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The Epic of 1804 : based upon and incorporating an English translation of Maurice A. Sixto's J'ai venge la race

Myriam Souffrant

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ABSTRACT

*THE EPIC OF 1804: BASED UPON AND INCORPORATING
AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MAURICE A. SIXTO'S
J'AI VENGE LA RACE*

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Northern Illinois University, 2017
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This thesis is a play written in English based upon the French audio recording entitled *J'ai vengé la race* by Maurice A. Sixto, famed Haitian story teller, comedian, diplomat and language professor (1919-1984). Mr. Sixto is regarded in Haitian literature as an oratory genius for his uncanny ability to analyze every segment of Haitian society using a rich and prolific narrative. With humor, wisdom, and a deft understanding of Haitian societal norms, he used his iconic voice to create authentic characters that have become part of the Haitian cultural fabric. His stories exposed the ills plaguing 20th century Haitian society; everything from the psychological remnants of slavery, to class differentiation and discrimination and beyond. As it is written, the play is in keeping with the Haitian literary tradition of a narrative within a narrative style of storytelling that Sixto uses in *J'ai vengé la race*. The play also does not support a fixed chronological canon, leaving its conclusion without closure and open to speculation. Thematically, the play is polymorphous, its themes ranging from the supernatural, to historical criticism, to personal testimony, to mysticism, to sex.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEKALB, ILLINOIS

MAY 2017

THE EPIC OF 1804: BASED UPON AND INCORPORATING
AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MAURICE A. SIXTO'S
J'AI VENGE LA RACE

BY

MYRIAM SOUFFRANT
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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Thesis Director:
Matthew Smith

DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to my father, Pierre Jean-Baptiste, who spent his life fighting for the Haitian cause and like Moses and Martin Luther King Jr., died before seeing the Promised Land.

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PREFACE

Maurice A. Sixto was born May 23, 1919 in Gonaïves, Haiti, the son of an engineer from the Virgin Islands, and of Maria Bourand, granddaughter of the Baron of Vastey, a nobleman in King Henry Christophe's court and a famous Haitian writer of the nineteenth century. Since childhood, Moy, as he was affectionately called by his loved ones, was renowned for his gift of imitating, with uncanny ability, the vocal inflexions, accents and mannerisms of celebrities as well as those of everyday people. After high school, he entered the military academy but left three months later in search of his true vocation. He became alternately a journalist, a teacher, a radio host, an interpreter, and a tourist guide before finally attending law school.

In 1950, he was appointed press attaché to the Liberian embassy in Port-au-Prince, where he remained until 1961. In 1962 he joined the first group of Haitian teachers to travel to the newly independent African country of Zaire, in order to fill the pedagogical void left there by Belgium. He spent the next nine years teaching English, French, Latin and Social Studies in Kinshasa. And it was there, in the Congo, that a phrase from André Malraux's *The Human Condition*, inspired him to begin storytelling. "*We must defend ourselves from the absurdities of life,*" wrote Malraux, "*and we can only defend ourselves by creating.*"

Sixto's stories, dubbed *lodyans* by famed Haitian author Georges Anglade, have come together as a compilation of fifty oral recordings entitled *Choses et Gens Entendus* (Things and People that are Heard). There is no theoretical definition for this literary genre, but according to Anglade, a *lodyans* is a unique and complex expression, similar to satire in its use of humor, irony, or ridicule in order to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices; particularly in the context of a contemporary political, social

and/or cultural issue. Unlike satire, however, a *lodyans* refrains from exaggeration, derision and scorn; instead it portrays its characters in their truest light, not as buffoons, but as everyday people who are perhaps oblivious to the inner psychological motives behind their despicable actions.

Sixto's *lodyans* are not only social, political and cultural commentary, but also vehicles for reflection driving along the road to hilarity. Simply put, they make one think whilst making one laugh. Let us take for instance *Ti Sentaniz*, which examines the plight of the *restavek* (domestic children). Using a tragicomic voice, from one moment to another, Sixto swings his listeners from the brim of tears to the brink of glee and back again, leaving them nevertheless with a vague sense of bitterness that forces them to examine their conscience. In *Lea Kokoye*, Sixto juxtaposes the situation of a young woman of modest means to that of a *bourgeoise* to demonstrate the injustices and class prejudices in modern Haitian society, while nonetheless amusing the gallery. Again, in *J'ai Vengé la Race*, Sixto urges his listeners to reflect on the psychology of modern Haitian men as it pertains to the sexual abuses suffered during the time of slavery; all this intertwined in the hysterical dialogue of the characters created by his talented iconic voice. His characters are deliberately real so that one imagines having spoken to them but a few minutes ago. They seem like people we know, people we see every day.

In 1963, Sixto was invited as guest of honor to a White House dinner hosted by the American First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy. In 1969 he lost his sight despite multiple surgical procedures. His blindness forced him to leave his post as teacher in Africa. He then settled in Pennsylvania where he lectured on pre-Columbian and African civilizations. In 1976 he was honored by the mayor of Philadelphia during the U.S. bicentennial celebration. In 1979 he received the prize for best storyteller in New York City, and in 1984, for best lecturer in Philadelphia. In May 1984, Sixto died of a heart attack, leaving behind a rich literary, historical and sociological legacy. Today, the Maurice Sixto Foundation, an organization created in 2004 in his memory, strives to improve the lot of the *restavek*.

For some time now, I've wanted to expose Haitian literary art to the English-speaking public, so in choosing my thesis project I afforded myself the opportunity. Initially I had thought to do a simple translation of *J'ai Vengé la Race* since it is one of the rare stories that Sixto delivers in French. However while working, I realized that it was necessary to clarify and deepen my readers' understanding of Sixto's historical and cultural allusions and evocations. I therefore concluded that a play would be the best vehicle for such an endeavor and *The Epic of 1804* was conceived.

In addition to being tasked with the elucidation of anonymous and somewhat obscure references found in *J'ai Vengé la Race*, for an audience that perhaps may be less familiar with Haitian history and culture, the play also seeks to initiate a dialogue around the implications of colonialism and slavery on the human psyche with regard to racism and sexual stereotypes.

The Epic of 1804 adds some passages to *J'ai Vengé la Race*, simulates others, and aborts a few. I kept most of the dialogue intact (of course, translated,) except for certain references at the end which seemed to me a bit superfluous. All in all, I encountered very few difficulties with regards to the translation. The soundtrack which, although presented in a digitalized format on *YouTube.com*, was originally recorded in the 1970s, and sometimes did not sound very clear. Although I could not include a handful of incomprehensible phrases, their absence does not in any way diminish the text, or cause the play to suffer any loss of meaning.

In the end, everything came together in a cogent symbiosis. I believe that I have fulfilled my objective, and I invite you to read *The Epic of 1804* in the hopes that like the *lodyans*, *J'ai Vengé la Race*, it will cause you to oscillate between tragedy and comedy, laughter and sorrow; it will give you the insight that precisely comes from recognizing what one ought not to laugh at, and at the same time compel you to laugh out loud, while helping you make a lucid and real examination of its depicted social and moral transgressions.

The Epic of *1804*

By

Myriam Souffrant

(Based upon and incorporating an English translation of Maurice A. Sixto's audio-comedy, J'ai Vengé la Race)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

*Because race, skin color and gender have played such an important role in the formation of Haitian society, the characters below are given physical descriptions that are not only historically correct but relevant and important to the portrayal of their roles.

SIXTO.....author of *J'ai Vengé la Race* and other works; middle aged Haitian man of medium complexion; speaks with bourgeois Haitian accent

DESSALINES.....Emperor of Haiti; middle aged Haitian man of dark complexion; speaks with Haitian accent

CLERVAUX.....one of Dessalines' generals; adult Haitian man of light complexion; speaks with bourgeois Haitian accent and pretentious inflexion.

GABART.....Dessalines' youngest general; young Haitian man of dark complexion; speaks with Haitian accent

CAPOIS.....Capois La Mort; another of Dessalines' generals; adult Haitian man of dark complexion; speaks with Haitian accent

CIVIL SERVANT..... attendant at the Haitian embassy; adult Caucasian man; speaks with French accent; of somber disposition

FRIENDS 1 AND 2friends of Sixto; adult Haitian men; nondescript

AMBASSADOR.....Haitian Ambassador; middle aged man of dark complexion; speaks with bourgeois Haitian accent and pretentious inflexion; of animated disposition

BLONDE.....the Ambassador's conquest; young Caucasian woman of fair complexion with blond hair and blue eyes; speaks with French accent

SERVANT.....Anacaona's servant; Taino man of brown complexion; non-descript accent

2 GIRLS AND 1 ADOLESCENT BOY.....Anacaona's court; Taino children of brown complexion; non-descript accent

ANACAONA.....Queen of Ayiti Boyo Kiskeya; Taino woman of brown complexion; non-descript accent spoken with regal inflexion

GUAROCUYA.....Anacaona's nephew; young Taino man of brown complexion; speaks with Spanish accent

COLUMBUS..... middle-aged Caucasian man; speaks with Italian accent

KAFKA..... adult Caucasian man; speaks with German accent

OVERSEERS 1 and 2..... adult Caucasian men; non-descript accents

SLAVES/REBELS.....5 adult Haitian men, 3 adult Haitian women, of dark complexion; speak with Haitian accents

SLAVE GIRL.....adult Haitian woman of medium complexion; speaks with Haitian accent

PLANTERS 1 and 2.....adult Caucasian men; speak with French accent

PLANTERS' WIVES 1 and 2.....adult Caucasian women; speak with French accent

AUCTIONEER.....adult Caucasian man; speaks with Southern American accent

MULATTO.....adult Haitian man of light complexion; speaks with a Haitian accent

Young CLERVAUX.....Teenage Haitian boy of light complexion; speaks with a French accent

ROCHAMBEAU.....French General; middle-aged Caucasian man; speaks with French accent

SOLDIERS.....7 adult Caucasians; may be men and women

DANCERS.....5 adult Haitian men (1 for the Potomitan, 2 Hounsis, and 1 Commandant General de la Place *called* LaPlace); 4 adult Haitian women (1 for the Potomitan, 2 hounsis); 1 adult Caucasian woman

DRUMMERS.....Haitian men; non-descript

GENERAL THOMAS-ALEXANDRE DUMAS.....Tall, muscular adult Haitian man of brown complexion; speaks with French accent

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, père.....Rotund middle-age Haitian man of light complexion; speaks with French accent

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, fils.....young and slender adult Caucasian man; speaks with French accent

COSTUMES

SIXTO.....typical mid-20th century male attire of Western civilization, to include turtleneck and feathered fedora

DESSALINES.....Napoleonic style emperor robes and crown, draped over a Napoleonic army officer uniform

CLERVAUX.....Napoleonic army officer uniform, no hat, missing an epaulette and armed with a musket

GABART..... Napoleonic army officer uniform, no hat, armed with a sword

CAPOIS..... Napoleonic army officer uniform, hat with a large hole in it, armed with a sword

FRIEND 1 and 2..... typical mid-20th century Western civilization male attire

CIVIL SERVANT..... typical dark suit of mid-20th century Western civilization

AMBASSADOR.....red robe; typical black suit with red shirt of mid-20th century Western civilization

BLONDE.....1960's Chanel style suit with golden star shaped broche pinned over right breast; typical 1960's bouffant hairstyle

SERVANT.....Taino SERVANT attire of the 16th century

ANACAONA'S COURT.....Taino court attire of the 16th century

ANACAONA..... Taino royal attire of the 16th century

GUAROCUYA.....typical mission style garb of an *encomienda* slave

COLUMBUS.....typical 15th/16th century Italian sea captain uniform

KAFKA.....typical 1920's style man's suit of Western civilization, includes watch and Boeler hat

- OVERSEERS 1 and 2..... typical light-colored attire of working class men in late 18th century America
- SLAVES/REBELS.....men are bare chested with torn pants, barefoot; women wear simple sack dresses, hair is tied with scarf, barefoot
- SLAVE GIRL.....simple skirt and shirt, hair tied with scarf, barefoot
- PLANTERS 1 and 2.....typical light-colored male landowner attire of late 18th century America, includes canes
- WIVES 1 and 2..... typical light-colored female landowner attire of late 18th century America, includes hand-held fans, purses containing small mirrors
- AUCTIONEER.....typical light-colored man's suit of late 18th century America
- MULATTO.....typical brightly-colored man's suit of late 18th century Europe
- Young CLERVAUX..... typical brightly-colored man's suit of late 18th century Europe
- ROCHAMBEAU.....French General uniform of the Napoleonic era
- SOLDIERS..... French soldier uniform of the Napoleonic era
- DANCERS..... Male Potomitan: brown bodysuit decorated as a tree; Female Potomitan: green bodysuit decorated as a vine; Male Hounsis: bare-chested, barefoot, calf length blue jeans, belt made out of twine, red bandanas tied around the neck; Female Hounsis: wide knee-length blue jeans skirts, white off the shoulder tops, bare midriff, hair wrapped in red bandanas; Commandant General de la Place: bare-chested, barefoot, white calf length pants, belt made out of twine; Caucasian female: red white and blue bodysuit decorated as the French flag
- DRUMMERS.....traditional attire of any region in West Africa
- GENERAL THOMAS-ALEXANDRE DUMAS..... French General uniform of the Napoleonic era

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, père.....typical man's suit of mid-19th century
Europe

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, fils.....typical man's suit of late 19th century
Europe

SETTINGS

SPLIT STAGE. The stage is split in two. Each side is set in a different time and place. STAGE RIGHT is a throne room in the netherworld. STAGE LEFT is an embassy living room in 1965 Paris. The respective rooms are only illuminated when action transpires in them. Some SPOTLIGHT scenes will be played DOWNSTAGE on either STAGE LEFT and/or STAGE RIGHT. Both STAGES share an elaborate door DOWNSTAGE that divides them equally.

STAGE RIGHT: The set may be sparsely or elaborately decorated as groups wish, but minimally, the stage floor is infused with fog. There is a throne CENTERSTAGE RIGHT angled at approximately 135 degrees to face the audience a little more than sideways. DOWNSTAGE LEFT, to the right of the door that divides the stages, there is a canon pointed at the audience at the opposite 135 degree angle, a powder keg with a torch placed atop. DOWNSTAGE RIGHT of STAGE RIGHT there are four stools and a small table. UPSTAGE there are paintings of various Haitian Voodoo gods hanging on the wall, including one of BOUKMAN, when Dessalines occupies the throne. These paintings change to Taino zemis when ANACAONA occupies the throne. In addition when ANACAONA is present, the canon, powder keg, torch and stools are removed.

STAGE LEFT: The set may be sparsely or elaborately decorated as groups wish, but minimally, there is a settee facing the audience, set between two chairs at either end of it that face each other; there is a coffee table in front of the settee with a tray, glasses and a bottle of Barbancourt rum atop of it. Living room must be decorated in either Louis XVI style or mid-century modern with an emphasis on the colors black and red as these colors symbolize the Duvalier regime in power in Haiti at the time. UPSTAGE on the walls are paintings of Toussaint, Dessalines, Capois (the one riding his horse), Christophe, Pétion and a photo of Papa Doc. There is a door to the left that leads OFFSTAGE.

DOWNSTAGE RIGHT of STAGE LEFT: There is a table where the book *Romancero aux Etoiles* is displayed as if for a book signing. DOWNSTAGE LEFT of STAGE LEFT there is another table with two chairs set as in a bistro with a bottle of wine and 2 glasses. These tables are to be placed a few moments before use. They are not lighted except when spotlighted for a scene and removed quickly after the scene ends.

FULL STAGE: During ACT II, SCENE I, the FULL STAGE is used. The setting is a combination of a burning town in 18th century Haiti as a BACKDROP; an auction block (CENTERSTAGE RIGHT) and a battlefield (STAGE LEFT) as FOREGROUND. Set decoration must include a fort, boulders large enough to hide several full grown adults, and the facsimile of a running horse that CAPOIS can mount. The horse must also be able to fall from under CAPOIS when it receives a bullet and dies.

Act I

ACT I, SCENE I

STAGE RIGHT

Nan Guinée, Hall of Revolution

AT RISE: We hear DRUMS beating as LIGHTS FADE UP on STAGE RIGHT only. SOFT SPOTLIGHT on SIXTO who enters from DOWNSTAGE LEFT at STAGE LEFT. Fog encircles his feet as he walks slowly towards the door that divides the two stages. DRUMS FADE OUT.

SIXTO grunts suspiciously, and stares at the door for a moment, then throws his right hand up in surrender.

SIXTO: Eh bien!

SIXTO opens door and passes through it. On the other side of the door he finds four men dressed as SLAVES sitting on the stools around the small table, playing bezig, and the Emperor DESSALINES seated on the throne watching their game.

SIXTO: *(awed and startled at the same time)* Wi fout! Kolangèt!

SIXTO drops to his knees in front of DESSALINES, removing his fedora and holding it to his heart, he bows his head. SLAVES continue to play quietly, ignoring SIXTO.

DESSALINES *(in a commanding voice):* Ki moun sa? Who is there?

SIXTO: Oh, Je m'excuse, Your Grace. Onè.

SIXTO bows deeply with much reverence opening his arms wide.

DESSALINES: *(looks at him quizzically and answers cautiously):* Respè. Who are you?

SIXTO stands up with pride.

SIXTO: I am, Your Grace, Maurice Alfredo Sixto.

SIXTO bows again, but less deeply than before, right arm across his stomach, left arm across his back, then replaces his fedora on his head.

DESSALINES: *(giggling but annoyed)* Gad yon tintin! Tande yon koze! Sa sa vle di? What does that mean? You tell me nothing. Kote w sòti? Where do you come from Mr. Sixto? What is your background, your family?

SIXTO: Oh, milles excuses, Your Grace. You see, it's that I sometimes assume that my reputation precedes me. I am the son of the engineer Alfredo Sixto...

CLERVAUX steps out from behind the throne holding his musket upright and formally marches 5 steps towards SIXTO. SIXTO steps back but continues to introduce himself, his voice getting higher with fear

SIXTO: ...and the grandson of Adolphe Sixto, formerly of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands...

CLERVAUX stops his advance as GABART steps out from behind the throne, sword half drawn and marches 7 steps, a little faster than CLERVAUX towards SIXTO

GABART: Eh...eh...Ou pa menm sòt Ayiti! You not even Haitian! What you doing here?

SIXTO: ...Eu, My mother was Maria Bourand, daughter of Alice de Vastey,

GABART stops his advance as CAPOIS steps out from behind the throne and marches rapidly 9 steps sword drawn and pointed at SIXTO who ends his pedigree, crouched in fear with CAPOIS' sword raised above him about to strike

SIXTO: ...who is none other than the granddaughter of Jean-Louis, Pompée-Valentin Baron de Vastey.

DESSALINES: *(intrigued)* Um...The Baron of Vastey, you say?

CLERVAUX: *(as if remembering an insignificant person long forgotten, turns towards DESSALINES putting his musket down and leaning against it)* Hmmm.... oui, I think he was chief of staff for your finance minister Andre Vernet, Your Grace.

DESSALINES: Um...Andre Vernet?

GABART sheathes his swords and turns towards DESSALINES

GABART: Uh Huh! I remember that boy. Eh, Eh, Jean-Louis. Yes. He joined Toussaint L'ouverture, our fearless leader, when he was around 15 something like that. I believe. He was not bad as a soldier *(chuckling)*... Eh, you know, for a mulatto.

DESSALINES, CAPOIS AND GABART chuckle. CLERVAUX and SIXTO remain somber. CAPOIS lowers his sword still eyeing SIXTO suspiciously, and SIXTO straightens up still uneasy. CLERVAUX walks to the throne and leans his musket against it while addressing DESSALINES

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...I believe le Baron de Vastey wrote, quite eloquently, might I add, on the evils of slavery. Many of his works were published both in French and English by North Americans who supported our cause.

