working for the common good, or upholding the principles of honest work and collective effort, only to become outcasts like Manu. Either way, Tevita becomes the object of disdain and resentment for the common folk.

Equipped with the representational tools and ethical paradigms that are supposed to prepare them to lead their countries in their righteous journey through the ‘paths to glory’, intellectuals from the peripheries sooner or later have to come to grips with the fact that modern epistemic formations are also submitted to the same unequal spatial distribution that wealth is. Tevita Poto soon realizes that, under the international geopolitics of intellectual labor circulation put in place by capitalist modernity, scientific and cultural capital has a geography as much as it has a history. Finding himself back in one of the geographical wastelands of modernity, it does not take too long for intellectuals like Tevita to understand that at the global peripheries of Capital, modern knowledge is too often little more than a safe passage to a conformist insertion into the local offices serving as the bureaucratic and corporate outposts for the international mechanisms of dispossession, and for concurrent practices of nepotist and clientelist self-promotion.

The story exposes how, under neoliberalism, one cannot truly universalize knowledge, that is, one cannot democratize it (by distributing it along a horizontal geographic axis) anymore that one can do so with material wealth. Throughout the story, constant allusions to the University, Church, and the State acquire their true meaning, as these institutions are, again, turned inside out, revealing their farcical flipside, as places where the foreign political and economic stranglehold on Tiko is deepened by the local intelligentsia, that is, under the banner of ‘development’. As Derek Walcott observes (Cited in De Loughrey, 2005, p.130), under capitalism, to be wealthy and righteous poses an irresolvable dilemma. In other words, on this view, in urban centers in Western Europe or North America the incompatibilities between individual and collective wealth are necessarily achieved through morally questionable and backhanded means. The ethical conundrums underlying them simmer out of view. Nevertheless, although less apparent, such dynamics and dilemmas are no less present in the colonial margins.

In any case, stripped naked from the self, this ‘glory’ is at best a concept devoid of any meaning, and at worst one pregnant with a dark genealogy of oppression. That is, without the comfort of theological niceties that geographical and historical distance from material misery provides to individuals in ‘more developed’ countries, intellectuals in the developing world must face the reality of the ‘glory’ they have pursued. Drinking from the cup of victory turns out to be sipping from a poisoned chalice.

It is, to be sure, not that Tevita’s uncle and father have gotten things wrong, for their perspective articulates very clearly how things have been since the beginning of modern times: the whelm of cultural and intellectual capital in Europe and North America is the direct result of structures of astounding violence and dispossession that were put in place around the world by successive modern empires and are still very much intact. The straightforward equivalence between material wealth and knowledge that Tevita’s uncle suggests is thus very telling. It encapsulates at once the truth that maintains the order of things in Tiko, as much as its denial, which guarantees its actual effectiveness. By fetishizing knowledge as a spiritual means to transcend this world, it simply becomes equated to wealth. Reducing the causal link and the difference between the two, on the other hand, to one that forecloses the dialectical circularity of their relation, Tevita’s uncle and father reiterate for the story the disavowal of the material origins of historical western knowledge.

Tevita Poto’s predicament is an eloquent portrayal of the tragic choices that the disparities in the global distribution of knowledge impose on Caribbean and Oceanian intellectuals: either to kowtow to such mechanisms and lose their soul, or become militant critics of the promiscuous relation therein among Church, State and Capital, and in the process be “ground small by the Great Chiefs” (Hau’ofa 1994). Tevita’s uncle decries that he “even talks like Manu”, that he, like Manu, criticizes the Church and the State. Tevita would likewise have to suffer excommunication and live at the margins of a society that resents their privilege, and that alienates them from the fold, regardless of their choice. Faced with this conundrum, the movements imposed upon Tepita Poto reflect the attempts at negotiating the deadlock underlying this ethical choice: they can either constitute circumventions, deviations, roundabout trajectories from the straight and ‘righteous’ paths to development - in which case they become politically and morally marginal entities -, or they can choose the ‘straight’ paths to glory, by becoming part of the island’s corrupt elite of crony capitalism. The story thus strikes the right ironic note in the fact that the ‘glory’ to which the gospel refers does not ring with anything remotely resembling spiritual growth and transcendence; that in colonized spaces, instead of being an unmistakable sign of salvation, there is an unbridgeable rift between material well-being and moral integrity, which turn out to be mutually exclusive.

‘The Glorious Pacific Way’ tells the story of Ole Pasifikiwei (in clear allusion to the “old Pacific way”), who dedicates part of his life to collecting oral traditions from Tiko, and intends to turn this former hobby into a larger project where all the genealogies and oral traditions of the Tikongs are compiled and preserved; for that, he needs a typewriter and some filing cabinets. At the mercenary instigation from the officials for the Ministry of Environment, Religion, Culture and Youth (MERCY), and after much hesitation due to what he deems a degrading act of begging for what is, in principle,

offered as a disinterested gift, Ole is gradually drawn into the treacherous intricacies of foreign aid. With Ole's insertion into the bureaucratic maze of MERCY, and thus into the hypocritically liberating forces of Christian mercy, in the end he is consecrated as a "professional beggar", and the 'ole pacific way' is, quite literally, turned into a cultural fetish, instrumentalized in the service of the transnational mechanisms of capital exploitation. This is, without a doubt, the function that State-sanctioned culture plays in the Caribbean (except, perhaps, Cuba) and Oceania. That is, culture can become a form of the fetishistic performance of a group's identity. Indeed, it is in this sense that Walcott's remark must be understood, to the effect that in both archipelagic regions, "artists and writers are turned into little more than archeologists, folklorists and ethnographers" (Walcott, cited in De Loughrey, 2005, p.134), since this is how aesthetic experience is reduced to a lifeless cultural artifact that can be trafficked on: It is the mechanism of their insertion into the global market.

