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Fabric, Skin, Color: Picturing Antilles' Markets as an Inventory of Human Diversity*

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Tela, piel, color: retratando los mercados de las Antillas
como un inventario de la diversidad humana

*Tecido, pele, cor: retratando os mercados das Antilhas
como um inventário da diversidade humana*

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Artículo de investigación

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ABSTRACT

The confrontation of West Indies' variegated and mixed-race populations with painting's material (canvas and pigments) and the human classificatory systems proper to the era of *Encyclopédie*'s illustrations prove to be, regarding race and racialization process, a notably interesting research field. Yet, until today, the idea of early modern Caribbean painting has not been raised as such; this is therefore what I propose to study in this article. Indeed, Caribbean painting by means of figurative inventiveness and because of its grounding in the geographical, political, and historical specificity of racial and cultural archipelago, created an original pictorial inventory of human diversity.

Keywords: (Author) Caribbean painting, human diversity, colonial markets; (Thesaurus) race, culture, art history.

RESUMEN

La confrontación de las poblaciones heterogéneas y de razas mixtas en las Indias Occidentales con el material pictórico (lienzo y pigmentos) y los sistemas de clasificación humana propios de la era de las ilustraciones de la Enciclopedia, demuestra ser un campo de investigación notablemente interesante en términos de raza y el proceso de racialización. Sin embargo, hasta hoy, la idea de pintura caribeña de la modernidad temprana no se ha presentado como tal, y esto es precisamente lo que propongo estudiar en este artículo. En efecto, la pintura caribeña, a partir de la creatividad figurativa y sus raíces en la especificidad geográfica, política e histórica de este archipiélago racial y cultural, creó un inventario pictórico original de la diversidad humana.

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Palabras clave: (Autor) pintura caribeña, diversidad humana, mercados coloniales; (Thesaurus) raza, cultura, historia del arte.

RESUMO

O enfrentamento das populações heterogêneas e de raças mistas nas Índias Ocidentais com o material pictórico (lenço e pigmentos) e os sistemas de classificação humana próprios da era das ilustrações da Enciclopédia demonstra ser um campo de pesquisa notavelmente relevante em termos de raças e do processo de racialização. Contudo, até hoje, a ideia de pintura caribenha do início da modernidade não foi apresentada como tal, e isso é precisamente o que proponho estudar neste artigo. De fato, a pintura caribenha, a partir da criatividade figurativa e de suas raízes na especificidade geográfica, política e histórica desse arquipélago racial e cultural, criou um inventário pictórico original da diversidade humana.

Palavras-chave: (Autor) pintura caribenha, diversidade humana, mercados coloniais; (Thesaurus) raça, cultura, história da arte.

Introduction

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The visual arts participated prominently in the Ancien Régime race debates because the art of seeing and of figuring (that also means the art of identifying and making visually identifiable) were instrumental in the understanding, fixing, classifying and ranking of human beings according to their skin color. Consequently, tools at the crossroads of art history, science history and political history appear useful and even indispensable in the historical investigations regarding race. Likewise, the basic connection between color issues in the eighteenth-century art making and art theory domains,¹ on the one side, and the obsessive search of Philosophers and Natural scientists regarding the origin of Africans' black color,² on the other, demands thorough studies of artistic and visual production of knowledge that used to make intelligible human diversity. From this perspective, the confrontation of West Indies' variegated and mixed-race populations with painting's material (canvas and pigments) and human classificatory systems proper to the era of *Encyclopédie*'s illustrations proves to be, regarding race and racialization process, a notably interesting research field.

Yet, until today, the idea of early modern Caribbean painting has not been raised as such; and this is therefore what I propose to study in this article. Indeed, Caribbean painting by means of figurative inventiveness and because of its grounding in the geographical, political, and historical specificity of racial and cultural archipelago, created an original pictorial inventory of human diversity.

Recent scholarship on Agostino Brunias, an Italian-English painter who emigrated to Dominica, and other studies (one each) on the Martinique painter Le Masurier and the Guadalupean Savart constitute the still timid beginnings of research devoted to some of the artistic personalities who worked on creating an *in situ* and/or an imaginary picture of the Caribbean

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1. Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *La couleur éloquente. Rhétorique et peinture à l'âge classique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989).
 2. For British context: Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race. Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); for German and English context: David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo. Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); for French context: Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

in the second half of the eighteenth century.³ None of these studies, however, is concerned with the wider question of the existence of a more comprehensive notion of Caribbean painting as a supranational entity.

Examining and describing this perspective would prove all the more important for the last third of the eighteenth century since it would alter the traditional interpretation which postulated that European nation states and their respective colonies in the Americas encompassed homogeneous political communities, unified not only culturally and linguistically, but also through artistic traditions specific to European national schools of painting: French, Italian, Spanish, British...⁴

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It seems to me that the few research forays undertaken to date have grown out of a conceptual framework related to the historiographical tradition of which the first example is Giorgio Vasari's regionalist reading in the sixteenth century.⁵ As a method, in his *Vite...* he chose the narrative of artists' biographies as modules distributed among Italian regions as Tuscany or the Veneto. His illustrious successor in the genealogy of the discipline Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), the German Art historian active in Italy in the eighteenth-century, who is considered the founder of our modern discipline and of the history of ancient art, chose on his side to ground his process of historicizing the wealth of antiquity, revealed by eighteenth-century archaeological excavations, in a history of forms (rather than Vasarian history of artists). This history of forms was

3. See Beth Fowkes Tobin, "Taxonomy and Agency in Brunias's West Indian Paintings", *Picturing Imperial Power. Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) 138-173. Kay Dian Kriz, "Marketing Mulatresses in Agostino Brunias's West Indian Scenes", *Slavery, Sugar and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies 1700-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 37-69. For Savart, see Séverine Laborie, "Joseph Savart, 'maître-peintre' à Basse-Terre", *La revue du Louvre et des musées de France* 1 (2012): 70-80; and regarding Lemasurier, see Jacques Foucart, "Note sur le peintre Le Masurier. A propos d'un récent achat du Musée d'Aquitaine", *La Tribune de l'art*. Web. Jan. 6, 2013. Available at: <http://www.latribunedelart.com/note-sur-le-peintre-le-masurier-a-propos-d-un-recent-achat-du-musee-d-aquitaine>.
4. The bibliographical references (cited above, note 3) do not address the question of Caribbean painting as a whole and still consider the national categories: "Eighteenth-Century British Painting" and "British West Indies 1700-1840" or individual artists: Joseph Savart, 'maître-peintre' à Basse-Terre and Le Masurier.
5. Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (Firenze: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550-1568).

