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Introduction: Caribbean Entanglements in Times of Crises

Michaeline A. Crichlow, Patricia Northover,
and Deborah Jenson

The time is out of joint.

SHAKESPEARE, *HAMLET*

And as the same thing there exists in us, living and dead . . .

HERACLITUS, IN ANDREW NORRIS, *POETICS, METAPHYSICS, AND DEATH*

CARIBBEAN SPACE, FREEDOM, AND THE END OF TIME?

The contributions gathered here for this special issue of *The Global South* emerged from a symposium, *States of Freedom/ Freedom of States*, held at the University of West Indies-Mona in the summer of 2010.¹ The time was palpably out of joint; Caribbean spaces seemed suffocated by unnatural death and violence. Our history, Plantation America, already burdened by the weight of tragic repetitions, by the dull pain of times going badly, was folded into even greater despair. 2010 was not a good year. It was a crossroads. The dead, the dying, the seemingly “born fi dead,”² multiplied in spectacular excess, as Haiti groaned in the holocaust of its twilight freedom, and the earth gave way and ate up the living. Epic history sucked into the abyss of “natural” disaster. Uncannily, actors rehearsing the play *The Trap* by Haitian writer and artist Franketyen were uttering these lines as the earthquake struck: “No light in the collapse of the cities, the slums, the palaces and the castles all in one cacaphonic hecatomb” (Munro 111). Is this simply Haiti’s text of deadly exorbitance,³ a tragedy in eternal rehearsal? Or do these words speak tellingly to us all, in the cities, the slums, the palaces, and castles in which we anxiously dwell? What is the other “Half [of] the story [that] has never been told?”⁴ What next then, in this time of freedom? Who next, in this time of tragedy?

This vexed temporality was no longer content to wait on futures promised. It broke open its sores and openly wept blood for tears. Who could be silent at such a spectacle? Who could speak? What could be said of this time, this bloody temporality, that provoked, beseeched, demanded, questioned, waited,

and cried? How could we think our present history? What were the contours of its expression? What were the signs that spoke to its limits? How does our time, Caribbean time, Creole time, speak to this present? How far has this time taken us to our dreams of freedom? Are these times linked to those dreams? Are tragedy and death, violence and catastrophe (time and time again in a nauseating repetition of unholy form), the fine print on the historic deal of freedom? What exactly is this thing – this state of freedom, these freedoms of states? And what exactly is its relation to, as well as its impacts and aesthetic effects on Caribbean time and space? A torrent of questions uncurled themselves out of time . . . out of space . . . out of freedom. This was the year, given to us in tragedy, the year 2010, in which a need erupted to engage on Caribbean soil with the questions of freedom, its tragic yet heroic past, its haunted and violent present, and its seemingly abject if not impossible futures.

The *States of Freedom/Freedom of States* symposium unexpectedly became framed by a state of emergency in parts of Kingston triggered by belated efforts from the government in Jamaica to enforce a U.S. extradition order for Jamaican gang and drug overlord Christopher “Dudus” Coke. The “informal state” subsystem within the West Kingston “garrison community,”⁵ in response sought to perform its own violent delimitation of sovereignty, poignantly revealing its complex relationship to the structures of the postcolonial state, which in turn sought to negotiate its own complex relationship to the imperatives of international law. This “extradition affair” thus produced a contingent situation that gave further impetus to our resolve to think about questions of freedom from the vantage point of Caribbean (island) states, and their social, cultural, economic, and political histories in modern world systems. Indeed, the overlay of “states of freedom” and “states of emergency” through the clashes between inner city residents and the Jamaican police and army seemed to have placed us in the open wound of history; an unsettling context for our efforts at analyzing our troubled world of haunted freedoms, complex emergencies, spectacular violence, modern terror, and indeed, as Alexander D. Barder and François Debrix suggest, “agonal sovereignties.”