DESSALINES: (to SIXTO) And how did he become a Baron? It certainly wasn't me who gave him that title. Je suis le seul roi! I am the only royal!

SIXTO approaches the throne making sure to give CAPOIS a wide berth

SIXTO: It was King Henri Christophe...

DESSALINES grunts and angrily moves about on his throne at the mention of Christophe's name

DESSALINES: (annoyed and stuttering angrily) Henri ki...ki? Sa w di la! Tswp....

CAPOIS raises and points his sword at SIXTO once more

CLERVAUX approaches SIXTO and places his hand on SIXTO's shoulder

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...I would advise you not to mention that name before his Imperial Highness. He and President Pétion...

DESSALINES once again makes angry grunts at the mention of Pétion

CLERVAUX bows slightly before DESSALINES

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...Milles excuses, Your Grace.

CLERVAUX turns toward SIXTO again

CLERVAUX: You see, the two of them conspired to betray our Emperor which led to his execution.

DESSALINES stands up swiftly

DESSALINES: (angrily) Execution? Ahh! I was assassinated! Murdered! Shot!

DESSALINES walks DOWNSTAGE to face the audience, looking up arms and hands semi opened as if pleading with a divine power

DESSALINES: (exclaims full of self-pity) Mezanmi! They split my head open with a saber, and finally stabbed me (lowers his head away from his heart as he makes several stabbing motions on his heart) multiple times with a dagger, screaming (shouts and raises his arms and head as before)"The tyrant is dead!" Oh, oh! Whoosh!

DESSALINES angrily, flipping his imperial robes, returns to sit on the throne,

DESSALINES: *(pitifully addressing SIXTO)* My own people, *wi*, desecrated and disfigured my cadaver, leaving my remains on the ground like so much garbage. They even refused to give me a proper burial, after everything I had done for them! *(shouts angrily)* *Bann engra!* Ingrates! Were it not for Défilée Bazile, *(wails pitifully)* Dédée woy! Dédée...

DESSALINES closes his eyes as he wails her name shaking his head and fist as if remembering and admiring her bravery

DESSALINES: ...She! *(raises his index finger for emphasis)* Aaah! She was the only one! The only one who dared! Listen well to what I'm saying to you *wi!*, She took my mutilated body to bury me herself *(extends his arm to the side, his index finger still pointed as if pointing to the ground)* I would not be here, *(brings his arm back to the front pointing down)* Nan Guinée with my confrères, if not for her *(rests his arm on the throne and sits back, breathing hard as if incensed)*

SLAVES stop playing bezig and stand up to sing:

SLAVES: *Damballah Wedo! Se bon! Se Bon! Ayida Wedo! Se bon! Se Bon! Lè ma monte chwal mwen gen moun ka kriye! Lè ma monte chwal mwen gen moun ka kriye! Lè ma monte chwal mwen gen moun ka kriye! Se bon! Se Bon!*

SLAVES stop singing and sit back down to continue playing bezig as if nothing happened

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...And you, Maurice Alfredo Sixto, how is it that you are here?

SIXTO: *(tearing his riveted gaze from the SLAVES to stare at CLERVAUX)* Me? I have no idea. Would you be so kind as to tell me where I am?

DESSALINES: *(more relaxed)* You are in Guinée, where all of us who were stolen from our home in Africa return after death. This is the Hall of the Revolution, *(waves his arm to showcase the surroundings)* where those who fought bravely for liberty are meant to spend eternity. Let me introduce you, *(pointing to each man with his scepter as he introduces them)*. This is Capois La Mort...

CAPOIS, facing SIXTO, holds his sword to his heart and stands straight at attention

DESSALINES: ...so nicknamed for his valor at the battle of Vertieres. This is Clervaux who sent the first shot of our Revolution, and Gabart my youngest general, only a boy but one of my fiercest soldiers.

Both face SIXTO and nod their heads with hands behind them to salute

DESSALINES: ... And I am, of course, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Jacques Premier et dernier! The first and the last! The sole, the only royal! Emperor of Ayiti! *(straightens his posture regally)*

SIXTO bows reverently in front of them

SIXTO: Enchanté, vos Excellences.

CLERVAUX : Hmmm... but you have yet to tell us what you are doing here, Mr. Sixto. Obviously you are not a revolutionary.

CAPOIS points his sword at SIXTO who quickly cowers and makes the others chuckle

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...Where and more importantly when are you from? Your clothing betrays you.

CAPOIS skims SIXTO's clothing with the tip of his sword

CAPOIS: He looks like a southerner. *(leans in and sniffs SIXTO)* Whoosh! Smells like one too.

THE PANTHEON laughs

SIXTO: *(a little miffed)* I am originally from the north, from Gonaïves.

DESSALINES: Ahh, the City of Independence. It is there you know that on January 1st 1804, I declared our country free and sovereign! This bodes well for you, continue. *(waves at him)* What did you do during your lifetime? What contributions did you make to Haiti? Did you go into the military? Did you follow in your ancestor Vastey's footsteps and become a great writer of injustice?

CAPOIS: Tswp! Please! *Kote sa!* Look at him. You think he's smart enough to be a writer?

SIXTO: No, I'm not a writer exactly, I am more of a *(opens his hands in a helpless manner)*... lodyanseur.

THE PANTHEON: A what?

SIXTO: *(a little nervous)*, Eh bien, let me explain.

SIXTO takes a step towards DESSALINES but retreats when CAPOIS steps in front of him

SIXTO: I did enter the military academy, but I was not suited for such pursuits, and only lasted three months, after which I studied law.

SIXTO moves closer to GABART

SIXTO: I've worked as a journalist, a radio personality...

GABART: *(awed)* Eh...Radio...

THE PANTHEON, except for GABART who sparkles with interest at the mention of the word radio, whispers among themselves, wondering to what SIXTO is referring

SIXTO moves closer to CLERVAUX

SIXTO: I later became a professor of literature, of French, English Spanish and Latin. I taught in Liberia and in the Congo, in Africa...

THE PANTHEON looks impressed except for CAPOIS

SIXTO:...which later helped me procure employment as a translator and attaché.

SIXTO moves closer to the throne with CAPOIS following him closely

SIXTO: I've also given conferences on pre-Columbian civilizations. But I think I am best known for my work as a lodyaniseur...

DESSALINES: (*frustrated*) Here's that word again! Sa sa vle di? What does it mean?

SIXTO: That is to say, I am a... comedian of sorts.

DESSALINES: A comedian? (*looks at the others for clarification*)

THE THREE GENERALS shrug

SIXTO: A jokester, a storyteller, you know, I tell anecdotes, funny stories about Haitian life and our problems.

THE PANTHEON stare at him for a moment then begin to laugh with understanding

DESSALINES: He must be good. We are laughing already.

GABART: Eh...eh...So what you are doing here? This is the hall for great revolutionaries. Those of us who forged Haiti with blood and fire! (*He shouts like a battle cry*) *Koupe tèt! Chop their heads!*

CAPOIS and CLERVAUX: (*responds the battle cry*) *Boule Kay! Burn their homes!*

SIXTO: (*shrugs*) I must be lost.

CAPOIS: (*raises his sword again and points it against SIXTO's throat*) Then I will escort you back to hell. You look like a spy. A mulatto spy!

SIXTO: No, no. Ah, take it easy. I'm not even from your time.

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...And what time are you from?

SIXTO: From the twentieth century.

DESSALINES: (*with hope in his eyes*) Ah, Haiti survives for 200 more years?

SIXTO: Yes...but barely.

CAPOIS: *(inching his sword closer to SIXTO's throat, menacing)* Why, but barely?

SIXTO: Haiti has many enemies. The world is still not resolved with what we did, what you did. They are still making us pay for the revolution. For having dared to become the first black independent republic. There is still much racism in the world!

THE PANTHEON look at each other and DESSALINES waves at CAPOIS to put his weapon away

CAPOIS sheathes his sword and steps back from SIXTO who sighs with relief

DESSALINES: And what are you 20th century Haitians doing about that?

SIXTO: Well, our country has had many challenges since the revolution. For example, the 20th century opened with our occupation in 1915 by the United States. Even though they left by 1934, they never really let go of their financial and political control over us. This was a nasty piece of business and it made us something akin to their client state.

CLERVAUX: Hmm...The United States? But that's only 13 little former British colonies barely held together by a weak federal government. We were the most prosperous French colony in the world! How could the United States *(with disdain)* possibly have invaded and occupied us?

SIXTO: Remember, Napoleon sold them the Louisiana Territory after we defeated his army, and the United States expanded from there all the way to the Pacific Ocean. They are now the most powerful nation in the world.

DESSALINES: Yes, I remember. Napoleon had imperial dreams of expanding the French empire into the Louisiana Territory using slave labor.

THE GENERALS: *(outraged)* Uhh, hunh!

DESSALINES: But, in order to do that he would have had to re-establish slavery in Haiti first or else he was afraid that our fearless leader Toussaint L'Ouverture would stop him!

CLERVAUX: Hmm...Oh, yes! So, he sent his treacherous brother-in-law Leclerc on a secret mission to arrest L'Ouverture, restore slavery in Haiti and reclaim the colony.

SIXTO: *(Although accusatory, his tone remains respectful)* You helped in that mission, Your Grace. You betrayed Toussaint, and Leclerc was able to capture him and send him to die in a prison in France.

THE THREE GENERALS take a deep breath and hold it, elbow each other, the SLAVES stop playing and look up. There is a tense silence as everyone stares at DESSALINES to gauge his reaction

DESSALINES: *(calmly remorseful)* I will forever regret that. Leclerc was a hypocrite and a liar. He fooled me. He used my own ambition against me and yes, I betrayed the father of our revolution, the great Toussaint L'Ouverture.

GABART: *(Defensive towards SIXTO)* Eh...eh...But once we realized Leclerc's true intentions, his scheme to enslave us again, we took up arms.

THE GENERALS: Yes, yes!

GABART: Eh...eh...This was no small feat, you know! Leclerc had come with warships and 30,000 troops, not to mention 80,000 more reserves that arrived later!

CAPOIS: And we only had 1,300 men!

SIXTO: I always wondered, how did you manage this? It seems an impossible scenario!

DESSALINES: *(chuckling)* Yellow fever helped.

DESSALINES gets off of his throne and comes to stand near the cannon. He puts one foot up on it, picks up the torch and holds it high with pride. As he does so and speaks, the SLAVES cower in their seats and the GENERALS take a step back fearfully.

DESSALINES: But I also knew how to motivate my men. At the start of the battle, I waved a lit torch near an open powder keg and swore that I would blow every single one of us up should one Frenchman break through our defenses. And they knew I meant it. We destroyed Napoleon's army.... again, and foiled his nefarious plot to enslave us once more!

SIXTO: *(moves near DESSALINES)* That's the very reason Bonaparte sold Louisiana. France was going to war with England and because of us Napoleon needed to rebuild his naval forces, so he abandoned his plan of expansion into North America. Instead, he made a deal with Thomas Jefferson and sold the Louisiana Territory to the U.S. for 15 million dollars.

DESSALINES: *(throws down the torch and steps away from the canon to return to his throne)* Thomas Jefferson...pff. That arrogant hypocrite never wanted to recognize Haiti as a sovereign state. He designed and signed the American declaration of independence affirming man's right to be free, yet he kept his own people in chains because they were black; refusing to even grant freedom to his own bastard half-breed children and their slave of a mother.

EVERYONE acquiesces

CLERVAUX: Hmmm....How was this occupation in 1915?

SIXTO: *(following DESSALINES back towards the throne)* Good and bad. Mostly bad. The U.S. military built roads and irrigation systems, schools, etc.

DESSALINES: *(Surprised as he sits back on the throne)* Ahh! They came to help us?

SIXTO: Unfortunately no. They came to help themselves. They came because the Germans had infiltrated our society by marrying into rich mulatto families. These German-Haitians controlled our economy at that time. The United States feared that Germany would gain a foothold in the Caribbean, so close to them.

DESSALINES: And why should they care?

SIXTO: Well, because Europe was at war.

CAPOIS: The Europeans were still at war 100 years later?

SIXTO: Another war. A terrible war they call World War I.

GABART: (*Dismissive*) Ah, all wars are terrible! Eh...epi tande, this was not the first time all of Europe went to war. Why they start to count now? (*twps*) Ridicule!

CLERVAUX: (*moves closer to the throne and SIXTO*) Hmmm....So the Americans were afraid that Haiti would become an ally to Germany, so they came to wrest control of our economy from the hands of these German-Haitians?

SIXTO: Yes, but just like LeClerc, some 100 years before, they tried to re-introduce a type of slavery in Haiti. The infrastructures they built, the schools, the roads, they built with forced peasant labor, they murdered many of us cruelly and unjustly without repercussions, treated us like dogs, separated us by color...

CAPOIS: That sounds like slavery alright

SIXTO: And they...changed our constitution.

DESSALINES: (*Enraged, he stands up*) Ki sa?! How?!

SIXTO: They allowed foreign ownership of Haitian land.

DESSALINES howls in pain and plops down on his throne defeated, leaning his arm against the arm of the throne and his head against his palm, he moans as if in pain

SIXTO: (*kneels next to DESSALINES trying to comfort*) But! We formed a rag-tag army called Kako and we fought against the US marines, and finally in August of 1934 they left.

CLERVAUX: Hmmm...But how did the world allow this to happen? Was there no law to forbid such a thing? What about the Constitution of 1791, or the Declaration of the rights of the people?

SIXTO: (*turning to Clerveaux*) Yes, but there was also the Monroe Doctrine.

CAPOIS: The Monroe Doctrine, what is that?

SIXTO: (*rises to approach CAPOIS*) It was a declaration made by the president of the United States, James Monroe, in 1823, I believe.

CAPOIS: What kind of declaration?

SIXTO: A foreign policy declaration that separated the old world from the new world. In other words, Europe from the Americas. Monroe declared that if any European country were to gain economic and/or political power over any American country, the United States would view this as an act of aggression and would take measures to protect itself.

CAPOIS: *Kolanget!* And they used this declaration to invade us!

CLERVAUX: Hmmmm.....But that is ridiculous! Didn't Spain, a European country, own most of South America? How could such a declaration be validated?

SIXTO: Because of us! Because of Haiti.

CLERVAUX: (*turning away from SIXTO*) Hmmmm.....Je ne vous comprends pas. I don't understand you.

SIXTO: (*approaching CLERVAUX*) During the 19th century a man called Simon Bolivar freed most of South America from Spain.

DESSALINES: And how is this related to Haiti?

SIXTO: (*turns to DESSALINES*) Because President Pétion...

DESSALINES: (*angrily*) *Men Tonèr!* That name again!

SLAVES are momentarily startled but go back to playing bezig

SIXTO: Milles excuses, Your Grace. Because the first president of Haiti supplied Bolivar with all the military weaponry and infantry that he needed to liberate (*counting he waves his index finger at each mention of the South American countries*) Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador and Bolivia from Spanish rule.

THE PANTHEON sighs in admiration

SIXTO: We helped Bolivar under one condition.

DESSALINES: What condition?

SIXTO: That after liberation, he would abolish slavery in those territories! And Bolivar kept his word! He freed all the Spanish slaves! This is documented history! Ah oui, ah oui!

DESSALINES: (*Delighted, throws his hands and feet up*) Ah ah! So not only did we free the slaves in Haiti we freed the slaves in South America too!

SIXTO: We not only freed slaves, we are the reason all those countries are independent. Without Pétion (*DESSALINES gives a small less aggressive grunt this time*) I beg your pardon, Your Grace, Simon Bolivar would have never accomplished his goal, and who knows, Spain would probably still own these countries today.

Excitedly, GABART shoves CLERVAUX and CAPOIS aside to come stand in front of SIXTO

GABART: Tann, tann, tann! Wait a minute. Eh...eh...You mean to tell me that if it was not for our revolution, the Haitian Revolution, Spain would still own most of South America?

SIXTO: Probably

GABART: Eh...eh...And if not for our revolution, the Haitian Revolution, France would own most of North America still?

SIXTO: Yes, more than likely. The United States would not be as powerful as they are. If they would even exist! England would probably still own the United States, were it not for us!

GABART: (*Laughing*) *Anmwyey!* Allons-donc, mon cher! Now you go too far!

CLERVAUX: (*to Gabart*) Hmmm.....Not at all, not at all. Do you not remember? Ah! You were probably too young, still a baby, I'm sure! But, during the American Revolutionary war, in 1779, the British laid siege to Savannah, and the United States asked France for help.

SIXTO: At the time we were still a French colony, so France sent 500 volunteers to help Commander Casimir Pulaski.

CLERVAUX: (*with much pride*) Hmmm.....500 free men of color volunteered to fight the British invasion of the United States. They were called the Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint-Domingue.

CAPOIS: Yes, yes! I remember King Henri Christophe (*DESSALINES grunts softly at the mention of the name*) Milles excuses, Your Grace, he was only a boy at the time. He went with them. He was their drummer boy, I think.

SIXTO: (*moves closer to the throne*) Did you also know, your Excellences, that a Haitian founded one of the greatest modern cities of the United States?

DESSALINES: (*skeptical*) What city?

SIXTO: Chicago! It is the 3rd largest metropolis in the United States. It was founded by Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable. He was a fur trader from Saint-Domingue who settled there around 1790. The first permanent resident of the area. He grew to be very rich.

CLERVAUX: (*prideful*) Hmmm.....I've heard of him. He was mulatto from the south of Haiti. From Jeremie, I think?

DESSALINES, CAPOIS AND GABART, look sideways and roll their eyes at CLERVAUX

SIXTO: Yes, he was a mulatto. But he was from St-Marc in the North.

DESSALINES, CAPOIS AND GABART, chuckle with satisfaction at CLERVAUX. CLERVAUX twips loudly, rolling his eyes and turns away from them.

DESSALINES: Does everyone know this? Does the world recognize our contributions?

SIXTO: Our history is not told. We are only famous for being the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

THE PANTHEON: *(in unison, surprised)* The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere?!

SLAVES stop applying then look at their clothing a little embarrassed but quickly straighten their backs with pride listening to the conversation.

GABART: *(moves to the center of the group)* Eh...eh...So let me understand. We! *(pointing to his chest)* We, Haitians, nou mem mem wi!

GABART makes a circle with his hand to encompass everyone in the room then points to his chest again each time he says "we".

GABART: We help free the United States from the British, we liberate our own country and help liberate most of South America. We found the first Black Republic in the world,

CAPOIS: *(interrupting)* and the 3rd largest city...

GABART: *Wi*, the 3rd largest city in the United States... and no one knows anything about what we did, who we are, except that we are the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere? How is this possible? Why?

SIXTO: Because France hates us and the United States fear us.

CAPOIS: I understand that France hates us. We were their golden goose and we humiliated them in front of the world when we fought for and won our independence. But why should the United States fear us?

SIXTO: In your day, they feared that we would be an example to the slaves in their own country. Their economy was based on slavery too, in 1804. If word leaked out that we had been successful in overthrowing the unjust system that kept us in bondage, then the North American slaves would do the same.

DESSALINES: *(shocked)* Do you mean to tell me that blacks are still enslaved in the United States?! *(stands unsheathing his sword and lifting it straight up and shouts)* To arms! Koupe tèt!

GENERALS and SLAVES: Boule kay!!

THE SLAVES grab clubs and along with the GENERALS come quickly to stand in front of DESSALINES, pushing SIXTO out of the way who stumbles to the floor. The GENERALS unsheathe their swords and hold them up against their chests. CLERVAUX grabs his musket to brace it against his right shoulder.

