

CONJURING PUERTO RICO'S ARCHIPELAGIC, DECOLONIAL FUTURE

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ABSTRACT: Explicitly situated in the aftermath of the Summer 2019 rebellion, this essay conjures Puerto Rico's archipelagic, decolonial future by examining, first, three instances of what I call our affective archive of Caribbean regionalism: (1) the 19th Century Confederación Antillana (CA); (2) the mid 20th Century West Indies Federation (WIF); and (3) the 21st Century Puerto Rican performance and community theatre piece, *Marea alta, marea baja* (2002) by the Agua, sol y sereno (ASYS) collective. Confronting the facts that Puerto Rico's decolonial movements – both institutional and popular – have not mobilised a Caribbeanist perspective as essential to their objectives, and that the most significant political proposals for materialising Caribbean integration have failed to rally popular power and agency, this essay contends, second, that Puerto Rico's struggles for a decolonial future must become archipelagic, that is, must take their cue from and expand our affective archive of Caribbean regionalism. In order to do so while continuing to galvanise the popular support experienced in the summer 2019 rebellion, not only must our struggles articulate themselves within and in collaboration with the greater Caribbean, but also as part of a radically participatory democratic project seeking multidimensional sovereignties. Specifically, three proposals are made: (1) the insertion of Puerto Rico in CARICOM's reparatory justice efforts; (2) the demand that such funds are managed within participatory budgeting models; and, (3) the creation of production and consumption cooperatives in the sphere of cultural sovereignty.

KEYWORDS: Puerto Rico, Caribbean, affective archive, archipelagic decolonisation, participatory democracy

Dreaming of Caribbeanness in 2020 Puerto Rico

In an 1882 letter to his friend, the revolutionary Puerto Rican poet Lola Rodríguez de Tió, Ramón Emeterio Betances, himself a notorious anticolonial leader, writer, and physician, sorrowfully recalls his flight from Puerto Rico, to which he was never able to return:

My wretched Cabo Rojo! My eyes swell as I think about it. Such a beautiful country and so miserable! I remember that when Segundo (Ruiz Belvis) and I fled the darkness, the boat ran aground a small beach of white sand, by Boquerón. I had a severe fever. We jumped and, crawling, I first got to a seagrape, under which I rested; afterwards, climbing on all fours a small hill that separated us from the rest of the island, I glanced and sent... a kiss for Patria. (Rama, 1975: 103)¹

¹ All translations from Spanish are my own.

Betances's recollection of his beloved archipelago is punctuated by a last, moving image of the Boquerón, Cabo Rojo coast from a body in pain. Having climbed up a hill to see the rest of the island from which he must flee, Betances, rather than encompassing it like his possession, *à la* Crusoe, sends it something unknown to language – thus the ellipsis in the letter – but akin to a kiss of love, which is implied by the double meaning of “a kiss for Patria,” both the homeland and Rodríguez de Tió's daughter, whose name was Patria.



Figure 1 – Map of Puerto Rico (Google Maps, 2020)

Betances died in 1898, the same year of the US military invasion of Puerto Rico. The latter event signalled the violent shift from a crumbling Spanish empire, which in December 1897 had promulgated the Carta Autonómica (Autonomic Charter) for Puerto Rico after a long struggle by a colonial population mired in misery and neglect, to the ex-colony of Britain now turned into an imperial monster of deceit.² In a flash, the archipelago was cursed by history once more.

I live, love, and write in Cabo Rojo, the small town where Betances was born and from which he treasured his last image of the Puerto Rican littoral. Almost one hundred and thirty years after Betances's letter, I stand on that Boquerón coast, suffocated by First-World-made climate change and capitalist-driven 'development,' carrying in my body the devastating collateral damages of US imperialism, the Estado Libre Asociado's failures, and the US-appointed *La Junta's* (Fiscal Oversight and Management Board) austerity machine.³ I stand on that Boquerón coast shouldering the legacy of centuries of colonialism, exploitation, subjugation, extraction, discrimination, and injustice. I stand on that Boquerón coast sickened by the rotting corpse of a debt wilfully crafted – and deliberately shielded from investigation – on the backs of a majority of deprived Puerto Ricans for the benefit of a few local and foreign family elites and blood traffickers. I stand on that

² The Carta Autonómica promulgated a limited form of self-government for Puerto Rico, composed of an 'Insular Parliament' with two chambers and a Governor General who would have maximum authority in representation of the Spanish monarchy.

³ Literally translated as 'Free Associated State', Estado Libre Asociado is the official name for the colonial 'arrangement' of USA-PR relations. In the context of the United States, it is often referred to as 'Commonwealth.' The Fiscal Oversight and Management Board, locally known as *La Junta*, was appointed in 2016 by then-President of the USA, Barack Obama, as part of the imposition on Puerto Rico of the PROMESA law to manage the debt crisis. Since then, *La Junta*, with the local government's acquiescence, has pushed extraordinary so-called austerity measures, in order to "balance the budget," "pay the bondholders" and "return Puerto Rico to the markets." During the last three years, neither *La Junta*, nor the PROMESA Title III federal court, have protected basic human rights and essential services, leading to an escalation of deprivation for the Puerto Rican majorities that many have labelled locally as forms of "slow death." After Hurricanes Irma and Maria wrought havoc in 2017, and, more recently, a seismic sequence has devastated the main island's southwestern region, the corrupt, increasing exploitation of disaster on the part of private firms and corporations, in tandem with local and federal authorities, has deepened the crisis to catastrophic levels.

Boquerón coast with no reparatory justice from any of the multiple empires raised on our collective murder.

But I also stand on that Boquerón coast on the heels of a revolutionary process that no one could have predicted, which managed to oust the former governor, Ricardo Rosselló (Figures 2 and 3), and radically reorient Puerto Rico's political imagination and will. Although, of course, the summer 2019 long-term effects are still uncertain, one thing seems clear: as Yarimar Bonilla declared, "Puerto Rican politics will never be the same."⁴



Figure 2 – Graffiti urging Governor Ricardo (Ricky) Rosselló to resign (*renuncia*) accompanied by number of estimated deaths in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria (ie 4645). (Photograph by Christopher Powers, 2019.)