cyclically conceptualized and modeled on the course of a life, with periods of genesis (Primitivism), maturity (Classicism) and decline (Mannerism).⁶

It nonetheless appears that these approaches (though fundamental for the discipline, because they provided it with modes of thinking able to be transformed in institutional and cultural structures in the nineteenth century) did not leave room for a conceptualization of artistic corpuses resistant to being enclosed within a national school.⁷

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Art History Reframed by West Indies

Therefore, I would like to raise the issue of the seminal framework of art history preventing the conceptualization of Caribbean painting as a challenge for renewing the means and the ends of this discipline in the scientific debate and research regarding race and process of racialization of the early modern era. For this purpose, I will keep in mind that these multicultural Caribbean places were not ones of peaceful harmony despite the fact that West Indies' imagery (from the eighteenth century on, as we shall see) concealed the brutality that accompanied this composite but above all fragmented society. The colonial history of Caribbean islands, their specific geography lying off Central America, made them desired targets and objects of territorial partition by French, Spanish, Dutch and British conquering empires.

In this new perspective of a Caribbean production, the work of the Italian and British painter Agostino Brunias (1730-1796) should figure prominently, primarily on an aesthetic level, but also because of his work's complex connections, the Atlantic networks of his printed reproductions.⁸

6. Johann-Joachim Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764). Both books were European bestsellers and translated at least into English and French in the same years. See Élisabeth Décultot, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Enquête sur la genèse de l'histoire de l'art* (Paris: PUF, 2000).

7. One can think to museum's displays, which are founded on geographic subdivisions of their collections, a tradition invented in the middle of the eighteenth century that remains preponderant from that time on until today.

8. One does not know much of Caribbean artistic milieu except that a couple of eighteenth-century artists who worked *in-situ* are now gradually emerging in the art history field. They are subject of monographic researchs: Brunias, Le Masurier, Savart. A couple of others can be identified as marine image makers: Nicolas Ozanne (1728-1811) and family, or as military painters: Auguste-Louis Rossel de Cergy (1736-1804) for example. Regarding proliferation of Caribbean imagery, I

Born in Rome in the 1730s and trained at the *Accademia di San Luca* in the same city, Brunias, portrayed at the time by the French painter Joseph-Marie Vien in one of his masquerade costumes (1748),⁹ met the Scottish architect Robert Adam during the latter's Grand Tour,¹⁰ and in 1756 began working for him as a draftsman of ancient ruins intended as a compilation and a record for the architect on his return to Britain.¹¹ Brunias followed Adam to London, settled there and worked in Adam's circle on the decoration of English mansions and castles. In this context Brunias met Sir William Young (1725-1788), a politician and member of Royal Society in the year 1748, when Zoffany portrayed him, and soon to be appointed as Governor of Dominica, an island ceded by France to Britain (together with St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tobago, and St Lucia) in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, under the Treaty of Paris that was signed in 1763.¹² Beginning in 1770, Brunias worked as the British governor's painter, and continued almost without interruption until his death in 1796. He returned for only two years to London (around 1778-1780), where he exhibited a couple of paintings: genre scenes typical of contemporary British art but taking colonial life as their subject, multiracial group portraits, or the picturesque and colorful scenes of markets.¹³

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will focus on French engravers who realized their prints after Brunias: Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, Ruotte and Ponce.

9. In 1748, Joseph-Marie Vien, then French Academy in Rome's director, invited students and friends to dress up in a *Turquerie* mode for the carnival. Vien made thirty drawings after the models (today kept at the Musée du Petit Palais, Paris) and among them is the portrait of Brunias, published in a prints collection by Vien entitled: *Caravane du Sultan à la Mecque: mascarade turque faite à Rome par Messieurs les pensionnaires de l'Académie de France et leurs amis au carnaval de l'année 1748* (Paris: Basan et Poignant, 1748) planche 22.
10. The Grand Tour was the long and initiatory trip British aristocrats made on the continent and mostly in Italy to finishing their education before entering society.
11. One must consider the comparison between visual collect in archaeology and anthropology in the early modern world. See Alain Schnapp, "Les Antiquaires face à l'Amérique: traduction et adaptation du passé", *Translating antiquity: Antikenbilder im europäischen Kulturtransfer*, dirs. Stefan Rebenich, Barbara von Reibnitz, and Thomas Späth (Basel: Schwabe, 2010) 153-179.
12. Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Family of Sir William Young, 1767-1770*, oil on canvas. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
13. See John Fleming, *Robert Adam and His Circle in Edinburgh & Rome* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1962) 360. We are awaiting the publication of the dissertation written by Mia L. Bagneris, "Coloring the Caribbean: Agostino Brunias and the Painting of

Figure 1. A Fabric Market.

Source: Agostino Brunias, *Linen day, Roseau, Dominica*, ca. 1780, oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

A first version (complex and refined) of a fabric market is now at the Yale Center for British Art (see figure 1). Two others in the same institution's collection and a fourth, less elaborate but equally interesting and very close to the previous ones, is preserved and exhibited at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid.¹⁴ Even without going into a highly detailed formal analysis of each of these images, it is clear that they are decorative paintings that create a glowing image of life in the islands, and are destined for the

Race in the British West Indies, 1765-1800", PhD dissertation (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2009), especially as regards Brunias' clients and eventually interior displays of his paintings.

14. Agostino Brunias, *A Linen Market with a Linen-stall and Vegetable Seller in the West Indies*, ca. 1780, oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; *Linen Market, Roseau, Dominica*, ca. 1780, oil in canvas. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; *The Linen Market, Santo Domingo*, ca. 1775-1780, oil on canvas, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid.

salons of colonial plantation owners and eventually addressed to potential European customers (metropolitan extensions of Creole families, for example). In her book, Kay Dian Kriz convincingly argues that the enchanted image of colonial islands had to give the European viewer envy for settling in the far and new Caribbean imperial possession.¹⁵ However, these pictures offer a saccharine and harmonious image of essentially cruel realities of colonial life: of trafficking, which consisted in tearing apart and displacing dehumanized African laborers, and in their brutal and ruthless exploitation within the plantation system based on slavery.