At a moment in which it seemed as if the very dialogues on freedom(s) were under strain, given contesting readings of its meaning from the country’s inner city interlocutors, our work on island nations from Jamaica to Haiti formally engaged with these questions: How are states of freedoms and “unfreedoms” being imagined, performed, and represented in politics, the visual and cultural arts (including literature), and how are these indicative of the particular ways that knowledge, places, power, people, and ideas have been creolized/kreyòlized? How do some states of cultural or identitarian freedoms coexist precisely with the circumscriptions of freedom in Caribbean states? And, how does the maintenance of the state of freedom in one locale impact the freedom of other

Figure 1. *Maroon Meditation*
by Charles Campbell.

states? Given such questions, we were compelled to consider freedom as experiences both within individual nations and among international networks.

The contributions in this special issue tackled these questions in a variety of ways and across a range of the geographies that punctuate the spaces of the Caribbean. They speak to the troubled projects of freedom, and pay close attention to the relational “hi/stories”⁶ ineluctably stitched into the fabric of freedom’s hopes. These hi/stories highlight lives lived and lost, presences under erasure that haunt, and hopes renewed against the backdrop of multiple “states of emergency” which now operate as the frame for our contemporary experiences of global capitalism, and indeed a world in multiple crises.⁷

In Kingston, Jamaica, the formal suspension of freedoms animated by the bloody exercises of power in a “state of exception” (as put forward by Agamben), elaborated first upon West Kingston residents, recalled a heritage of violence. In pre- and postcolonial hi/stories, was this long-delayed declaration of sovereignty over all, including exclusive garrison spaces, all that exceptional? Perhaps the difference lay in the concentrated excesses of these brutal exercises in sovereignty over the body, as Hansen and Stepputat emphasize, and the many lives laid to waste . . . still counting. Today, Haiti continues to burn with innumerable urgent conflagrations of a national community’s revulsion against the perpetuation of poverty and disease under the project of international state building and disaster recovery.

How then may one read the entangled present histories of Caribbean Atlantic spaces and discern the contours of their contradictions, existential anxieties, their uneven but intimately related experiences of place and space as woven

Figure 2. *Maroon Mandala*
by Charles Campbell.

into the tapestry of globalization? What stories of (un)freedom do these “repeating islands” framed by continental geographies and global economies, yet seemingly set adrift on seas of vulnerability, offer to us? To what extent do they afford us with the material to explore “what is dominant but hard to see” and to unearth “what is emergent in today’s imperial formations-and critically resurgent in response to them” (Stoler 211)? The essays in this volume provide us with different interpretations, responses, and speculative possibilities in seeking to address these issues as they engage the theme framing this intervention – states of freedom/freedom of states. They also pave the way for us to consider that the idea of freedom is not the endpoint of a linear journey from point A to point B, but rather a complex, even convoluted starting point for examining the ways in which Caribbean peoples have exercised their agencies in the pursuit of better and different ways of being, individually and collectively.

Visually, this complexity of *States of Freedom/Freedom of States* is intimated in the work of Vancouver-based Jamaican artist Charles Campbell, where his meditative dwelling on slavery and the iconic Brookes slave ship’s visual rendering of the Middle Passage give way to a deliberate morphing that transforms those images into mandala-like figures. Mandala, according to the dictionary, is a Sanskrit word meaning “circle.” Accordingly, “in various spiritual traditions, mandalas may be employed for focusing (the) attention of aspirants and adepts, as a spiritual teaching tool, for establishing a sacred space, and as an aid to meditation and trance induction.”⁸ But Campbell has not simply appropriated the form of the mandala wholesale; he has selectively engaged it, investing it with new histories and new meanings, transforming it into a vehicle for the articulation of freedom and unfreedoms, and linking the

mandala's meditative dimension to his own meditations on Caribbean personhood and its processes of creolization.