Within all the complexity that a body – my body – carries, I try in 2020 to imagine Betances's 19th Century pain, his trepidation, his fear on that boat and on that hill. I wonder what he thought of the coastal seascape? What did it make him feel before it became the site of his involuntary escape? How did his relation with the coast and the sea change that night, when they were transformed into the perilous scenario of, at once, possible escape and potential death? Was the maritime journey – and eventual diasporic subjectivity – partly responsible for his notion of *Antillas para los antillanos* (The Antilles for the Antilleans), his dream of a *Confederación Antillana* (CA) (Antillean Confederation)? How can I honour this memory in 2020, marked by the revolutionary urgency of radically transforming local politics and Puerto Rico's 'relationship' with the USA? How can I nurture and defend the relational dream of Caribbeanness memorably rendered by Édouard Glissant and so many others?

⁴ See Walter's interview with Bonilla (2019b). About the multiple and intersecting ways in which Puerto Rico's summer 2019 is revolutionary, in addition to Bonilla's interview and her column 'Meet the Women Who Toppled Puerto Rico's Governor' (2019a), see the pieces by Bernabe and Rodríguez Banchs (2019), Bonilla and Caraballo-Cueto (2019), Dávila and LeBrón (2019), Santiago-Ortiz and Meléndez-Badillo (2019), LeBrón (2019), Colón Rodríguez and Rodríguez López (2019), and Llenín Figueroa (2019a).



Figure 2 – Paro General (one-day general strike), San Juan, July 22nd, 2019 (photograph by Christopher Powers)

An Affective Archive of Caribbean Regionalism

Explicitly situated in the aftermath of the summer 2019 rebellion in Puerto Rico, this essay, which is part of a larger book project preliminarily entitled *An Archipelago Between the Dire and the Luminous: Towards Puerto Rico's Decolonial Futures*, seeks to honour the memory of CA and that of two other instances in its wake: the mid 20th Century West Indies Federation (WIF), and the more recent Puerto Rican performance and community theatre piece, *Marea alta, marea baja* ('High Tide, Low Tide') (2002), by the theatre collective Agua, sol y sereno (ASYS). Among many others, these three fulgurations are part of what I call Puerto Rico's affective archive of Caribbean regionalism, that is, the multifarious forms in which our love, even passion, for the archipelago – Puerto Rican, Caribbean – manifest themselves. The affective archive of Caribbean regionalism includes written texts of various kinds and non-verbal, sometimes ephemeral, interventions, such as activist events, performance pieces, visual arts, music, dance, spiritual and mythological lives, as well as other instances that evade enumeration.⁵ In other words, our affective archive of Caribbean regionalism refutes the colonial and neocolonial structures of isolation and fragmentation violently inserted between our archipelagos with the conviction that, as Brathwaite famously declared, our "unity is submarine" (1975: 1). Such maritime, archipelagic consciousness must be strengthened in Puerto Rico if we are to imagine – and shape – a truly decolonial future.

Punctuated by the summer 2019 events, Puerto Rico's contemporary movements against the savage intensification of neoliberal capitalism and colonialism, systemic corruption, disaster porn, misogyny, and queerphobia are part of a much larger affective archive held by the submarine forces of our volcanic islands, our relentless creativity, and our defiant joy.⁶ We Antilleans, made against the backdrop of the plantation machine, of a forced

⁵ For an anthropological study that conceptualises and beautifully defends the importance of the ephemeral in recent Puerto Rico, see Rosario (2013). In her dissertation, Rosario analyses the *Playas pa'l Pueblo* (Beaches for the People) camp alongside the 2010 UPR student strike. She writes: "Ephemeral spaces and the unfixed possibilities they create, help participants to get past strict notions of rationality to push the limits of thought so much so that they can be shaken from expectations, and find the world anew" (2013: 79). From a simultaneously sociological and literary standpoint, Rebollo Gil (2018) also studies, in a moving and compelling way, recent ephemeral activism in Puerto Rico deemed by many to be "irrational" or "insufficient."

⁶ In another register, this is what I understand Torres-Saillant to be calling for as well when he declares: "The necessity of knowing, valuing, and protecting each other in the Caribbean prevails. We also need to develop the strategy of affirming the Antillean intellect's great products. We should contribute to legitimizing the creativity, imagination, and genius of this region's people. Inasmuch as we get to know each other better, we will start finding vital resources that we did not know we had, and we will be able to share them in the shaping of our common good. Maybe we will learn about

cosmopolitanism through slavery and rape, violence and death, have always been liberating affections, sharing common dreams, shifting our subjected bodies through dance and laughter; in a word, fleeing the plantation.

Still, as we will see, the most significant political proposals for the materialisation of Puerto Rico's and the Caribbean's regional consciousness have failed to rally popular power and agency. As a consequence, this essay also responds to the contemporary Puerto Rican scenario by arguing that our struggles for a decolonial future must *become archipelagic*, that is, must take their cue from and expand our affective archive of Caribbean regionalism. In order to do so while continuing to galvanise the popular support experienced in the summer 2019 rebellion, not only must our struggles articulate themselves within and in collaboration with the greater Caribbean, but also as part of a radically participatory democratic project seeking multidimensional sovereignties: those of the body (gender, race, sexual orientation, cognitive, and functional diversity), as well as those of food sources, energy, health, education, and culture. Specifically, three proposals are made: (1) the insertion of Puerto Rico in CARICOM's reparatory justice efforts; (2) the demand that such funds are managed within participatory budgeting models; and, (3) the creation of production and consumption cooperatives in the sphere of cultural sovereignty.⁷

An Archipelagic Dream, Take One

As multiple scholars have pointed out, the idea of an Antillean Confederation was shared by many of the most prominent 19th Century leaders of independence struggles in Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.⁸ In one way or another, in fleeting references or in more sustained allocutions, uniting the Spanish-speaking islands in a common, political formation was a goal shared by Betances, Eugenio María de Hostos (Puerto Rico), José Martí (Cuba), Antonio Maceo (Cuba), and Gregorio Luperón (Dominican Republic). But Betances was singular in his profound racial consciousness, in his insistence on Haiti's inclusion, and in his recognition of the latter as the most radical historical force of liberation in the Caribbean. Still, the CA's inclusion of – or relation with, for that matter – the rest of the Caribbean beyond Haiti, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, remains unclear.