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The range and variety of skin colors, clothing styles, ages, agricultural products and textiles, head covers, and postures of female and male bodies, offer a series of graceful, mischievous and picturesque scenes, which are precisely the honey that provide delight in painting.¹⁶ The eye endlessly scans this static parade and finds its pleasure in the to-and-fro of aesthetic experience; from the overall view of a popular scene to the focusing and selection of certain details executed with great care by the artist. The sighting of the multicolored embroidery on the hem of the black woman bent double in the right foreground (the only refined embroidery in this abundance of textiles) is a remarkable example of the optical mobility and agility that the painting demands from the viewer.

The pictorial success of these seemingly innocuous works, which, in reality, condense in the extreme the world of material culture allowing for the economic functioning and justification of the colonies, lies in the interaction of visual clues. The Indian Madras pattern is repeated in fabrics, in handkerchiefs, in clothing and in scarves, either striped or checked. The traditional white Creole dresses and lace outfits work as a counterpart to the colorful parasols while the skin tones of the porters correspond objectively to different social statuses within this motley population. Nudity is racialized as well, although in an unstable fashion since both the Caribe 'Indians' and the Africans display it, some partially, others entirely.¹⁷ However, if one follows *The Black Code*, living almost naked was among others a violation of codes

15. Kriz 42-46.

16. See Emma Spary, "Scientific Symmetries", *History of Science* 62 (2004): 1-46.

17. See Robert S. Duplessis, "What Did Slaves Wear? Textiles Regime in the French Caribbean", *Monde(s)* 1 (2012): 175-191; and Danielle C. Skeeahan, "Caribbean Women, Creole Fashioning, and the Fabric of Black Atlantic Writing", *The Eighteenth Century* 56.1 (2015): 105-123.

governing social and civilized relations between the islands' inhabitants, as required by the colonial powers, at least as far as the French were concerned.¹⁸

Color Print and Contamination of Forms

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Jewelry such as necklaces, earrings or elaborate headdresses adorns the bodies of Nannies, Pretty Women or Warriors shown in staged poses. These sketches, which can be found elsewhere in work by Brunias, also flourished in fragmented form in illustrated collections of picturesque travels such as *Encyclopédie des voyages, contenant l'abrégé historique des mœurs, usages, habitudes domestiques, religions, fêtes...* (see figure 2), as well as graphic and coloristic explorations in stipple engraving (*gravure au pointillé*).¹⁹ This new technical process allowed for a creation of a variety of hues for shadow, light, and colors not previously found in engravings. Furthermore, the diversity of the colonial population, just like the mix of fabrics on which the islanders set such store, was a visual boon for the followers of the illusionistic achievements of these new printing methods. Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, Ponce and Ruotte were the first not only to seize the opportunity offered by the visual and aesthetic grammar of Brunias' work but also to recognize and exploit new technical possibilities of dissemination of such intensely colorist work by stipple engraving (see figure 3).²⁰

18. See Duplessis 176, and *Le Code Noir ou Édit du Roy servant de règlement pour le gouvernement et l'administration de justice de la police des îles françaises de l'Amérique, et pour la discipline et le commerce des Nègres et Esclaves dans ledit pays*, article xxv: "Seront tenus les Maîtres de fournir à chaque esclave pour chaque année, deux habits de toile". See François Niort, *Le Code Noir* (Paris: Dalloz, 2012). Even if this is a French context, one can take this normative law text as an index of similar customs in other colonial islands.

19. For a contextualization of stipple engravings' European circulation in the last decades of the eighteenth century, see Philippe Bordes, "Jacques-Louis David's Anglophilia on the Eve of the French Revolution", *The Burlington Magazine* 134.1073 (1992): 482-490; and earlier Arthur Mayger Hind, *Bartolozzi and Other Stipple Engravers Working in England at the End of the Eighteenth century* (London: W. Heinemann, 1912).

20. I think of Nicolas Ponce's engravings for Moreau de Saint-Méry in Antoine Phelipeau, Nicolas Ponce, and Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Recueil de vues des lieux principaux de la colonie française de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: s.e., 1795) planches 25 et 26: "Colonie de saint-Domingue, 6 sujets qui montrent des Costumes nègres"; N.º 26 (high). "Blanchisseuses; Affranchis des colonies".

Figure 2. *Femme mulâtre de la Martinique.*



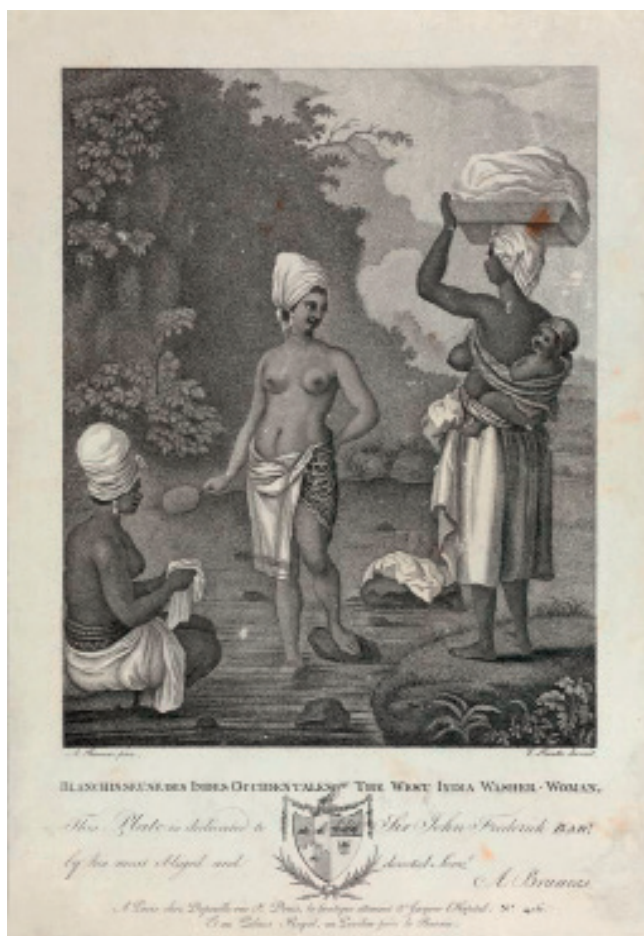
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Source: Jacques Grasset de Saint-Sauver, "Femme mulâtre de la Martinique accompagnée de son esclave", *Encyclopédie des Voyages* (Paris, 1796), 1805, print. Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux.

