

Statues in the French Caribbean and the Iconoclastic Assault

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This article contributes to debates concerning slavery and slave museums, taking as inspiration historical novels and archives from the Schwarz-Bart Library in Goyave (Guadeloupe). I question, in particular, the passing over of black or mulatto female heroines, in sharp contrast with *béké* figures who, even if they have been temporarily(!) beheaded, remain the more famous icons in the collective mind of the French Caribbean and Caribbean population at large. I could indeed measure that Martinicans, in particular, are proud to have ‘given Napoléon’s wife’ and to have erected her beautiful body into white marble ‘posture’ at the Fort-de-France *Savanah*. My survey touches on the counter-example of ‘*La mulâtresse Solitude*’, a statue erected in Guadeloupe, but without any indication of its source: the best-selling novel *La mulâtresse Solitude* by André Schwarz-Bart. Why does Édouard Glissant’s project for a ‘*Centre national pour la mémoire des esclavages et de leurs abolitions*’ on no occasion mention *Solitude* as the only female heroine such a *Centre national* could and should have staged? What does this tell us about the gender bias that continues to wreak havoc to the West Indies in all fields? *Solitude* remains a central, pivotal *poteau mitan* in Caribbean iconography. In spite of recent successful innovations, there is still much to sort out before leaving the dominant tendency to ‘*statufier sur son sort*’ and to promote male heroes instead of female ones.

There is no suitable memorial or plaque or wreath or wall or park or skyscraper lobby. There’s no 300-foot tower. There’s no small bench by the road. There is not even a tree scored, an initial that I can visit in Charleston or Savannah or New York or Providence or better still, on the banks of the Mississippi. And because such a place doesn’t exist (that I know of) the book had to. (Morrison 1989: 4)

Iconoclasm has a long tradition in the French West Indies. Since slavery was abolished in 1848, the sequels of slavery and colonialism have polarized society along an ethnic divide: while the white descendants of masters have quite rapidly elevated monuments and statues to glorify their presence and politics in the Caribbean islands, rebellious descendants of slaves have regularly vandalized these prestigious symbols of domination in the Caribbean archipelago.

In what follows, we shall draw particular attention to two opposite statues in the French Caribbean: one the female icon of European beauty and French colonial power in Martinique; the second, the victimized yet resistant slave standing upright to face the colonial power and confront the re-establishment of slavery in Guadeloupe. The first one embodies the imperial prestige of Martinique, which stands apart and above Guadeloupe and Haiti; the second the counter-culture of an Afro-Caribbean maroon. As a final example we will briefly scrutinize the male statue of the republican leader Victor Schoelcher (1804–1893), thanks to whom (so says the legend) the French West Indies and La Réunion (in the Indian Ocean) saw slavery abolished in 1848.

Josephine and Schoelcher Beheaded

During a television quiz in the late 1990s, I was able to measure the importance of Joséphine de Beauharnais, Napoléon's 'proud' and dignified (first) spouse, in the collective mind of Martinicans. The French Caribbean inhabitants of the island are particularly proud to have given birth to a Creole lady from one of the oldest dynasties in Martinique. But such a symbol is only embraced by a tiny minority of islanders, since she also represents repression, both sexual and racial, within an ongoing struggle for equality. These racial and social tensions remained vivid until Aimé Césaire (1913–2008), '*le nègre fondamentale*', cofounded, together with Léon Damas (1912–1978) and Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906–2001), the concept of '*negritude*', inspiring racial pride and the vindication of a political status emancipating all individuals of colour or racial and social prejudice (Bolzinger 2016). The ideology of *negritude*, however, has been questioned by Damas and Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), because it also engendered 'lactification' and alienation, given the politics of assimilation. At the level of monuments, the vacuum of local heroes has only recently been filled up by initiatives running over the existent monuments, erected when the French colonial power was omnipresent on all levels of society – well until the end of the nineteenth century.

The question in the television quiz read as follows: whose statue is represented (and the hint was: Martinique, Napoléon)? Nobody among the team members was able to answer the question and the Martinican presenter who was asking it was visibly very ashamed, sad and disappointed. It is this kind of 'detail' in the actual daily life which proves how the small island of Martinique continues, on the one hand, to nourish a strong attachment to the '*métropole*'; while, on the other, a small but growing group of '*independentists*' seek to sever the 'umbilical cord' with the European nation.