Regarding the idea of the Antillean Confederation, Betances's texts of varying genres – journalistic pieces, letters, speeches, and translations of texts on the Haitian Revolution and its leaders – which were compiled by Carlos M. Rama in the 1975 volume *Las Antillas para los antillanos*, demonstrate the Puerto Rican's unyielding insistence on the need for unity, since, as he writes to his friend Julio Henna in 1895, "disunion would be a disaster" (1975: 187). They also show a Betances painfully aware of his historical moment: Puerto

products we don't need to import because they already exist locally, be that textiles, flying fish or critical thinking." (2011: 38).

⁷ Within the contemporary struggles in Puerto Rico, and especially in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane season, there is a notable and recurrent attempt to extend the reach of the concept of *sovereignty*. Traditionally, sovereignty in Puerto Rico has been understood in strictly political-juridical terms; thus, it has been a rallying cry for the decolonial, pro-independence movement in all its forms. Now, it is being increasingly understood to mean much more than the transformation of the political-juridical status with respect to the United States, and to include food, energy, art, and bodily sovereignties, among others (Reyes Cruz, 2018). For discussions concerning non-state forms of sovereignty in other regions, especially archipelagic ones, see Prinsen and Blaise (2017) and Negrón-Muntaner (2017).

⁸ See, among others, Venegas Delgado (1994), Gaztambide Géigel (1996), García (2005), Arpini (2008, 2009, 2014), Arroyo (2013), Chaa-Pérez (2013), and Buscaglia Salgado (2015).

Rico had to follow Cuba's and the Dominican Republic's steps in shedding Spanish colonial rule (as Haiti did France's at the beginning of the 19th Century) and the archipelagic union was primarily an exigency resulting from the USA's imperial developments. That is, for Betances, the political, social, economic, and cultural integration of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Haiti was, first and foremost, a defensive, historical necessity, "so as to prevent the yankees from eating Cuba and Puerto Rico alive" (Rama, 1975: 224), as he writes to Henna in 1896.

But, beyond the immediacy of preventing the USA's expansion in the region, how were Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti to materialise the Antillean Confederation in the 20th Century? In light of the primarily defensive conceptualisation of the union at the close of the 19th Century, the answer to this question remains largely unexplored in Betances's texts. Reading his letters, one gets the distinct impression that his daily life was all but consumed by the pragmatic, immediate concern of financing (from Paris, along connecting lines mainly through New York) the Cuban revolution for independence in order for it to prevail. If it did, Betances thought, Cuba would then help launch a similar revolution in Puerto Rico, where Betances's 1868 uprising (*El Grito de Lares*) had been tragically suppressed.

As a result, the Antillean Confederation was for Betances more of a felt emotion manifested in deep bonds between his fellow comrades and collaborators than a political program in the traditional sense of the word. Hence, I agree with Jossiana Arroyo (2013) and Khalil Chaar-Pérez (2013) when they observe that the CA was manifested primarily in and through homosocial relations between *prohombres* ('great men') holding a deeply patriarchal view of leadership and liberation. Indeed, in 1896 Betances wrote to Henna in exasperation that Puerto Rico was a *pueblo de mujeres* ('a people made up of women'), by which he clearly meant a cowardly and fragile people (Rama, 1975: 227). Still, Betances's letters show a rare, emotional patriarchy that does not shy away from open declarations of love between his 'brothers' of ideas. Within such relations, the CA idea was made.⁹

Betances's work shows, moreover, that he found the CA inconceivable without national independence as a precondition. This exigency has endured through the 20th Century's colonial liberation struggles – as can be corroborated in figures such as Pedro Albizu Campos and Frantz Fanon – and well into our present moment in many circles of the Puerto Rican left. Critics such as Carlos Pabón (2002) and Frances Negrón-Muntaner (2007), for their part, have questioned this nation-state imperative, arguing that it shows an excessive commitment to exclusionary political categories, which they claim are anachronistic in the era of globalisation. In a more generous tone, Carole Boyce-Davies has written in defence of the "Caribbean Trans-Nation," a 21st Century version of the CA (Boyce-Davies, 2008: 18).

Concerning Betances, I take the more nuanced perspective that his commitment to the nation-building precondition responds to the historical context in which he was immersed and the significant influence exerted by French republicanism on him and many other Caribbean and Latin American liberation thinkers. Still, it remains true that the nation-state ideal has been a deeply contested concept in Puerto Rico and many other Caribbean

⁹ Indeed, one could argue, with Norman Girvan, that beyond the 20th Century official juridical-political organisms such as CARICOM, which have sought to concretise a Caribbean union, the archipelagos are united through their shared "resistance projects" (Girvan, 2018: 15), which Girvan organises in the following categories: "pan-Africanism, West Indian nationalism – regional and insular; revolutionary pan-Caribbeanism; Plantation pan-Caribbeanism; and Greater Caribbean" (Girvan, 2018: 16).

islands. Within nationalist circles of the Puerto Rican left, this contention tends to be read as immature political thinking on the part of the Puerto Rican majority, resulting from centuries of colonialism's psychological impact, and, more recently in the 20th Century, from the devastating violent repression of the Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista) and its leaders by the US-Congress and intelligence agencies.¹⁰ The repression was aided and abetted by local Puerto Rican elites from both the pro-status quo Partido Popular Democrático, who were (and continue to be) interested in selling and consolidating the false sense of national sovereignty provided by the "Commonwealth agreement," and the pro-annexation New Progressive Party (Partido Nuevo Progresista), who were (and continue to be) invested in fabricating for the archipelago an "American" national identity to fit the nation-state (the USA) that, according to them, Puerto Rico already belongs to.

Although the aforementioned nationalist interpretation is supported by unquestionable historical evidence, it also tends to infantilise Puerto Rico's political capacities, avoiding a subtler, yet crucial, question. That is, whether the enduring ambiguity concerning 'the nation' in Puerto Rico might reveal a pulsating, if unrecognised, awareness that the colonial subject should at least be able to hold the empire accountable for its crimes. In a scenario of colonial subjugation, where reparatory justice *as such* has never been at the forefront of the nationalist struggle, let alone in the political platforms of the hegemonic parties, how can the majorities possibly make such demands? To answer this question, we would have to turn to more immaterial manifestations of Puerto Rico's political awareness, akin to the affective archive this essay explores: perhaps the empire is held somewhat accountable through Arcadio Díaz Quiñones's *el arte de bregar* ('the art of dealing with')¹¹ and through a latent, when not overt, desire to *cimarronear* (maroon), to break free from the imperial and partisan conceptual framework, which controls the terms *both* of the colony's subjugation and liberation!¹² After the summer 2019 rebellion, one would be hard-pressed to deny that such immaterial political reserves have been nurtured for decades.