N.º 25 (low). "Costumes des affranchies et des esclaves des Colonies; Costumes des affranchies et des esclaves des Colonies". No. 26 (low). "Danse de Nègres; Nègres jouant au baton".

Figure 3. The West India Washer-Woman.

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Source: Louis Ruotte d'après Agostino Brunias, *Blanchisseuse des Indes Occidentales*, ca. 1770. Musée du Nouveau Monde, La Rochelle.

Yet this was not the first time that the history of techniques engaged with natural history and especially with the questions related to skin color as dominant marker.²¹ The invention of a printmaking process suddenly capable of incorporating color was immediately associated with the exploration of

21. Different techniques were in use to represent black skin before the invention of color print by means of dying paper: density of ink particles or crosshatching. See Elmer Kolfin, "Black Models in Dutch Art between 1580 and 1800", *Black Is*

anatomy and not incidentally with African anatomy (which means black skin color) as exemplified by Albinus and Ladmiral in 1737.²² The engraver used a recent technical discovery by the German artist Leblon and his French pupil and successor Gautier d'Agoty, himself an author of a colored print with an African figure (*Zamore*, Countess du Barry's page) regarding the possibility to integrate color to printmaking, as a tool to digging the questions of skin color through the visual medium.²³ His first achievement was an amazing collection of anatomical plates entitled: *Myologie complete en couleur et grandeur naturelle, composée de l'Essai et de la Suite de l'Essai d'anatomie en tableaux imprimés* (Paris, 1746, twenty plates) but a couple of years later he confessed as well that "The Indian fabrics manufacturers, so common in Marseille (where he was born in 1716) that one can see everywhere workers in the streets, attracted my eyes and from this specific moment I had the idea to try printing my paintings in the same taste".²⁴ As a matter of fact, textiles' growing and diversifying presence tended to fuel the desire of a Mediterranean harbor society for colorful and exotic imaginary worlds. Consequently, one can understand the invention of color printing as another kind of response to the changing taste of the French society. It

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Beautiful: From Rubens to Dumas, eds. Esther Schreuder and Elmer Kolfin (Zwolle: Waanders Press, 2008) 70-88.

22. See Mechthild Fend's comprehensive article "Flesh-Tones, Skin Color and the Eighteenth-Century Color Print", *Aesthetics of the Flesh*, dirs. Felix Ensslin and Charlotte Klink (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014) 211-232; and before that the first exhibition of the print in Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boetsch, Nanette Jacomijn Snoep, and Lilian Thuram, *Exhibitions. L'invention du Sauvage* (Paris: musée du Quai Branly, 2011), and the works of Rafael Mandressi. Rafael Mandressi, "Race and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth-Century", Paris, EHESS, jan. 30, 2014. Lecture in Jean-Frédéric Schaub and Silvia Sebastiani's seminar *La race à l'âge moderne: expériences, classifications, idéologies d'exclusion*.
23. For these issues of color at the crossroads of history of techniques and intellectual history, see the e-book and website of Sarah Lowengard: *The Creation of Color in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Gutenberg: Columbia University Press, 2006). Available at: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/lowengard/index.html>, and especially regarding Gautier d'Agoty, Leblon and colored engraving: http://www.gutenberg-e.org/lowengard/C_Chap12.html.
24. Here is the original version I translated: "Les Manufactures d'Indiennes, si communes à Marseilles [où il était né en 1716] qu'on y voit partout les ouvriers travailler dans les rues, attirerent mes regards, & c'est là d'où me vint l'idée de tenter d'imprimer les tableaux dans le même gout". Jacques-Fabien Gautier d'Agoty, *Lettres concernant le nouvel art de graver et d'imprimer les tableau* (Paris: J. Bullot, 1749) 7.

was indeed subject to the impact of an increasingly colored environment and demanded a more adapted print culture, more joyful, more picturesque. In a way, Gautier d'Agoty succeeded in satisfying this specific desire by inventing the color print.

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Moreover, all the garnishing objects described below, so peculiarly painted, helped to build and broadly disseminate a picturesque imagery of colonial life that was based on “convenance”, to use the term from contemporary art theory that was precisely concerned with the idea of the authenticity of decor and costume, that is to say, the choice and representation of apparently random consumer products, both agricultural and manufactured.²⁵ These attributes formed ensembles appropriate for outdoor genre scenes, similar to English *Conversation Pieces* that revolve around a curving line in order to avoid the frontal dimension of painting, and even resembled, from this point of view only, the “embarrassment of riches” in the Flemish universe.²⁶ The artists probably found precedents in Italian art too since several examples of market scenes were painted during the eighteenth century such as those by Borgamano, or the many English interpretations of Italian market scenes, particularly found in the immediate circle of Brunias’s main patron: Zoffany (the portraitist of the Young family) who also painted a *Florentine Fruit Stall*.²⁷

Brunias’ intelligence lies in the fact that he knew how to choose a recurring event of colonial life: the fabric market, and was able to present it through his paintings as an artistic synthesis of picturesque and documentary elements pertaining to knowledge of colonial life and enjoyment in its pictorial imagining. Brunias was the first, I believe, to address this colonial reality *in-situ* and as a painter. Others before him imagined it as artists but had never visited the Caribbean as Moreau the Younger and Delaunay who illustrated *L'Histoire des deux Indes*, in 1780, with a print entitled *Hurricane in the Caribbean* (figure 4).²⁸ On the other hand, draftsmen who were

25. Michèle-Caroline Heck, “L’attitude et la convenance”, *Théorie et pratique de la peinture. Sandrart et la Teutsche Akademie* (Paris: MSH éditions, 2006) 209-219; or Christian Michel, *Le célèbre Watteau* (Genève: Droz, 2008) 85.

26. Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Incorporated, 1987).