In 1991, a symbolic decapitation of the statue of Empress Josephine took place in Fort-de-France. The statue, originally commissioned by Napoleon III from the French sculptor Gabriel Vital Dubray (1813–1892) and erected in 1859, had already been vandalized several times and splashed with red paint. It symbolized a growing and general dissatisfaction with French leadership, the imperial heritage and the implicit neo-colonialism in the ‘*statut de département d’outre mer*’ (Curtius 2008). Not only was Joséphine, who was born on Martinique, the typical Creole lady; but she also epitomized the different beauty canons of the powerless female subject who, by the colour of her skin and by her marriage, had obtained an incredible superiority over the other islanders of mixed race descent.

The ‘scandal’ of the beheaded empress made news in the tiny island of the French-speaking Caribbean and spurred many reactions by critics, scholars, and historians (Dubois 2006; Bonniol 2004). As a consequence of the violent demolition of the white marble Empress statue, a project took form: the slave road or ‘*route de l’esclavage*’, aiming to render visible the material traces of slavery, worthy of renovation, restauration and thus allowing the island population to reconnect with its own past, and redeem the spectre of colonialism and the terrible deeds committed under slavery.

In 2020, however, iconoclastic assaults reached a new climax, like everywhere else in Europe, America and the Caribbean: statues were destroyed and dismantled by activists in the months after the murder of George Floyd by white police officers, in the aftermath of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ (BLM) movement. Such protests rapidly engulfed a stream of vandalism: in response, local politicians in Martinique decided to calm down the tensions by temporarily removing the statue.

This renewed iconoclastic wave brings to the forefront the troublesome relationship between public space and conflictual cultural heritage in former colonies throughout the world. To the population of the French West Indies, the mainly anonymous yet collective act of disfiguration and destruction meant a growing weariness with the ways in which metropolitan France still led society. After many decades of independentism and insurrection, petitioners and decision makers gave in to requests and accepted that new monuments be raised both in Martinique (at Le Diamant, for instance) and in Guadeloupe (at Matouba). In this way, the Creole inhabitants could now enjoy both their counter-History and their need for a genuine French-Caribbean pantheon and imaginary.

Yet as Frantz Fanon had rightly pointed out, the ‘tropical Frenchmen’ would continue to provoke unrest. French assimilation politics generated alienation (according to Fanon) and much of the hostile environment created between the white minority and the Afro-Caribbean majority still exists. In the colonial mind, the French West Indies were just ‘confetti on the Atlantic ocean’ (President De Gaulle’s words). Treated as a colony of settlement despite being in reality an extractive sugar colony, Martinique was seen as an extension of France in the tropics. As such, this faraway France, where a colonial citizenry had attained a certain degree of civilization, became the site of an intense struggle over French identity and nationality waged between liberal French republicans and a reactionary right wing consisting

of monarchists and Bonapartists. Race, politics, and socioeconomics were intertwined in the Caribbean. Faced with an intransigent population of white plantation owners who maintained the old aristocratic mores of pre-revolutionary France, liberal officials turned to the island's burgeoning mixed-race middle class as bearers of the French Republic.

Martinique has Joséphine de Beauharnais, Guadeloupe has . . . Solitude: the two statues are diagonally opposed as the first one represents the upper class and the white marble elevates the European beauty transplanted to the colonial mansion. The second one is a robust black figure without the fine features of the wealthy plantation daughter. The first one has often been attacked in times of social unrest while the second one, much 'younger', remains firmly anchored on a crossroad at Baimbridge, miles away from the centre of the island. The fact that Guadeloupe, the nearby 'Sister-island of Martinique', is deprived of statues of equivalent 'symbolic' order is significant. Pointe-à-Pitre is bereft of such a magnificent French and Caribbean 'daughter' of the French colonial empire.

Such discrepancy sheds light on an unequal relationship between the two islands: Martinique has always been superior to Guadeloupe in the colonial mind, but the latter had its slave revolt, leading to the first, short-lived, abolition of slavery (from 1794 to 1804). Hence there is a more pronounced pro-independence fever and racial pride.

It is thanks to a historical novel that this 'character' has actually been nourished: *La Mulâtresse Solitude* ('A Woman Named Solitude'), first published in 1972, became so powerful that its legendary protagonist, slightly a historical figure, inspired a statue on the island of Guadeloupe and a second one in the French 'métropole'. It is a process of a three-dimensional memory as the neo-slave narrative, written by André Schwarz-Bart (1928–2006), *A Woman Named Solitude*, became a sculpture at a crossroad at Baimbridge (near the Pointe-à-Pitre airport), and later on in a Parisian peripheral zone associated with its communist past.