Moreover, the Caribbean nationalist tradition – including Puerto Rico's, since Betances, through Albizu Campos and to this day – has been characterised by a deep, even

¹⁰ See Atilés-Osoria (2019) for an overview of this repressive history.

¹¹ The Puerto Rican concept of *bregar* is particularly challenging to translate and is defined by Díaz Quiñones in multiple ways. In the context of this essay, consider the following definitions: "another order of knowledge, a diffuse method without pomp to navigate daily life, where everything is extremely precarious, shifting or violent" (2000: 20); "putting in relation that which until then had seemed distant or antagonistic. It is a position from which one acts to dissolve without violence conflicts that are very polarized" (ibid: 22); and, "perhaps it is the secret agent, or the double agent, of the Puerto Rican political culture" (ibid: 26).

¹² As far as I am aware, Bonilla's book *Non-Sovereign Futures* (2015), which studies the francophone Caribbean as deeply connected to the Puerto Rican experience, is the most thorough and careful exploration of this conundrum. As she explains in the introduction to her work: "I argue that in both the independent and non-independent Caribbean, there is a common feeling of disenchantment with the modernist project of postcolonial sovereignty, even while there is also a lingering attachment to its normative ideals. For, although it might seem as if the project of postcolonial sovereignty has led to a political dead end, many populations still find meaning and power in the right to nation and state. National independence does not seem to guarantee sovereignty, but it is unclear whether societies without it can achieve what sovereignty – as a native category – has come to represent. Moreover, contemporary populations often lack the conceptual language with which to describe plausible (or even utopian) alternatives to the modernist projects of decolonisation and national sovereignty. This is why Puerto Ricans routinely vote against political independence even while asserting a wish to see their island 'free and sovereign' and why the Guadeloupean protagonists of this book repeatedly declare that they want sovereignty 'even if it is under the French flag.'" (2015: loc. 195-201)

programmatic, commitment to the concept of sacrifice as an ideal.¹³ As a result, Puerto Rican nationalism, for instance, has been willing to concede too much to empire, be it Spain or the United States. The idea that forming a nation-state would automatically and unquestionably be better than the colonial condition has led the independent Caribbean to gain such juridical status without reparations for centuries of colonialism and slavery. In several cases, the former colonial masters even received compensations for their “losses” when slavery was abolished and independence was achieved.¹⁴ In Haiti’s case, these “compensations” constitute one of the founding reasons why the ostensibly independent nation-state since 1804 was crippled with *debt* since the first few decades of its inception, a colonial-capitalist calculus that allowed neocolonialism to take hold well into the future.¹⁵

The absolute impunity of empires, along with the complicity of “post” or neocolonial elites, helps to explain the continuous dynamics of class, gender, and race-based exploitation, economic dependency, and forced migrations that the Caribbean archipelagos – even the independent countries – are forced to face. The lack of reparatory justice also deepened the incommensurable difficulties that, precisely as a result of colonial subjugation, islands without their own capital accumulation, traditions of self-government, and production economies were burdened with as they attempted to start on a path *as if* they were a nation-state among others within a capitalist world-system.¹⁶ As it turns out, the nation-states of western Europe and the USA were *built on the basis* of exploiting land, resources, and people for centuries. That *is* the nation-state. Thus, requiring our colonial territories to become truly independent nation-states without the imperial nation-states paying for their crimes is like requiring a tropical tree to grow in a desert.

Despite the continuing debate on the nation-state, as well as nationalism’s failure to demand reparatory justice – an issue I will return to – what remains true among Betances and his circum-Caribbean and circum-Atlantic comrades are their affective relations, facilitated by a shared passion for a united Caribbean archipelago. The union, then and now, is bodily felt and thought rather than juridically rationalised. Empire has been unable to destroy this affective archive continuum. With such gigantic odds against Puerto Ricans, I insist on reminding ourselves that this is not a negligible feat.

An Archipelagic Dream, Take Two

A few decades after Betances’s death, the Anglophone Caribbean embarked on its own confederation project. The story of the mid-20th Century West Indies Federation (WIF)

¹³ The elaboration of this story is beyond the scope of this essay, but it is traced in the larger book project of which it is a part.

¹⁴ Betances himself, in a 1895 letter to Julio Henna, explains: “You understand how important this decision is (that Puerto Rico’s name remains tied to Cuba’s in the context of the Cuban War of Independence) – and this is confidential – , if the Spaniards leave Cuba, we would demand they leave Puerto Rico, too. I have argued that we could offer them, in a timely manner, 125 million dollars in indemnization, of which 25 would be for Puerto Rico.” (Rama, 1975: 188-189).

¹⁵ See Dubois (2012: 97-104) for a discussion of the details concerning the ‘indemnity’ agreement. See also Dayan (2004).

¹⁶ As Sir Hilary Beckles chillingly reminds us: “These ravished islands have done their best to clean up the colonial mess. They have spent beyond their means in the process of seeking to convert colonials into citizens. Left largely illiterate and riddled with ill health by colonialism they have built schools and hospitals that must be maintained. Social expenditure in the interest of building democracy exceeds financial income. This is the price they paid for participation in modernity. Now their public debt strangles their quest for economic growth. It is a debt that should be written off as an investment in democracy.” (2017: np.)

has been amply analysed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (e.g. Clarke, 1976; Padmore, 1999; Coore, 1999; Cooper, 1999 and Duke, 2016). From these appraisals four consensuses emerge:

1. In sharp contrast to Betances's CA as a revolutionary political ideal to strengthen Puerto Rico's, the Dominican Republic's, Cuba's, and Haiti's possibilities of achieving and maintaining sovereignty and a republican form of government, the idea of federating the Caribbean British colonies first emerged publicly in the 19th Century from Britain's own imperial administration, which sought federation as a way to reduce its expenses and better *sustain* British colonialism in the region.
2. Only during the 20th Century's first decades did confederation become a West Indian local and diasporic idea and political horizon, which was supported by the British government because at that point its Caribbean colonies were no longer the sources of wealth they used to be, nor did they hold the same geopolitical interest for the empire.
3. Such local and diasporic support was primarily from intellectuals, academics, artists, writers, activists and government figures, but never turned into a grassroots movement with support from the majority of West Indians themselves.
4. The long, embattled negotiation process culminating in the declaration of WIF in 1958 and its relatively quick demise in 1962 was marked by highly charged frictions between "insular" and "regional" sentiments; between competing political parties at a local level (especially in Jamaica); and between high-profile male political leaders (in particular, Eric Williams, Norman Manley and Alexander Bustamante), whose personal limitations have been interpreted by some (Padmore, 1999) as the main reason for the WIF's collapse.¹⁷

There are two salient commonalities and one significant difference between the aforementioned consensuses and the Puerto Rican situation. The first commonality is the failure, as we saw, on the part of the traditional nationalist movement and its leaders in Puerto Rico to understand Caribbean integration as a *fundamental necessity* for decolonisation.¹⁸ The myriad progressive, popular movements – beyond partisan institutions – that have been active in Puerto Rican politics throughout the 20th Century and until the present have also tended not to consider the archipelagic, regionalist perspective as key to the advancement and consolidation of their claims. I contend that the various forms of communitarian sovereignties currently intensifying in Puerto Rico – to which I will return below – must understand this limitation as a challenge to be met head-on in the 21st Century.¹⁹ To continue galvanising the extraordinarily diverse and

¹⁷ In my book project, I dispute the prevalence, within WIF scholarship, of the geographical determinism implicit in this consensus, whereby "the island" and "the insular" have been used as convenient blame-all categories.

¹⁸ The ample discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this essay, but I address it in my book project, alongside a similar claim concerning the Puerto Rican Independence Party (*Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño*) – still in existence – and the current Movement for Citizen Victory (*Movimiento Victoria Ciudadana*), which was recently officially registered as a party to participate in the 2020 general elections.

¹⁹ On the importance of communitarian sovereignties post 2017 hurricane season in Puerto Rico, see Llenín Figueroa (2019b). In that piece, I develop the concept of "communitarian sovereignty" as distinct from the much more commonly used *autogestión*. For a superb ethnographic study that confronts both the transformative possibilities and the (sometimes inadvertent) colonial complicities of *autogestión* (which the author translates as 'autonomous organising') in Puerto Rico after the 2017 hurricane season, see Garriga López (2019).

massive popular support against the *status quo* that Puerto Rico witnessed in the summer 2019 rebellion, such communitarian movements must be structured around a radical and participatory democracy seeking multidimensional sovereignties (see Reyes Cruz, 2018) explicitly within the context of, and in collaboration with, the greater Caribbean.

The second commonality is the fact that Puerto Rico, even since the 19th Century abolitionist movement (see Araujo, 2017) in which Betances was a protagonist, has consistently neglected to demand reparatory justice from either the Spanish or the US empires. Now, in the midst of our humanitarian and debt crisis, the effects of such disregard are more evident than ever. The fact that Puerto Rico is prevented by the US government from being an active member of CARICOM (López Vera, 2005) constitutes another hurdle, since, as we will see in the following section, CARICOM is currently leading the regional effort for reparations.

On the other hand, the significant difference has been the absence throughout the 20th and 21st centuries in Puerto Rico of a Pan-Caribbean consciousness on a par with the Anglophone Caribbean's. This 'lack' can be easily noticed in most official political parties and organisations, although, as we have seen, Puerto Rico's affective archive is crisscrossed by a Caribbeanist perspective. Despite the WIF's collapse, the question of Caribbean integration has been unwaveringly on the Anglophone Caribbean's political, social, and economic agenda. After the 19th Century CA ideal, in contrast, the Puerto Rican political scenario, in electoral terms, has been characterised by the agonising absence of a Caribbean consciousness. Although Puerto Rico's political status as a US colony stands out among the reasons for this blindness to our archipelagic constitution, the fact remains that, as previously pointed out, not even the political parties and movements explicitly advocating for decolonisation have paid attention to the integration with our archipelagic region as an indispensable requirement for achieving their objective.

Two more limitations to the WIF project as it was originally negotiated should be noted. First, WIF was materially and symbolically impaired by not being premised on the exigency of reparations on the part of the British for centuries of slavery and colonialism, a limitation which has only recently, but crucially, been taken up by CARICOM, as I will soon discuss. Caribbean integration, in a word, has attempted to see a friend where there was an enemy, behaving as though the atrocious consequences, including the ecological ones, of slavery and colonialism, and the ineffable costs of nation-building, both material and symbolic, in their wake should be defrayed by the survivors rather than the perpetrators.

Second, neither WIF, nor CARICOM were framed as truly transformative political projects seeking to foster popular participation.²⁰ This has resulted in both initiatives being caught in a neocolonial, capitalist logic, from mid-century notions of industrial development "by invitation" through tax exemptions and the current regime of neoliberalism and "free trade". Thus, Caribbean integration through WIF and CARICOM has been systematically undercut by the inability to break free from the exploitative structures that constitute imperialism's legacy. Today, the dream of integration, in Puerto Rico and everywhere else in the Caribbean, must self-critically confront and redress these two limitations if it is to become an ideal truly shared by our archipelagos' majorities.

²⁰ Kamugisha's (2019) indictment of the Anglophone Caribbean's postcolonial elites in this respect is particularly illuminating.