27. Johan Joseph Zoffany, *A Florentine Fruit Stall*, ca. 1777, oil on canvas. Tate, London.

28. Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *L'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* [1770] (Amsterdam: s.e., 1780).

commissioned on site to create a graphic collection had not been educated as thoroughly in the fine arts as Brunias, who had left London at the height of his career.²⁹

Figure 4. Hurricane in the Caribbean.



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Source: Jean-Michel Moreau le jeune, *Ouragan aux Antilles pour l'Histoire des deux Indes* de l'abbé Raynal, ca. 1780, print. Paris.

Brunias's aesthetic and ethnographic timeliness guaranteed his success both in the colonies and in Europe, with an amateur clientele he had before leaving Europe (Sir William Young and Robert Adam's circle), as well as with

29. I am thinking for example of the naval officer and French painter Auguste-Louis de Rossel de Cercy (1736-1804).

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mediators who followed a commercial logic.³⁰ Many engravers used his work to create a grammar and visual schemata through which an image of the affable Caribbean could be disseminated, works that established the enchanting stereotype of Creole life. Indeed, the shortcuts used by engravers who sampled his production (as he did himself) promoted this image of glowing, nonchalant, and abundant islands, to the detriment of a colonial realism that revealed the exploitation of land and of working bodies through the plantation system. Yet since the beginning of the eighteenth century, this other imagery also existed (see for example Sébastien Leclerc's *Sucrerie* and *Indigoterie*),³¹ but as it was less enchanting, unredeemed by the aesthetic codes of European art academies and relegated to the status of scientific illustration; it did not have the success of the iconography that mixed the familiar and the exotic, the authorized aesthetic code and the picturesque gap.³²

Global, Atlantic and Local Visual Cultures

We must also understand that Brunias was probably one of the first to establish a proper artistic or, more precisely, a decorative career on the other side of the Atlantic, and that his encounter both with the New World and its unprecedented multi-ethnicity (given the small land mass of the islands) figuratively increased the feeling of proximity, of contact between populations. This sensation, in my opinion, he conveyed in painting through the attention he paid to the composition of his market scenes. And, precisely, Brunias' work stands out in this initial and specific artistic intervention. His scenes of fabric markets represent the most complete examples of the specificity of this colonial archipelago in terms of its population because they demonstrate his stylistic ability to adapt European artistic codes to

30. Fleming.

31. Sébastien Leclerc's plates for *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français* (Paris: s.e., 1667-1671) by Jean-Baptiste Dutertre.

32. Brunias's paintings representing fabric markets were exhibited in London in the late seventies in order to make his picturesque work known to prospective English clients. Especially since his return to Europe after his first stay of 6 or 7 years in the Caribbean, Brunias not only worked for this past clientele, in the wake of Robert Adam, but in addition, he worked on decorative paintings and murals (see Victoria & Albert Museum) in the style of Joseph-Marie Vien (not surprising given their old friendship), and then once back in the Indies, he worked for Creole and white plantation owners on Dominica and St. Vincent, such as Sir Patrick Blake, Richard Payne and Charles O'Hara. See: Peter C. Sutton, "Agostino Brunias", *Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza*. Web. Available at: http://www.museothyssen.org/en/thyssen/ficha_artista/105.

this American location. Looking at these paintings, one could almost evoke a “climatic” appropriation of European history painting, digested in this instance through the specificity of the insular place of its production and of the Atlantic slave trade that generated these human beings in many colors.

The Dominican Brunias (whose opus was the largest and stylistically most accomplished) had at least two imitators, the Guadeloupean Savart (a pastel artist) and the Martinican Le Masurier, who worked for the island's French Governor, Choiseul-Meuse (1735-1815). He produced a family portrait for the governor, as well as two genre paintings based on social distinctions related to skin pigmentation, decorative panels presumably for the governor's colonial residence (Paris, ministère des Outre-Mer). He also painted, in a context that unfortunately is unknown to us, a *Market scene* (figure 5) now held by the Musée Calvet in Avignon.³³

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Figure 5. Market Scene.



Source: Le Masurier, *Marché à Saint Pierre de la Martinique*, oil on canvas, 1775. Musée Calvet, Avignon.

These artists all used textiles as an extension of human diversity based on skin color, and also showed to what extent colonial creative inventive-

33. Laborie; Foucart.

ness relied on the choice and the glimmer of apparel. Textiles had clearly emerged as a privileged medium for the expression of Caribbean people's relationship to ornamentation and beauty, while they simultaneously held a distinctive social function and were also directly implicated in the triangular commerce of slave trafficking. *Indiennes de Traite* (literally: *Indian Slave Trade Fabrics*) as much as *Guinées* (*Guineas*) were then currency on the market for African slaves.³⁴ African merchants did often prize cotton fabrics from East India in their commercial exchange with slave traders.³⁵

In the paintings, the preeminence of costume (clothing and headgear) thus emerges to the detriment of objects (tools, instruments, weapons...) or monuments, the last of which is barely represented in the known iconography of the Caribbean. The power of the insular and American colonial imagination in visual terms, even in the case of black and white prints, was entirely focused on the sophistication of ornamental uses (the superb hats of the freedmen and women which probably inspired the Parisian *Merveilleuses* and *Incroyables* like the Creole Joséphine Bonaparte) and the practical uses of fabrics (rolled up scarves placed on the head for carrying a basket or as a baby carrier for the back). The paintings themselves echoed the complex classification of the local population, the divisions and subdivisions of the human species, which were defined in practice by body colors and clothing and supported in theory by Moreau de Saint-Méry among others.³⁶

Joseph Savart's pastel (figure 6), though not the most ambitious in the existing Caribbean corpus, offers the considerable interest of directly translating the correspondence, or even the continuum, of skin color and fabric color in the colonial pictorial imagination. Four women with different skin tones, carefully dressed and coiffured in varied ways, appear half-length in

34. The *Guinée* is a textile piece that gilts a unit valor in the African slavery commerce in Africa (often blue).

35. Cécile Cousquer, *Nantes, une capitale française des indiennes au XVIII^e siècle* (Nantes: Coiffard, 2002) 153; and see Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, "L'Afrique noire, acteur à part entière de la traite", *Les traites négrières. Essai d'histoire globale* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004) 74-90.