DESSALINES: We will invade this very day! We will take them by surprise under the cover of night...

SIXTO: (*getting up and pushing his way towards DESSALINES, panicked he shouts*) No, no, no! You can't do that!

DESSALINES. SLAVES and GENERALS: (*pointing their weapons at SIXTO so that he is at the center of their menace*) Why not?!

SIXTO: (*sardonic*) Well, first of all because you're dead! And secondly, because they had a civil war, and in 1863 the American President Abraham Lincoln began freeing the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation. After the war and after his death, slavery was outlawed in the U.S. in 1865 with the 13th amendment to their constitution.

THE PANTHEON: (*as if to say "at least!"*) Ah, bon!

DESSALINES waves the SLAVES away who go back to playing bezig and THE PANTHEON sheath their swords and relax their stances

SIXTO: But like us, African-Americans have struggled for equality and economic autonomy ever since. Although they were free, they still lived like slaves. There was something called the Jim Crow laws that kept them separate from the whites. They were not allowed to use the same public facilities, go to the same schools, same hospitals, etc. Many in the south, still worked on plantations picking cotton like their ancestors before them.

DESSALINES: (*disgusted*) Ah, these whites...

SIXTO: Although there have been many who fought against these injustices along the years, it was not until the 1960's when a man named Malcolm X and another named Martin Luther King, with the Civil Rights Movement did things begin to improve.

CAPOIS: (*thoughtfully*) 100 years later...

CLERVAUX: Hmmm....I can understand that living among the whites with them still in control, it would be difficult for the blacks to become economically independent and wealthy. But Haiti is a separate sovereign country with the ability to make our own foreign policies and trade agreements.

SIXTO: It is precisely our need to trade that destroyed our economy.

CLERVAUX: Hmm...That does not make any sense. Que voulez-vous dire, Mr. Sixto? Whatever do you mean?

SIXTO: France levied a heavy tax on us in 1825. Threatening us with warships. They demanded we compensate them for the loss of Saint-Domingue. In exchange for French recognition of Haiti as a sovereign republic and in exchange for peace, they required payment of 150 million francs.

THE PANTHEON: 150 million francs!

THE PANTHEON and SLAVES make comments on the extraordinary amount

CLERVAUX: Hmm.... And how much is that in 20th century money?

SIXTO: In 1984 when I died that was a little more than half a billion dollars, I believe.

DESSALINES: (*whistles*) Kolangèt! N aksepte sa? We agreed to that?

SIXTO: Not only did we agree...to that, we accepted to borrow the money from them to pay them?

DESSALINES: (*getting off his throne to come stand among his generals*) Men, oh, oh! Ki kaka sa? Poukisa? There was no need! Who cares if France refused to recognize us! So what if they had warships! We could have fought and won again! Who is the idiot who brokered this deal?!

SIXTO: Our second president, Jean-Pierre Boyer.

CAPOIS: Boyer? How could he do this? He fought with Toussaint! How could he sell out like this to the French?

DESSALINES: Where was Christophe in all of this?

ALL FOUR MEN turn to stare at DESSALINES and take a deep breath of surprise

DESSALINES: What? I can say his name. Just no one else can.

SIXTO: After your death, Your Grace, there were many who wanted to succeed you. Haiti became divided between the king in the north and the president in the south. When the president died in 1818, he was succeeded by Boyer. Two years later the king in the north suffered a stroke and committed suicide. Boyer then united the North and the South and even conquered the Dominican Republic. All the island was under his control and his protection. He did what he thought he needed to do for the good of the country.

DESSALINES: But it was not good for the country!

SIXTO: No. this debt and the economic isolation we endured from the entire world has brought us to our knees today. We are a country mired in poverty and corruption.

CLERVAUX: Hmmm.....Corruption?

SIXTO: *(turning to CLERVAUX)* Yes, unfortunately. Our presidency has become a get rich quick scheme for scoundrels. The devil sits on the presidential throne. Every head of state from Boyer to Duvalier has been either a greedy power hungry megalomaniac, a fool, or a very unlucky man.

DESSALINES: *(going back to slump on his throne, he puts his head in his hands)* So, it has been for nothing! All our work! All our blood! Our valor! Haiti is still in bondage!

SIXTO: *(incensed)* It was not for nothing! We are surviving, Your Grace. Haiti is still here! Still fighting! And still independent.

THE PANTHEON look at SIXTO, surprised by his passion

SIXTO stands and straighten his arms towards them palms up and open

SIXTO: Every Haitian is very proud of our history, of our forefathers, of you!

DESSALINES raises his head and the four grin with pride

DESSALINES: *(Hopeful)* And we are a recognized sovereign nation?

SIXTO: Yes. France recognized us in 1825 after we agreed to pay them, of course. Soon after, so did Great Britain, and Spain, and other Western countries. It took the United States a little longer, however. Not until 1862 did they recognize Haiti.

DESSALINES: 1862? But that's 58 years after our independence! Why did it take the United States so long? Are they not the beacon for freedom and independence? They were the first American country to gain independence from Europe.

SIXTO: Well, beginning with Thomas Jefferson...

DESSALINES: *(disdainfully)* Pff... Thomas Jefferson.

SIXTO: ...slavers did everything they could to isolate Haiti, economically and politically. They couldn't stomach the idea of a free independent and prosperous country run by blacks. It wasn't until their 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, did the United States recognize Haiti and begin to trade legitimately with us.

CAPOIS: How ironic that the two countries who were forerunners of the noble ideals of liberté, égalité et fraternité have done everything they could to destroy the one country who truly fought for those ideals. Haiti.

CLERVAUX: Hmmm.....But we trade now and we have embassies in other countries, n'est-ce pas?

SIXTO: *(turning to CLERVAUX)* Yes, yes. We trade some. Our natural resources are very depleted and we are in competition with more developed countries, but we do have embassies worldwide. As a matter of fact one my *lodyans*, my stories, is about our ambassador to France and what he does to avenge our people.

DESSALINES: Oh that sounds very interesting. Sit down, sit down, *shita non*. Tell us this story, this *lodayns*.

DESSALINES signals with his hand to the SLAVES to give up their stools to SIXTO who sits facing DESSALINES, his back to the door that separates the two stages, and to the GENERALS who sit facing SIXTO in front of DESSALINES' throne. The SLAVES EXIT after bowing to DESSALINES

SIXTO: Eh bien, messieurs, Krik?

THE PANTHEON: Krak! *(leaning forward to listen)*

SIXTO: The story begins in Paris, 1965.

SIXTO emphasizes each syllable of 1965 with his hands then slaps his thighs before moving the stool closer to his captive listeners, creating a sense of intimacy. The men lean closer to him to listen

When SIXTO begins his story, STAGE RIGHT slowly fades to black as his voice diminishes

SIXTO: I was on my way to our embassy with some of my friends one afternoon. At the time, André Malraux, General DeGaulle's minister of culture, was restoring several historic buildings and monuments in the city of lights. But going down Thibault Street, I could see that the author of *The Human Condition*, despite his best intentions could not have repaired the irreparable havoc wreaked by pigeons and time upon the old building that housed our embassy.

SIXTO's voice begins to fade as pigeons fly or walk across the stage and the four listeners are weirdly startled by this but their attention quickly returns to SIXTO.

SIXTO: *(voice fading)* The seat of our mission had not been altered since I last visited the ambassador some years prior, accompanied by two of my friends. I remember, we were greeted by a rather somber French CIVIL SERVANT...

STAGE RIGHT slowly fades to black while STAGE LEFT lights up

During this transition, SIXTO goes to stand at the door separating the two STAGES. He is joined by FRIEND 1 and 2 who come from UPSTAGE RIGHT. This is done in the DARK so the audience does not see.

ACT I, SCENE II

STAGE LEFT

The Grand Salon of the Haitian Embassy in Paris, France, 1965

AT RISE: SIXTO AND HIS FRIENDS are standing at the door that splits the stage. They are on STAGE RIGHT. They ring the doorbell which chimes *La Marseillaise*. THE FRENCH CIVIL SERVANT enters from the opposite door on STAGE LEFT and *La Marseillaise* plays when he opens. He crosses the room very slowly to open the elaborate door for SIXTO and his FRIENDS. *La Marseillaise* plays again when he opens the door. On the floor and on the couch are strewn various articles of the AMBASSADOR'S clothing.

CIVIL SERVANT: Oui?

SIXTO: We've come to see the ambassador. Would you be so kind as to let him know that Maurice Sixto is here?

CIVIL SERVANT moves aside to let them ENTER and speaks as he closes the elaborate door and walks back very slowly to the opposite door not looking at them.

CIVIL SERVANT: His Excellency will certainly see you. But you'll have to be patient. Monsieur is very tired.

SIXTO: *(smiles knowingly to his friends)* I've never met one single diplomat who suffered from anemia due to overwork.

FRIEND 2: *(Laughing)* Oh wi, sa se vre.

CIVIL SERVANT: An embassy is often a reward for laziness.

FRIEND 1: Ah, wi! Yo paresse konsa! Very lazy. Very lazy these ambassadors.

SIXTO AND HIS FRIENDS laugh, then stare awkwardly at the CIVIL SERVANT as he makes his way to the LEFT DOOR very slowly. Once there he puts his hand on the handle and before opening the door says:

CIVIL SERVANT: Make yourselves comfortable, messieurs. His Excellency will be with you *(looks at his watch)* in about an hour... or maybe less.

EXIT CIVIL SERVANT. La Marseillaise plays as he opens the LEFT DOOR to EXIT.

SIXTO AND HIS FRIENDS sit down pushing aside some of the clothes to make room to sit. SIXTO sits on the couch on the left side, FRIEND 1 sits on the left chair, FRIEND 2 on the right chair

FRIEND 1: An hour?

SIXTO: Or less.

FRIEND 2: *(laughing)* He's making us wait! Ambassadors are good for that.

From OFF STAGE comes loud sounds of lovemaking, a woman's giggle and a man's low throaty groan. SIXTO AND HIS FRIENDS look around astounded and shocked

SIXTO: Apparently, ambassadors are good for that too.

SIXTO AND HIS FRIENDS laugh

Suddenly, the LEFT DOOR opens and, La Marseillaise chimes until the door closes.

The AMBASSADOR enters, draped in a red dressing gown accompanied by a disheveled BLONDE woman. They walk into the salon clinging to each other.

The AMBASSADOR is oblivious to his GUESTS, he is cuddling the BLONDE who notices SIXTO AND his FRIENDS and tries to straighten her clothing discretely as she and the AMBASSADOR make their way to the right door where they exchange a long sloppy kiss before BLONDE EXITS.

As BLONDE exits La Marseillaise chimes until the door closes behind her.

The AMBASSADOR then suddenly turns to his GUESTS and exclaims

AMBASSADOR: *(Dramatic)* Ah! My dear friends!

AMBASSADOR sits on the right side of the couch and while talking serves each one of them a glass of rum then sits back satisfied by the end of his speech

AMBASSADOR: I know, I know, I've kept you waiting! But believe me, messieurs, when you understand that I have been working on your behalf! That I have avenged you! Once you realize that I have just relived, on the banks of the Seine, the epic of 1804, you will share in my satisfaction, my pride, and my joy! Ah Ha!

SIXTO: The epic of 1804, you say! On the Seine?

FRIEND 1: What happened in 1804 on the Seine? I don't recall anything particular happening on the Seine in 1804.

AMBASSADOR downs his drink and replaces it dramatically on the table with a satisfied sigh.

As AMBASSADOR explains, he begins to dress himself with the various clothing strewn about the room, by the time he is finished speaking he is completely dressed, having shed the red robe and thrown it on the sofa at some point, accidentally hitting SIXTO's face

AMBASSADOR: Eh bien, messieurs, I was taking a stroll this morning in the Latin Quarter and upon arriving at Boulevard Saint-Michel, my eye caught the glint of a golden pin that sparkled on the ample bosom of a very pretty lady.

The AMBASSADOR stops dressing for a moment and covers his chest with his hands as if remembering the ample bosom, then he resumes dressing as he continues speaking

AMBASSADOR: I was suddenly reminded that I had to procure the novel *Romancero aux Etoiles* by Jacques Alexis, you know, that excellent writer who vibrantly entered our literary world and that of the entire world like a fireball! I headed for the nearest bookstore. Happy coincidence, messieurs! Did Cocteau not say that superstition is the art of aligning one's self with coincidence?

SIXTO AND HIS FRIENDS acquiesce

AMBASSADOR: *(stops dressing and raises his index finger as if in warning)* In fact, messieurs, certain coincidences are signs! *(continues dressing)* I found myself exactly beside that irresistible young Parisienne who just left. She was holding in her beautiful hands *Romancero aux Etoiles*. Incredible but true!

AMBASSADOR, who is DONE DRESSING, opens his arms towards the table DOWNSTAGE RIGHT of STAGE LEFT where the book Romancero aux Etoiles is displayed as if for a book signing. The salon is BLACKED OUT and a SPOT LIGHT opens on the table.

BLONDE ENTERS from OFFSTAGE LEFT and comes to stand to the RIGHT of the table and picks up a copy of the book, begins to read. BLONDE is wearing glasses and a golden star-shaped pin on her chest. The AMBASSADOR approaches the book table from the left. AMBASSADOR picks up a copy of the book opens it and pretends to read. They throw two or three interested glances at each other before the AMBASSADOR speaks.

AMBASSADOR: *(flirty)* Mademoiselle, seeing you with the same book that led me here, I feel like Pyrrhus standing before Hector's widow. And I hear cavorting in my head and in my heart, *(puts his hands on his heart)* a verse from Racine of which I am extremely fond.

BLONDE: *(pleasantly surprised and giggly)* Oh, tell me, what verse is it?

AMBASSADOR: How can I refuse? *(kneels in a poetic stance and opens his arms)* *Is it I whom you seek, Madame? (covers his heart) Am I allowed to hope as much?*

BLONDE giggles

AMBASSADOR: *(stands up and speaks with his natural demeanor again, but flirty)* I beg of you, Mademoiselle, allow me to offer you this tome? Do me the honor of accepting in the name of Jacques Alexis, whose brilliant mind has catalyzed our unforgettable encounter.

The AMBASSADOR takes the book from her hands while she removes her glasses and slips them in her pocket, he leads her to DOWNSTAGE LEFT to the bistro table. FADE OUT on the BOOK TABLE and SPOT LIGHT on the BISTRO TABLE as they sit close to one another facing the audience. The AMBASSADOR serves the wine. Their demeanor is flirty with each another.

ACCORDION MUSIC of La Vie en Rose begins to play softly in the background. Allow song to play until it fades out.

BLONDE: *(stroking the book seductively)* Have you already read *Romancero aux Etoiles*?

AMBASSADOR: Of course. But presently I am doing a bit of research in order to build a case for the defense and rehabilitation of the Indians on the island of Haiti, of which I am the ambassador.

BLONDE: *(impressed)* Ah, you are the ambassador from Haiti?

AMBASSADOR: *(bows his head slightly)* At your service, Mademoiselle.

BLONDE: *(puzzled)* And you talk of Indians?

AMBASSADOR: The first inhabitants of the island! The true masters of the land, who paid much too dearly for this calamity that we continue to call the discovery of America!

BLONDE: *(surprised)* Calamity?

AMBASSADOR: You are aware that the three ships, La Pinta, La Niña and La Santa Maria were headed to the East. I know not what evil genie, for his own amusement, no doubt, diverted them westward. It was the greatest misfortune for the Indians who lived happily on their isle of paradise.

AMBASSADOR stands up and looks up, cupping his hands as if to catch a falling star

AMBASSADOR: This island, so often compared to an emerald fallen from God's ring into the Caribbean Sea. It was a disaster for the Indians, *(raises his fist up along with his voice)* a thunderbolt in a clear sky, to watch adventurers come ashore with a crucifix in one hand and a gun in the other *(takes a crucifix from his left pocket and a gun from his right and raises them up, still looking upward)* to exterminate them in the name of religion and civilization. *(Dramatically drops his arms to his side and his head down)*

BLONDE: *(mesmerized, staring at him)* How absolutely thrilling!

AMBASSADOR replaces the crucifix and the gun in his pockets and sits back down

AMBASSADOR: Forced to toil day and night in the mines, the Indians experienced the most unimaginable of abuses. Christopher Columbus was the first to establish slavery on the island of Haiti. And Queen Isabella of Spain, while dreaming of Asian spices, was selling off her jewels to

finance this famous expedition. At the same time she was preparing a mega-tomb! (*slams his palm on the table*) When the Spaniards arrived there were two million five hundred thousand Indians on the island. Five years later, brace yourself, Mademoiselle, there were only two thousand left.

BLONDE: Didn't this same Queen Isabella vow not to remove her petticoat until the Moors were either exterminated or driven out of her shores?

AMBASSADOR: She did well to keep her word since there is talk of her beatification. Soon she will be recognized as a martyr. I deeply regret that an exceptional Indian, an exquisite, intelligent woman, whose poems, songs, and music have survived through the ages; an extraordinary woman, betrayed by the Cross of Alcantara, and cowardly condemned to a hanging death by a monster; I regret, I say, that the beautiful Anacaona, the beloved Queen of the Indians, did not have the chance to export her own civilization well before Isabella the Catholic.

STAGE LEFT FADES TO BLACK while we hear a FLUTE playing as LIGHTS FADE UP on STAGE RIGHT only.

ACT I, SCENE III

STAGE RIGHT

AT RISE: We hear a FLUTE playing music

SETTING is the same as Opening scene of ACT I except that the LOAS have been replaced by ZEMIS. ANACAONA's man SERVANT enters from UPSTAGE carrying a golden staff and stands to the right of the throne.

ANACAONA enters from UPSTAGE preceded by two GIRLS who throw yellow petals on the ground before her path. She is followed by a teenage BOY who carries a large palm leaf fanning ANACAONA.

ANACAONA wears a crown of gold flowers and carries, arms crossed on her chest, one small golden staff in each hand. As she enters to sit on the throne her SERVANT shouts:

SERVANT: All Hail! All Hail! Queen Anacaona! Ruler of the fourth kingdom of Xaragua, sister of Bohechío, chief of Xaragua, wife of Caonabo, chief of Maguana! Golden flower! And last of the five caciques who ruled the island of Ayiti Boyo Kiskeya.

ANACAONA sits on the throne, her back straight not touching the chair. The girls sit cross-legged on either side of the throne. The boy stands next to the throne still fanning ANACAONA.

FLUTE MUSIC FADE, to very LOW

ANACAONA: *(outraged)* Did I hear, they have made Queen Isabella a martyr?

SERVANT: Yes, Golden Flower.

ANACAONA: For refusing to remove her skirt until the Moors left her country? What profanity is this?

SERVANT: It is indeed profane, Golden Flower.

ANACAONA: I refused to remove my skirt to be ravaged by the lecherous Spaniards and they hung me for it! Which of the two of us is the true martyr? I reigned over my people in peace before these Spanish devils arrived on our land to destroy us, on that treacherous queen's orders!

Annoyed, ANACAONA waves the BOY away, and he sits cross-legged next to GIRL 2 laying the fan down.

GIRL 1: They stole our gold!

GIRL 2: Deceived us with lies and false promises!

BOY: Raped our women!

SERVANT: Enslaved our men and murdered our children with their diseased bodies.

ANACAONA: How can someone who caused the destruction of an entire race; waged war against many nations so that millions died in her name; how can someone with more lust for power than love for human life be granted the status of martyr, while her victims disappear from human memory? How can she be rewarded for her crimes, while I hanged for my valor! Where is my husband?

SERVANT: Dead, Golden Flower!

ANACAONA: Yes, my beloved, brave Caonabo! He fought valiantly but Columbus, the deceiver, had him captured and shipped to Spain!