A Tidal Theatre

The third instance of our shared affective archive to be addressed in this essay is quite different from CA and WIF, and, at the same time, it is a potent manifestation of the capacity advocated above to break free from the exploitative structures that constitute imperialism's legacy. The experimental, transdisciplinary and community-driven theatre collective Agua, sol y sereno (ASYS), was founded in 1993 in Puerto Rico by Pedro Adorno, Cathy Vigo, Miguel Zayas, Rudek Pérez, Julio Ramos, Kisha Burgos, Manuel Colón, Ronal Rosario, and Israel Lugo (Agua, sol y sereno, 2009: np.). The collective's name, as Adorno has recounted, comes from a popular saying in Puerto Rico: *eso aguanta agua, sol y sereno*. The saying translates literally as 'that resists water, sun and the night breeze,' which means that if something (in ASYS's case, the theatre collective itself) can resist all three natural elements, then it can resist anything (Adorno, 2019: personal interview). Having "learned by doing" (Geirola, 2013: 166) with theatre masters such as Los teatreros ambulantes (Rosa Luisa Márquez and Antonio Martorell), Teatro Pregones, Bread and Puppet Theatre, Peter Schumann, Augusto Boal, and several independent theatre collectives from various Latin American countries, such as Yuyachkani, Malayerba, and Candelaria, the collective's work is directly related to the bodily, affective archive of the Caribbean. The collective's "scenic proposals are tied to the development of the so-called 'dramaturgy of the body'" (Agua, sol y sereno, 2009: np.). Moreover, ASYS's originary foundational impulse is deeply marked by political struggles for liberation, as much as by a steadfast ecological and Caribbean consciousness, which Adorno has described as an "ethical and ecological translation and the act of perceiving the space of the homeland not from a specific place, but from a broader Caribbean" (Adorno, 2012: np.).

The theatre collective is further sustained by a foundational commitment with vulnerable communities and populations, to whom "usually, theatre in Puerto Rico does not reach" (Agua, sol y sereno, 2009: np.). This affective bond "has had a vital repercussion in the very development of the creative process in the country's arts" (Quintero, 2012: 31), resulting in a theatre that transcends "traditional theater spaces" (Irizarry, 2005: 42). ASYS's work has been extraordinarily diverse in terms of contents, forms and *mise-en-scène*: "costumed groups and parades, processions, passacaglias, dramatic and theatrical pieces" (Agua, sol y sereno, 2009: np.). They also regularly participate in popular festivals and celebrations – most notably, in the *Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián*, which take place every January and constitute the traditional end to Puerto Rican Christmas – with vibrant, rhythmic *comparsas* (costumed groups and parades) that include their signature *zancudos* (stilt walking) and *cabezudos* (big-headed puppets). ASYS also organises a continual program of community workshops and has been involved in multiple social justice struggles in the country.

In this section, I explore ASYS's piece *Marea alta, marea baja* ('High Tide, Low Tide') (henceforth referred to as *Marea*), which was staged in 2002 at the Escambrón beach in San Juan. This setting provided an extraordinary seating space – the littoral at sunset – for an audience of between 1,000 and 2,000 people every night, including hundreds of kids from public housing projects, in a massive theatre experience very rarely achieved in Puerto Rico.²¹ As is customary in ASYS's trajectory, the piece included dialogue in conjunction with dance, puppets, live music and improvisation, elements that at the time were characterised by the *El Vocero* journalist Jorge Rodríguez as "a masked language and... amazing props" (Rodríguez, 2002: 9).

²¹ Adorno shared this information with me in an interview conducted in ASYS's workshop on February 4, 2019.

Conceptualised by a group of ASYS's members and collaborators (Pedro Adorno, Cathy Vigo, Mareia Quintero, Santiago Benet, María Soledad Agosto y Natalia Oliveras), *Marea* boasted the work of forty actors ("acrobats of sand," as Adorno described them to me) and the inclusion of multiple members of the surrounding communities.²² Roberto Irizarry, the only other critic who, to my knowledge, has written about *Marea*, summarises the plot as follows:

Marea dramatizes a combat through several historical periods between local rebels called Neighbors and external presences called Greys. At the same time, the struggle is fed by the phantasmagorical return of historical and mythical figures, such as the Spanish conqueror Diego Salcedo, whose fame is the result of having been assassinated by indigenous Tainos in 1644, thus demonstrating the Spaniards' mortality, and Mackandal, the Haitian Revolution's hero fictionalized by Alejo Carpentier in The Kingdom of this World (1949). In the midst of the struggle, the private guard David Sanes, who was killed in real life during artillery practice by the USA Navy in the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, dies, as well as Encarnación, the archetypal representation of Dominican immigrants to Puerto Rico. In the end, both (Sanes and Encarnación) are initiated as ancestors in a funerary ritual led by Salcedo and Mackandal. (Irizarry, 2005: 49-50)



Figure 3 – Performance of *Marea* on the beach (2002, ASYS Archives).

About the decision to do theatre at the beach, Adorno has explained that "it was not staging, but rather the main character" (Geirola, 2013: 168), while Irizarry has written:

²² Unfortunately, there is no audiovisual documentation of the piece available at the moment, but from Mareia Quintero I was able to personally recuperate a version of the script, which was a collective creation. For this reason, some of the lines I quote here might have not been delivered exactly like so in the actual representations, but I am assured that the fundamental elements of the piece's verbal components are there.

the beach is the dividing line *between the interior and the exterior, between the local population, the invaders, and the rebels who land on the island in solidarity, between Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean, and between the soundness of land and the ambiguity of the Atlantic Ocean's water.* (2005: 50, emphases added).

However, I believe there is much more to this decision. Coinciding with Wilson Harris's claims about our shared mythic substratum, *Marea* deliberately intermingles historical events and figures with mythic elements that make it "cosmic," an adjective used by Adorno in our interview. Some significant examples of "the cosmic" in *Marea* are: the "sea turtle's egg, principle of life" encountered by the blind man at the piece's onset (Agua, sol y sereno, 2002: 1), the arrival of a turtle that has come to lay her cosmic eggs and die on the coast (an implicit reference to the Native American myth of the cosmic turtle), and Mackandal's transformative search for the *Tanze*, the "ancestral fish," as the Narrator recounts:

Since he escaped from the fire in neighboring Haiti, Mackandal submerged into the ocean. With grouper, shark, octopus and manta ray skin, Mackandal follows the trace of Tanze, the ancestral fish... His drum song crosses the Atlantic. Through the coral kingdoms where those, his brothers who did not reach the coast, live. Through the oil-stained kingdoms that whales have led him to discover. Mackandal owned the fire and, among dolphins, he breathed peace. But today he reaches the sand because he knows that in the sea's immensity his song becomes foam, while on the coast, his voice reached the kingdom of this world. (Agua, sol y sereno, 2002: 4)

For their part, the cosmic eggs:

were fish tanks with a floating candle inside. The first egg would come out and one of our children would come in running and take it. The kids collected the sacred turtle's eggs... Then, the actors with tress on the backs entered, which were gigantic sculptures... that were like three turtles with trees, and they would plant themselves. Then, the children would climb on top of the turtle with its eggs... and, as the night set in, they would be carrying these eggs with candles. The island's future... (Adorno, 2019: np.)