In the New World, or rather Plantation America, no figure cuts an image of "fleeing the plantation" better than the Maroon.⁹ And in the images above, *Maroon Meditation* and *Maroon Mandala*, respectively, Campbell offers up a meditation on these flights. In the first image, maroon bodies seem indistinguishable from the bush they inhabit. These new camouflages offer new sites for the working out of freedom, for the learning and unlearning, and indeed the morphing and unsettling of power relations on distant plantations. The hexagonal figure, however, suggests perhaps another strategic practice of freedom, one that emphasizes a many-sided approach to changing earlier forms and interpretations of freedom and power. The image in the latter is also suggestive of freedom as an ongoing struggle. Here one is treated to a beautiful motif: a creation, a six-sided pattern that alludes to the difficulty of interpreting historicity given its multiple foldings, its untranslatability, and opacity rather than transparency. This motif does not lend itself to an easy reading of particular histories.

The motif embeds a visible cross in the green pattern and extends beyond its evident porous boundary, into another coloring, this time orange, pointing to the rendition of the familiar slave shackles now scattered and disembodied, so much so that it resembles ordinary tools, (perhaps a clamp, or a hammer?), but still discernibly shackles. It is as if we are being treated to a meditation on the possibilities that freedoms in the New World's Plantation America came with a heavy price; that all freedoms, here and there, then and now, entail crosses, crossroads, that one has to contend with. Here, a path-dependent frame invites remembering. Here, these creolized mandalas with their gestures towards movement, reflection, and histories act as a critical gateway for a profound meditation on the states of freedoms, emergencies, and other exigencies threaded in violence that proliferate across our worlds.

In his own words, in a Youtube video, Campbell "labored" under a singular interpretation of slavery; one that had become burdensome in light of traditional connections of the image of slavery to forced movement. He subsequently shifted, manipulated, and changed the images to capture more complex notions of migration representing the circular movements of people (including that of the artist himself). Yet that earlier history is "set" as, or, rather, forms a constitutive backdrop for a present-tense "spectral" or "haunted" creativity. This manipulation by the artist gestures toward the performative as an ongoing and pivotal element in holding and expressing ontological memories. This performativity is a critical component of the creolized maneuverings for various freedoms, as Crichlow and Northover argue. The manipulations, the play to arrive at other interpretations, other signifiers, are pitted against overcharged scripts of "black" subjectivity, national sovereignty, modern development, and freedom. They ultimately represent the ongoing quest both for and toward a different kind of

presence in the world. Indeed, a different place in the hi/stories of freedom. The essays in this volume thus offer to consider the region's complex articulation of historical, economical, political, and cultural forces affecting the *idea* of freedom in light of the paradoxical trends shaping our present.

THE ESSAYS: FRAGMENTS ON THE SEAS OF HISTORY

In the essay, "Tomás Sánchez on Exorbitance: Still Lives of the Tropical Dump," Francisco J. Hernandez-Adrián presents a critical probe of the relational dynamics, contradictions, (ir)rationalities, and visual politics embedded in the project of globalization through a close and careful reading of the "garbage panoramas" produced by the contemporary Cuban artist Tomás Sánchez. These panoramas represent "the inter-textual force fields that symbolize value and colonial power--the constitutive facets of Caribbean and Atlantic experience." The master visual trope underpinning these artworks, and skillfully deployed in this essay, is the idea of exorbitance. Exorbitance points to the systemic paradoxes and existential limit points engendered by the consumptive freedoms and productive powers extolled in the progressive narratives of globalization -- narratives in which island spaces are violently and intimately interwoven. Indeed, Adrián implicates the creolization processes, threaded through these islands' spaces and beyond, which lie at the heart of globalization as not just "instances of exorbitance but as its constitutive scenario." Exorbitance symbolizes not just the "disproportionate," the "excessive," "that which departs from its proper orbit," but also "excision and the irruption of loss in the fantasy of an ordered world." Like garbage, exorbitance identifies grotesque monstrosities -- persistent yet morphing teratologies -- that threaten the present and its hopes for "the other realm of human life . . . the fast receding dream of a harmonious existence with nature," as promised under the project of globalization. Yet even as the present global threatens to cannibalize its subjects in exorbitance, Adrián explores a "tangential line of flight" through the critical visual field and the creole practices of questioning freedoms. This questioning is continued in the essays by Rupert Lewis and Kenneth Surin, both of whom explore the contemporary political dilemmas facing Caribbean nation states.