But to be precise, it is not that Pacific and Caribbean cultural identities - understood as the sum of state-sanctioned set of policies surrounding aesthetic and intellectual practices that somehow evoke foregone traditional forms of life for disembodied contemplation in the two regions - pre-existed ulterior modernization processes, but rather that they are the retroactive effect of such processes. Modernity does not so much encroach on those cultures, but to the contrary, depends for its functioning on the retroactive illusion of a (pre-existing) cultural entity suffering such encroachment. As a question of structural necessity inherent to its economic and geopolitical dynamics, modernity incessantly creates its own places of 'backward' traditional cultures, its own territories of Edenic timelessness that will have been forever lost, as much as it creates its 'own' spaces of material scarcity. From this perspective, international development programs and NGO's are not mechanisms of inclusion into the wave of modernization of previously undeveloped enclaves, but rather the way their inclusion therein is continuously reproduced, precisely as exclusion. As the history in the two archipelagic regions of such organizations has shown, the presumptive generosity and charity of international development programs and NGO's is the way such exclusionary inclusion is accomplished. The story is thus an eloquent commentary on the true role that cultural uniqueness - as an indirect effect of such 'denial of coevalness'- often plays in this geopolitics of underdevelopment.

The (essentially Marxist) insight that holds together this and other tales in the collection, one that also undermines from within the temporalities undergirding modern narrative forms, is that Modern History, conceived of as the ever-accumulating recounting of past deeds that describe a straight ascending line from a 'less' to a 'more' civilized state, depends upon a mythical construal of 'primitive accumulation' as something that took place in illo tempore (that is, through one's own hard labor and austerity). But since Nietzsche (and even before him, Marx) one knows that such temporal structuring of secular becoming covers up - encasing within what Nietzsche calls 'the wardrobe' of Western European spiritual development, what was first and foremost a geographical event -, the abject truth of enslavement and barbarous plunder that took place 'somewhere else'.

This tale exposes to the cold hard light of day the fact that the fairy tale of 'primitive accumulation' is the Ur-narrative that confers meaning to the fiction of modern progress. Therefore, what allows for a diachronic assessment of civilizational superiority is a disavowal of a logic constitutive of the modern subject's self-representation vis-à-vis the Other, whereby the latter is construed as 'backwards', at the same time that it is encroached upon and exploited through epistemic expedients of merciful charity. At its most fundamental, Fabian's 'denial of coevalness' is a denial of this logic time at work in the representational mechanisms of the modern subject, for what is contemporary, what happens 'at the same time', what is synchronous to such self-representation as culturally superior to others, is this ongoing process of accumulation by dispossession that, being originally material (read 'spatial'), is retroacted as a cultural (read 'spiritual', 'historical', 'temporal') difference. Simply put, there is nothing primitive about 'primitive accumulation', while everything in it is geographical; accumulation, conceived of ultimately as cultural achievement, is always already contemporary to (and dependent upon) an ongoing and expanding process of material dispossession.

In each of these tales, two types of subjectivity and their corresponding spatial relations, cohabitate within each individual, opening up a silent battleground which is but a reflection of the conflict that is already spatialized in the different relationships the characters entertain with the objects that constitute it: one the one hand, the abstract, empty forms of the modern, cosmopolitan, subject of calculated rationality. On the other, 'traditional' formations that lurk in the unconscious background, but which reappear in the most critical moments of the situation, to 'haunt' in decisive ways the outcome of the dilemmas the tales represent. But again, this unconscious, underdeveloped underbelly is nothing but the retroactive effect of this denial of coevalness that is constitutive of modern temporalities, as it is emblemized in the anthropological gaze. Moreover, this fetishistic disavowal of contemporaneity between human groups, is the subjective, temporal correlate of the spatial aspect of coloniality, of what I have called 'the denial of the corporeal' that is expressed as aesthetic disembodiment. Both are two mutually reinforcing sides of an intrinsic aspect of western modernity.

Slaying the ancient gods

That is why, what these tales ultimately teach us is that the modern dilemma between development and underdevelopment is a false one, since the production of underdeveloped spaces belongs entirely, from the moment of its historical inception, to the inner dynamics of western modernity as a historical phenomenon. In many crucial ways, the ubiquitous yet marginal Manu - a clear allusion to the word mana, the sacred energy some places and people irradiate in Polynesian belief systems -, incarnates the solution to this false dilemma. 'The Tower of Babel' begins with an intriguing conversation between Manu and an ancient preacher, over which of the gods, the ancient or the new, should be slayed:

'Tiko can't be developed,' Manu declared, 'unless the ancient gods are killed.'

'But the ancient gods are dead. The Sabbatarians killed them long ago,' countered the ancient preacher.

'Never believe that, sir. Had they died, Tiko would have developed long ago. Look around you,' Manu advised.

The ancient preacher looked around and saw nothing; he looked at himself, his tattered clothes, his nailed-in second hand sandals, and nodded rather dubiously. He wished to be developed. 'And how do you slay the ancient gods?' he inquired.

'Never try, sir, it's useless.' Manu replied. 'Kill the new ones.' And that, in short, is what Manu does. He wants to keep the ancient gods alive and slay the new ones. He pedals his bicycle to the International Nightlight Hotel, to the Bank of Tiko, and all over Tulusi, shouting his lonely message against Development, but the whole capital is a cemetery (Hau'Ofa 1994, 18).

The passage exposes this false dilemma from at least three interrelated perspectives that involve the equivocal mobilization of two archetypical tropes of modernity. First, by relating coloniality, represented in the text in terms of a constitutive blindness with relation to space, - "the ancient preacher looked around and saw nothing" (my emphasis)-, to the motive of dressing, the narrator inserts anticolonial literature directly in the tradition of the Nietzschean critique of industrial modernity qua nihilist ruination of experience, and therefore of the past, as the historic depository of (revealed) truths, troped in literature and art since Early Modernity as an act of unveiling/unmasking, and thus nakedness. It is thus that objective space (which accedes to the human perceptual field primarily through light and has been the privileged emblem of Western epistemology and aesthetics), the relative capacity to see something in it, also implicates questions of beliefs and mores (more often than not allegorized as clothing in Western tradition). Secondly, the dialogue is sustained by an equivocation that touches at the heart of this double motif, namely the one concerning the apparent value, the range of meanings mobilized by the word 'development': whereas the ancient preacher, perceiving himself as naked- or rather, what amounts to the same, as dressed in ragged clothes- desires 'to be developed' by killing the ancient gods, Manu actually meant to assert their persistence as a trump card against the ideological/nihilist underpinnings of 'development'. What he actually meant is that the ancient gods will never be killed - they will survive and eventually prevail, even under the set of beliefs - the clothing of the new ones. It thus recasts the inherent incommensurability between place and subject in colonized spaces in terms of an emphatic (dis-)articulation between two temporalities, those of the 'old' and the 'new' gods. It therefore dis-places the duplicity obtaining between colonized subjects and their space, towards a semantic oscillation between two orderings of time within the colonized subject's consciousness. In other words, by a sort of 'stripping naked' the word 'development' from its semantic clothing, by deflating it, to reveal the abyssal, inessential, performative nature of the word itself, the narrator, impersonated in Manu, opens up from within that suspension of the horizon of its possible other meanings, for further contestation.