SERVANT: We thank the zemis that your beloved husband our great Cacique Caonabo never arrived in Spain and blessedly died on his voyage there!

ANACAONA: Yes. I thank the zemi Yucahu, god of the Sea, for his mercy in sparing my proud husband the humiliation of being paraded in front of that terrible queen like some oddity.

GIRL 1: As if we were the ones who were strange looking!

GIRL 2: They were the strange ones! The likes of which we had never before seen!

BOY: They came here with skin as white as devils, crosses and guns for arms, and forked tongues!

ANACAONA: We treated them kindly even so, and they repaid us in blood, and fire! We made them a feast! An arieto like none before, to show our willingness to trade and treat with them.

GIRL 1: We sang ballads and gave them food and made merry with them.

ANACAONA: And how did they thank us?

BOY: They locked us in the hall and set it on fire!

GIRL 2: They wanted to burn us alive! *(Cries softly and leans head on BOY's shoulder)*

GIRL 1: Most of us died. Those who managed to escape were chased down and cut down.

SERVANT: Their legs chopped off by Spanish swords. Although they spared some of us. Those they let live, they enslaved.

BOY: But you survived the fire and your legs were not cut off, Golden Flower! The zemis be praised that our queen was spared!

ANACAONA: I was not spared! That degenerate Spanish governor Ovando offered me life in exchange for my bed. As if I would ever let him defile me.

SERVANT: He lusted after your beauty.

ANACAONA: But I lusted for my freedom and my dignity, so I chose death.

SERVANT: He condemned you to hang.

ANACAONA: And I went gladly to the gallows!

ENTER GUAROCUYA from UPSTAGE

SERVANT: Who goes there?

GUAROCUYA: It is I, Guarocuya, your nephew, Golden Flower!

GUAROCUYA comes to stand before the throne sideways to the audience

ANACAONA: Nephew! I thought they spared you! I thought you alive and a Catholic!

GUAROCUYA: I am no longer alive nor a Catholic!

ANACAONA: They stole you from us after they burned your father, my brother, Magiocatex, in that treacherous fire they set at the peace talks. I heard they raised you in a monastery and taught you their ways, made you a slave and a Christian.

GUAROCUYA: Yes, they tried. They even changed my name to Henry.

ANACAONA: Henry?

GUAROCUYA: Enriquillo, for short.

ANACAONA: How did you live that life, my nephew? You, the son of a cacique! The rightful heir to my brother, your uncle Bohecio! You should have ruled Xaragua and Managua upon my death! Did they succeed in turning you into one of them, into a Catholic Spaniard?

GUAROCUYA: No, Golden Flower. I kept the tradition. I married your granddaughter Mencia. Although the Spaniards called her Lucía.

ANACAONA: I have a granddaughter?

GUAROCUYA: She was born of the rape of Higuemota, your daughter.

ANACAONA: (*angrily*) Of course, these Spanish fiends can only assuage their lust by raping our women and corrupting our blood with half-breed children! Oh, Higuemota, my daughter! Would that I had lived to spare you the indignity of giving birth to a monster's bastard!

GUAROCUYA: Mencia was a good woman, Golden Flower. But for her light skin, she looked just like you. She loved your ballads and sang them often. She had a beautiful voice, and she was beautiful just like you. Perhaps too much like you.

ANACAONA: What do you mean?

GUAROCUYA: The Spaniard who owned us....

ANACAONA: Who owned you?

GUAROCUYA: ...who enslaved us. They called it *encomienda*, meaning protection, but it was slavery.

ANACAONA: Protection? What were they protecting you from?

GUAROCUYA: The Caribs, and the pirates?

ANACAONA: Pirates? What is that?

GUAROCUYA: They are like the Caribs, but worse. They look like the Spaniards, but they speak different tongues, and travel not in canoes like Caribs but in great ships, like Columbus had when he came. A group of Tainos were assigned under the protection of a Spaniard in exchange for labor, mining or farming *lo que sea*. Legally we were free. Queen Isabella...

ANACAONA: *(interrupting, with contempt)* Pfff...Isabella

GUAROCUYA:...had forbidden slavery, but the crown could not control what the *encomendados* did to us. Valencia, the one who protected us, who owned us, who enslaved us, he put me in charge of the other men. I toiled day and night overseeing the laborers when the sun was up, and teaching them to be Catholic...

ANACAONA: *(interrupting, with disdain)* Pfff...Catholic

GUAROCUYA:... when the sun went down. At first, I believed that it was because I was the son of a *cacique* that he put me in charge of the others. But soon I realized it was to keep me away while he lusted after Mencia. She, like you, rejected his advances. This made him angry and he raped her.

ANACAONA: I was never raped. I died first, before letting any Spaniard touch me!

GUAROCUYA: Mencia wanted to die. I wanted justice.

ANACAONA: And did you get justice?

GUAROCUYA: No. It was her word against his. And because she was Taino, no one believed her.

ANACAONA: So, what did you do?

GUAROCUYA: I took a few warriors to the mountains of Cibao and waged war. We were not many, only 2000 or so, because it was hard to find able bodied men in those days. Those that the Spaniards had not murdered or beaten down through slavery were dying of the smallpox.

GIRLS: *(hugging each other in fear, whisper)* Smallpox

GUAROCUYA: We fought valiantly, Golden Flower. The Spaniards could not defeat us, so they offered us a treaty for freedom and property.

ANACAONA: Property?

GUAROCUYA: Yes, property. Their ways are not our ways. These Spaniards, they like to own things: land, people, gold. It is not our way, but it was meant to give us power. So we accepted. In the end, it didn't matter. There were too few of us left to make a difference. The Spaniards won. We are no more.

ANACAONA: Fear not, Guarocuya, my nephew. We are gone but we will never be forgotten.

ANACAONA slowly rises from her throne and comes DOWNSTAGE as she speaks with great dignity and hope . FLUTE MUSIC gets a little LOUDER but SOUND must not cover her speech

ANACAONA: The world will honor us over the devils who destroyed us. The world will admire our courage, they will never pay homage to that Italian sailor and his Spanish demons over us. Our names will resound in the voices and memories of those who come after us. The new inhabitants of Ayiti Boyo Kiskeya will not forget who we were and what we did!

STAGE RIGHT quickly FADES TO BLACK as DOWNSTAGE LEFT quickly LIGHTS UP on the Bistro table.

ACT I, SCENE IV

STAGE LEFT, DOWNSTAGE LEFT

BISTRO TABLE

AT RISE: Bistro table is SPOTLIGHTED. AMBASSADOR AND BLONDE are seated as before

AMBASSADOR: We are forgetters! We have yet to pay homage to the Indians. This is not due to neglect or error. It is a failing!

BLONDE: *(wide eyed admiring the Ambassador, she sighs)* A failing...

AMBASSADOR: Enriquillo, escaped to the heights of Mount Cibao with his two thousand survivors and took a desperate but heroic stand against those Spanish barbarians who had decimated a whole race. These two thousand Spartans of the Arawak tribe all died standing tall and with rage in their hearts. And we must salute them, Mademoiselle, as the first freedom fighters in America! *(stands, and raises his hand to his head in a military salute)*

BLONDE: *(claps excited)* Yes, yes!

AMBASSADOR: *(sits back down and takes her hands in his)* To our shame, would you believe, Mademoiselle, that in front of the splendid bay of our capital, there still stands a statue of that Italian navigator?

BLONDE: *(slips her hands out of his coquettishly)* And what is he doing there?

AMBASSADOR: I'm sure he's wondering the exact same thing?

STAGE RIGHT DOWNSTAGE CENTER SPOTLIGHTS COLUMBUS standing like a statue atop a pedestal, with the Bay of Port-au-Prince as BACKDROP. DOWNSTAGE LEFT remains spotlighted on bistro table. AMBASSADOR AND BLONDE turn their attention to COLUMBUS

COLUMBUS: *(confused)* What am I doing here? Oh no! Did I get lost again?

AMBASSADOR gets up and walks towards COLUMBUS accusingly pointing his finger at him. BLONDE'S gaze follows AMBASSADOR.

AMBASSADOR: This indelicate conquistador landed uninvited at the head of a band of gold-thirsty mercenaries to torture the Indians, slaughter them and rob them of their wealth! J'accuse!

COLUMBUS cowers in shame and fear

BLONDE: I really don't see what he's doing there.

STAGE RIGHT quickly FADES TO BLACK and AMBASSADOR returns to bistro table and sits

BLONDE: Is it to prove that the criminal always returns to the scene of the crime?

AMBASSADOR: I have not seen a statue of Il Duce in Addis Ababa, nor a statue of the Führer at the airport in Tel Aviv. Kafka died much too soon! He missed the opportunity to write a good book.

BLONDE and AMBASSADOR turn their attention to STAGE RIGHT DOWNSTAGE CENTER that SPOTLIGHTS KAFKA who ENTERS from UPSTAGE RIGHT. He begins pacing back and forth in front of COLUMBUS, stopping briefly when an idea occurs to him. He is oblivious to COLUMBUS's presence. As KAFKA deliberates, COLUMBUS tries to get him to notice him and is disappointed when he doesn't.

KAFKA: *(coughing and wheezing, in a German accent)* An idea! An idea for a new book! What can I write about that is bizarre, nightmarishly complex and especially incredibly illogical?

KAFKA stops pacing for a moment as if an idea has just occurred to him

KAFKA: Ah! Of course! The celebration of a murderer by his victims!

KAFKA begins pacing again

KAFKA: But who? Who is the worst, the most depraved of all criminals and yet the most celebrated by his own victims?

KAFKA: *(mumbles to himself but loud enough for audience to hear)* Ghengis Khan? No, no. Too remote... Henry the 8th? Maybe? But, no, no. Not bizarre enough.... Napoleon?! No. Not celebrated enough....

KAFKA stops pacing and faces the audience

KAFKA: Columbus!

As KAFKA speaks COLUMBUS looks excited and proud to be chosen at first, then puzzled, then defensively outraged, and finally disappointed

KAFKA: Yes! Of course! What could be more bizarre, more illogical than celebrating a man who provoked the complete annihilation of an entire race and the enslavement of two whole continents? Columbus Day is the most bizarre of celebrations! That is what I must write about! Maybe then the world will understand what a travesty it is!

KAFKA begins to cough and wheeze profusely, falls on the floor.

KAFKA: Oh, no! I die.

KAFKA dies. COLUMBUS looks dejected.

Pigeons walk back across STAGE but in opposite direction than first time.

STAGE RIGHT AND LEFT FADE TO BLACK

INTERMISSION

Act II

ACT II, SCENE I

STAGE LEFT, DOWNSTAGE LEFT

BISTRO TABLE

AT RISE: BOTH STAGES ARE DARK except for the SPOTLIGHT on BISTRO TABLE DOWNSTAGE LEFT. AMBASSADOR and BLONDE are seated as before.

BLONDE: Oh, Ambassador! This is all absolutely fascinating. I get chills just listening to you!

AMBASSADOR: Do you, my dear?

BLONDE: (flirty) Tingles...

AMBASSADOR laughs deep in his throat flattered.

BLONDE: But I thought Haitians today are not descended from the Indians.

AMBASSADOR: No, my dear, we are not. But we share in their tragedy. You see, once the Indians had been exterminated, there still remained the need to seek the Spanish god within the gold mines. Our forefathers, purchased in various parts of Africa, and transported like cattle in the holds of slave ships to the West Indies, took up the burden in those mines and on plantations.

BLONDE: Oh, how awful!

AMBASSADOR: These uprooted unfortunate people, the damned of the earth, as Fanon would say, doused the Indian soil with their sweat, their blood, with all sorts of humiliations and woes to turn this enchanted island into the most prosperous of colonies: the granary of France! The Pearl of the Antilles! But also a laboratory of human misery.

As the AMBASSADOR speaks, DOWNSTAGE FADES TO BLACK while STAGE RIGHT LIGHTS UP. Twelve black SLAVES, eight men and four women, in chains and nearly naked, are being led by two white OVERSEERS towards an auction block. Three of the slaves are GABART, CAPOIS and DESSALINES. OVERSEER 1 sports a rifle and OVERSEER 2 cracks a whip above the slaves.

OVERSEER 2: Let's go niggers! C'mon get a move on! Lazy sons of bitches! Get up there! Time to be auctioned off!

The OVERSEERS line the slaves up on the auction block as two richly dressed white PLANTER couples arrive from UPSTAGE to bid on the slaves. They stand to face the auction block. The WIVES are coquettish and carry fans and purses, the PLANTERS are snooty and walk with canes.

The AUCTIONEER enters from UPSTAGE and takes his place on the auction block. OVERSEER 2 approaches a SLAVE GIRL and brings her forward. The AUCTIONEER begins the

bidding as the two PLANTERS silently bid for the SLAVE GIRL by raising their auction signs. At the end of the bidding the AUCTIONEER slams his gavel.

AUCTIONEER: Sold to the highest bidder!

PLANTER 1 goes up on auction block and grabs the SLAVE GIRL as the other PLANTERS clap

PLANTER 1: Eh, you're a pretty one! A little lighter than the others. I like your color. We can't have that burned by the tropical sun. I won't put you to work in the fields. You'll be a house slave! Good to warm my nights! *(strokes SLAVE GIRL'S chin with his finger)* Would you like that, ma chérie?

SLAVE GIRL jerks her head away from PLANTER 1

PLANTER 1: (angrily) You're feisty, I see. I'll show you how to respect your master. C'mere girl!

PLANTER 1 forces the SLAVE GIRL off the auction block and throws her down on the ground. SLAVE GIRL protests while PLANTER 1 kneels atop of her and begins to undo his belt ready to rape her while OVERSEER 1 and OVERSEER 2 move to stand in front of them to block the audience's view of the rape. WIVES move to DOWNSTAGE, facing the audience

WIFE 1: Pff... I don't think she's that pretty. Her lips are so thick and did you see that big behind? I think she looks like a gorilla!

WIFE 2: Well, your husband certainly seems to like it, ma chère!

WIFE 1 gives WIFE 2 a nasty look and taps her arm with her fan. They both turn their backs to the audience and shake their bouffant posteriors giggling, then turning back to face the audience, they both take out their mirrors and start smacking and puffing their lips and giggling to see if they can make them bigger.

ENTER from UPSTAGE a well-dressed MULATTO. He whistles and tips his hat at the PLANTER'S WIVES who giggle, flattered. Immediately, OVERSEER 2 turns and whips the MULATTO who trips and frightened rushes towards OFFSTAGE via DOWNSTAGE RIGHT, chased by OVERSEER 2

OVERSEER 2: You uppity nigger! I'll teach you to respect our women!

MULATTO: I'm a free man! I haven't done anything to deserve your whip!

OVERSEER 2: You ain't got no right to look and whistle at white women, boy! You a dead man!

EXIT MULATTO and OVERSEER 2

SLAVE GIRL screams and PLANTER 1 smacks her and the WIVES hide their faces with their fans and return to stand next to PLANTER 2.

GABART, CAPOIS, and DESSALINES and the other men SLAVES move to help the SLAVE GIRL but OVERSEER 1 points his rifle at them and shoots one of the men SLAVES dead.

PLANTER 2: *(disappointed)* Aw! I wanted that one!

The AUCTIONEER kicks the dead SLAVE off the auction block and grabs one of the other men SLAVES and brings him forward.

AUCTIONEER: How about this one!

The SLAVE spits in the AUCTIONEER'S face. The WIVES exclaim in shock. DRUMS beat while The AUCTIONEER, OVERSEERS and the two PLANTERS grab the SLAVE and drag him off the auction block and begin beating him while the WIVES cheer and egg them on, leaving the raped SLAVE GIRL exposed and curled in a fetal position on the ground crying.

The other SLAVES begin to revolt, but OVERSEER 1 shoots another man SLAVE dead. The AUCTIONEER, PLANTERS AND OVERSEERS stop beating the SLAVE who has died. DRUMS STOP. They kick him over next to the other two dead SLAVES.

AUCTIONEER: *(pointing to CAPOIS, GABART and DESSALINES)* You! You! And you! Take these dead niggers out of here.

CAPOIS, GABART and DESSALINES look at each other, then quietly, they each grab one dead body by the arms and drag them OFF STAGE as they begin to sing. The whites move aside to let them pass.

CAPOIS, GABART and DESSALINES: *(looking at the whites with resentment they sing)* Bon tan se mwen, move tan se mwen, n'a wè sa e! Bon tan se mwen, move tan se mwen, n'a wè sa e!

CAPOIS, GABART and DESSALINES: *(looking at the slaves left on the auction block as if signaling them with their song)* W'a sonje koze nou te koze a? Es ke'n sonje paròl nou te pale a?

The SLAVES left on the auction block respond to their song by acquiescing as they sing:

SLAVES: *(their look seems to say "don't worry" as they sing to CAPOIS, GABART and DESSALINES)* Mwen gen yon shyen yo rele Mabezwen! Mwen gen yon lòt yo rele Sizo Kabpaka, m ap mande sharite nan pye fanmim yo! Sizo Kabpaka, m ap mande sharite!

CAPOIS, GABART and DESSALINES: *(As they exit off stage with their burden they remind the others left on the auction block singing)* Sonje koze nou te koze a!

SLAVES: *(confirming)* Wi nou sonje paròl nou te pale a!

AUCTIONEER returns to his podium.

WIFE 2: They're very musical people aren't they?

WIFE 1: Crazy niggers.

AUCTIONEER: Well! That was interesting. Let us continue with the bidding, shall we?

*ENTER YOUNG CLERVAUX (this can be same actor who played ANACAONA'S fan bearer)
He rushes towards PLANTER 2*

YOUNG CLERVAUX: Papa, Papa! I've just returned from France.

PLANTER 2: How many times have I told you not to call me that in public?!

YOUNG CLERVAUX: I'm sorry Pap... I mean Sir.

PLANTER 2: What news do you bring from France?

YOUNG CLERVAUX: There's been a revolution! King Louis is dead! Guillotined! And the National Assembly has given us, all free people of color equal rights under the law.

PLANTER 2: Equal rights?

PLANTER 2 and the other whites begin to laugh. Suddenly YOUNG CLERVAUX notices the raped SLAVE GIRL. He approaches her and helps her up.

YOUNG CLERVAUX: Sister! What have they done to you?

SLAVE GIRL: They raped me, like your father raped our mother and now I will bear a half-breed mulatto bastard like you!

SLAVE GIRL angrily wrests herself out of his arms and PLANTER 2 puts his arm around YOUNG CLERVAUX leading him away from her.

PLANTER 2: How many times have I told you to stay away from trash like that?

YOUNG CLERVAUX: But she is my sister.

PLANTER 2: She is a slave and barely human. You are better than her. White blood runs through your veins. As my son, you were born free. I've sent you to be educated in France, and you can have your own slaves if you like (*points to one of the slaves*). Here! Do you like that one? I will buy him for you. You can live just like a white man.

YOUNG CLERVAUX: (*angrily wrests himself from his father's embrace*) I cannot vote or run for office or be treated equally in the courts like a white man. I cannot have a job that a white man wants, nor live in a white man's neighborhood, or marry a white woman! Yet I am forced to

enter the military and a white man can murder me without going to prison for it. My black mother is still a slave. I am not free.

DRUMS BEAT. From OFF STAGE, VOICES sing as the whites, startled and fearful, search from where the voices are coming:

VOICES FROM OFFSTAGE: *(loud)* Bon tan se mwen, move tan se mwen, n a wè sa e! Bon tan se mwen, move tan se mwen, n a wè sa e! Es ke'n sonje koze nou te koze a!

SLAVES: *(respond in song)* Wi nou sonje paròl nou te pale a!