Lewis, a keynote speaker for the conference, offers in his paper an intervention that is centered on tracking the political ligaments of a security crises induced by a U.S. extradition order for an alleged crime lord and drug king pin, which placed Jamaica's West Kingston Garrison community into the international spotlight in the summer of 2010. His essay "Party Politics in Jamaica and the Extradition of Christopher 'Dudus' Coke" speaks to the Janus-faced democratic political arrangements operating in Jamaica to maintain a form of sovereign power that paradoxically rests on a divestment of sovereign authority to criminal forces and informal garrison legalities. The effect of this diffusion and

divestment of sovereignty has been to accommodate transnational drug and war machines within vulnerable island states. Lewis offers summary critical appraisals of several prominent interpretations of the political dynamic shaping Jamaica's democratic machinery and perverting its claims of either freedom or representation. These political assemblages of partitioned and partial sovereignty implicate what Saskia Sassen might argue to be "incomplete contracts" stitching together formal and informal claims and understandings of citizenship (and freedom). These political assemblages, however, do not reflect a unique Jamaican phenomenon, but rather find expressions elsewhere in the tragic repetitions constituting the Caribbean Atlantic region.

These forms of the political also seem to symbolically parallel "garbage panoramas," and thus testify to the contradictory excesses threatening human and regional security, and which also threaten to bury the region's subjects under fields of violent and grotesque exorbitance. Lewis suggests that a racializing gaze is implicated in the (in)coherencies of these political assemblages of politics and modern power, which are undermining the possible expressions of justice and freedom promised under democratic systems of representation, voice, and sovereign power – an issue more fully taken up in Northover's contribution to this volume.

In contrast, for Surin, the essential problem facing these small nation states must be framed as their intolerable dependent insertion in a global capitalism that emasculates these states' real possibilities to experience autonomous growth and development, and therefore to count themselves as free. In his essay, "Can There Be a Delinking Strategy for the Nations of the Caribbean?" Surin therefore revisits the classical dependency paradigm in its more Marxist form, where the pattern of economic insertion into capitalism is the pivotal obstacle to exercising a national project for empowerment, justice, and freedom. Like Gunder Frank, Surin posits that a delinking from the neocolonial capitalist order is needed. Surin's hopes are, however, more totalizing as he argues for a "complete reconfiguration of the prevailing world system so that the built in asymmetries between high income countries (HIC) and Less developed countries (LDC) can be eliminated." Indeed, Surin resurrects the radical tradition's hopes by reclaiming the revolutionary path of escape, but this revolution is expected to be "long" and its future eternal. While Surin hopes to revive radical debate on revolutionary exit strategies, his panoramic vision may elide critical aspects of the problem that are hinted at in Lewis' and Adrián's essays in their examination of Creole political excess and the politics of exorbitance.

In her essay, "Object Blackness, Hauntologies of Development, and the Demand for Authenticity: A Critique of Sen's *Development as Freedom*," Northover suggests that a greater understanding of the pathologies of the present and the region's contradictory engagements with the will to power and freedom requires a deeper interrogation of the haunting that is at work in the