The final result, at the end of this passage, is not so much a repression, disavowal, or even foreclosure, but rather a sort of hysterical bracketing, an (itself ambiguous) semantic deferral of the possible meanings around the word 'development'. The effects of this deferral reverberate

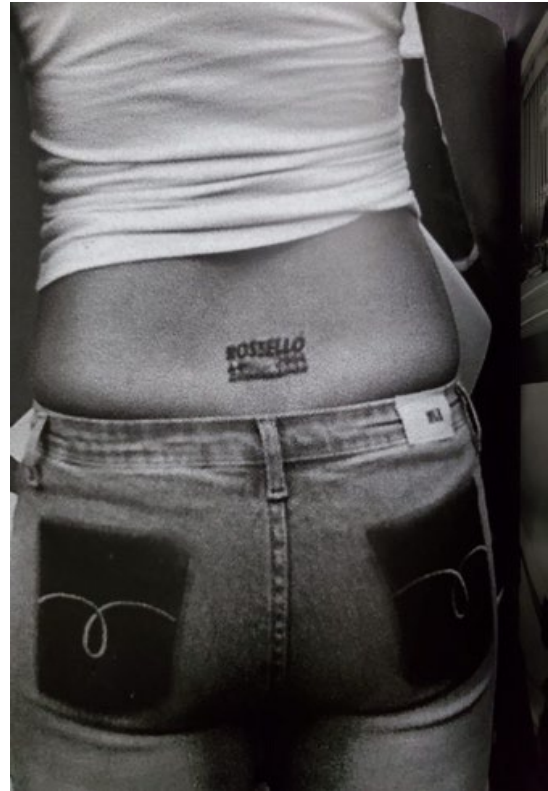


Fig. 8: The butt of a woman, over which a tattoo bearing the name "Roselló"

Source: *donde*, p. 39.

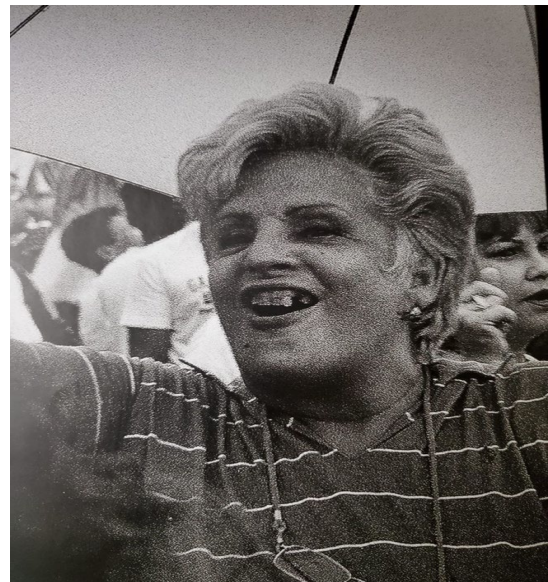


Fig. 9: A woman showing her decaying teeth enthusiastically attending a political rally.

Source: *donde*, p. 46

throughout the vicinity of other fields of the same experience that circumscribe closely related terms, such as 'progress', 'modernization', 'success', 'democracy'). It is ultimately

left to the reader to decide as to which gods are the ones considered ancient and worthy of being slayed, and which ones are worthy of bearing the cycles and rhythms that calendarize the coming development, and therefore, ultimately what should be the true meaning of that word.

The narrator brings to the surface, so to speak, the unconscious memory of destruction and erasure- the 'old gods'- upon which hinges the mobilizing power of the word 'development', as one of modernity's master signifiers. To re-historize means here not to validate one version of the past over another, but rather, to reactivate the lingering struggles from whose constant erasures modernity's times emerge as the conqueror's narrative, and thereby to open up for further contest, in the here and now, the radical undecidability of any of its given meanings, and with it, the subject's ideological implication in whatever decision it takes over its possible future meanings. Development, therefore, becomes itself an ideological battleground, a space where two versions of subject and community, one that relies on the constant forgetting of the injustices committed, and one that renews the call for their redress, themselves wage a battle to the death.

That is also why these tales display a structure closer to the static, mythical time more characteristic of pre-modern prose narration, such as Mircea Eliade (1959) has described. Moreover, what are portrayed as mythical, are precisely the arrow-like messianic temporalities implicit in the narratives of modern progress and development. Immobility and circularity are both spatial markers of pre-modern, mythical time, and the portrayal of Judeo-Christian linear historical becoming that undergirds developmental policies in Oceania, as itself mythical, closed upon itself, somehow ritualistic, carnivalesque and demonic, is perhaps the most forceful political message of the tales, and at the same time a telling sign of its imminent overcoming. Paradoxically, in order to surmount our subjection to the set-ups, pitfalls and deadlocks of colonized spaces, one would rather have to re-temporalize them, as de Certeau and Lefebvre have argued. Consequently, the only ways to be able to envision imperial space concretely in the full force of its colonial breadth, as it exerts its influence locally over places far off from its financial hubs, is to know its history, and to awaken the ancient gods, precisely at the most perilous moment, when they are actualized from the past as still confronting the new ones.

In the end, Manu becomes the solitary outcast living at Tiko's margins, indifferent yet attentive to the whirlpool of development unfolding before his eyes. That is, perhaps, the historical meaning of Manu's indictment against the barbarous priests of modernization: " WHY ARE YOU DESTROYING MY COUNTRY?" (p.19). It is as if his body were to retrace the meaning of his present to the most perilous of moments, which in spatial terms would be the emblematic place that Mary Louise Pratt calls the contact zone, where modern history meets modern geography, and where the spatial naturalization of Time, its transformation into abstract Capital, was concomitant to its radical de-historization (Fabian 1983, p.16). It is a gesture repeated throughout archipelagic political and literary history- from Saint John Perse, Virgilio Piñera, and Franketienne, to Brathwaite and Walcott - exiled artists and intellectuals turning, geographically and historically, away from the centuries-old cartographic illusions of modernity, and towards the indeterminate limits- marked in early modern

maps by the warning sign *hic sunt dracones* - that indexes the possibility of a different sphere of spatial-temporal relations.