YOUNG CLERVAUX grabs the musket from OVERSEER 1 and shoots him. DRUMS STOP. OVERSEER staggers back UPSTAGE and dies OFFSTAGE.

YOUNG CLERVAUX: *(shouts)* Koupe tèt! Boule kay!

DRUMS BEAT. STAGE LEFT LIGHTS UP. It is no longer the Embassy salon but an extension of STAGE RIGHT. SCENERY is a town on fire. The bistro table DOWNSTAGE RIGHT is also GONE, along with the AMBASSADOR and the BLONDE.

The SLAVES attack PLANTER 2 and the WIVES with machetes that were hidden around the auction block, grabbing PLANTER 2 and the WIVES from behind and slitting their throats. PLANTER 2 and the WIVES scream and die rolling on the ground to exit UPSTAGE RIGHT. YOUNG CLERVAUX chases PLANTER 1 towards UPSTAGE RIGHT. They BOTH EXIT.

Enter ROCHAMBEAU (this can be the same actor who portrayed Columbus) accompanied by three French SOLDIERS (these can be actors who portrayed the French civil servant, the dead overseer and Kafka), one of whom carries the French flag. They enter from DOWNSTAGE RIGHT and give OVERSEER 2 a gun and a soldier's uniform. OVERSEER 2 puts on the uniform and takes the gun. He joins them in shooting at the SLAVES while the SLAVES/REBELS hide behind boulders throwing rocks at them.

CAPOIS, GABART and CLERVAUX enter from UPSTAGE LEFT in full military uniform along with three more SLAVES/REBELS (These can be the actors who portrayed the deceased slaves). The other SLAVE/REBELS join them. CAPOIS is on horseback. Actors and horse run in place to convey distance between the armies. One of the bullets from the French SOLDIERS shoots CAPOIS's hat off.

CAPOIS: *(shouts wielding his sword)* En avant, en avant! Liberté ou la mort! Liberty or death!

ROCHAMBEAU: We need reinforcements!

Enter four more SOLDIERS from DOWNSTAGE RIGHT (these can be the actors who portrayed the Planters and their wives). The French SOLDIERS, crouching to avoid the rocks

being thrown at them, continue shooting, but become sick with fever. One of the bullets hits CAPOIS's horse and the horse falls. CAPOIS stands back up and continues charging!

CAPOIS: *(shouts wielding his sword)* En avant, en avant, Mwen di! Liberté ou la mort! Liberty or death!

ROCHAMBEAU stands up, sharply opens his arms in a "stop" motion, and the DRUMS STOP. Everyone stops. He removes his hat and walks 5 paces towards CAPOIS. CAPOIS hesitates at first then walks 5 paces to meet him.

ROCHAMBEAU: I have never witnessed such courage on the field of battle before in my life. My compliments, *Capitaine*.

ROCHAMBEAU salutes him, and CAPOIS does the same. Thunder and lightning explode, and ROCHAMBEAU turns to go but DESSALINES steps forward.

DESSALINES: General Rochambeau!

ROCHAMBEAU turns back towards DESSALINES and the HEAVY SOUND OF FALLING RAIN is heard.

DESSALINES: You would be wise to surrender. The loas have sent this storm to help us defeat you. You cannot win against the loas and us too. *(puts his hand on CAPOIS'S shoulder. CLERVAUX and GABART advance to stand behind them)*

DESSALINES: Look at your men. They are sick with yellow fever. You cannot win this battle. Vertieres is ours for the taking!

ROCHAMBEAU: *(Looks up at the sky then at the SOLDIERS sick and dying. He signals the SOLDIER that was holding the flag. The SOLDIER brings him the French flag)* We will retreat this very night.

ROCHAMBEAU hands the flag to Dessalines and turns back to exit DOWNSTAGE RIGHT with his soldiers. The REBEL SLAVES rejoice and DESSALINES tears the white portion of the flag off and puts together the red and the blue. Then looking at CLERVAUX, DESSALINES says:

DESSALINES: This flag now symbolizes the union of the blacks and the mulattos. On this day, January 1st 1804, I, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, declare that Haiti is a free and independent republic!

EVERYONE begins to sing the Haitian National Anthem (La Dessalinienne, to the rhythm of La Marseillaise) while marching

ALL: *Pour le Pays, pour les ancêtres, marchons unis, marchons unis. Dans nos rangs, point de traîtres ! Du sol soyons seuls maîtres. Marchons unis, marchons unis. Pour le Pays, pour les ancêtres. Marchons, marchons, marchons unis. Pour le Pays, pour les ancêtres.*

STAGE FADES TO BLACK

ACT II, SCENE II

STAGE RIGHT

Nan Guinée, Hall of Revolutionaries

AT RISE: STAGE RIGHT is decorated as in the Opening scene of ACT I. DESSALINES is seated on the throne. GABART, CAPOIS, CLERVAUX and SIXTO are seated on the stools as before.

SIXTO: 1804 was the greatest year in our history! The greatest year in the history of the Americas! History of the entire world!

DESSALINES: January 1st was the culmination of our great revolution! We avenged our people on that great day. We, a band of slave rebels defeated the greatest army in the world.

CAPOIS: Napoleon's army! To establish the first Black republic in the world! Haiti became free and independent on January 1st 1804!

DESSALINES: Yes, Capois! Your unyielding courage led us there! *Mezami!* I can't believe what you did at Fort Breda at the battle of Vertieres! Charging like that in the midst of flying bullets, and even after your horse was shot, you got up and continued charging! (He gets up and twirls his arm above his head as if brandishing a sword) Wielding your sword above your head, shouting to your troops to keep moving forward! "Devant, Devant, *gason!*" What a frightful sight you were!

DESSALINES sits back proudly

DESSALINES: (*smiling at CAPOIS*) You were like an avenging angel. Rochambau trembled in his boots! He called for a cease-fire just to salute you!

CAPOIS: Yes, I remember. But you, CLERVAUX, you started it all.

CLERVAUX: Hmmm....Moi? What did I do?

CAPOIS: What do you mean, what did you do? Stop it with your false modesty! You fired the first shot! You, and Ti-GABART were the last ones with me when we pushed back against Rochambau's desperate counter-attack and defeated them.

GABART: Eh...eh...My name is Gabart, tande, not Ti-Gabart. Why you have to call me Ti-Gabart? Haitian's always diminishing each other with that word Ti. Ti-Marie, Little Marie, Ti-Sentaniz, Little Sentaniz, Ti-Joe, Little Joe! We are not Ti-anything. We are far from little.

DESSALINES: Ahh! Don't take offense Gabart. We only call you Ti because you were the youngest of us all. The youngest of my generals. You were just a boy, but you showed the courage of ten grown men.

CAPOIS: Well, if it wasn't for that storm with so much thunder and lightning! It was like a deluge! Who knows what would have happened! Who knows if Rochambau would have retreated from Vertieres?

DESSALINES: He would have. The loas were with us on that famous November night. That storm was not a coincidence. The loas, *(He turns to the paintings and names them all, the light hitting each painting as he does so)* Dambala, Ayida, Ogun, Azaka Erzulie, and our High Priest, hougan BOUKMAN! Who became a loa upon his death! He officiated the ceremony at Bois Cayman! The ceremony that began it all. When the loas sealed the fate of our enemies.

There is a brief silence as everyone acquiesces by nodding gently. Then CAPOIS starts to sing and the others (except for SIXTO) chime in one at a time DESSALINES being the last to join in and the DRUMS JOIN IN as they repeat the verse the third time.

CAPOIS: Dambala Wedo, se bon, se bon. Ayida Wedo, se bon, se bon. Le ma monte chwal mwen gen moun kap kriye, Le ma monte chwal mwen gen moun kap kriye.

STAGE RIGHT FADES TO BLACK and DOWNSTAGE LEFT LIGHTS UP. The AMBASSADOR and BLONDE are seated at the Bistro table as before.

BLONDE: Oh, Your Excellency, Europeans have no history. Yours is unique. This is the only slave revolt of this kind that I know of. But let's get back to the Indians. I'm tremendously interested in them. Wasn't it Nietzsche who said: *Those who have not survived, did not deserve to live?*

AMBASSADOR: I would kindly ask you to keep Nietzsche in context, where he remains a humanist who fought against the metaphysical philosophy of the Middle Ages in order to give man his place in the universe. This philosopher believed in the will of man, the determination of man, in the power of man. Everything we know, Mademoiselle, we know it through man. These maniacs have taken Nietzsche out of context in order to appropriate the right to annihilate millions of defenseless people in the name of the most aberrant of absurdities: the superiority of one race!

BLONDE: Oh, you are so right!

AMBASSADOR: Based on this racist theory we can simply burn the Charter of Human Rights, renounce any struggle for human dignity and equality! I do not understand how one can justify these horrible genocides, these odious selections with Nietzsche or Darwin bibles. It is much too convenient an amnesty granted to today's destroyers, to all those satisfied dictators, comfortably seated in their armchairs atop thousands of corpses. They need only brandish a Nietzsche to ease their conscience and rejoice that they've helped erase legions of opponents or suspects who, according to them, did not deserve to live.

AMBASSADOR stands

AMBASSADOR: We cannot allow mitigating circumstances for assassins either in uniforms or suits who conceived, ordered, financed, or encouraged, these grim executions, whether these murderers be academics or illiterates! *(Slams his fist on the table)*

BLONDE: *(clapping)* Bravo!

AMBASSADOR: *(raising his index finger upward as if pontificating)* The father of relativity, the great Albert Einstein himself, would have perished had he not fled Nazi Germany, because, according to some, he did not deserve to live. I completely agree with the great contemporary French writer Jean-Paul Sartre when he maintains that under all circumstance, all men must have the power to choose life. These useless killings, Mademoiselle, make me think of the great Elizabethan poet Lord Byron who wrote: *The death of any man diminishes me.* *(He dramatically slams his fist to his chest and bows his head)*

BLONDE: *(excited and provocative with double entendre, she stands and approaches him)* I can't wait for you to expose your...briefs! I'm already burning with the desire to visit your...island, to admire your beautiful...country, to deepen my understanding of your wonderful...story.

AMBASSADOR: *(encircling her shoulders with one arm)* It is a dream that I can help you realize with minimal delay, my dear. According to a myth of international law, the embassy is an extension of the country. Therefore, I would like to invite you to empty a glass of champagne on Haitian soil without ever leaving Paris.

BLONDE: It would be my pleasure.

AMBASSADOR: I will make sure of it.

AMBASSADOR and BLONDE exit to the LEFT. STAGE LEFT FADES TO BLACK

ACT II, SCENE III

STAGE LEFT

The Grand Salon of the Haitian Embassy in Paris, France, 1965

AT RISE: SIXTO, his FRIENDS and the AMBASSADOR are seated with drinks in their hands very jovial. Enter CIVIL SERVANT from DOOR on LEFT of STAGE LEFT. La Marseillaise chimes until door is closed. CIVIL SERVANT carries a box.

CIVIL SERVANT: Your Excellency, your package has arrived.

AMBASSADOR: Wonderful! Put it down here on the table. And bring us another bottle or rum, will you?

CIVIL SERVANT: Very good, sir.

CIVIL SERVANT walks very slowly toward AMBASSADOR and GUESTS. THEY watch him in awkward silence as he approaches and puts the box on the table, then walks slowly back toward LEFT DOOR of STAGE LEFT. AMBASSADOR AND GUESTS watch him in awkward silence. EXIT CIVIL SERVANT. La Marseillaise chimes until door closes

SIXTO: What's in the box?

AMBASSADOR: Ah! This box contains the crowns of our nation!

AMBASSADOR stands to open box and remove its contents. As he speaks, he passes each hat to SIXTO who after admiring it passes it to FRIEND 1 who then passes it to FRIEND 2 who then puts it down on the coffee table. When the AMBASSADOR has removed the third and last hat, he places the box on the floor.

AMBASSADOR: These are reproductions that I had commissioned from a nearby haberdashery (*removes the hat and hands it to SIXTO*). Here is a duplicate of the hat of our esteemed leader, the father of our nation Toussaint L'Ouverture! (*Removes the crown with extreme care*) And this, messieurs, is an exact replica of King Henri Christophe's crown! Look how precise! It almost seems as if I am holding the very crown itself! (*passes it to SIXTO with much care*)

FRIEND 1: Are these real jewels?

AMBASSADOR: Oh, no, my friend! Who could afford such luxury? Not I! Not yet! (*removes the last hat*) And this is Capois La Mort's hat. I had it made specifically with the hole put there by a French bullet that though it tried, could not deter this great general from forging onward. Even after his horse was killed right from under him, he pressed on, messieurs, he pressed on to win the decisive battle of Vertieres!

FRIEND 1 and 2 murmur with awe.

ENTER CIVIL SERVANT from LEFT DOOR. La Marseillaise chimes until he closes the door. He carries a tray with a new bottle of Barbancourt rum and walks slowly to place it on the coffee table. AMBASSADOR and GUESTS watch him in awkward silence.

AMBASSADOR: Ah Bon! Merci, merci bien.

CIVIL SERVANT: Will His Excellency require anything else this evening.

AMBASSADOR: No. You may retire.

CIVIL SERVANT: Very good, sir.

CIVIL SERVANT walks slowly to left door. AMBASSADOR AND GUESTS watch him leave in awkward silence. EXIT CIVIL SERVANT. La Marseillaise chimes until door closes.

AMBASSADOR: Bon! Let's get back to our sheep! Where was I?

FRIEND 1: You were about to tell us what happened once you brought the girl back here?

SIXTO: You can guess what happened.

FRIEND 2: Yes, but we want details, details.

FRIEND 1: I bet it was something else, eh? That girl is beautiful!

FRIEND 2: Tell us, Your Excellency. How did you....? You know...

AMBASSADOR: Messieurs, I lived the most beautiful dream of my life which strangely enough was actually a series of possessions! I became possessed, I tell you! *(He stands)* At first, it was the spirit of our great High Priest BOUKMAN himself who entered me, as I led her to my bedroom for a new ceremony of the Cayman Woods, or rather, should I say, the ebony wood. *(Makes a straight fist with his hand and laughs)*

FRIEND 2: *(slaps his knee)* Se sa!

AMBASSADOR: In as little time as it takes to say it, I had divested myself of these western frills. *(He removes his jacket)* The gazelle in front of me was fascinated by the magic of the African night, deep, mysterious and bewitching. I ravished her with my eyes and she made my head throb. *(again with his fist turned up he punches the air near his pelvis)*

FRIEND 1 and 2 laugh, but SIXTO squirms uncomfortably

As the AMBASSADOR speaks STAGE RIGHT LIGHTS UP SLOWLY and DRUMMERS emerge from UPSTAGE RIGHT beating their drums softly and slowly. DRUMMERS position themselves DOWNSTAGE RIGHT. As the AMBASSADORS' speech accelerates, so does the intensity of the DRUM BEAT.

STAGE LEFT SLOWLY FADES TO BLACK as AMBASSADOR, SIXTO AND FRIENDS are SPOTLIGHTED. AMBASSADOR remains standing, looking up as if talking to a deity in the sky above, while SIXTO AND FRIENDS stare up at him as if he were a deity above them.

WHILE AMBASSADOR SPEAKS, two DANCERS, one, the female DANCER in a green bodysuit decorated to look like a vine, and the other, a male DANCER, in a brown bodysuit decorated to look like a tree, emerge: one from UPSTAGE RIGHT OF RIGHT STAGE and the other from UPSTAGE LEFT OF RIGHT STAGE. DANCERS advance to CENTER STAGE, then turn towards each other and advance towards one another, then, circle each other to finally cling to one another, serving as the POTOMITAN...

AMBASSADOR: Yes, messieurs, my eyes devoured her with a lust and impatience that you can easily understand. Slowly, she advanced to cling to me in unconditional surrender, like a supple vine wraps itself around an ancient tree.

AS AMBASSADOR speaks, FOUR DANCERS: two men and two women (the HOUNSIS) come from UPSTAGE RIGHT. Two carry a white sheet, each holding on to opposite ends of the sheet with both hands above their heads, two carrying a blue sheet the same way. They circle the POTOMITAN with the sheets then one HOUNSI hands one end of the white sheet to the TREE while another HOUNSI hands one end of the blue sheet to the vine. The POTOMITAN wrap themselves together with their ends of the sheets, while the two other HOUNSIS pin the other ends of the sheets to the ground to make a peristil that looks like an open tent

AMBASSADOR: I seized her to breathe in her soul in one of those long, wet kisses, as voluptuous and as endless as the mystical embrace of the Blue and White Nile along the banks of Khartoum. Sensational spectacle, messieurs!

Enter LA PLACE from UPSTAGE RIGHT carrying a machete that he wields while dancing. His choreography must interpret the AMBASSADOR'S words.

AMBASSADOR: Suddenly, I became our brilliant forefather Toussaint L'Ouverture himself at the Battle of Snake Gully. *(AMBASSADOR grabs Toussaint's hat and puts it on)*

The four HOUNSIS dance a mixture of warlike movements and lovemaking movements. The choreography of the dance must interpret the AMBASSADOR'S words.

AMBASSADOR: *(wiggles his fingers as he runs them up and down the air in front of him)* Like our great leader, I applied the same dexterity, the same speed in roaming her flanks and exploring her two beautiful tangerines while my fingers, frantically climbed and descended all along the surface of her beautiful, petite and lithe body, *(exchanges Dessalines hat for Christophe's crown)*...

The HOUNSIS dance to go OFFSTAGE while LA PLACE blows a flame from his mouth

AMBASSADOR: ...to light the three tiers of her being in the manner of our great monarch, King Henri Christophe whose hand, armed with a torch, set fire to the four corners of the city of Cap-Haitian.

The HOUNSIS return ONSTAGE carrying bowls of fire and ceremoniously offer them to the four cardinal points and place each bowl at the four corners of the peristil, then, resume dancing. The dance becomes more and more intense as the DRUMBEAT increases with the AMBASSADOR'S speech. The HOUNSIS dance as if possessed.

The BLONDE emerges from UPSTAGE and joins the dance, partnering with LA PLACE. They take CENTERSTAGE to interpret the AMBASSADOR'S words. BLONDE is dressed in a bodysuit decorated as the French flag and LA PLACE and the BLONDE'S choreography simulates coitus in interpretative yet tasteful dance movements.

AMBASSADOR: She was at her climax. Her mind, her heart and her senses were aflame! I felt myself invaded by the ardor of the hero of Vertières but the fort of Crête-à-Pierrot was my specific goal. In a furious and clear instant (*exchanges the crown for Capois' hat*) I made a play for the under bush and I penetrated the fort shouting: (*shouts*) Freedom or death! I am master of this fort!

DRUMS and DANCERS freeze for a brief moment

FRIEND 1 and 2: (*in anticipation*) And...And...

DRUMS AND DANCERS resume, still interpreting the AMBASSADOR'S words.

AMBASSADOR: She quivered beneath my conquering blade. What rapture! Oh what harmony! Africa mingled with Europe! What synchronicity! What deliverance! But especially messieurs, what victory! It was the victory of a slave, evening the score with the slave master, who, in a moment of feverish lust, had forced our Dahomean grandmother under the tropical sun in the middle of a coffee plantation.

DRUMS AND DANCERS lower their intensity and DANCERS subtly dance towards OFFSTAGE RIGHT while SLAVE GIRL comes from UPSTAGE running as if fleeing, followed by PLANTER 1 who is chasing her. Once DOWNSTAGE RIGHT CENTER, PLANTER 1 catches her and pulls her to him tries to forcibly kiss her, she resists.

SLAVE GIRL: No, please! Leave me alone!

PLANTER 1: You are my property! I will do with you as I will!