projects of globalization and development. Northover critiques Sen's thesis of "Development as Freedom" which, she argues, is complicit with a Kantian transcendental ideal of absolute sovereign agency. Taking her cue from Isaiah Berlin's essay "Two Concepts of Liberty," she ferrets out the presence of an exorbitant attachment to an ideal of "free agency," which she argues expresses a fetish of transparency. This she defines as "a contingently racialized philosophy of *place* (interpreted here following Heidegger as 'the capacity to be present') embodying a social and psychological disavowal of constitutive forces and elements making place and producing (social) space." Raciality in this context, however, does not speak to color but rather to a peculiar mechanism of "othering" that rests on a distinction of subject and object: sovereign and sovereignlessness. This binary pair, moreover, does not speak to an ontology of presence, or a dialectic of presence and absence, but rather it speaks to a specter of abject blackness – a non-present presence that haunts the scenes of enlightenment and underpins the questioning of modern power and its freedoms. Her essay puts forward the view that this fetish fuels the violence and (ir)rationalities of the present, and radically disables Sen's efforts to sustain his project in a politically authentic relation to the present.

This idea of "development as freedom" may well have been rehearsed in the political pronouncements of Puerto Rican Governor Muñoz Marín, according to the arguments of Richard Rosa. In "Governing Tourism: Representation, Domination and Freedom in Puerto Rico: 1949," Rosa highlights the condition of Puerto Rico as a case of exceptional politics through an analysis of the strange political rationalities occasioned by the first democratic election of a Puerto Rican governor in 1949. He cites the exigencies of cold war politics, the rise of third world nationalisms, and the harsh realities of the pursuit of development as elements critical to positioning the island as an industrialized self-sufficient space. It was these processes that underscored a strategic disavowal of the possible benefit of the status nation-state by the ruling elite, making Puerto Rico a standard bearer of freedom imagined differently from most of its Caribbean counterparts. Governor Muñoz Marín championed Puerto Rico's difference, arguing that the island was on a different track, one that was antithetical to the formation of a nation-state, and superior to it. In fact, as Rosa shows, Marín would cast the nation-state as a dangerous and outmoded configuration: a virtuous claim that resonated in a time of necessity (or so the governor believed). For these strange utterances would coincide with the abandonment of the import substitution program and the turn toward industrialization by invitation – inviting foreign companies into the island to induce development. Here, development is seen as the foundation of a necessary democracy without the baggage of an Andersonian nationalist "imagined community" formally deemed so by a naturalization of the politics of a nation-state. Within the region itself then, freedom was open to several interpretations, the most common

being the realization of personhood and nationhood through the formation of nation-states. This Puerto Rican interpretation imagines a different kind of democracy: one which does not need the trappings of the nation-state. This mode of imagining development's freedoms requires imagining its realization through association with the U.S. imperial state. Today, Puerto Rico remains locked into the status of commonwealth that was inaugurated in 1952.

Puerto Rico's exceptionalism then lay in its own peculiar advocacy of the idea of "development as freedom," underscoring the myriad ways in which freedoms have been read, imagined, and spoken throughout the region. This is a particularly critical point that brings to mind the excess in Caribbean historical performatives negotiating slavery and freedom throughout the Atlantic world. For example, J. Lorand Matory in his recent article "Free to be a Slave,"¹⁰ discusses the diverse meanings of slavery by practitioners of Afro-Atlantic religions. These differ, he argues, from the U.S. where the descendants of slaves have focused on freedom as implying equality and on slavery as an unpardonable sin and an inherent evil: a phenomenological obstacle to all freedoms. Instead, Matory posits that followers of Ocha, Vodou, Umbanda, and Spiritism stake their claims less in terms of a Jeffersonian notion of freedom than in the idea of power, doing so within systems that do not assume equality of rights. Throughout the Afro-religious world, Matory notes, freedoms are expressed in diverse ways where the idea of the slave is rendered less negatively and seen, paradoxically, more as a model of strategic agency for citizens of various circum-Atlantic republics irrespective of their "race." The idea then of an emancipatory "Black" or racial consciousness as a seamless untroubled location where already constituted racial subjectivities occupy transparent agonistic positions becomes problematic. Instead, perhaps, as intimated in the work of diaspora scholars like Brent Hayes Edwards, one should examine the *imaginations* of practices of freedom, as a space produced through opening vistas, as well as difference and contestations within the global dynamic of coloniality and postcoloniality. In light of these perspectives above, it is therefore imperative that we continuously thresh out the nature of the particular experiences that constitute the myriad subjectivities at play here and there.