History Spatialized: Eduardo Lalo and the Caribbean City as Hieroglyph

... facing catastrophe, particularly as a systemic and not an episodic feature of the Caribbean, life will depend on the shifting ability to both stand in place and float away, still in defiance of the emptying island.

Frances Negron-Muntaner, *The Emptying Island*.

The work of Puerto Rican writer and visual artist Eduardo Lalo represents a possible realization of the kind of archipelagic/relational subjectivity that is already prefigured in Hau'ofa's fictional character. Indeed, much in line with Manu's gaze, Lalo's authorial voices are those of the unbeliever. In his essay, appropriately titled 'Intemperie', Lalo lays out this attitude towards Western modernity in general:

Unbelieve. Unbelieving the world is equivalent to questioning the forms that sustain it.

Doing so is a form of abandonment, a renouncement of universal ideas, and the commitment to an adventure into the limits of the mind.

Unbelieving, then, to access the condition of survivor.

Unbelieve so that writing arrives as a gift (p.12).

This unbelief translates for Lalo into a constant unwriting, most emphatically of the territories symbolic and material- whether sexual, racial, ethnic, linguistic, or national-, under whose marks modern literature has institutionally authorized and legitimated itself. Of all these, it should not come as a surprise that the national mark occupies a special place, since a modern writer first and foremost becomes subjected to the signs of visibility imposed by the implicit consensus governing any recognition conferred under the banner of the sovereign nation-state. Still today, the national emblem summoned by these signs largely regiment the production, circulation and exchange of literary products.

It even subsumes the others. And this is what renders Puerto Rican literature fatally opaque, ambiguous and ultimately invisible to the international market. That is also why, for Lalo, this unwriting opens up, as its most natural imaginary referent, the non-places which are the main subject of his writings.

Indeed, his text-images are phantasmal evocations of a somewhat similar quality to that of Marc Augé's 'non-places', those anonymous places of human transience, linking one place to the next like modules in a factory's chain of production, places where human transience rules and dwelling is contracted to a minimum and conditioned like no other by the laws governing the abstract space of Capital: the maximum profit attainable in the least amount

of time expended. The crucial difference is that, by virtue of the steady disappearance of the Commons, these

inhospitable and downright characterless places are supposed, through practices that conjure up the communal totality of a 'nation', to give for Puerto Ricans effective content to the modern meaning of 'dwelling'. Countering the presumption of unquestionable, positive self-transparency of cultural artifacts that riddle the treatment of nationhood as allegorical annexations of the familial with the usual silences, identity hypostases and fictive reductions revolving around race, religion, language, and gender, Lalo begins his book *donde* with a commentary on the impostures undergirding every modern national enterprise:

The pretense of talking about those around me and the place that contains us. The burden of still thinking from a collective "reality", an all, a great family, without being aware, among other things, of the vagrancy that this implies (p.23).

The black and white, grainy photographs of the book depict half-built, already ruined governmental or residential buildings, turned into crack houses, badly run-down department stores filled with all sorts of abandoned miscellanea, obeying no discernible principle of design or taste, garbage patches, and from all that, indistinct, human figures emerge, barely recognizable. The butt of a woman, over which a tattoo bearing the name "Roselló" (Fig. 8.). A Spiderman inflatable figure hanging from the balcony of a public building project. A woman showing her decaying teeth enthusiastically attending a political rally (Fig. 9). It is as if the objects were submitted to a process of dilapidation that antedates their symbolic inscription in the city's unconscious. These images show, above all, the degree to which subjects in colonized spaces are denied the capacity to make their own places out of any given space. This capacity may or may not include, but decidedly goes well beyond mere legal ownership. This denial is expressed first and foremost as violent disruptions in the aesthetic field that challenge the sensorium's capacity to establish and nurture symbolic relations that link a subject's body to their space. Whether by allowing for the establishment of a visual continuum as part of a spatial whole, or as a coherent set of placeholders and signposts that demarcate the material confines where remnants of past experiences would take root and give rise to a community in the form of stories and images, this possibility of ritualizing representational acts that memorialize past events is crucial, for they are the cosmic seed from which affects and dreams from a possible future of togetherness can be shared.

Simply put, Lalo's work demonstrates, perhaps like no other intellectual in the region, the aesthetic, corporeal coefficient of colonial spatial practices, and it thus inevitably evokes, for me, Walter Benjamin. Again, Eduardo Lalo:

Why not think from the body, from its lonely smallness, from the only possible solitude, also knowing that this is an illusion? Perhaps that way the ghost is more real or, at least, less manipulated.

The biggest failure is not failing (p.23).

It is not surprising that this particular kind of urban writer is viewed rather as a 'talker', like Karl Shapiro does when referring to Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*. Since this distracted gazing and talking is city strollers' main activity, whereby the stories and anecdotes are interwoven with the activities of the modern consumer and producer, as they relate with a landscape on the move- "The walker's body



Fig. 10: Bregar. Source: *donde*, p. 47.

absorbs the world, is consubstantial with space" (Lalo, 2016c, p.4.).

To contemplate non-writing. The substitution of the act of writing for sitting, walking, running, breathing, going to the bathroom, going to bed (Lalo 2016b, p. 21).