36. Moreau de Saint-Méry counted 128 skin colors in his *Lois et constitutions des colonies françaises de l'Amérique sous le Vent* (Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1784-1790). For a comprehensive understanding of contemporary skin colors theories, see Florence Gauthier, *L'aristocratie de l'épiderme. Le combat de la Société des Citoyens de Couleur (1789-1791)* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2007) 21-62, and especially chapter 4: "Moreau de Saint-Méry théoricien du néo-blanc": 101-108.

a window recess. The window belongs to the Nordic pictorial tradition and signifies a nonexistent place or a picturesque place par excellence, which is neither situated nor historicized and which serves as an iconic motif to frame the gaze. With a total lack of plausibility from the point of view of gravity, a folded and tied load of laundry of carefully ironed cloths in a large rectangle sits in the bottom corner of the frame. This motif likely reveals the profession of the young women (probably laundresses); however, it also refers to a sampling of the population, as their complexions vary subtly from one to another and above all, in an eloquent shorthand in relation to other comparable paintings, the fabrics act like mirrors and visible echoes of local flesh tones.³⁷

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Figure 6. *Femmes créoles*.



Source: Joseph Savart, *Femmes créoles*, 1770, pastel. Musée Victor Schœlcher, Pointe-à-Pitre.

37. We have many images of laundresses in the colonial iconography and it is interesting to note that in French, the laundresses are called the *blanchisseuses* (whiteners).

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At the end of the eighteenth century, colorist sophistication superficially blinded the viewers of Martinique's market scenes to the realities of colonial life, which by no means consisted of an abundance of foods, variety of fabrics, easy-going life and natural order of peaceful coexistence between the different communities. On the contrary, when examined closely, the paintings, even more than other visual media, not only exposed the so-called "aristocracy of the skin"³⁸ but also revealed a refined and more complete classification of individuals in which the phenotype manifested itself through skin color as much as through a chromatic variety of fabrics, a range of patterns and clothing types, which, taken together, allow the viewer to decode the social identity of each person in this slavery world.

Thus a young black boy (heir to Largillière's page)³⁹ with a vague brown loincloth around his waist, placed in the center of the painting and accompanied by a monkey, a white dove on his left shoulder, and a few parrots, most likely represents the poorest layer of Martinique's society in the 1770s. In contrast, the white settler with powdered hair (like all the other members of his class in this painting) is interacting with the black child, either pushing him away with a gesture or inviting him to trade one of his birds for a few coins.⁴⁰ All of these figures can be accurately situated according to their social group. Another example is the mulatto woman sitting on a bench and wearing a white blouse, a blue striped skirt, a shawl and a head scarf of the same red and pink fabric iconographically associated with a freedwoman of color, according to the engraved and captioned interpretations by Agostino Brunias.⁴¹ The woman herself is interacting or playing (it is unclear in the picture) with another colonial inhabitant.

38. See Gauthier.

39. The black page imagery is well known and singularized by the fact that these servants, more often men than women, used to be very young and often were represented in the intimacy of their masters or mistresses as in Gautier d'Agoty engraved portrait of la duchesse du Barry à sa toilette with Zamore.

40. Angela Rosenthal, "Visceral Culture: Blushing and the Legibility of Whiteness in 18th Century British Portraiture", *Art History* 27.4 (2004): 563-592; and Melissa Hyde, *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and His Critics* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006).

41. The captions of Nicola Ponce's etchings are short but eloquent sentences; one can find them in the bottom of the folds.

Textiles, Skin's Extension and Social Code

We are thus a long way from Arcadian innocence. The social code seems extremely precise to anyone who looks at the picture carefully; just as the economic value of these colonial territories (given the natural resources of the islands) can be discovered easily by whoever takes the time to examine every corner of the Saint-Pierre market painted by Le Masurier.⁴²

There might be a Caribbean specificity to this textile painting that resembles the ambition of *Casta* painting as an artistic medium for exporting and explaining the New Worlds and at the same time remains outside the genre painting by resisting obviously the dominant European diagrammatic culture, as defined by John Bender and Michael Marrinan.⁴³ Indeed, we should consider the graphic and intellectual qualities of the knowledge specific to the Enlightenment, in other words, how a schematic system that is effective thanks to its abstraction of diversity and its patterned reconstitution (a system set up in the furrow of *Encyclopédie*'s illustrations) is also made apparent in comparable ways by *Casta* paintings. And, in parallel, we should try to show how the imagery of a fabric market, conceived with a decorative aim and destined primarily for Caribbean patrons (unlike many of the *Casta* paintings), should be seen as a project of a dynamic, evolving representation of the West Indies.⁴⁴

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If there is indeed a pictorial genealogy of Caribbean market scene paintings, we can see to what extent its origins should primarily be sought in orientalist painting from the early eighteenth century. As early as 1700 the multi-community model of Istanbul had produced a proliferation of illustrated books, with collections useful for visual anthropology and publications in the form of costume collections (Tounefort, Vanmour). These graphic works could have inspired later pictorial representations of people living in the Caribbean archipelago; on the level of fantasy, precisely because the inventory of populations is presented through their initial identification by their dress, their clothing.

42. Marie-Pierre Foissy-Aufrère, "voir sa notice du Marché à Saint-Pierre de la Martinique", *Marcel Puech, une vie, un don / chefs-d'œuvre de la donation Marcel Puech au musée Calvet* (Avignon: Fondation du Muséum Calvet, 1975) 74-75.

43. John Bender and Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

44. See Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting, Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Figure 7. *Portrait de mademoiselle de Clermont en Sultane.*



Source: Jean-Marc Nattier, *Mademoiselle de Clermont en Sultane*, 1733, oil on canvas. Wallace Collection, London.

In this perspective, Jean-Marc Nattier would have brilliantly initiated this intermingling of skin color with that of clothing in his 1733 painted portrait of an aristocrat (figure 7). These bright colors were used to evoke the fantasy of the harem, a harem dominated by the white body of the sultana: Mademoiselle de Clermont. Seventeenth-century academic prescriptions recommended costume collections as a source for painters in their search for historical accuracy and were instrumental in this particular orientalizing portrait. Yet if Poussin, as an academic model painter, was evocative in his

use of the costume (a word which in French as well contains the idea both of custom and costume), it is clear that collections such as Tournefort's, illustrated by Vanmour,⁴⁵ attempted to create a visual inventory of ethnic communities living in the Ottoman Empire and exhibited their customs mainly through clothing: this is the case not only with Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, but also with African men and women, Moors and black eunuchs used to guarantee the inviolability of the harem. This maelstrom of costumes, races, and sexual identities provoked visual pleasure by the complicity of color and body and incited the erotic imagination. Textures played a part in a sensuality integral to patterned fabrics, enjoyed primarily through sight (the ultimate erotic sense) especially insofar as they triggered a haptic desire as strong as it was frustrated by the magical illusion of painting.