This Caribbean Atlantic diversity is treated in Sean Metzger's essay on "Chineseness." Metzger adds a new wrinkle to the way in which "Chineseness" is apprehended from the portal of incorporate-ness. Incorporate-ness is an optic from which to view the formation of Chinese citizenship in the Caribbean. It signifies a citizenship embodying an entanglement of the financial and the political in the popular perception of Chinese Trinidadians. Metzger is not articulating an essentialness because he is attentive to the morphing of this identity; instead, what he discloses is an identity that traverses "ripples in the seascape" (105) along various axes of a process of "incorporating." In "Incorporating: Chineseness in Chen's Trinidad," Metzger explores the visual and fictional works of

Trinidadian Renaissance man Willie Chen. Chen's life spans an array of successful encounters as artist, novelist, printer, set designer, playwright, oilman, and baker. Metzger's deft and intricate reading of Chen's fiction and visual art enables him to resist the idea of belonging to the nation-state and the focus on rights as *the* essence of a politics of freedom by New World minorities. Instead, Metzger proposes a different route to the exploration of Chinese identity, particularly its New World configuration – one that teases out the symbolic and material association of “Chineseness” within the global system of capital. Drawing on this optic Metzger approaches the textured meanings of incorporate-ness of Chinese cultural bodies in early 19th century histories, now tentatively linked to the rise of China as a new hegemon, and the realignment of foreign affairs by the Trinidadian State. Accordingly, the enduring stereotype of Caribbean Chinese as shopkeepers, (which underscores the apertures within the colonial world for the assertion of racially marked bodies), is filtered through a discussion of capital and its facility in forging and accommodating new relations to the nation, as updated by contemporary associations of China and Chinese workers in an ongoing neoliberal moment. Certainly, Metzger's discussion flags the idea of the Caribbean as a modern space whose subjects were originally treated as a complicated form of capital (which renders some bodies, more than others, conduits to the realization of value via neoliberal capital). However, these subjects now lay claim to a “Post-Creole imaginary” – that is, an imaginary which, as Crichlow and Northover argue, speaks to the work of re-imagining place and transforming inhospitable spaces.

If the movement of capital profits from a perspective that allows for a re-negotiation of various freedoms, yielding another understanding of freedom or at least its veritable pursuit, then Michaeline Crichlow's essay “Making Waves: (Dis)Placements, Entanglements, Mo(ve)ments,” returns us to an instance of a “body politics” routed through migration. She suggests that we rethink migration as an act of repositioning along an axis of freedom and a flight toward a kind of homeliness, which, at any rate, gives Caribbean subject/citizens an occasion to seek a particular kind of “dwelling” or “homing.” Crichlow wants to nudge the discussion of migration away from an economic paradigm of push and pull effects and its burdensome over-determinism materialism for analyzing movements. What she wants instead is a methodology that “reads” the way in which particular cosmologies, ideas of freedoms, life, and living may undergird such movements. Crichlow's essay, which focuses on boat people from Haiti and the Dominican Republic, thus calls for a methodology that discloses elements of the imaginary worlds of those directly undertaking movement and dwelling. Crichlow argues that such movements are tied to, but not entirely determined by, economic or state dynamics. Stepping back from the familiar analytic of the state and economy as the ultimate point of departure or the horizon from which such analyses usually proceed, Crichlow

instead seeks to read these movements of (dis)placement through the entangled histories of bodies, living and dead; or more generally, as the hi/stories of bodies interpolated through a “mapping of the present.” This term, adapted from Elden’s 2001 text *Mapping the Present*, and as used here, draws attention to political and representational technologies seeking to both triangulate a present existence and structure different possibilities for becoming in the modern world – a point elaborated in the work of Crichlow and Northover. Given the weight and violence of such mappings, she argues that migrants seek a route for re-homing freedoms and unsettling the disturbed zones of a trans-temporal and inter-temporal institutionally dynamic dwelling. Migration then becomes linked to the remaking of dwellings, apprehended then as liminal practices of vulnerable peoples who are intent on a “Creole line of escape”¹¹ from existing states of unfreedoms and unhomeliness.