A literature done in transit, a writing of impermanence and drift. If the body serves as the perceptual membrane between subject and world, one can understand that an aesthetic aggression of the dimensions we see at work in Puerto Rico is a clear index of how coloniality ultimately refers to a denial of the corporeal that goes in both directions: the subject's sensorial rejection of the space which he inhabits, finds its counterpart in the centuries' long history of institutional spatial practices that deny Puerto Ricans their right to constitute and see themselves collectively. When Lalo's text-images present the reader with the real of Puerto Rican reality's irreducible irrepresentability, they demonstrate the degree to which this irrepresentability is an unmistakable sign that what is ultimately at stake in colonial spaces is their inhabiting subjects' inability to aesthetically constitute their own subjective places out of them, since the only spaces left where some kind of socializing is permitted and even promoted, are those exclusively associated with consumerist expenditure and low-wage labor. It is not surprising that the formidable and ever-accelerating disappearance of the Commons that characterize spatial practices in Puerto Rico has been accompanied by an increasing loss of any sense of communal life. Lalo lays this out in the following terms:

Puerto Rican society creates maximum distances in minimum spaces. Power, family, organization of the economy or culture drift towards this. This direction produces two effects: a claustrophobic intensification of space (the shrinking distance) and the creation of anti-solidary relations. Ironically, in a culture obsessed by the diminished dimensions of its island, its most common and most unconfessed product is distance, in other words, the size of what it separates. Puerto Rican society divides and, by doing so, goes astray, loses, exiles. In Puerto Rico everything seems to move away indefinitely (Lalo 2018, pp.33-34).

If Manu indexes for the reader the fissures of a reality where the space of Capital unravels in the colonial cacophony of

modernity's own aporias, the anonymous "narrator" in Lalo's work textually unfolds precisely an instance of this kind of interstitial practice, where narration comes to a standstill, in order to expose the disastrous becoming of a carefully planned and executed collective ecological and urban catastrophe. In a similar manner to Hau'ofa's stories, this temporal suspension that Lalo's work registers ultimately entails, by excavating the materials of modernity's mythical undercurrent to reveal the violence cyphered in the characters of a language that needs to be invented, a subversive evacuation of what Julio Ramos calls "progress's accumulative time" (Ramos 2019, p.2).

Contrary to Hau'ofa's tales, Lalo achieves this, not by parodying and thereby malfunctioning the narrative machinery upon which modernizing values are predicated, undermining it from within the contradictions of its foundational myths, but by a sort of epidermal writing/walking, casting his gaze at the city from the utopian possibilities that arise from the demonic stream of this very malfunctioning. It describes the unconscious current of the dirty, irrepresentable, unnamable folds of the city, where modern writing meets its representational limits. The images accompanying the text of two of his most explicitly visual works- *donde* and *Los pies de San Juan*- are thus like the spectral negatives of the transparent timelessness that the tourist industry most often associates to the region. By writing this very malfunctioning, this scriptural sub-traction of meaning turns the images of the Caribbean city, as it retraces its signs to its barbarous origins, into a hieroglyph.

There are certainly in those places practices also marked by the syncopated and seemingly haphazard rhythms- the kind of making-do we have seen at work in *Tales of the Tikongs*-, that also have become historically intrinsic to how Puerto Ricans relate with their space, not only among themselves, but with respect to those objects, which are submitted to usages that are in the best of cases only partially the ones for which they were supposed to have been made (bicycles that are also walking sound systems, old-cars that become living places, buildings designed for dwelling transformed into orchards or playgrounds, abandoned parking lots turned into open-air theaters). Arcadio Díaz Quiñones, calls it *la brega*, a word with a long ancestry that invokes incessant negotiation, to break through the *cul-de-sacs* of a situation, to dissolve it from within its own contradictions. The earliest ancestor of the word is the Old Germanic voice *brikkān*, 'to break'. Much like Lacan's "*savoir (faire)*", de Certeau's 'availing oneself of' or Lefebvre's 'making-do', *bregar* involves creativity, cunning, improvising, and a certain careless disposition for an unforeseeable outcome. In his textual inscriptions, Lalo *brega* (deals/makes-do) with a visual language that carries the inheritance of the spatial violences perpetrated on the archipelago by its governing classes. He thus inscribes the dislocation of this making do in his writing. The result is what he calls a scratched scripture ('*una escritura rayada*'), a writing that is as soiled, intervened, hackneyed and broken by this violence as the reality to which it refers:

Scratched writing. Behind these words there are others; the text contains ghosts of lost texts. The text is a residue [...] the scratched writing is the cynical patrimony of the defeated peoples that have formed the periphery of the West. We use the same language, the same alphabet, the same concepts, but these do not include us in the same way [...] our stench is a tautology, a non-word,

destruction in destruction, death in death. (Lalo 2005, p.121-131)

The scriptural becomes, in the case of Lalo, the realm where the practices of this *bregar* register the history of the subjective transformation of the human sensorium in the island. Indeed, in order to duly assess the place that his work occupies in the Caribbean literary tradition, it would be necessary to rehearse what Susan Buck-Morss calls Walter Benjamin's "Copernican Revolution" in historiographical research, regarding the political overtones of his artwork essay, in particular his appropriation of the theosophical concept of 'aura', in the context of a contemporary state of things that constantly replicates, at the global level, what originally obtained on occasion of the emergence of the capitalist industrialized city during the first half of the nineteenth century (Buck-Morss 1989, pp.x-xii).

To understand in its truly historical materialist weight Benjamin's idea that the role of aesthetic practices in late modernity is preeminently political- as opposed to the mimetic/documentary function it had during the preceding centuries-, the assertion should be taken in the sense that, at those moments where the very notion of storytelling is on the brink of losing its function of conferral of meaning, it is through those practices that humans can contemporize with the tumultuous sensorial influx that rapidly accelerating material changes in city spaces impose on their perceptual apparatus. These are for Benjamin the moments 'of greatest peril', since it is when the residual specter of past struggles- its victories and defeats- surges forth, untimely, to the present, on the occasion of a society mired in a political crisis whose conventional narratives, hollowed out as they have become by the imperceptible but inexorable gravity of what Theodor Adorno called their 'non-identity with the real', cannot cover up any longer the lingering trace of its antagonisms. It has been the calling of writers of the modern city, and this is even more true in the post-imperial, archipelagic margins of the contemporary neoliberal globe, to cast their perplexed gaze, on what were once 'artificial paradises', like a bewildered animal would stare at an infernal, hallucinatory spectacle of sameness.