PLANTER 1 tries to kiss her again. SLAVE GIRL wrests herself away, tries to run, trips; PLANTER 1 tears her dress; she gets back up and runs OFFSTAGE; he chases her OFFSTAGE.

DRUMS increase their intensity. Choreography of LA PLACE and BLONDE continues to interpret the AMBASSADORS'S words.

AMBASSADOR: *(voice grows with ardor, until he shouts the last line)* And as her grateful whimpers filled the room and reached my ears like an aphrodisiac symphony. She sang me her love, she crooned me her pleasure. And, when the psychological moment arrived, messieurs....Africa, the black continent, drenched all of Europe!

DRUMS STOP. LA PLACE and BLONDE STOP. After a brief moment STAGE RIGHT FADES TO BLACK and STAGE LEFT LIGHTS UP.

AMBASSADOR: *(takes a handkerchief from his pocket and dabs his face as he speaks)* As I was trying to come back from my ardent labors, she stroked my sweaty chest with her delicate artistic fingers, her big, beautiful eyes, like two sleeping lakes under the light of the full moon, staring up at me, she whispered: *(mimics the voice of a woman)* Ivory has always been attracted to ebony.

After a slight pause FRIEND 1 AND 2 burst in gleeful laughter. SIXTO chuckles a little.

AMBASSADOR: *(puts handkerchief back in his pocket, and pontificating, raises his index finger up)* It was Montaigne who spoke through her, messieurs. Amidst the packages of human cargo distributed throughout America, Montaigne foresaw that a young black slave marked by fate and sold in Haiti would seduce her white master to give birth to the first of the Dumas. This is why today France can ask of all nations with the greatest of pride: Who among you has produced in the span of a century three Dumas?

LEFT STAGE SLOWLY FADES TO BLACK as DOWNSTAGE RIGHT CENTER is SPOLIGHTED. ENTER GENERAL THOMAS-ALEXANDRE DUMAS from UPSTAGE RIGHT and stands in the SPOTLIGHT facing the audience

THOMAS-ALEXANDRE DUMAS: My name is Thomas-Alexandre Dumas. I am the son of a French nobleman and a Haitian slave. I was Napoleon's greatest general, and was named military governor of Italy, but I was denied my pension because of my race and died in poverty and hunger. Historians have forgotten me. I am French but my blood is Haitian.

ENTER ALEXANDRE DUMAS, père, from UPSTAGE RIGHT to stand to the left of THOMAS in the SPOTLIGHT facing the audience

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, père: My name is Alexandre Dumas. I am the son of General Thomas Alexandre Dumas. I am the pride of French literature, I wrote The Three Musketeers, and The Count of Monte-Cristo among others. Although I am a celebrated author and my works have been translated in over 100 languages, I suffered much discrimination throughout my lifetime because of my race. Most of my readers are unaware that I am black. I am French but my blood is Haitian.

ENTER ALEXANDRE DUMAS, fils, from UPSTAGE RIGHT to stand in the SPOTLIGHT to the left of ALEXNDRE DUMAS, père, facing the audience

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, fils: My name is Alexandre Dumas as well. Like my father I am also an author. I am best known for having written the play *La Dame aux Camélias*, or as some have interpreted, *Camille*. My play was converted into the Italian opera, *La Travietta*, and numerous films. I was admitted into the French Academy in 1874 and awarded the Legion of Honor in 1894. I did not suffer discrimination because of my race. It was easy to cover up the fact that I too am black, because as you can see, I look white. I am French but my blood is Haitian.

STAGE RIGHT FADES TO BLACK and STAGE LEFT IS LIGHTED

FRIEND 1: Ah ha! Napoleon must be rolling over in his grave to know that the most famous name in French Literature is actually Haitian.

AMBASSADOR: *(speaking to his guests)* The great General Thomas-Alexandre Dumas was stripped of his rank and died of starvation. But the son was able to avenge the father by using not guns of war, but much more lethal weapons: The French language and the pen!

AMBASSADOR sits down on the edge of the settee and sips more rum.

AMBASSADOR: Was it not the novelist Edward Lytton who wrote in his historical play about Cardinal Richelieu “The pen is mightier than the sword”? No truer words were ever written, I tell you. Alexandre Dumas used this most formidable of weapons to avenge his father. When he wrote *The Count of Monte-Cristo*, it was to turn his father into Edmond Dantes, an avenging angel who destroys his jealous enemies one by one. *(sits back and takes another sip)*

FRIEND 1: Ah, mon cher! Me? I don’t see how Edmond Dantes represents General Thomas Alexandre Dumas? As I recall from the story, they have very little in common. Dantes was a poor French sailor who was wrongfully imprisoned.

AMBASSADOR: *(sits forward again)* And so was General Dumas. After his boat sank off the shores of Naples, he was captured by the Neapolitans and spent two years in an Italian prison while Napoleon did nothing to rescue him. As a high ranking officer in his army and a hero of the French Revolution, Napoleon should have moved heaven and earth to have Thomas-Alexandre released. *(indignant)* Oh, oh.

FRIEND 2: Ah, oui. Sa...m dakò. I agree with you.

FRIEND 1: Even so, Your Excellency. Dantes and Dumas barely have anything else in common. They are not even of the same race!

AMBASSADOR: Ah ha! There is your first mistake, mon ami! (*raises his index finger*) The name Dantes is Spanish which implies that Edmond was of Spanish origin. In those days, you must recall, the Spaniards were suspected by other Europeans of being partly black,

FRIEND 2: Wi, sa se vre. That's true.

AMBASSADOR: Not only because of the Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula that lasted more than 700 hundred years, but also because during the slave trade, many Spanish sailors fathered children with African women.

FRIEND 2: Oh, oh. They couldn't resist, hein?

FRIEND 1: Ah, so Edmond Dantes would have been dark like General Dumas.

AMBASSADOR: And that is why Edmond could pass himself off as the Count of Monte Cristo, who was suspected of originating from the Middle East, of course!

FRIEND 1: Ah, je vois. Edmond Dantes, a character of obscure, more than likely black, origin, like General Dumas, entices the jealousy of his friends, as did General Dumas, is falsely imprisoned, as was General Dumas...

FRIEND 2: Found a treasure, as did General Dumas...

AMBASSADOR: But the similarities end there, messieurs. Thomas-Alexandre being an honorable and ethical man, followed military rules and remitted the treasure to his commanding officer Napoleon Bonaparte as he should have.

FRIEND 1: Whereas Dantes used his treasure to convert himself into the Count of Monte-Cristo, an avenging angel.

AMBASSADOR: And there you have it! Thomas-Alexandre not having been able to avenge all the injustices committed against him, his son Alexandre Dumas gave his father a virtual vengeance by writing *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He used their own weapons to defeat them: the most beautiful of languages, French, of course, and the mightiest of weapons: The pen!

FRIEND 1 and 2 applaud shouting:

FRIEND 1 and 2: Bravo, Your Excellency, Bravo! Ah neg sa s on tèt.

SIXTO stands up and looks at his watch

SIXTO: Bon, mes amis, I apologize. This has been all very fascinating but I have an appointment at the Paris Opera House that I'm already late for. I must leave you.

AMBASSADOR: (*getting up too*) Oh, what a shame! I hope the two of you will stay, at least?

FRIEND 1: Yes, I'm having the best time!

FRIEND 2: Me too. If you don't mind, Moy, we'll meet you later at the hotel for dinner.

SIXTO: Very good. Six o'clock, then.

FRIEND 1 AND 2: Six o'clock! See you, Moy!

FRIENDS get up and shake hands with and raise their glasses to SIXTO, then take a drink and sit back down.

As AMBASSADOR and SIXTO speak, they walk towards CENTERSTAGE to the door that separates the two stages.

AMBASSADOR: Let me walk you out. I expect you will come again tomorrow. I have quite a story to tell you about a girl I once knew named Lea Kokoye. I can't wait to regale you with the tale!

SIXTO: I look forward to it! Á demain!

AMBASSADOR: Á demain, Moy!

They shake hands and AMBASSADOR opens the door to let SIXTO EXIT. La Marseillaise chimes until door is closed.

AMBASSADOR returns to his remaining guests, slapping his hands together and rubbing them, he sits on the settee

AMBASSADOR: Bon, to continue... *(pauses and picks up his drink and slowly takes several sips)*

FRIEND 2: *(impatient)* eh bien, continue, continue. What happened next? With the girl, I mean. When we arrived you too looked pretty cozy.

FRIEND 1 elbows FRIEND 2 frowning

FRIEND 1: *(reprimanding)* Oh, oh

AMBASSADOR finishes his drink and puts it down

AMBASSADOR: What happened next, you ask? With the girl? Ah, Ah, messieurs, I tell you it was pure ecstasy! Now where was I? Oh, yes. She snuggled up against me and I opened both arms widely, to envelop her in a garland of love...

AMBASSADOR opens his arms wide then brings them back in a circle leaning slightly forward as if holding a woman and speaking into his arms as if speaking to her

AMBASSADOR: ...Whenever day meets night, I said to her, it is to give birth to the dawn which is more beautiful and more brilliant than either of them. *(straightens himself up)* Then, messieurs, she released the most beautiful sound of the heart and of the senses that you have ever heard... and cried...

AMBASSADOR pauses for effect, takes another sip of his drink.

FRIEND 1 AND 2: And cried...?

AMBASSADOR: And cried *(mimics the voice of a woman in ecstasy)* Oh Africa, you always offer your best to Europe.

After a pause, FRIEND 1 and 2 burst out laughing

AMBASSADOR: I have avenged our race, messieurs. Like the famed author of The Three Musketeers, I used their own weapons to defeat them! I used the most beautiful of their languages, French of course; spoke it with the most profound wisdom of their greatest geniuses in order to seduce and devour their most precious treasure: an authentic Gallic daughter.

FRIEND 1: Their Venus!

FRIEND 2: Their Aphrodite!

AMBASSADOR: Yes! Their goddess whose temple doors they must beg to enter! For when they sailed towards America, messieurs, and murdered our Indian brothers for gold, it was to adorn her white neck with its sparkle as an offering to satisfy her vanity. When they enslaved our African fathers and beat them into submission, it was to enrich their pockets in order to impress her so that she might deign to satisfy their lust. For why would she otherwise choose to lay and spread her thighs for their finger-like twigs when she could have instead ...

AMBASSADOR STANDS and OPENS his arms wide as if parting the seas, and spreads eagle standing facing the audience, raises his voice, almost shouting

AMBASSADOR:... the rod of Moses which easily parts the Red Seas and makes waters gush forth from rocks?! *(wiggles his hand to show the movement of snakes)* When she could have the prowess of Dambala himself who can swallow all of Pharaoh's serpents, and can turn the Nile River blood red! Indeed, messieurs, why should she choose an inadequate measly stick over the very tree of life! *(stands straight and raise his arm, index finger extended)* For like Eve, tempted by the promise to reach the apex of divinity, she cannot resist and will every time bite into the forbidden fruit *(brings arm down and pretends to ferociously bite into an apple)*. So this, *(raises his index finger to the side of his face and holds it there)* messieurs, this is how, with the delicious complicity, the eager consent, and dare I say, the most salacious enthusiasm of a blonde, blue-eyed white woman...I have avenged our race! *(raises his index finger higher as he outstretches his arm upward)*

FRIEND 1 AND 2: *(clapping)* Bravo! Bravo!

AMBASSADOR takes the bottle of Barbancourt rum from the table as FRIENDS stand up and hold out their glasses

As AMBASSADOR speaks, he pours three drops of rum on the ground before filling the held-out glasses of his guests.

AMBASSADOR: Let us take this bottle of Barbancourt messieurs! This five-star bottle of our home-grown rum contains the burning sun of our beloved island and the spirit of our glorious ancestors! Let us pour out the three ritual drops to thank the Indians, the Africans, the brave, the barefoot, who gave us our country, forged it in iron, fire, and blood. To remember, the innocents, like that young American boy Emmitt Till who died so unjustly, and all of us who still bear the scars of slavery and its offspring racism! Let the liquid gold spring forth in these crystal glasses to sparkle, to dance, and to sing our victory! *(raises his glass)*

FRIEND 1 and 2: Hail to you! Your Excellency! *(raise their glasses)*

AMBASSADOR: Hail Ayiti!

FRIEND 1 and 2: Hail Ayiti!

FRIENDS AND AMBASSADOR clink their glasses and down the rum, then burst out laughing

STAGE LEFT SLOWLY FADES TO BLACK AND STAGE RIGHT IS LIGHTED. THE PANTHEON and SIXTO are still seated but SIXTO is standing.

SIXTO: Et voila, your Excellencies, history, psychology, philosophy, ethnology, mythology, theology, military strategy, literature, and poetry, all at the service of...hanky-panky.

After a brief silence, The PANTHEON bursts out laughing and they along with SIXTO slowly begin to walk towards OFFSTAGE RIGHT as they speak

CLERVAUX: Hmmmm....I like that ambassador. When he dies he should come join us in the Hall of Revolutionaries! What do you think, Your Grace? After all he did so much to avenge the race, I believe he deserves a spot!

The PANTHEON bursts out laughing again

GABART: Eh...eh... I agree, we should reserve him a place here.

DESSALINES: Perhaps.

SIXTO: What about me, alors? I told you his story.

CAPOIS: Well you're still under review. Maybe if you tell us one more of these lodyans, we might consider it.

CLERVAUX: Hmm.....Yes, what about that story the ambassador wanted to tell you when you returned the next day? The one about the Coconut girl.

SIXTO: Uhm... Lea KoKoye? Eh bien messieurs, Krik?

THE PANTHEON: Krak!

SIXTO AND THE PANTHEON EXIT AND THE STAGE QUICKLY FADES TO BLACK

THE END

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APPENDIX A

EXPLANATION OF CRELOE TERMS AND PHRASES FOUND IN THE EPIC OF 1804

EXPLANATIONS OF CREOLE TERMS AND PHRASES FOUND IN *THE EPIC OF 1804*

(In alphabetical order)

Anmwyey! – Exclamation of shock and call for help. Creolization of the French *À moi!* Or *Help me!* in English

Ayida Wedo – In Voudou folklore, goddess of the rainbow, wife of Dambala

Ayiti Boyo Kiskeya – original Taino name of the island of Hispaniola

Battle of Vertières – Decisive battle that won the Haitian revolution for the slaves

Bezig – Card game popular in the 17th and 18th century. In French Bezique. Similar to the game Pinochle.

Bon tan/Move tan- Traditional Folkloric song

Bon tan se mwen - I'm here for the good times

Move tan se mwen - I'm here for the bad times

na we sa – We'll see about that

Eske n sonje koze nou te pale a – Do you remember what we talked about?

Wi nou sonje parol nou te pale a – Yes we remember what we talked about

Mwen gen yon chyen yo rele mab bezwen- I've got a dog that I call I need help

Mwen gen yon lot yo rele sizo kab bakab- I've got another named I may or may not be able to help

M ap mande charite nan pye fanmim yo – I'll ask for charity from my family

Boukman – Voudou priest who officiated over the ceremony at Bois Cayman that sparked the Haitian revolution

Dambala Wedo- In Voudou folklore the serpent god, creator of the universe

Fort of Crête-à-Pierrot – Fort at Vertières

Gad yon tintin – “Look at this nonsense”

Hounsis – Voudou priest/priestess in training

Kolangèt – Expletive, deformation of the phrase « Le colon guette ta mere »: an insult slaves used with one another implying that the slave master was lusting after someone's mother.

Kote sa? – Literally “where is that”: meaning that something is not believed

Koupe tèt! Boule Kay! – Haitian battle cry from the revolution. Order given by the leaders of the slave revolt to chop off the heads and burn the homes of the colonists.

Kako – guerilla army formed to combat the U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934

Ki Kaka sa? – What nonsense (*shit*) is this?

Krik Krak –interjection made up of two onomatopoeias. These are not words but sounds specific to creole cultures. Stories are introduced by krik/krak. They are used as an overture to storytelling.

La Dessalinnienne – Haitian National Anthem, to the music of *La Marseillaise*

*Pour le Pays, pour les ancêtres,- For the country, for the ancestors
marchons unis, marchons unis.- Let's march united, Let's march united
Dans nos rangs, point de traîtres!- Within our ranks, there are no traitors
Du sol soyons seuls maîtres. – Let's be the only masters of this land
Marchons unis, marchons unis. – Let's march united, Let's march united
Pour le Pays, pour les ancêtres.- For the country, for our ancestors*

La Place – short for General Commandant de la place, i.e. master of Voodoo ceremonies

Loas – Voodoo gods

Lodyans – a term coined by Haitian author Georges Anglade to describe the oratory works of Maurice A. Sixto and other Haitian raconteurs

Mezanmi – Exclamation of shock, creolization of the french *Mes amis*, i.e My friends!

Moy – Maurice Sixto's nickname

Nan Guiné – Mystical Africa where slaves believed they would be transported after death

Neg sa s on tèt – “This man is very smart”

Nou menm, menm – “We, ourselves”

Onè...respè – traditional Haitian greeting where the guest offers *Honor* as he enters a house, and the host replies *Respect* to indicate that the guest is welcomed.

Papa Doc – Nickname given to Francois Duvalier, President of Haiti from 1957 to 1971, in reference to his patriarchal style of dictatorship and his previous profession as a medical doctor.

Peristil – Tent where Voodoo ceremonies take place

Potomitan – Middle post of the tent where Voodoo ceremonies take place

Se bon, Se bon – Traditional Voodoo hymn

Dambala Wedo, se bon, se bon - Damballa Wedo, It's good. It's good.

Ayida Wedo, se bon, se bon - Ayida Wedo. It's good. It's good.

Le ma monte chwal mwen gen moun kap kriye - When I mount my horse, some people will cry.

Tande yon koze – “listen to this”

Tonèr! – Expletive, meaning *damn*, but literally meaning thunder

Tswp – Noise made when Haitians twist their tongue to indicate disdain

Wi fout – Expletive, meaning *fuck!* or *goddamn!*

APPENDIX B

ANALYSIS OF THE TRASCRIPTION AND THE TRANSLATION OF J'AI VENGE LA RACE

ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF J'AI VENGE LA RACE

Were it not for technical difficulties with the 1970s recording, the transcription and translation of *J'ai vengé la race* would have been a flawless endeavor. However, although the convenience of the digitalized version on *youtube* was of great help, the original soundtrack lacked clarity. There were some incomprehensible words that after having replayed the audio umpteenth times, still could not be discerned. In those few instances (a total of four) I eventually simply interjected the word "incomprehensible" in the transcript. Fortunately, these were few enough that the transcription as well as the translation experienced minimal translation loss; so minute as to be negligible.

In most of those instances, I effortlessly omitted the incomprehensible words from the translation. For example, « *Que ces assassins soient des universitaires, des... (*incompréhensible)... ou des illettrés* », became "...whether these murderers be academics or illiterates?" However, in one instance, it was necessary to insert my own word in order to explain and elaborate: « *Elle était au paroxysme. Son cerveau, son cœur, et ses sens étaient en... (*incompréhensible...)* » became "*She was at her climax. Her mind, her heart and her senses were aflame!*" Considering the context, I thought it an appropriate substitute.

Certain references made by Maurice Sixto needed to be modified if not in the transcription then in the translation. For example, his reference that Columbus was headed east but was diverted west seemed on the surface erroneous: « *Vous n'ignorez pas que les trois bateaux, La Pinta, La Nina, et la Santa Maria allaient vers l'Est. Je ne sais quel mauvais génie,*

pour s'amuser sans doute les a détourné du côté de l'ouest. » People today may not be familiar with the idea that Asia was generally referred to as the East in earlier times and in order not to confuse the modern reader, I modified this sentence in the transcription by capitalizing *l'Est* but not *l'ouest*, and in the translation by stating that Columbus was “headed to the East. I know not what evil genie, for his own amusement, no doubt, diverted them westward.” Adding the definitive article and keeping the word East capitalized as done in the French transcript clarifies that it is used as a location and not a direction. To show the contrast I used the hyponym *westward* instead of simply leaving the hyperonym *west* to indicate direction.