Three essays in this issue explore Haiti’s efforts, and the tragic dilemmas encountered in seeking to claim its place, not just as a local zone of triumph over colonial order, but also internationally as a sovereign state, from the early independence to the current moment. In “Truth and Freedom in Haiti: An Examination of the Haitian Truth Commission,” Jermaine McCalpin brings his expertise to bear on the turbulent political evolution of the *Commission Nationale de Vérité et de Justice* (CNVJ) in Haiti: a truth commission first proposed by a Haitian diasporan group in Montréal in 1994, and implemented in the spring of 1995. Modeled after the first deployment of a truth commission institution/genre/performance in Uganda in 1974, the Haitian CNVJ unfolded contemporaneously with the more extensive South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to McCalpin, the Haitian commission’s mandate was to “globally establish the overall truth of the most serious human rights violations committed between September 29, 1991, and October 14, 1994.” McCalpin assesses the specific goals and methodology of the commission, its relationship to the judicial system and to the Aristide government in Haiti, and its widely-perceived failure “within an institutional vacuum” and in relation to the U.S. government censorship (redaction) of key sections of the archives on human rights abuses from the period in question. A final and decisive flaw was the “weak publicity and inaccessibility” of the Commission’s work and report. McCalpin’s research is just as pertinent for the explosive problem of impunity and institutional inadequacy in the current post-disaster Haitian environment, and presents a searing account of the obstacles to the institutional life of freedom in the Haitian state, as well as a precedent for consideration among current calls for truth commissions in Haiti.

Deborah Jenson proposes in “States of Ghetto, Ghettos of States” that the roots of a precarious state apparatus in Haiti can be traced back to a virtually unknown continuation of French aggression against the new black nation from within the island of Hispaniola, from 1804 to 1808. French General Ferrand’s

rule in the “*era de francía*” in what is now the Dominican Republic involved the careful establishment of legal conditions through which Haitian Independence was not simply left unrecognized, but actively argued against in international courts. Haiti was deemed to be an ongoing French colony in a state of rebellion in legal cases ranging up to the level of the U.S. Supreme Court. Jenson argues that Haiti’s tenuous international sovereignty set the stage for “uncivil communities” within Haiti, meaning ghetto-ized communities like Cité Soleil, which exist on the margins of constitutional zones.

The essay by Jean Casimir, “Going Backwards Toward the Future: From Haiti to Saint Domingue,” provides a political theory and an implicit manifesto to address the kinds of problems assessed in the papers by McCalpin and Jenson. The initial hypothesis of this study is that the working classes of Haiti, deported against their will to Saint-Domingue in their capacity as captive slaves, can still resolve their problems themselves, as did the pilgrims of the Mayflower, the American adventurers of the Far West, the Brazilian *bandeirantes*, or the Australian or Kiwi pioneers. The difference between the Haitian case and these other populations of ex-patriates is that the latter produced their elites themselves, while France positioned itself as the source of a social elite for its huge yield of slaves. Without roots in the masses, posits Casimir, this “air-dropped” elite was transformed after the country’s independence into an oligarchy without the resources to carry out its civilizing mission. This article describes the Haitian Revolution and independence as a war of secession from the colonial metropole on the one hand, and a profound civil fracture on the other. The Haitian Revolution itself is considered here as an accident in the modern Western world’s sphere of influence, whose structures remain in the process of resolution both internally and externally. In the long-term, the history of Haiti, Casimir asserts, can be viewed as the failed attempt to compromise resulting from this unexpected split. He suggests that today Haiti is living a forced return to assimilation as defined by the wealthy countries, but under the leadership of a new Metropole, the United States of America. In Casimir’s account it is significant to note that the oligarchy of the French citizens of Haiti is today in a precarious position, and that it too emerges as a loser in the accelerated decadence of the State if not the Haitian nation. This article proposes that forcible acknowledgment of these processes and fractures can aid Haiti in grappling for its “state” of freedom from a united internal point of departure.