It is because Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Miller, or W.G. Sebald wrote about them, that cities like Philadelphia, Paris, or Manchester become, not only more tolerable for their inhabitants, leaving one, thanks to the bridges towards a future carved on the history of its objects by this new language, feeling a little less lost in them, more 'at home', a little less threatened by what the vertiginous proliferation of all sorts of technological devices turned into an urban milieu that was as menacing as it was hypnotizing. A reassuring subjective sense of 'belonging to a place', which transcends the sedentary confines of a household is, after all, what differentiates dwelling from merely 'being there'. It is thus that a characteristic modern taste slowly but inexorably seeps through the crevices of the old one. Before it can be referred to its corresponding symbolic artifacts, this taste is expressive of a new kind of language of matter, a different grammar of the bodies human and non-human, a syntax of velocities of displacement, its rhythms, postures, gestural lexicon and modes of intonation, in short anything that a certain choreography, recognizable from the frenzied, increasingly automated reproduction of social life, defines in terms of spatiotemporal patterns, which will subsequently have been conceived of, for a subject-to-come, as 'natural'.

A new language of the senses, a body-language, or rather a language of the corporeal, must be invented, one where utterances, together with the senses they evoke, are one with the bodies uttering them, and every object a lighthouse that, by irradiating to the world their light from their dormant nucleus of human exploitation and misery, become signposts of the sacred.

It is in this sense that the literary history of a modern nation merges inextricably with the history of its senses. But to cast a truly contemporary gaze at this reality- and this is the experience to which Lalo, like all great writers of the modern city, submit us-, one has to be willing, in Buck-Morss' words, "to destroy the mythical immediacy of the present" (1989, p.x). The consensual symbolic means of experiencing the city as a present identical to itself, mesmerizing its citizens with the overwhelming power of its techno-aesthetic devices- such as are the ones sanctioned by the modern State which, with the authority conferred to its officers by habits and practices presumed to be 'ageless', polices in their interest the city's sensorial order under the institutional banner of a 'national culture'-, have to give way to ones that render visible, in the uselessness and invisibility of the material debris that falls from the unstoppable train of progress and development to the wastelands of official memory, the irrepresentable catastrophes from which the authority of its traditions draw their legitimating power. This means that, what has been theretofore considered 'beautiful' and 'pleasant' about this city and its objects, will be shown its irrepresentable correlative undertow, by seers who cannot help but be, themselves, both crepuscular harbingers of dying old ways, still harboring, as if they were halfheartedly contemplating a withered collection of dead seashells, the vestigial echoes of desires, rituals and tastes of the ruling classes, as well as wary (and weary) outsiders, acute observers who, in their obsessive search for this new language, tear through the phantasmal veil of an apparently monolithic reality, to reveal the invisible violence that imparts the city with the phantasmagoria of disembodied senses in the eyes of those who lack the symbolic (and therefore mimetic) means to navigate their bodies through it, nor can afford 'a space of their own' to realize them. If, for a growing fraction of those individuals, the modern city is a spectacular parade of narrative and sensorial artifacts that compels them to carry on their shoulders the full weight of its past by transforming their bodies into complying vessels of senselessness, it is the modern artists and writers' task to preserve the city's future for what is to come, by safeguarding possible pathways for these bodies' return back to their senses.

By virtue of the same regime of things that confers material expression to another, a rather small fraction of the socius embodying those same desires and tastes, against such a gaze, Lalo's work, in Duchesne's words, casts on its buildings, streets and everything that they contain "a stripped gaze that caresses what remains after the projects, the utopias, the progress, the developments and the babelization, once the human work collapses on the waste of its truth" (Duchesne-Winter 2009, p.66). Like the works of the aforementioned authors, Lalo's works do not constitute achieved examples of this new womb of symbols from which a new city and a new city dweller could be imagined, but rather they document its becoming, from the remnants of an old language in the process of its disappearance.

Writing therefore becomes for Lalo an act of constant erasures, unwritings, that make this triple marginality a coextensive condition, not only of all Puerto Ricans, but potentially of all Caribbean subjects and in a way, of all groups inhabiting enclaves submitted to the same dynamics of political exclusion and material dispossession. Like his European and North American counterparts, because of the historical and geographical singularity of being a writer of the Caribbean city, Lalo's work registers in his writing an experience of eccentricity that overflows with an excess of drift the territorial markings of national identities. His drift (deriva) increasingly becomes cosmic, impinging on the ecological substrate as the last frontier where capitalism, and the narrative machinery that sustains it, loses its moorings. It is, indeed, this excess that signals to the realization of a transnational archipelagic citizenship. A global citizenship dreamt of by Wolfgang Goethe achieves its culmination only by passing through the irreducible singularity of radical marginality and the diasporic disaffiliations to which Caribbean peoples have been submitted since the region's inception as a modern enclave of cultural confluences.

That is, also, why his gaze at the Caribbean city proceeds



Fig. 11.: Source: donde, 228-229.

by subtraction, which in his writing ramifies along three conditions that function as motives that traverse the triple marginality of his writing: invisibility (mainly, although not exclusively, of Puerto Rican social space qua archetypal colonial enclave), uselessness (first and foremost of the text, of writing), and historical strandedness ('estar quedao' connotes the sense of having missed the train of progress, to have been brushed aside, but also it can refer to one's own body ex-posed to the elements, which makes this raw exposition, this homelessness, the condition for dwelling in the Caribbean city, but which also evokes the radical cosmic nakedness that is the existential condition of citizenship for this new globalized archipelagic dweller).

That too, is why one of the most salient features of Lalo's spatial (un-)writings is his recurring insistence on this oppressive, almost claustrophobic sense of historical paralysis- which visually translates into the motive of a grayed-out Caribbean. As the inscriptions of its erasures become materialized in space, silently inscribing on each of its surrounding objects the enigmatic trace of its

overwhelming drive, the largely unknown urban history of the island gives its places and its peoples the asphyxiating sensation of staring at an invisible wall, made in equal degree of mutual mistrust, ignorance and scorn. That ominous sensation of being swallowed by the unsurmountable weight of the culture of historical amnesia on which the island's social space has been built, and experienced by whomever has lived in a colonized enclave long enough to be able to decipher the sense of subdued paroxysm to which objective violence has infused every aspect of its reality. In an analog, yet altogether different gesture to that of W.G. Sebald's tortuous meanderings and perambulations, what Lalo's strolls throughout the dilapidated and dehumanized Puerto Rican urban landscape bring to light, is this objective spatialization of the island's urban history as a recurrent violent and systematic erasure.