One passage that proved particularly difficult included some inaudible words which made the statements quasi senseless. I transcribed what I thought I heard but am still unsure as to its accuracy: «*Je ne sais si c'est pour perpétuer...(?) car au moment de la durée, ce conquistador indélicat avait débarqué sans invitation à la tête d'une bande de mercenaires assoiffée d'or* ». Perhaps, I am simply unfamiliar with the term “*au moment de la durée*”, but I also could not find a definition, synonym or translation of this expression. I deduced that there must be a word or phrase missing in the recording. Perhaps the vinyl skipped as they were so often prone to do. Knowing that *durée* meant length of time, I therefore compensated by interpreting the gist of the passage with a free translation: “*I do not know if it's to perpetuate the length of time that this indelicate conquistador spent uninvited at the head of a band of gold-thirsty mercenaries...*” This translation changes the meaning somewhat because of the use of the word *spent* rather than *landed* as indicated in the source text, but I feel the translation

loss is excusable as the sentence still conveys the intent of the source text in depicting Columbus and his mercenaries as intruders.

This was for the most part an exotic translation as I imported many grammatical and cultural features from the source text with minimal adaptation. For example I did not translate the words, *Mademoiselle* to Miss, or *Messieurs* to gentlemen. Also, even though the great majority of the dialogue consists of target language words and acceptable target language syntax, it is modeled on the structure of the source language. Thus the target text should convey that although the translation is in English, the characters are speaking French, with an educated tonal and social register.

Because language has a tendency to separate us, keeping us in disparate intellectual systems and divergent philosophies, I hope that this translation has the ability to open doors and to forge roads between people who heretofore did not understand one another, creating a bridge that connects thought and belief, and fosters appreciation among those of contrary backgrounds.

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF THE ADAPTATION OF J'AI VENGE LA RACE

ANALYSIS OF THE ADAPTATION OF *J'AI VENGE LA RACE*

I wanted to write an adaptation of *J'ai vengé la race* because in translating I realized that many Anglophones or non-Haitians may not understand Sixto's allusions. Sixto related this story for a fairly well educated Haitian audience who would be familiar with Haitian history and literature as well as European authors and philosophers. He did not feel the need to specifically name or explain who they are as he assumed that his references would be understood. For example, I doubt the average American is familiar with Kafka and his works. I wanted to show why the ambassador makes reference to him in context with Columbus, so I had to bring Kafka to life, per se, to explain to the audience that he wrote oxymoronic stories with bizarre themes, and in so doing I think that I conveyed that celebrating Columbus Day is an anathema.

History books, especially textbooks, relate facts but not the human factor behind those facts. Books can also distort facts. For example, saying that Columbus discovered America is factual from a Eurocentric point of view. All school children learn and accept this, but how many history books make the point that one cannot discover a continent that is already inhabited by millions of people. Did the Taino feel as if they had been discovered? Or were they the ones discovering the existence of Europe through Columbus' arrival? Had Native Americans written history textbooks, how different would the history of the Americas seem? And if school children had learned that version, how differently would they feel about themselves and their history?

My approach to history with this play is to humanize the facts and draw my audience into the hearts of the inhabitants of that distant past. I wrote the scene with Queen Anacaona,

not only to explain who she was but also to show my audience that the arrival of the Spaniards was not about entrepreneurship, or the bravery of men who set out on a great adventure across the sea, but about greedy, evil men who embodied covetousness, lust, pride and sloth. These men came to the so-called new world in search of riches. They coveted land and minerals that did not belong to them. And in so doing, raped, subjugated and annihilated a whole people, arrogantly thinking themselves superior to those they were destroying. Their false sense of self-importance allowing them to justify their evil doings to the point of believing that it was their God-given right and duty to Christianize and “civilize” the natives.

Some of Sixto’s other obscure references include « *le grand prêtre dans la nuit du 28 novembre* ». No one unfamiliar with Haitian history could possibly know that Sixto is referring to Boukman, or when the ambassador speaks of « *notre génial précurseur à la Ravine-à-Couleuvres* », he means Capois La Mort, or again when he mentions the monarch « *dont la main, armée d’une torche, incendiait les quatre coins de la ville du Cap* » he’s indicating King Henri Christophe. I had to add these names to clarify his meaning but still, this did nothing to enlighten my audience about who these people were. So, I brought to life the characters of Dessalines, Capois, Clervaux and Gabart and tried to convey through them how these revolutionary men felt about their mission. In the play, they became real characters so they can tell their story themselves.

I envision my audience to be a fairly well educated English-speaking audience; more than likely North American, whose familiarity with Haitian history is minimal; an audience that is interested in history, particularly black history and specifically Afro-Caribbean history. Also, I

think anyone of Haitian descent might be interested in the play, and possibly French people as well. Of course, no one is barred. South American, Africans, Asians, Native Americans, etc...All are welcome.

I wanted to make sure that my audience understands that *J'ai vengé la race* is a Haitian story. Although the theme is about a need to right a universal wrong, to somehow no matter how minutely, balance the scales between two races, this story was written by a Haitian with a Haitian mentality and cultural outlook. I don't believe that it would work the same way if the Ambassador had been from the U.S. or Canada, or any Latin-American country. The relationship between France and Haiti is very distinct due to the Haitian revolution and its aftermath. Sarkozy was the first French president to ever step foot on Haitian soil since Haiti's independence. There is still much resentment between the two countries as can be ascertained by Haiti's demand for reparation for slavery from France.

My goal has always been to expose the Haitian voice to the world and the Haitian voice is a Creole voice in both language and culture and I wanted to make that clear. I dare not imagine that I possess the same wit and humor, or literary flair as Maurice Sixto, however, it was indeed my intent to keep this adaptation true to his purpose by mimicking his ability to create compelling characters who entertain spectators while at the same time make the audience reflect on how the ills of the past affect the present.

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT OF J'AI VENGE LA RACE

J'ai vengé la race

Auteur : Maurice A. Sixto

Transcription : Myriam Souffrant

En 1965 je rentrais à l'Opéra de Paris qui venait de retrouver sa jeunesse et sa beauté. Le sombre manteau déposé par les ans sur les célèbres épaules de cette grande dame ne cachait plus l'élégance de sa vie. A cette époque, Monsieur André Malraux, ministre de la culture du Général De Gaulle, faisait ravalier plusieurs édifices et monuments historiques de la ville lumière. Cependant en passant par la rue Thibault, je pouvais constater que l'auteur de *La Condition humaine*, malgré toute sa bonne volonté, n'aurait pas pu réparer l'irréparable outrage fait par les pigeons et le temps au vieux bâtiment qui logeait notre ambassade. Le siège de notre mission n'avait pas changé de visage depuis que j'avais rendu visite quelques années auparavant à notre ambassadeur en compagnie de trois de mes amis.

Nous avons été reçus, je m'en souviens, par un huissier français qui nous avait dit un peu solennellement :

- Son Excellence vous recevra certainement. Mais vous auriez à faire preuve de patience, car monsieur est très fatigué.

Je n'ai pas manqué de sourire. D'avoir travaillé pendant quelque temps dans deux ambassades étrangères à Port-au-Prince me permettait d'affirmer à mes amis que je n'avais jamais rencontré un seul diplomate souffrant d'anémie à cause d'un surcroit de travail. Peut-être que ce fonctionnaire pince-sans-rire voulait nous rappeler que bien souvent une ambassade est une prime accordée à la paresse. Il nous invita comme un maître de cérémonie à nous installer au grand salon pour faire anti chambre, et nous avons attendue plus d'une bonne heure dans loge.

Brusquement une porte s'ouvrit ! C'était pour laisser apparaître notre ambassadeur, monumental et majestueux, tel un chef Zaïrois de la tribu des Baloubas ! Drapé dans sa robe de

chambre rouge, comme la colère des opprimés, il ne jeta pas un seul regard sur les quatre visiteurs qui l'attendaient. Il était trop préoccupé à raccompagner une appétissante petite blonde qui essayait de cacher, comme une ingénue, ce que mes amis et moi pouvions facilement deviner.

Après avoir pris congé, à voix basse bien entendue, de cette délicieuse créature, l'ambassadeur se retourna vers nous en disant :

- Mes chers amis, je le sais, je vous ai fait attendre ! Mais écoutez moi bien, messieurs. Quand vous saurez que je viens de travailler pour vous ! Que je viens de vous venger ! Quand vous saurez que je viens de revivre, au bord de la Seine, l'épopée de 1804, vous partagerez ma satisfaction, ma fierté, et ma joie !

Sans même nous donner le temps de placer un seul mot, il enchaîna :

- Je me baladais ce matin messieurs, dans le quartier Latin. Arrivé au boulevard Saint-Michel je fus attiré par le reflet d'une broche en or qui scintillait sur la poitrine généreuse d'une jolie dame. Par une rapide association d'idées je me rappelais que je devais me procurer *Romancero aux Etoiles* de Jacques Alexis, cet excellent écrivain qui entra vivant dans notre littérature et dans celle du monde entier comme un météore.

- Je me dirigeai vers la librairie la plus proche. Coïncidence heureuse ! Cocteau n'a-t-il pas dit que la superstition, c'est l'art de se mettre d'accord avec les coïncidences ? En effet, messieurs, certaines coïncidences sont des signes. Je me trouvai exactement à côté de cette irrésistible jeune Parisienne qui vient de partir. Elle tenait dans ses belles mains *Romancero aux Etoiles*. Incroyable, mais vrai ! Je me penchai vers elle pour lui dire :

- *Mademoiselle, en vous regardant avec le même livre qui m'a conduit ici, je me sens comme Pyrrhus devant la veuve d'Hector. Et j'entends cabrioler dans mon esprit et dans mon cœur un vers de Racine que j'aime beaucoup.*

- Vous voulez me dire ce vers ?

- Je n'ai rien à vous refuser. Me cherchez-vous, Madame ? Un espoir si charmant me soit-il permis ? Je vous en prie, Mademoiselle, me serait-il permis de vous offrir ce volume ? Faites-moi le grand plaisir de l'accepter au nom du Dr. Jacques Alexis dont la pensée a catalysé notre inoubliable rencontre.

- Ses deux lèvres juteuses s'entrouvrirent sur deux rangées de perles pour me remercier. Elle me fit retrouver l'agressivité de mes vingt ans. Sans perdre une minute je l'invitai à prendre un verre, en face, au Café de Luxembourg. Elle ne se fit pas prier. Et là, autour de la table, elle engagea la conversation en me demandant :

-Vous avez déjà lu *Romancero aux Etoiles* ?

-Bien sûr. Mais je fais ces jours-ci des recherches en vue de préparer un réquisitoire pour la défense et la réhabilitation des indiens dans l'île d'Haïti, dont je suis l'ambassadeur.

-Ah, vous êtes l'ambassadeur de Haïti ?

-Pour vous servir Mademoiselle.

-Et vous parlez des indiens ?

-Des premiers habitants de l'île ! Les vrais maîtres de la terre, qui ont payé bien trop cher cette mésaventure que nous continuons d'appeler la découverte de l'Amérique !

- Cette mésaventure ?

- Vous n'ignorez pas que les trois bateaux, *La Pinta*, *La Nina*, et *la Santa Maria* allaient vers l'Est. Je ne sais quel mauvais génie, pour s'amuser sans doute, les a détournés du côté de l'ouest. Ce fut pour le plus grand malheur des indiens qui vivaient heureux dans leur île de rêve ; cette île si souvent comparée à une émeraude tombée de la bague de Dieu dans la mer des Caraïbes. Ce fut un cataclysme pour les indiens, un coup de tonnerre dans un ciel serein, que de

voir débarquer des aventuriers avec la croix dans une main et le fusil dans l'autre pour les exterminer au nom de la religion et de la civilisation. Forcés de travailler jours et nuits dans les mines, les indiens ont connu les mauvais traitements les plus inimaginables. Christophe Colon a été le premier à établir l'esclavage dans l'île d'Haïti avec les repartimientos. La reine Isabelle en rêvant aux épices de l'Asie vendait ses bijoux pour financer cette fameuse expédition, et préparait en même temps une méga-tombe. A l'arrivée des espagnols il y avait deux million cinq cent mille indiens dans l'île. Cinq ans plus tard, tenez-vous bien je vous en prie, ils n'étaient que deux mille. Le cacique Henri avait gagné les hauteurs du Cibao avec ses deux mille rescapés du désastre de la découverte. Ils avaient pris une position désespérée mais héroïque contre ces barbares qui avaient décimé toute une race. Ces deux mille spartiates de la tribu des Arawak ont tous péri verticalement avec la rage au cœur. Et nous devons les saluer, Mademoiselle, comme les premiers combattants pour la liberté en Amérique. Ces êtres paisibles, croyez-moi, goûtaient chaque jour la joie de vivre libre dans une orgie de lumière, de verdure, et de fleurs.

- Cette même reine Isabelle n'avait-elle pas juré de ne pas enlever son jupon avant que les Mores ne fussent ou exterminés ou chassés hors de ses frontières ?

- Elle avait eu raison de tenir parole car on parle de sa béatification. Bientôt elle sera dans le martyrologe. Je regrette infiniment qu'une indienne exceptionnelle, une femme exquise, intelligente, dont les poèmes, les chansons, et la musique nous sont parvenus ; une femme extraordinaire, trahi d'ailleurs, par la croix d'Alcantara et lâchement condamnée à la pendaison par un monstre ! Je regrette, dis-je, que la belle Anacaona, la reine adorée des indiens, n'ai pas eu la chance d'exporter sa propre civilisation bien avant Isabelle la Catholique. Nous n'avons encore rendu aucun hommage aux indiens. Ce n'est pas une négligence ou une erreur. C'est une faute ! Nous sommes des oublieux, des exotiques. Et nous aimons les paradoxes. Le croiriez-vous,

Mademoiselle, en face de la magnifique baie de notre capitale nous avons encore une statue du navigateur génois.

- Et qu'est-ce qu'il fait là ?

- Il se le demande lui-même, j'en suis sûr. Je ne sais si c'est pour perpétuer...(?) car au moment de la durée, ce conquistador indélicat avait débarqué sans invitation à la tête d'une bande de mercenaires assoiffée d'or pour torturer les indiens, les massacrer, et emporter leur richesse.

- Vraiment je ne vois pas ce qu'il fait là. Veut-on prouver que le criminel retourne toujours au lieu du crime ?

- Je n'ai pas vue une statue du Duché à Addis Abeba, ou encore une statue du Führer à l'aéroport de Tel Aviv. Kafka est mort bien trop vite. Il a raté le sujet d'un bon livre.

- Mais vous ne descendez pas des indiens.

- Les indiens exterminés, il a fallu continuer à chercher le dieu de l'Espagnol dans les mines. Nos pères, achetés en conséquence dans diverses régions d'Afrique, et transportés comme du bétail dans les cales des bateaux négriés jusqu'aux Antilles, ont pris la relève dans les mines et sur les plantations. Ces malheureux déracinés, ces damnées de la terre, dirait Fanon, ont arrosé le sol des indiens de leur suer de leur sang de toutes sorte d'humiliation et de souffrance pour faire de cette île enchantée la colonie la plus prospère : le grenier de la France, la perle des Antilles ; mais aussi un laboratoire de misères humaine. Un beau matin ils ont brisé leurs chaînes pour arracher les armes de leurs maîtres et les chasser. Quand ils ont proclamé leur indépendance sur la Place d'Armes des Gonaïves, le dimanche premier janvier, 1804, ils ont écrit la dernière page de la plus fulgurante épopée de tous les temps !

-Je vous ai écouté en frissonnant. Les peuples Euros n'ont pas d'histoire. La vôtre est unique. C'est la seule révolte d'esclaves de ce genre que je connaisse. Mais revenons bien vite aux indiens si vous le voulez. Ils m'intéressent énormément. C'est bien Nietzsche qui a dit : Ceux qui n'ont pas survécu ne méritaient pas de vivre.

- Je vous demanderais de bien vouloir laisser Nietzsche dans son contexte, où il demeure un humaniste qui combattait la métaphysique du moyen âge dans le but de donner à l'homme sa place dans l'univers. Ce philosophe croyait en la volonté de l'homme, la détermination de l'homme, en la puissance de l'homme. Ecoutez, Mademoiselle, tout ce que nous savons nous le savons par l'homme. Comment prétendre être un meneur d'hommes en les détruisant ? Des maniaques ont tiré Nietzsche de son contexte pour s'arroger le droit de détruire des millions de gens sans défense au nom de la plus aberrante des absurdités : la supériorité d'une race ! Le père de la relativité, s'il n'avait pas pris la fuite, aurait péri parce qu'il ne méritait pas de vivre. A partir de cette théorie raciste on a qu'à bruler la charte des droits de l'homme, renoncer à toute lutte pour la dignité humaine, pour l'égalité de l'homme et de la femme (dont je suis un fanatique), et chercher bien vite refuge dans la société protectrice des animaux. Je ne comprends pas qu'on explique ses horribles génocides, ces odieuses sélections avec des bibles de Nietzsche ou de Darwin. C'est une amnistie bien trop encourageante accordée à tous ces destructeurs d'aujourd'hui, des indiens Achée du Paraguay, à tous ces tyrans de village, à tous ces dictateurs satisfaits, confortablement assis dans leurs fauteuils, sur des milliers de cadavres. Ils n'auraient qu'à brandir un Nietzsche pour avoir bonne conscience et se réjouir d'avoir aidé à disparaître des légions de contradicteurs ou de suspects qui ne méritaient pas de vivre. Ces liquidations inutiles, Mademoiselle, me font plutôt penser à un poète Elisabéthain qui a écrit : la mort de tout homme me diminue. Comment peut-on reconnaître des circonstances atténuantes à des assassins en

*jacket ou en uniforme qui ont conçu, ordonné, financé, encouragé, ces lugubres exécutions ? Que ces assassins soient des universitaires, des... (*incompréhensible)... ou des illettrés. Je rejoins aussi un grand écrivain français de notre époque quand il soutient dans toute circonstance l'homme doit avoir l'opportunité de choisir la vie.*

- J'ai hâte de lire votre réquisitoire. Déjà je brûle du désir d'aller visiter votre île, d'aller admirer votre beau pays, de mieux approfondir votre merveilleuse histoire.

- C'est un rêve que je peux vous aider à réaliser dans le meilleur délai, et avec le plus grand plaisir. En attendant, selon une fiction de la loi internationale, l'ambassade est un prolongement du pays. Je voudrais vous inviter à vider une coupe de champagne en terre haïtienne mais sans vous déplacer de Paris.

-J'aimerais bien.

- Après l'avoir baratiner par une demi-heure, elle m'a suivi, messieurs, en territoire national avec la tête pleine de notre histoire. J'ai vécu le plus beau rêve de ma vie qui a été une série de crise de possession. J'étais d'abord le grand prêtre dans la nuit du vingt-huit novembre, et je l'entraînais dans ma chambre pour une nouvelle cérémonie du Bois Cayman ; disons plutôt cette fois, pour une cérémonie du bois d'ébène. En peu de temps qu'il le faut pour le dire, je m'étais dépouillé des coquetteries de l'occident. La gazelle en face de moi était fascinée par la magie de la nuit africaine, profonde, mystérieuse, et ensorceleuse. Je la dévorais des yeux et elle me donnait mal au cerveau. Oui, messieurs, je la dévorais des yeux avec cette convoitise et cette impatience que vous pouvez comprendre. Elle s'avança lentement pour s'agripper à moi dans une reddition inconditionnelle, comme une liane flexible s'enroule autour d'un arbre millénaire. Je la saisi pour aspirer son âme dans un de ces baiser, aussi long, aussi mouiller, aussi voluptueux que l'éternel et mystique baiser du Nile Bleu et du Nile Blanc dans le bord de Khartoum. Spectacle sensationnel, messieurs !