A poetic chant accompanied this moment, which Adorno shared with me in our interview:

Every person who dies, evaporates, and, since we are seventy percent water, if somewhere on earth the sky exists, it is in the sea. So, every time you see the salty sea, you are touching something of your grandparents, your great-grandparents, and your great-great-grandparents.

Can one find a more indelible, bodily manifestation of our "submarine unity" across time and space than this performative, ephemeral moment?



Figure 4 – *Marea* performers in the sea (2002, ASYS Archives).

Contrary to Irizarry's interpretation of the beach as a "dividing line," I argue that the beach and its constant tidal movements (*mareas*) are the piece's "main character," as Adorno pointed out. The beach and its tides contain the fundamental cosmic origins *and* the recurrent submarine, archipelagic connections – emerging from the ineffable violence of transatlantic slavery and ongoing patters of 'clandestine' migration, *as well as* from liberatory flight and volcanic seabed union – that the piece insists upon. This is exemplified well in the following instances: "The sea sweeps, baptizes, drowns, cleanses, carries and brings, returns" (Agua, sol y sereno, 2002, 'Script': 1), and:

With her eyes wide open and her submarine sense of smell, Encarnación has traversed day and night the foundations of that bridge of islands that is the Caribbean. Always awake. Watching them come and go... Trying to help some of her brothers... pointing the way of favorable currents. (Agua, sol y sereno, 2002: 7, emphasis added).

Marea potently reminds us that imperialism's legacy of Caribbean balkanisation has never been able to erase the connections that have always been – and remain – in the ocean's depths. This is also made clear in ASYS's description of *Marea* for the 2002 promotional materials:

Uniting the lands of the many coasts lapped by the Caribbean Sea, 'High Tide, Low Tide' tells stories of voyages and shipwrecks that seem to have been always there, hidden in the depths of the sea. This creative piece is part of our contact with that other world, its mythologies and its relation with our everyday lives... Internal experimentation and exploration have been the starting point to achieve a connection and integration with that which surrounds us. This piece represents an appropriation of a space so intimate to us as the sea; it constitutes a new look at that great mirror that we call the Caribbean Sea and an opportunity to see ourselves reflected on it and, consequently, to recognize ourselves as what we are, an island. Thus, this ode to the Caribbean Sea... that blood of the great body that we call the Antillean Archipelago. (Agua, sol y sereno, 2002: np., emphases added).

Significantly, when asked in 2009 with which piece in ASYS's trajectory he was most unsatisfied, Adorno chose *Marea*:

It is one of the most attended shows by our public... A visually stunning set... but I think that, in dramaturgical terms, it remained more like an auto sacramental where one did not know very well what was being proposed... It's a piece that I will return to, and I want to do more pieces like that throughout the Caribbean, more pieces in front of the sea... (Geirola, 2013: 169)

I take this to mean that the piece failed to communicate a more familiar dramaturgical composition, in the tradition of Aristotle's conflict-driven drama. But perhaps that is precisely *Marea*'s greatest strength: its capacity to encompass conflict within an overarching reflection on unity and connection. The history of the Caribbean and Puerto Rico has been so overdetermined by conflict and violence, that a theatre collective with a mission to "heal" (Geirola, 2013: 187) is a welcome and desirable accomplishment. Moreover, I am certain that Betances and his Confederation comrades, the WIF's archipelagic dreamers, and all those who have fought for the union of the Caribbean archipelagos and have nurtured their affective bonds through such struggle, are cosmically applauding, in the depths of the Caribbean Sea, this tidal theatre. They, as much as us, will be delighted to see *Marea* again throughout the Caribbean, as Adorno promises.

The three affective archive instances explored above – the *Confederación Antillana*, the West Indies Federation, and the theatrical piece *Marea alta, marea baja* – demonstrate, through a sustained period of time from the second half of the 19th Century through the beginning of the 21st Century, a shared passion for the region's connections and a common impulse to make those relations visible and greater. Through them, we have glimpsed the archipelagic future that this essay posits as a requisite for Puerto Rico's decolonial future. But, as a political project of emancipation, that future requires, in my view, a commitment to experiment with the most radical forms of participatory democracy, which did not characterise either CA or WIF.

As was amply demonstrated in the summer 2019 protests in Puerto Rico, theatre, for its part, as a collective, bodily practice and experimentation is one the most potent tools to keep us alert to our affective memory, as well as to mobilise it in our struggles for justice and decolonisation. But we know theatrical pieces – and art in general – even if deeply political, are not the same as political projects, nor should they be. For this, we must turn to participatory democracy, as well as to Puerto Rico's immediate context post-summer 2019, in order to offer some proposals of "real utopias," as Erik Olin Wright calls them: the participation of Puerto Rico in the regional struggle for reparations, the management of such funds within participatory budgeting models, and the development of regional, Caribbean cultural co-ops.

"Real Utopias" for a Decolonial, Archipelagic Puerto Rico

As perhaps the most well-known and enduring heir to WIF, CARICOM, founded in 1973, has sought to foster and sustain multiple forms of "functional integration" in the absence of full political integration. This is what Anthony Payne, in *The Political History of CARICOM* (2008) refers to as "regionalization" rather than "regionalism," or what Jessica Byron and Patsy Lewis describe as "intergovernmental cooperation" instead of "supranational integration" (2018: 60). For the purposes of this essay, I wish to emphasise the significance of a specific, and very recent, functional integration effort to counter one

of WIF's founding limitations: CARICOM's 2013 10-point call for reparatory justice. In her book, *Reparations for Slavery and the Slave Trade*, Ana Lucía Araujo summarises CARICOM's efforts as follows:

In 2013, CARICOM... decided that each country member would create a commission for reparations. Weeks later, CARICOM created a Reparations Commission chaired by Sir Hilary Beckles... On March 11, 2014, the caucus gathering all presidents of CARICOM member states adopted a plan consisting of ten demands of symbolic and financial reparations for slavery, the Atlantic slave trade, and the genocide of indigenous populations. Addressed to Denmark, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Sweden, CARICOM's ten-point reparations plan includes a formal apology... (and) "the reduction of domestic debt and cancellation of international debt." Most other measures of the plan are demands of symbolic reparations... (Araujo, 2017: 175-176).