Moving Landscapes: n Archipelagic Response

Being largely a response to Eurocentric imaginaries of the island as an isolated enclave with fixed boundaries surrounded by the pelagic desert, the population movements throughout Puerto Rico's modern history constitute perhaps the strongest refutation of such a claustrophobic image, in at least two interrelated ways: first, the rituals and practices that give concrete expression to these immigrational flows disprove the accepted notion that an island is an exclusively material-spatial concept, offering instead concrete instances that are eloquent of how this notion, the sum of its enabling and its constraining conditions, has, even in spite and against the grain of their own colonial fantasies, been internalized by Puerto Ricans' ways of relating among themselves and their space. Since its early modern birth, as part of a rhetoric and discursive domain bearing the imprint of the European medieval imaginary to accommodate imperial interests, the deceptive regime of visibility ordained by the 'Island' as a spatial trope, covers up as much as it is expressive of more than a five-hundred years' history of dynamic and recurring patterns of economic, political and cultural relations, as sociologists of the Puerto Rican diaspora like Jorge Duany, Juan Flores, Pedro San Miguel and Yolanda María San Miguel have shown (See Sepúlveda-Rivera 2004). It is by virtue of the relative engagement with this enormous ocean of left-overs from what subtended such relations, in the form of partial defeats and triumphs through which history becomes (both within and without) a landscape harboring spectral scenes of lingering, unresolved struggles, that an archipelagic subjectivity, with all its perplexing singularities and contradictions, actualizes its concrete reality, that is, with a greater or lesser sense of historical urgency. Second, the internal dynamics of such diasporic movements expose the degree to which the notion of impermeable fixity attributed to an island's borders is constantly undermined by the same forces that such a trope enables. In this regard, Lalo ironizes about the fact that, for an oceanic, sun-bathed island, to these days the two predominant architectonic types, which for the author still model human relations in Puerto Rico, are the medieval fortification and the monastery. But while this is undeniable and can be verified at every turn, the paradigmatic immobility and isolation of the fortress and monastery- which today gains its most eloquent urbanistic examples in the fantastic proliferation of privatized, CCTV-scrutinized enclosures such as controlled access residencies, heavily surveilled shopping malls and secluded hotel complexes- has since always come accompanied by the dialectical supplement of a submarine, centrifugal thrust that

is today becoming increasingly global in its reach, while still having its main historical gradients distributed along several urban enclaves of the U.S. mainland.

In her novel-documentary PR-13 Aguirre, (DATE) Puerto Rican writer Marta Aponte Alsina calls attention to the way the southeasternmost part of the Puerto Rican archipelago was the site of an underground and outlawed confluence of cultures that took place at the margins of two successive empires, an ongoing process that was simultaneous to the cartographic inception of the region as an agro-industrial "free market zone" *avant la lettre*:

...the southern coast was abuzz with reciprocal activities, in the old trade known as contraband, and which consisted not only of inert merchandise but also of human trafficking. This exchange of goods is inseparable from cultural friction, on a scale that is difficult to conceive, since it no longer exists... (Alsina 2020, Entrevista, p.5)

Evoking Glissant's Relation, Alsina appropriately calls this 'a moving landscape' ("paisaje móvil"), and one can hardly think of a more concise way to define in spatial terms the ever-changing multiplicity, in the realm of meanings and the places they designate, set in motion by the term archipelagic. But this passage also serves to illustrate how colonial enclaves have always been generative of a subterranean world of economic and cultural lines of exchange of all types, which imperial attempts to control and manipulate only resulted either in their geographical dispersal, intensification, or both. That is perhaps the reason why *donde* ends with a close-up on a spherical map covering the space comprised by the Indian Ocean (Fig. 11).

Significantly, this is not a political map, but a geographical one, yet its political overtones could hardly be ignored. Even through the squared grid of latitudes and longitudes that this deformed panoptic illusion by which we absurdly still measure distances and dimensions, ones sees the lines and arrows that indicate trade routes, together with sea and wind currents. One could imagine a map that takes this further, and also includes, for instance, periodic immigrational flows of both animals and humans, as well as, why not, the tectonic forces that slowly but inexorably continually redraw in equal measure climate patterns, topographies and littorals- inscribing human history into a geological timeline of perpetual change. To be sure, the image's most immediate effect, and perhaps the author's conscious intention, is to help us visualize in its true geographical dimensions our (the Caribbean's) historical invisibility, as well as the meaning of not seeing ourselves on that part of the globe, because of the simple fact that empirically, our archipelagoes do not figure in it. This suggests, of course, that our historical invisibility has been, after all, ingrained in our spatial memory since Columbus' founding navigational blunder, which was geographical in the most planetary and cosmological sense of the term. That this region has, throughout its history, come to designate what Benítez Rojo has called 'a certain way' of being that has had this representational dislocation as its foundational cosmic referent.

But the deepest meaning of this gesture would be lost if we did not consider the radical displacement of that drifted gaze that is historically inscribed in the Caribbean subject. We can approach the same problem by asking what kind of subject would be contemporaneous with the set of conditions

imposed by modernity on natural spaces, if it is not the kind of archipelagic subjectivity that Caribbean and Oceanian individuals often incarnate in their daily lives. This image, taken in the context of what preceded it, indeed makes us question whether humans throughout their history have not related to space in much the same way, and whether this kind of subjectivity, for whom nothing else than the whole planet constitutes the only spatial disposition that can truly accommodate for the range of possibilities that capitalist modernity has opened up, by virtue of the depth and breadth of penetration into the forces of nature that its unsurmountable technological power carries with it. At any rate, this 'dis-oriented' gaze (literally 'lacking the Orient') forces us to question whether the nihilistic, world-negating drive of Christianity, by virtue of which modern European capitalism would have become the only spatial regime at humans' disposal has, on the contrary, only achieved, in its attempts to obliterate it, the amplification to a planetary scale of the truly archipelagic nature of both space and the creatures that inhabit it. Indeed, as any dimension of experience relevant to their mutual relation, making it the way that increasingly dominates interactions among human groups today, as well as between them and their places, to an extent that overflows whatever understanding of the phenomenon is enabled by the spatial and subjective coordinates of dwelling and urban settlements set forth by current institutional configurations of modern nation-states.