- Subitement, je devins notre génial précurseur à la Ravine-à-Couleuvres. Comme ce grand capitaine, je mettais la même dextérité, la même rapidité, à longer ses côtes et à explorer ses deux jolies mandarines pendant que mes doigts, frénétiques, montaient et descendaient sur le plastique de son beau corps menu et velouté, pour allumer les trois étages de son être à la manière du monarque dont la main, armée d'une torche, incendiait les quatre coins de la ville du Cap. Elle était au paroxysme. Son cerveau, son cœur, et ses sens étaient en... (**incompréhensible*)... je me senti envahit par la fougue du héros de Vertières, mais, la Crête-à-Pierrot était mon objectif précis. A un moment clair et furibond je me taillais un chemin dans les broussailles et je pénétrais dans le fort en criant comme l'empereur : Liberté ou la mort ! Je suis maître de ce fort !

- Elle tremblait sous mon archer vainqueur. Quelle ivresse ! Oh quelle harmonie ! L'Afrique se mêlait à l'Europe ! Quel synchronisme ! Quel défoulement ! Au niveau des quatre dimensions ! Mais surtout messieurs, quel victoire ! C'était la victoire d'un esclave, rendant la monnaie de sa pièce au colon, qui dans un moment de lubricité fébrile avait forcé l'aïeule dahoméenne sous le soleil des tropiques au milieu d'une plantation de café.

- Ses plaintes reconnaissantes remplissaient la chambre et arrivaient à mes oreilles comme une symphonie aphrodisiaque. Elle me chantait son amour, elle me gazouillait son plaisir. Quand le moment psychologique arriva, messieurs, l'Afrique ... (**incompréhensible*)... continent noir arrosa l'Europe !

- J'essayais de revenir de mes ardentes fatigues et je contemplais la grandeur de ses beaux yeux, pareilles à deux lacs endormis sous la lumière de la pleine lune. En passant ses petits doigts d'artiste sur ma poitrine en suer, elle murmura doucement :

- *Oh Afrique, tu nous réserves toujours quelque chose de rare.*

- C'était Montaigne qui parlait par sa bouche. Dans les paquets de marchandises humaines délivrés un peu partout en Amérique, Montaigne prévoyait déjà qu'une jeune esclave marquée par le

destin et vendue en Haïti allait séduire son maître pour donner naissance au premier des Dumas. Voici pourquoi la France peut dire aujourd'hui à toutes les nations avec la plus grande fierté : *Qui de vous en un siècle a produit trois Dumas ?* Montaigne prévoyait encore, que l'Afrique, berceau de toutes les civilisations, allait inspirer l'immense talent de Picasso pour révolutionner la peinture.

- *Ma chérie pouvons-nous compter les chefs-d'œuvres que nous avons fait ensemble.*

Chaque fois que le jour s'allie à la nuit, c'est pour donner naissance à l'aurore qui est plus belle que lui.

- Elle se blottit contre moi pour essayer de retrouver son équilibre. J'ouvris largement les deux bras, dans ce geste magnanime qui a fait du républicain le père du panaméricanisme. Et je l'enveloppais d'une guirlande d'amour. Alors, elle poussa ce cri du cœur et des sens.

- *J'ai toujours été attirée par le bois d'ébène.*

- *Cette attraction, lui dis-je, mais c'est la définition même du surréalisme qui est l'hommage de la culture française à la culture africaine retrouvée. Nous venons de vivre la symbiose de nos vertus. Réjouis-toi ma chérie ! Tu es l'apport du génie français au génie africain retrouvé.*

- *Tu es formidable.*

- *Tu es adorable.*

- Messieurs, j'ai vengé la race ! J'ai résolu le problème du prince Hamlet ! Le *to be or not to be* n'est plus la question qui nous préoccupe. Chaque fois que l'on demandait à ce grand visionnaire, qui selon Lamartine ... (**incompréhensible*)... nation, comment il comptait se débarrasser des colons. *Prendre leurs propres armes*, ne cessait-il de répéter, *et les mettre à la porte !* J'ai pris leurs propres armes ! Je me suis servi de la plus belle des langues, parlée par les plus beaux génies jamais paru sur

cette terre, avec la savoureuse complicité d'une authentique fille des gaulois aux yeux bleus, et j'ai vengé la race !

- Prenons cette bouteille de rhum messieurs ! Cette bouteille de cinq étoiles qui contient le brûlant soleil de notre île bien-aimée et l'esprit de nos glorieux ancêtres ! Versons les trois gouttes rituelles pour remercier les indiens, les preux, les va-nu-pieds, les marrons, qui nous ont donné cette patrie, dans le fer, le feu, et le sang. Puissent-ils continuer à soutenir les frères innombrables dans leur lutte atroce jusqu'à la victoire finale, en cette fin du 20ème siècle, contre le racisme le plus tenace, le plus irritant, et le plus féroce, dans cet enfer de la Rhodésie et de l'Afrique du Sud.

- Nous allons aussi sabler du champagne, messieurs ! Le liquide d'or va jaillir dans le cristal, pour pétiller, pour danser, pour chanter notre triomphe ! J'ai vengé la race !

Et voici l'histoire, la psychologie, la philosophie, l'ethnologie, l'écologie, la psychanalyse, le droit international, la stratégie militaire, l'épopée, la littérature, la poésie, tout cela au service de la fornication.

APPENDIX E

I'VE AVENGED OUR PEOPLE: TRANSLATION OF J'AI VENGE LA RACE

I've avenged our people

Author: Maurice A. Sixto

Translation: Myriam Souffrant

In 1965, I was making my way to the Paris Opera House which had just recently regained her youth and beauty. The erstwhile dark veil that had settled upon this great lady's famous shoulders no longer concealed her elegance. At the time, André Malraux, General DeGaulle's minister of culture, was restoring several historic buildings and monuments in the city of lights. However, going down Thibault Street, I could see that the author of *The Human Condition*, despite his best intentions, could not have repaired the irreparable havoc wreaked by pigeons and time upon the old building that housed our embassy. The seat of our mission had not been altered since I last visited the ambassador some years prior, accompanied by three of my friends.

I remember, we were greeted by a rather somber looking French bailiff who said to us:

"His Excellency will certainly see you. But you'll have to be patient. Monsieur is very tired."

I had to smile. Having worked for some time in two foreign embassies in Port-au-Prince, I could assure my friends that I had never met one single diplomat who suffered from anemia due to overwork. This deadpan civil servant, perhaps wanted to remind us that an embassy is often a reward for laziness. He invited us, like a master of ceremonies, to settle in and wait in the grand salon, where we cooled our heels for more than a good hour.

Suddenly, a door opened! And our ambassador entered, monumental and majestic, like a Zairian chief of the Baluba tribe, draped in a dressing gown as red as the wrath of the oppressed. He did not even cast a glance in our direction. He was much too busy escorting a tasty little blonde who tried to hide, like an ingénue, what my friends and I could easily discern.

After taking leave of this delicious creature, amidst whispers of course, the ambassador turned to us saying, "My dear friends, I know, I've kept you waiting! But believe me, gentlemen, when you

understand that I have been working on your behalf! That I have avenged you! Once you realize that I have just relived, on the banks of the Seine, the epic of 1804, you will share in my satisfaction, my pride, and my joy!”

Without allowing us a word in edgewise, he continued: “I was taking a stroll this morning in the Latin Quarter and upon arriving at Boulevard Saint-Michel, my eye caught the glint of a golden pin that sparkled on the ample bosom of a very pretty lady. I was suddenly reminded that I had to obtain *Romancero aux Etoiles* by Jacques Alexis, that excellent writer who vibrantly entered our literary world, and that of the entire world, like a fireball!

“I headed for the nearest bookstore. Happy coincidence! Did Cocteau not say that superstition is the art of aligning one’s self with coincidence? In fact, gentlemen, certain coincidences are signs! I found myself exactly beside that irresistible young Parisienne who just left. She was holding in her beautiful hands *Romancero aux Etoiles*. Incredible but true!

“I leaned in to say to her:

“Mademoiselle, seeing you with the same book that led me here, I feel like Pyrrhus standing before Hector’s widow. And I hear cavorting in my head and in my heart, a verse from Racine of which I am extremely fond.”

“What verse is it? Will you tell me?”

“How can I refuse? Is it I whom you seek, Madame? Am I allowed to hope as much? I beg of you, Mademoiselle, allow me to offer you this tome? Do me the honor of accepting in the name of Jacques Alexis, whose very thoughts and ideas have catalyzed our unforgettable encounter.

“Gratefully, she parted her luscious lips to reveal two magnificent rows of pearly whites. I felt stir deep within me the vigor of my youth. Without skipping a beat I invited her for a drink at the Café

Luxembourg across the way. I didn't have to ask twice. And once seated, she began the conversation by inquiring:

"Have you already read Romancero aux Etoiles?"

"Of course. But presently I am doing a bit of research in order to build a case for the defense and rehabilitation of Indians on the island of Haiti, of which I am the ambassador."

"Ah, you are the ambassador from Haiti?"

"At your service, Mademoiselle."

"And you talk of Indians?"

"The first inhabitants of the island! The true masters of the land, who paid much too dearly for this calamity that we continue to call the discovery of America!"

"Calamity?"

"You are aware that the three ships, La Pinta, La Nina and La Santa Maria were headed to the East. I know not what evil genie, for his own amusement, no doubt, diverted them westward. It was the greatest misfortune for the Indians who lived happily on their isle of paradise: this island, so often compared to an emerald fallen from God's ring into the Caribbean Sea. It was a disaster for the Indians, a thunderbolt in a clear sky, to watch adventurers come ashore with a crucifix in one hand and a gun in the other to exterminate them in the name of religion and civilization.

"Forced to toil day and night in the mines, the Indians experienced the most unimaginable of abuses. Christopher Columbus was the first to establish slavery on the island of Haiti with the repartimiento system. Queen Isabella while dreaming of Asian spices, was selling off her jewels to finance this famous expedition, and at the same time was preparing a mega-tomb! When the Spaniards arrived there were two million five hundred thousand Indians on the island. Five years later, brace yourself, there were only two thousand left.

"The cacique Henry had gained the heights of Cibao with his two thousand survivors of this disastrous discovery. They had taken a desperate but heroic stance against those barbarians who had decimated a whole race. These two thousand Spartans of the Arawak tribe all died standing tall and with rage in their hearts. And we must salute them, Mademoiselle, as the first freedom fighters in America! Believe me, these gentle souls, savored every day the joy of living in an orgy of light, greenery and flowers."

"Didn't this same Queen Isabella vow not to remove her petticoat until the Moors were either exterminated or driven out of her shores?"

"She did well to keep her word since there is talk of her beatification. Soon she will be recognized as a martyr. I deeply regret that an exceptional Indian, an exquisite, intelligent woman, whose poems, songs, and music have survived through the ages; an extraordinary woman, betrayed, by the way, by the Cross of Alcantara, and cowardly condemned to a hanging death by a monster; I regret, I say, that the beautiful Anacaona, the beloved Queen of the Indians, did not have the chance to export her own civilization well before Isabella the Catholic.

"We have yet to pay homage to the Indians. This is not due to neglect or error. It is a failing! We are forgetters! Exotic! And we love paradoxes. Would you believe, Mademoiselle that, in front of the splendid bay of our capital, there still stands a statue of the Genoese navigator?"

"And what is he doing there?"

"I'm sure he's wondering the exact same thing? I do not know if it's to perpetuate the length of time that this indelicate conquistador spent uninvited at the head of a band of gold-thirsty mercenaries in order to torture the Indians, slaughter them and rob them of their wealth."

"I really don't see what he's doing there. Is it to prove that the criminal always returns to the scene of the crime?"

"I have not seen a statue of Il Duce in Addis Ababa, nor a statue of the Führer at the airport in Tel Aviv. Kafka died much too soon! He missed the opportunity to write a good book."

"But you are not descended from the Indians."

"Once the Indians had been exterminated, there still remained the need to seek the Spanish god within the mines. Our forefathers, purchased in various parts of Africa, and transported like cattle in the holds of slave ships all the way to the West Indies, took up the burden in those mines and on plantations. These uprooted unfortunate people, the damned of the earth, as Fanon would say, doused the Indian soil with their sweat, their blood, with all sorts of humiliations and woes to turn this enchanted island into the most prosperous of colonies: the granary of France! The Pearl of the Antilles! But also a laboratory of human misery.

"One morning they broke their chains to seize their master's weapons and drive them out. When they declared their independence on the Place d'Armes in Gonaives, on Sunday, January 1, 1804, they penned the last page of the most glorious epic of all time!"

"I get chills just listening to you! Europeans have no history. Yours is unique. This is the only slave revolt of this kind that I know of. But let's get back to the Indians. I'm tremendously interested in them. Wasn't it Nietzsche who said: Those who have not survived, did not deserve to live?"

"I would ask you to kindly keep Nietzsche in context, where he remains a humanist who fought against the metaphysical philosophy of the Middle Ages in order to give man his place in the universe. This philosopher believed in the will of man, the determination of man, in the power of man. Listen, Mademoiselle, all that we know, we know it through man. How can one claim to be a leader of men by destroying them? These maniacs have taken Nietzsche out of context in order to appropriate the right to destroy millions of defenseless people in the name of the most aberrant of absurdities: the superiority of

one race! The father of relativity, had he not fled, would have perished because he did not deserve to live.

“Based on this racist theory we can simply burn the Charter of Human Rights, renounce any struggle for human dignity, for man’s equality and woman’s (of which I’m a fan) and quickly seek refuge in the Humane Society! I do not understand how they can justify these horrible genocides, these odious selections with Nietzsche or Darwin bibles. It is a much too convenient amnesty granted to today’s destroyers of the Achee Indians of Paraguay, to all those village tyrants, to all those satisfied dictators, comfortably seated in their armchairs atop thousands of corpses. They need only brandish a Nietzsche to ease their conscience and rejoice that they’ve helped to annihilate legions of opponents or suspects who did not deserve to live.

“These useless killings, Mademoiselle, make me think of an Elizabethan poet who wrote: The death of any man diminishes me.

“How can we allow mitigating circumstances for assassins either in uniforms or suits who conceived, ordered, financed, or encouraged, these grim executions, whether these murderers be academics or illiterates? I agree with a great contemporary French writer when he maintains that under all circumstance, man must have the opportunity to choose life.”

“I can’t wait to read your briefs! I’m already burning with the desire to visit your island, to admire your beautiful country, to deepen my understanding of your wonderful story.”

“It is a dream that I can help you realize with minimal delay and with great pleasure. According to a myth of international law, the embassy is an extension of the country. Therefore, I would like to invite you to empty a glass of champagne on Haitian soil without ever leaving Paris.”

“I would love to.”

“We chatted for half an hour more, then she followed me, gentlemen, onto our national territory with her head filled with our history. I lived the most beautiful dream of my life! I was possessed! At first with the spirit of the High Priest on the night of November twenty-eight, and I led her to my bedroom for a new ceremony of the Cayman Woods, or rather I should say, the ebony wood.

“In as little time as it takes to say it, I had divested myself of the frills of the West. The gazelle in front of me was fascinated by the magic of the African night, deep, mysterious and bewitching. I ravished her with my eyes and she made my head throb. Yes, gentlemen, my eyes devoured her with a lust and impatience that you can easily understand. Slowly, she advanced to cling to me in unconditional surrender, like a supple vine wraps itself around an ancient tree. I grabbed her to breathe in her soul in one of those long, wet kisses, as voluptuous and as endless as the mystical embrace of the Blue and White Nile along the banks of Khartoum. Sensational spectacle, gentlemen!

“Suddenly, I became our brilliant forefather at the Battle of Snake Gully. Like that great captain, I applied the same dexterity, the same speed in roaming her flanks and exploring her two beautiful tangerines while my fingers, frantically climbed and descended all along the surface of her beautiful, petite and smooth body, to light the three tiers of her being in the manner of the monarch, whose hand, armed with a torch, set fire to the four corners of the city of Cap-Haitian.

“She was at her climax. Her mind, her heart and her senses were aflame! I felt myself invaded by the ardor of the hero of Vertières but the Fort of Crête-à-Pierrot was my goal. In a furious and clear instant I made a play for the under bush and I penetrated the fort shouting like the Emperor: Freedom or death! I am master of this fort!

“She quivered beneath my conquering blade. What rapture! Oh what harmony! Africa mingled with Europe! What synchronicity! What deliverance! At the level of the four dimensions! But especially gentlemen, what victory! It was the victory of a slave, evening the score with the slave master, who, in a

moment of feverish lust, had forced our Dahomean grandmother under the tropical sun in the middle of a coffee plantation.

“Her grateful whimpers filled the room and reached my ears like an aphrodisiac symphony. She sang me her love, she crooned me her pleasure. When the psychological moment arrived, gentlemen, Africa, the black continent, drenched all of Europe!

“As I emerged from my ardent fatigues, admiring the beauty of her huge eyes, like two lakes sleeping under the light of the full moon. Stroking my sweaty chest with her little artist’s fingers, she whispered softly:

“Oh Africa, you always reserve something rare for us.”

“It was Montaigne who spoke through her. Amidst the packages of human cargo distributed throughout America, Montaigne foresaw that a young slave marked by fate and sold in Haiti would seduce her master to give birth to the first of the Dumas. This is why France can ask today of all nations with the greatest of pride: Who among you has produced in the span of a century three Dumas?

“Montaigne also predicted that Africa, the cradle of all civilizations, would inspire Picasso’s immense talent to revolutionize painting.

“My darling we can count the masterpieces we’ve created together. Whenever day meets night it is to give birth to the dawn which is more beautiful than they.”

“She snuggled up against me to try to regain her balance. I opened both arms widely, in the same magnanimous gesture that turned the Republican into the father of Pan-Americanism. And I enveloped her in a garland of love. Then she released the cry of the heart and the senses

“I’ve always been attracted to ebony.”

“This attraction,” I said, “but it is the very definition of surrealism which is the tribute of French culture to rediscovered African culture. We have just experienced the symbiosis of our virtues. Rejoice my dear! You are the contribution of French genius to the revived African genius.

“You're amazing!”

“You are adorable.”

“Gentlemen, I have avenged our people! I have solved the problem of Prince Hamlet! To be or not to be is no longer the question that concerns us. According to Lamartine, every time our great visionary, was asked how he intended to get rid of the colonists: *Take their own weapons*, he kept repeating, *and throw them out!*

“I took their own weapons! I used the most beautiful of languages, spoken by the greatest geniuses ever to appear on this earth, and with the delicious complicity of an authentic blue eyed Celtic daughter, I avenged our people!

“Let us take this bottle of rum gentlemen! This five-star bottle contains the burning sun of our beloved island and the spirit of our glorious ancestors! Let us pour out the three ritual drops to thank the Indians, the brave, the barefoot, the maroons, who gave us this country, forged in iron, fire, and blood.

“May they continue to support our brothers in their atrocious struggle until the final victory at the end of the 20th century against the most tenacious, irritating and fierce racism in this hell that is Rhodesia and South Africa. We will also pop open the champagne, messieurs! The liquid gold will spring forth in this crystal to sparkle, to dance, and to sing our victory! I have avenged our people!”

And here is history, psychology, philosophy, ethnology, ecology, psychoanalysis, international law, military strategy, epics, literature, poetry, all at the service of fornication.