From my standpoint as a committed intellectual and activist in Puerto Rico, I submit we must adhere to CARICOM's work on reparatory justice, which will necessarily mean circumventing the top-down approach that has characterised Puerto Rico's decolonial platforms in partisan terms. Instead, bringing the discussion of reparatory justice for colonialism and slavery to the public forum in Puerto Rico, and connecting it with the greater Caribbean, will require the mobilisation of our well-established practices of communitarian sovereignties, as well as possible collaborations between organisations and institutions.²³ Reparatory justice – both conceptually and politically – must take centre stage within the participatory democracy we are cultivating in the aftermath of the 2017 hurricane season, the summer 2019 rebellion, and the current seismic emergency.

The struggle for reparatory justice, moreover, should be levelled with an accompanying model of participatory budgeting, the first and most well-known of which was developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989 (Menser, 2018: 70-72, 77-79). When the struggle for reparations achieves some allocation of funds, even if small, a system should already be in place to democratically control, administer and invest such funds. As Menser explains, participatory budgeting strengthens participatory democracy in multiple ways: "enable(s) effective and democratic community control of the (budgeting) process;" "promote(s) capability development of individuals and groups;" "promote(s) effective and responsive

²³ For a discussion of the recent turn in Latin America to a reflection on communitarianism, see López (2001). In terms of non-partisan organisations currently working towards framing Puerto Rico's decolonial struggle within the language of reparations, Red Jubileo Sur/Américas, a network of collectives, organisations, and popular movements demanding annulments and reparations for Latin American debts, is salient. In 2019, the network launched a campaign to specifically demand reparations for Puerto Rico's manufactured indebtedness in tandem with Haiti's (see Jubileo Sur Américas, 2019). The Puerto Rican collectives *Comuna Antilla* and *Comuna Caribe* are part of the network and are actively working on the campaign (see El Calce, 2019). However, articulating a much ampler plan to demand reparations for colonialism, on the one hand, and slavery, on the other, as well as determining what the specificities should be concerning these two historical crimes in the case of Puerto Rico, remains an immense challenge to be met. With respect to institutional collaboration, consider the recent agreement – an extraordinary achievement – between the University of West Indies and the University of Glasgow: "The University of the West Indies has inked an agreement for reparations that is said to be the first such deal and one that gives an indication of a form compensation may take for centuries of unpaid labor stemming from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. At the end of last month UWI entered into an historic agreement with the University of Glasgow (UG) for £20 million (US\$ 24.2 million) that will go towards funding of research to promote development initiatives to be jointly undertaken with UWI over the next two decades." (Alleyne, 2019: n.)

governance to develop, choose, and implement quality *projects* that meet community needs;" "reduce(s) political and economic *inequality* in terms of the process and the projects;" and "strengthen(s) '*civil society*' broadly construed to support associations and community-based organizations" (ibid: 68). In some areas of San Juan, participatory budgeting has recently been on the collective agenda, but with limited implementation and doubtful endurance (Mora Pérez, 2015). We must extend the reach and continue to experiment with these forms of participatory democracy while fostering the communitarian sovereignties that have been mobilised more intensely in Puerto Rico since 2017.

Finally, cooperatives, which have an established tradition in Puerto Rico in the form of credit unions, must be defended and strengthened in the current context of the *Junta's* attempt to dismantle them in favour of commercial banking. A cooperative is defined by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common, economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise" (Menser, 2018: 147). ICA further identifies the following seven principles of worker co-ops: "voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training, and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community" (ibid: 147-48).

Because of their inherent capacity to empower the collective and nourish collaboration rather than competition, co-ops are crucial for the development of a radically democratic political project. Thus, co-ops should be multiplied in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean across all types of sovereignties. Particularly in the immediate aftermath of the extraordinarily creative and artistic struggle of Puerto Rico's 2019 summer, and in an effort to continue mobilising our shared affective archive through the arts, I propose the creation of local and regional, Caribbean cultural co-ops that would link artists as well as audiences both within the Puerto Rican archipelago, and between Puerto Rico and the Caribbean region.²⁴

Cultural co-ops, which would foster and strengthen Puerto Rico's and the Caribbean's cultural sovereignty, should be organised both in the sphere of production and consumption. Although production co-ops (or worker co-ops) are much more established and well known throughout the world (the largest example of which is the Mondragon Co-op in Basque Country, Spain), multiple models of consumption co-ops already exist with substantial success (see Menser, 2018: 201-225). Consumer co-ops, among which the Seikatsu co-op in Tokyo, Japan, stands out, are "owned by people who come together to collectively purchase some good or service" (ibid: 202); they "aren't about making money; they're about saving money" (ibid: 203). The combination of democratically run and popularly controlled production and consumption cultural co-ops would extend the reach of Puerto Rican and Caribbean art's capabilities to articulate democratic transformations across the region.

As we ponder Puerto Rico's recent achievements and continue to contribute with our ideas and our work towards the creation of a decolonial, Caribbeanist horizon for the archipelago, we should remember two lessons from the historical evidence: (1) that merely achieving the formal status of an "independent nation-state" does not ensure true political, economic, social, or cultural sovereignty for ex-colonies; and (2) that despite the

²⁴ Many of the excruciating difficulties that Annalee Davis (2019), writing as an artist and cultural agent from Barbados, documents for Caribbean art and artists, would be at least alleviated through the shared power and amplified reach of cultural co-ops.

generalised idea that achieving a nation-state status is a prerequisite for Caribbean integration, the absence of such status has not precluded the nurturing of an affective archive of Caribbean regionalism and, thus, should not impede the myriad ways in which regional collaboration can (and must) be deepened and expanded from Puerto Rico's standpoint. If, following Bonilla's argument concerning the non-sovereign Francophone Caribbean, Puerto Rico might currently be understood as experiencing a seismic political reorganisation, I believe our decolonial, archipelagic future should be predicated upon a radically democratic *archipelagismo* forged on the basis of multiple sovereignties and of its affective archive of Caribbean regionalism. Doing so might honour the enduring, pulsating Caribbeanist dream that we have traced since the 19th Century, with a 21st Century language and praxis. Let our wounded but, oh, so alive, bodies in the Boquerón coast become Agua, sol y sereno's "acrobats of sand."

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