References

- 80grados. (2020, August 3). El despoblamiento de Puerto Rico, 2010-2019. 80grados.
<https://www.80grados.net/el-despoblamiento-de-puerto-rico-2010-2019/>
- Alsina, M.A., (2021) PR-13 Aguirre. 80grados.
<https://www.80grados.net/antipodas/>
- Augé, M. (2000). Los No Lugares: Espacios Del Anonimato: Una Antropología de La Sobremodernidad. 5th ed. Gedisa.
- Buck-Morss, S. (1989). The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project. MIT Press.
- Cartwright, W. Ed. (2009). Cartography and Art: Art and Cartography; [Proceedings] Cartography and Art Symposium held in Vienna in February 2008. Springer.
- Certeau, M. de. (1984). The Practice of Everyday Life. University of California Press.
- , (1996). Valerse de: Usos y Prácticas. La Invención de Lo Cotidiano (pp. 35–48). In El Oficio de La Historia Iberoamericana..
- Cullen, D. (Ed). (2012). Caribbean: Art at the Crossroads of the World. El Museo del Barrio in association with Yale University Press.
- Davis, A. (2007). Barbados in a Nutshell. In T. Mosaka (Ed.), Infinite Island, (pp.). Brooklyn Museum in association with Philip Wilson Publishers.
- De Loughrey, E. M., (Ed). (2005). Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture. University of Virginia Press.
- Duchesne-Winter, D.(2009). Desde donde alguien: política del no-lugar en Eduardo Lalodonde. In *Comunismo Literario y Teorías deseantes*, 65-90.
- Doxiadis, C.A. (1968). Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements. Oxford.
- Eliade, M. (1959). Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return. Garland Publishers.
- Fabian, J. (1983). Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object. Columbia University Press.
- Glissant, E., & Dash, M. (1999). Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays 3. University of Virginia Press.
- Glissant, É., & Wing, B [trans.]. (1997). Poetics of Relation. University of Michigan Press.
- Gnecchi R., Paini, E., & Paini, A. (Eds). (2017). Tides of Innovation in Oceania: Value, Materiality and Place. Australian National University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2001). Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography. Routledge.
- Hau'ofa, Epeli. (1998). Mekeo: Inequality and Ambivalence in a Village Society. Australian National University Press.
- , (1994). Tales of the Tikongs. University of Hawaii Press.
- , (2008). We Are the Ocean: Selected Works. University of Hawaii Press.
- , (1975). Anthropology and Pacific Islanders. Oceania, 45(4), 283–289.
- , (1971). Mekeo Chieftainship. The Journal of Polynesian Society, 80(2), 152–169.
- , (1993). Our Sea of Islands. The Contemporary Pacific, 6(6), 147–161.
- Hessler, S., & Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Foundation, (Eds.). (2018). Tidalectics: Imagining an Oceanic Worldview through Art and Science. TBA21-Academy; The MIT Press.
- Klarr, C. (2020) Hiapo (Tapa). Smarthistory.
<https://smarthistory.org/hiapo-tapa/>
- Koya, C. F., (Ed). (2010). Pacific Stories of Sustainable Living. School of Education, University of the South Pacific.
- Lalo, E. (2005). Donde. 1. Editorial Tal Cual.
- , (2016a) Donde. Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byS1ji15T9w>.
- , (2016b). Intemperie. Corregidor.
- , (2016c). Los Pies de San Juan. 2nd ed., Fundación Roberto Sánchez Vilella.
- , (2018) Intervenciones. Corregidor.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). The Production of Space. Blackwell.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (1980). Spatial Form in Literature: Towards a General Theory. Critical Inquiry, 6(3), 539–567.

- Mosaka, T. (Ed.). (2007). *Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art*. Brooklyn Museum in association with Philip Wilson Publishers.
- Negrón-Muntaner, F. La isla que se vacía, I. Mixcloud. <https://www.mixcloud.com/radioupr/la-isla-que-se-vac%C3%ADa-conversaci%C3%B3n-con-frances-negr%C3%B3n-muntaner-200211/>.
- (2020, July 17). The Emptying Island: Puerto Rican Expulsion in Post-Maria Time. Hemispheric Institute. <https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-14-1-expulsion/14-1-essays/the-emptying-island-puerto-rican-expulsion-in-post-maria-time.html>.
- O Ka'ili, T. (2005). Tauhi Vā: Nurturing Tongan Sociospatial Ties in Maui and Beyond. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 17(1), 83–114.
- Ramos, J. (2019). PR 3 Aguirre: Entrevista a Marta Aponte Alsina. *Caracol*, [S. l.], n. 18, p. 21-70.
- DOI: 10.11606/issn.2317-9651.v18i18p21-70.
<https://www.revistas.usp.br/caracol/article/view/156772>.
- Sepúlveda-Rivera, A. (2004). Puerto Rico urbano : atlas histórico de la ciudad puertorriqueña. San Juan, P.R.
- Stephens, M. (2013). What Is an Island? Caribbean Studies and the Contemporary Visual Artist. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, 17(2), 8–26. doi:10.1215/07990537-2323292.
- Stephens, M. A., & Martínez-San Miguel, Y. (Eds.) (2020). *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Towards New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations*. Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd.
- Stone, J. (1988), Imperialism, Colonialism and Cartography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 13(1), 57-64. Doi:10.2307/622775
- Thrower, N.J. (2008), *Maps and Civilization: Cartography in Culture*. University of Chicago Press.
- Thomas, N. (ed.). (2010). *Hauaga: The Art of John Pule*. Otago University Press.
- Tuan, Y-F. (2011). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Waddell, Eric, et al., editors. *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*. Beake House, 1993.
- Walcott, Derek. The Nobel Prize in Literature 1992. NobelPrize.Org. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1992/walcott/lecture/>. Accessed 26 May 2020.
- (2007). Antilles. In T. Mosaka (Ed.), *Infinite Island*, (pp.). Brooklyn Museum in association with Philip Wilson Publishers.
- Winduo, S. E. (2000). Unwriting Oceania: The Repositioning of the Pacific Writer Scholars within a Folk Narrative Space. *New Literary History*, 31(3), 599–613.

Keywords

Caribbean, Oceania, Relation, archipelagic, tidalectics.