Finally, a third stage was set with the inauguration, in 2015, of the first slave museum granted to Guadeloupe, in the presence of president François Hollande together with Christiane Taubira and other important politicians, artists and intellectuals. I was expecting to see *Solitude* in the museum's collection, more precisely in the last room where local authors such as Aimé Césaire and Édouard Glissant (1928–2011) had their photographs displayed. It was not the case. Nor was it with André Schwarz-Bart, the bestselling Polish Francophone Jewish author of *The Last of the Just*.

In this, his first Caribbean novel, André Schwarz-Bart brought into public space (given the fact that fiction is elaborated for a readership both local and international) an erased and even hidden heroine of French Caribbean historiography. Schwarz-Bart had thus elevated to the rank of novelistic protagonist, a heroine whose symbolic potential was, according to him, of the same order and calibre as that of Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793) for women's rights or Théroigne de Méricourt (1762–1817), another advocate of equality in the French Americas. *La Mulâtresse Solitude* is similar to the autobiography of a slave, from which only the narrative

perspective differs. A third-person narrative, *La Mulâtresse Solitude* is impregnated with marvellous realism, while giving us a shattering testimony on the slave system, in the sugar plantation world (a concentration camp *avant la lettre* in the tropics), and the re-establishment of slavery in the West Indies after the Convention abolished it in 1794.

The author, of Polish-Jewish origin, refused to heroize her character: Solitude may have been a citizen of colour, but she was not a natural leader of rebellious people. However, leading an escort of maroons who find her 'so unlike the stories they used to tell, the cane tales, the legends' (Schwarz-Bart 1972, 118), she kills an opponent in self-defence. It is almost by chance, haggard and fearful, that she eliminates a French soldier whose path she crosses. The alleged heroine, whose incredible life the novelist must complete by imagination, is moreover devoid of words: illiterate, she only received a rudimentary education in her master's house. It is in a daze state, as though she were a zombie, that she leads the insurgents who, with Louis Delgrès (1766–1802), crowd into their last hideout, the Danglemont House: 'without wanting it, without even knowing it, it is said, she led the disempowered group which was shrinking day by day' (Schwarz-Bart 1972, 110). The incisive '*dit-on*' gives value to the 'legends' that sediment the West Indian popular memory.

In a penetrating way, the hierarchy of races and the total prohibition of individualism are rendered in this poignant novel. Schwarz-Bart reminds us that, according to the *Code Noir*, a legal document that prescribed punishment for disobedience to the system, slaves received atrocious punishments that led them to 'marooning', the desertion of the plantation, as Solitude's mother did, or else die a slow death. In the same way, the 'mixture of races' being forbidden, all 'mixed bloods' knew the fate of being privileged in relation to blacks, but were, nevertheless, despised by the whites: a caste of freedmen to which Louis Delgrès belonged was thus formed, which constituted the first ranks of the insurrection in Saint-Domingue and everywhere else in the Caribbean.

At a time when France did not yet have a specific place of remembrance and had yet to inaugurate a stele, a commemorative plaque or a museum for these oppressed minorities, Schwarz-Bart's novel treated the 'Toussaint complex' of West Indians: unlike Haitians who can readily identify with Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803), the 'Black Jacobin', as a glorious example of a leader of enslaved people, the West Indians have no real heroes, no role models given the centuries of ruthless oppression and colonial yoke. Unlike the other Martinican novelists and essayists, Schwarz-Bart decided to choose Solitude instead of Louis Delgrès or Toussaint Louverture. In other words, it is the female antagonist of the terrible slave rebellion who is placed at the forefront of the novel, so as to honour the many women of African descent whose voices and faces have never been remembered, known, and certainly not glorified. Unlike the male theorists both of the *antillanité* movement, founded by Edouard Glissant, and the *créolité* movement, founded by Patrick Chamoiseau (b. 1953) and Raphaël Confiant (b. 1951), Schwarz-Bart, the novelist, pays attention to the West Indian heroine and even privileges the feminine perspective and condition in the plantation universe. The couple of both André and his Guadeloupean wife, Simone Schwarz-Bart (b. 1938), reverse the perspective and

focus on ‘rememory’ as advocated by American novelist Toni Morrison (1931–2019) in her essay ‘The Site of Memory’ (Morrison 1995).