States of Freedom/Freedom of States as a critical intervention does not define either states or freedom, but meditates on their mandala-like movements, expressions, and hi/stories amid the oblique forms of islands set in what Antonio Benítez Rojo has called the Caribbean’s “soup of signs” (2). Yet, “freedom” remains the shaky ground of Caribbean people’s immense efforts to refashion their futures. Indeed, though the islands have been pressed into utilitarian insularity, breaching historic structures of solidarity emergent with movements

for freedom, structures like Haiti's Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), in which a State of Emergency law fused a disaster-crippled political process onto a hybrid political entity,¹² only serves as a reminder of the urgency of forming new critical coalitions among Caribbean peoples for reframing "states of freedom" and the "freedom of states." The ethics of freedom extends beyond these vulnerable Caribbean spaces, however, to include the diverse peoples of the world, as well as those extra-Caribbean academic partners who seek to support these projects for refashioning times. In this special issue of *The Global South*, we share fragments of special meditations on maroon, creole, and spectral mandalas in order to address, interrogate, and challenge the "hauntologies" of the "sovereign's exceptional position beyond any need to answer or respond" (Anderson, Jenson, and Keller) in this fragmented philosophical topography which, in its spatial poetics, is peculiarly Caribbean.

Notes

1. This symposium, through the initiative of the Duke University Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) working group "Caribbean Studies in an Era of Globalization," brought together largely U.S. and Caribbean scholars under the aegis of a Memorandum of Understanding between Duke University and the University of the West Indies. Special thanks are due to the coordinating committee for this conference, to Duke University's CLACS, the Office of the Provost and the President, and the Center for International Studies, and, at the University of the West Indies, the offices of the Vice Chancellor and the Principal (Mona), the Deans of the Faculties of the Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES). A full list of the participants and their abstracts at the conference is presented at the website <http://www.uwi.edu/statesoffreedom/default.aspx>, which will host information on future events.
2. "Born fi dead" is island creole for "born but to die" in Jamaica. It features as the title of the 1996 novel, *Born Fi Dead: A Journey through the Jamaican Posse Underworld* by Laura Gunst. This novel speaks to the violence circulated in Jamaica through transnational criminal gangs, "posses," which traffic in guns, drugs, sex, violence, and death.
3. In this volume see Adrián's theorizing of this idea of exorbitance in his discussion of the visuals of Tomás Sánchez.
4. Extract from Bob Marley's lyrics in "Get up, Stand up."
5. On the garrison phenomena in Jamaica, see Rupert Lewis' essay in this volume.
6. Hi/stories, as coined by Crichtlow and Northover, is read as human identity stories here (20).
7. See in this regard, Arrighi's "Postscript on the Second Edition of *The Long Twentieth Century*."
8. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala
9. Maroons are heroes for Plantation American writers, perhaps with the exception of the Creolists of Martinique (Chamoiseau, Confiant and Bernabé), for whom the figure of the maroon is ambivalently held. In Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, for example, the Maroon figures appear as wanderers.
10. J. Lorand Matory presented a version of this essay for his keynote address at the *States of Freedom/Freedom of States* conference.

11. This is taken from the title of Boisseron's article.

12. The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC) is co-chaired by the UN Special Envoy to Haiti and the Prime Minister of Haiti with a board comprising major disaster relief donors.

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