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The oriental charm covered the whole eighteenth century and pertained in one way or another to some works of academic artists as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), who clearly remembered this sensual game in his *Turkish Bath* of 1862, in which the textiles, though fewer in number, have not disappeared altogether and still engage with colors, materials and other ornaments that decorate the smooth, multi-colored bodies of these intertwined women: a hat, a shawl, a cushion and rugs contribute to a sophisticated and entirely orientalist languor.

Source: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Le bain turc*, 1862, oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Actually, it is interesting to note (and this can be confirmed by the history of human natural science in the eighteenth century)⁴⁶ that these graphic costumes collections are the first steps of cultural anthropology. Along the way, this science of man, searching for more reliable and long-lasting categorizations and anxious over hybridity and the loss of pure origins, turned away from interchangeable garments to focus on skin first and then on bones becoming physical anthropology, a discipline which was then able to stabilize and quantify difference and even to introduce hierarchy lying on (supposedly) objective facts and conveying this comparative knowledge

45. And to some extent, that of Bernard Picart, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde, représentées par des figures dessinées par B. Picart, avec des explications historiques*, vol. 7 (Amsterdam: Bernard, 1727-1737). Volume 7 is titled: "Africans, Moorish Woman, Turks, Taken from Vanmour's Illustrations for Turkey".

46. See Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Michel, 1971); and Claude Blanckaert, "1800, le moment naturaliste des sciences de l'homme", *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines* 2.3 (2000): 117-160.

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through images. I refer mainly to Petrus Camper's theory based on facial-angle measurements,⁴⁷ but also to two evocative images that stand at the eloquent extremities of this historical demonstration: the women of plate 87 by Scottin after Vanmour⁴⁸ and, at the other end of the century, Tardieu's versions of William Blake's original engravings designed for *The Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* by John Stedman,⁴⁹ another illustrated book contemporary to Camper who overturned the science of man based on the observation of diversity, from that of costumes to that of bodies, from adornment to the organism.⁵⁰

In Nattier's work, the color spectrum ranges from the lightest complexion (majestically situated in the center) to the darkest, pushed to the margins of the painting. This composition, nevertheless, stresses the stylistic prominence of the mulatto woman, arms outstretched, who holds a long white cloth and wears a cream colored, beige and brown turban and clothing, her right breast exposed. She appears as if haloed by the illuminated archway, an architectural form that functions as a nimbus. It is thus the formal composition that signals the artist's true interests, rather than the painting's pretext and the title, which paradoxically direct the viewer's attention to Mademoiselle de Clermont. I believe then that the portrait of the young aristocrat served merely as an alibi for the artist's real pictorial project.

Nattier's picture thus introduced a visual interpenetration of bodies and clothing materials which echoed ideas that were widespread in early cultural anthropology. In 1727, for example, Lafitau explained the origin of the skin color of the "Reds" and the "Blacks" by their excessive use of tattoos and other colorful make-up.⁵¹ He imagined that smearing the skin with pig-

47. Petrus Camper, *Verhandeling over het Verschil in de Wezenstrekken in Menschen van Onderscheidene Landaart en Ouderdom* (Utrecht: B. Wild en J. Altheer, 1791). The same year, the French edition of this book was published under the following name: *Dissertation sur les variétés naturelles qui caractérisent la physionomie des hommes des divers climats et des différents âges*. See also Miriam Meijer, *Race and Aesthetics in the Anthropology of Petrus Camper (1722-1789)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

48. Later taken up by Bernard Picart in *Cérémonies...* plates 98 and 99.

49. John Stedman, *The Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, vol. 11 (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1796).

50. That is the argument I developed in my habilitation: *Art and Race. The African against Enlightenment's Eye* (2016).

51. See Joseph-François Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages américains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* (Paris: Saugrain, 1724) 29; and Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes...* vol. 15, 11-12, offered an alternative interpretation which mixes climate and makeup

ment (he was perhaps thinking of achiote or Brazilian red) had eventually changed its color. Thus Lafitau provides an indirect context for the textile playfulness of the artistic imagination. His interpretation explains why, when it came to painting people of various appearances, initially oriental and later in the century Caribbean (because the colonies had become the place of this “mixing” and of cohabitation of multi-colored populations), painterly skill and scholarly logic demanded a correspondence. Whatever these materials were transformed in and/or eventually deposited on textile or bodily surfaces.

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The New World, conceived as an archipelago, that is, an aggregate of small and distinct territorial units, was therefore a world of various colors on every level (natural, artisanal, and human), for nature offered its pigments for use: through manufactured transformation, local natural resources had a direct impact on men, their skins as well as their outfits. If, according to Lafitau, the pigments used for coloring and tinting were somehow embodied and contributed over time to the complexion of the skin, they also proved to be the cause of skin color among the diverse populations on Earth. Accordingly, it stands to reason that artists, and particularly the colorists of the eighteenth century, would echo this naturalist theory through their paintings. From this point of view I suggest that given the knowledge of numerous communities living in the Ottoman Empire and the western iconography of this people in the first half of the eighteenth century, artists of the West Indies borrowed the picturesque Orientalism of Vanmour, Nattier, Liotard... and adapted it to the picturing of the Caribbean islands' multicolored populations.⁵²

Orientalism or Picturesque Alterity

And in a way it tends to reinforce the idea I suggest that, before the scientific conceptualization of race, Orientalism was the stylistic and artistic environment propitious to the picturing of the undefined “other”, of alterity as something distinguishing human beings but mostly on a superficial,

in the determination of Americans' skin color. See Madeleine Dobie, *Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century French Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) 108-109.

52. Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, dir. *Weisse Blicke. Geschlechtermythen des Kolonialismus* (Marburg: Jonas, 2004); and Marianne Koos, *Haut, Farbe und Medialität. Oberfläche im Werk von Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-1789)* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2014).

ephemeral and not stabilized level of skin color. The Caribbean iconography belongs to the Orientalism as a picturesque interpretation of the conceptual alterity which prepared a deepened understanding of human diversity based on scientific tools (from bones measurements to contemporary DNA),⁵³ related to the category of race. As such, before becoming a biological science, the picturing of Antilles' populations lied on skin's specificity, and more peculiarly on the epidermis where stood (Enlightened Naturalists and Philosophers used to believe) the fluid giving the carnation's color.⁵⁴

In the context of an article dedicated to questions of race in the eighteenth century and their appropriation and conceptualization by the visual arts, it is not surprising that colorists' enthusiastic depiction of skin colors leads the researcher to textiles, the variety of which arose from the globalization of the supply of natural colorings and from the Atlantic Human traffic on which human diversity was replayed.⁵⁵ Moreover, in my opinion, painting's specificity as a medium using canvas and pigments became the vector and the most appropriate witness to the restitution as well as the representation of human diversity in the Caribbean.

Painting thus serves as a human color chart (in French, we say a *nuancier*, coming from the word "nuance" which translated in English means "shade") deployed in a confined space, the picture itself resembling an island.⁵⁶

In this way, pictorial art can be considered as the indistinct source for cultural anthropology, since in its function of restitution of knowledge of the Other, Anthropology reveals itself, first and foremost, as a science (or an art) of observation. From this point of view, images and especially painted ones or colored ones (as the new techniques of print color require their inclusion as well) became the first and best sources for the science of man.

Looking closely at paintings by artists who apparently relished depicting the shades of complexion as the world expanded or diversified (in Paris and in Martinique or in 1800 Barbados) and as a consequence of violent population transfers and forced or consensual *métissage*, we must consider the

53. See Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Pour une histoire politique de la race* (Paris: Seuil, 2015).

54. See the synthetic book of the contemporary beliefs and theories by the French surgeon Claude-Nicolas Le Cat, *Traité de la couleur de la peau humaine en général, de celle des nègres en particulier et de la métamorphose d'une de ces couleurs en l'autre, soit de naissance, soit accidentellement* (Amsterdam: s.e., 1765).

55. Beyond Atlantic circumnavigation, trading was active with Asia continent as well.

56. Precise signification of a "nuancier": color samples' map of commodities to sale as painting, varnish, make-up, lipstick, etc.

continuum of skin and fabric; the latter reinforcing and completing social distinctions already made by flesh color.

However, this aesthetic appropriateness was first grasped by the Caribbean populations, which maintained a close relationship with textiles through their apparently widespread activity as laundresses (figure 8). As it happens, this female activity enabled the development and the growth of the textile ornament in the Caribbean: dyeing, embroidery, pleating, ruching, layering of materials, etc., provided colonial laundresses with artistic opportunities.

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This shows us that even in situations of extreme deprivation, of planned dehumanization of the worst sort, in a small but ingenious way men, or in this case predominantly women, can succeed in artistically colonizing a few familiar and apparently insignificant spaces with symbolic forms or at least with embellishments symptomatic of a humanity that is impossible to annihilate.

Figure 8. Europe supported by Africa and America



Source: William Blake, "Europe supported by Africa and America", *Travel to Surinam*, Stedman, 1796, print. London.

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The sophistication and variety of fabrics in the Caribbean world around 1800 fulfilled this function, and the art of painting, more than any other archive in this case, proved to be the most appropriate witness and conveyor of Caribbean reality. Moreover, the herald and the leader of the emancipated colonies, Toussaint Louverture, anticipated, in pictures and in his dress, this woven and crossbred world (in French this gives a rhyming pair: *tissage/métissage*), wearing, as he did, illustrated buttons with many motifs borrowed from the work of Brunias (figure 9).

Figure 9. Illustrated Button.



Source: After Agostino Brunias, *Button (Haiti)*, ca. 1730-1796, gouache paint on tin verre fixé. Cooper Hewitt-Smithsonian Design Museum, New York.

The social distinction of individuals through the outfit and the material culture related to the body did not only happen in the West Indies. It is proper to most of social life in the early modern world. Nevertheless, the

Antilles populations living on islands experienced a singular promiscuity that probably demanded a smooth but reliable codification of each person with the same standardized element; in other words a material common to all communities whatever the social class. From this point of view textiles fitted in this function outstandingly. Eventually, artists such as Brunias, Le Masurier, Savart... were grabbed by these playful and colored scenes of Caribbean public life. Painters witnessed and conveyed these picturesque settings; nevertheless, they, in this specific case, were, first and foremost, relays of local artification authorized and performed by the inhabitants themselves.⁵⁷

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The eye of the depicted always contributes to the fashioning of the self even if he/she does not hold the brush in his/her hand.⁵⁸ The true challenge for the art historian is to be able to see in what way and at what level this self-fashioning intervened in the making of the picture.⁵⁹ I would like to displace a little bit the issue and interpret, in a form of conclusion, the recuperation of Brunias' imagery (decorative and meant for the owners) by Toussaint Louverture who, even if he was the revolutionary Haitian hero, recuperated and appropriated this specific visual imagery to anchor it more locally and remove the idea of an artist, a European and owner's gaze, a colonial vision upon colonized and agency deprived populations. The Caribbean paintings were the most situated artistic intervention (impossible anywhere else but in the Antilles) no matter who held the brush, who the artist was, what his skin color or his outfit was, in other words his/her social status in the archipelago. With these buttons on this jacket (or through the legend of it) Toussaint Louverture opened up the idea that these paintings, beyond individual and artistic intention, beyond political display, were precisely and first of all creations of the eye of the depicted.

57. I am very grateful to Ada Ferrer who, with a simple question regarding what I could say about the eye of the depicted, engaged me to deepen the interpretation of Toussaint Louverture's buttons.

58. See my articles: "Un portrait entre cliché racial et émancipation sociale" and "Les rencontres hypothétiques du peintre et de son modèle: clefs sociales dans l'interprétation du tableau", *Les portraits du pouvoir*, dirs. Olivier Bonfait and Brigitte Marin (Paris: Somogy, 2003) 110-113 and 114-126.

59. Regarding local agency see for example: Bronwen Douglas, *Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

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