In the months following the BLM movement, a second pair of statues underwent attacks and beheading in the French West Indies, in Fort-de-France and Bourg-Schoelcher (Martinique): the statues of Victor Schoelcher (1803–1893), who had been in charge of the emancipation proclamation, were so damaged that the mayors in both towns decided to have them temporarily removed. Deliverer of freedom, Schoelcher certainly nourished antislavery ideas but to say that he was the only person responsible for the emancipation is, once again, a very Western way of ‘falsifying History’. Schoelcher’s memorialization erased the impact of the various slave revolts upon the declaration for all of the overseas island territories (La Réunion, French West Indies). This myth of humanist principles lying at the origin of this gesture, is known as ‘schoelcherism’, whilst reality was the wave of uprisings which forced the French Republic to make such a decision. For historian Myriam Cottias (b. 1960), the assault on these statues questioned the sequels of slavery and colonial oppression; she saw these acts of collective, yet clandestine, violence as an expression of frustration about belonging to France.

In spite of being the symbol of male French republican power and abolitionist ideas, in spite of representing this very important builder of freedom, the statue in Fort-de-France, located in front of the town’s Law Court, and the one in Bourg-Schoelcher, were the targets in May 2020 of iconoclasm: the assault was moreover filmed by its perpetrators themselves and broadcast *YouTube*. Young rascals, all male, dressed in red, white and black sports gear, pull down both statues. The television channel ‘Martinique la première’ soon spread the news (Martinique 1ère 2020).

While French President Emmanuel Macron and Serge Letchimy, President of the Martinique Executive Council, openly condemned such acts, voices were heard about the need to rebalance the two conflictual versions of Martinique’s historiography: ‘The Foundation for the Memory of Slavery’ explained that Schoelcher’s fight brought together enslaved people, who continued to revolt against their state, but also against abolitionist activists such as Victor Schoelcher. One can observe and regret, though, that the Glissant’s spiritual son and heir, novelist Patrick Chamoiseau, only took the time to react on Twitter, denouncing the political implication of Victor Schoelcher’s action and calling for respect for Schoelcher. Iconoclasm beyond the racial, gender and ethnic boundaries will thus continue to strongly oppose decorum and beauty (as main ‘assets’ on the female side), with male power and agency. Schoelcher stands as the ‘just leader’ for the subaltern black children represented at his feet in the Fort-de-France statue.

Baimbridge 1999. Museum Culture as an Ongoing Divide in the Caribbean Archipelago

When the General Council of Guadeloupe decided, in 1999, to erect a statue in memory of Solitude at the crossroads of Baimbridge, not far from the Boulevard des

Héros, Guadeloupean sculptor Jacky Poulrier (b. 1951) created an imposing life-size sculpture of a strong, standing, woman. Beneath a massive and robust Solitude (compared with the frail figure suggested by Schwarz-Bart's novel), the base bears the following:

Despite her pregnancy, Solitude continued the struggle of resistance after the tragic ordeals of Baimbridge and Matouba. But during a hunt in the woods of the lowlands she was captured and sentenced to be hanged, her torturers allowing her only time to give birth. On November 29, 1802, only 30 years old, Solitude was hanged on the big mast of torture while uttering the cry of 'Live free or die'. The grateful people of Guadeloupe honor and respect her memory.

The names of both the author and the sculptor have been omitted, which entails interrogations as to the notions of 'intellectual property', on the one hand, and cultural heritage, on the other. What is puzzling too is that Martinicans rewrite an official colonial history and do not bother to set the record straight. Martinique's leading historians and novelists such as Edouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, but also Raphaël Confiant, have never reconfigured the record, paying tribute to either André Schwarz-Bart or his work. On the contrary, they have preferred to 'commemorate their heroic figures' and to value male heroes such as Louis Delgrès and Victor Schoelcher. Delgrès's statue was one of the earliest monuments to be erected in Guadeloupe to commemorate the permanent abolition of slavery in 1848 in Pointe-à-Pitre, the 'capital' of the Guadeloupe Overseas Department.

While the traumas of slavery linger deep in the collective Caribbean mind, the approach and sociocultural practices of Glissant or the *créolistes* (Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant) actually excise the name of an author who should be valued, as it is by scholars such as Jean-Luc Bonniol (Bonniol 2007) and Laurent Dubois (Dubois 2006). This oversight was never corrected by the local authorities. While the statue inscribes the figure of Solitude durably in time and space, the author who contributed to her recovered memory through a narrative, itself submerged by Confiant and Chamoiseau in their anthology, raises sustained interrogations about why, and who is in power to decide which figure should be at the centre of the West Indies cultural and historical heritage. The erasure of André Schwarz-Bart's name itself is an act of iconoclasm.

Given the notoriety of Solitude in Paris today, voices even having been raised in 2021 to have her enter the pantheon (next to Alexandre Dumas and Joséphine Baker), and the existence of a '*Jardin Solitude*' in the 17th arrondissement, such omission in local circles leads us to consider the biased reception of Schwarz-Bart's work in the French West Indies. Co-author with his wife, Simone Schwarz-Bart, of a monumental six-volume encyclopaedia, *Hommage à la femme noire* (Schwarz-Bart and Schwarz-Bart 1989), highlighting black women who fought for their freedom and independence across continents and centuries, André Schwarz-Bart was not even included in the vast Anthology, *Lettres créoles, Tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature, Haïti, Guadeloupe, Martinique*,

Guyane (1635-1975), signed by Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant and published in 1991. A special issue of the Martinique magazine *Portulan*, on 'Jewish memory, black memory' (October 1998) did not include any article on the emblematic, mixed couple of the French West Indies. Ironically, in France, André Schwarz-Bart was in 1959 awarded the prestigious Goncourt Prize for his novel *The Last of the Just*, but he is not prominent either in the canon of Shoah literature, unlike Primo Levi (1919–1987), Elie Wiesel (1928–2016) or Charlotte Delbo (1913–1985).

In the West Indies, as in France, he is known by essayists such as Édouard Glissant, who discussed opening a museum in his essay *Mémoire des esclavages*, but his contributions and monumental work have no mention among the different projects considered. In other words, André Schwarz-Bart does not attract attention, unlike the work of Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier (1904–1980), whose Makandal, an equally imagined hero in *The Kingdom of this World*, acquired monumental dimensions. The occultation of the author and his protagonist, especially under the pens of Édouard Glissant, Raphaël Confiant or Patrick Chamoiseau is even more surprising, since the latter had a theatrical adaptation of *La Mulâtresse Solitude*; moreover, Solitude inspired his own character of 'Man l'Oubliée' in his novel *Un Dimanche au cachot* (Chamoiseau 2010).

Inextricably entangled with the Caribbean museological ideology, is the connection between fictions and 'installations' which allegedly preserve and support both cultural heritage and popular forms of knowledge (through tourism and island tours). A recent example of conflictual heritage was the toppling of the statues of 'Papa Schoelcher'. For historian Myriam Cottias (Cottias 2020), France needs a salutary 'repentance' act and has to recognize, after the Memory Laws (2005, recognizing the slave trade as a crime against humanity), the need for counter-monuments.

As he planned a museum of slavery in Martinique, the novelist and poet Édouard Glissant had the ambition to have France install a museum in one of its Overseas Departments. He then published a kind of Manifesto, with an introduction by Dominique de Villepin, in which he argued that Martinique needed monuments, both inside and outside (Glissant 2007: 155), and should host museums that might also serve as art galleries and performance spaces to welcome all kinds of initiatives documenting the post/colonial period. While Glissant's museological ideas and ambitious project were certainly legitimate, his own 'pivotal role' was probably too much at the centre of his proposal. Indeed, the diversity and solidarity he aimed as the mission of this 'centre' included his own work as a novelist and essayist (Glissant 2007: 147). The decision was finally taken in favour of Guadeloupe over Martinique.

***Mémorial ACTe* and the Non-museification of Solitude**

In 2009, President Nicolas Sarkozy granted the island of Guadeloupe its first and only Museum on Slavery, the *Mémorial ACTe*. The ambitiously promoted museum was built (Film institutionnel, 2017) in a very postmodern style of architecture, on the site of the former sugar cane factory, Darboussier. This factory, a typical

nineteenth century structure, had been demolished to make way for the museum. It is the first of its kind in the French overseas departments, and the English-sounding name – ‘ACTe’ – was meant to emphasize its international vocation: visitors from around the world could now discover slavery in its most diverse aspects, as well as the transatlantic slave trade in its connections to the small island of Guadeloupe.

Located on the harbour roadstead, outside Pointe-à-Pitre, this ‘Caribbean Centre of Expressions and Memory of the Slave Trade and Slavery’ was officially inaugurated in 2015 – on the day chosen for the commemoration of slavery, 10 May – by President François Hollande and local elected officials, politicians (such as Christiane Taubira) and writers, and in the presence of the heads of State of Haiti (Michel Martelly), Senegal (Macky Sall), Mali (Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta) and Benin (Thomas Boni Yayi). However, in this symbolic ‘place of knowledge’ and of transmission, Solitude was missing. As a reaction, protestors tried to remove her statue and bring it into the museum, but the police prevented this ‘revolutionary act’ from taking place.

The novel *La Mulâtresse Solitude* is part of the genre of the autobiography of an ex-slave and fills the gap of a suppressed, non-existent history, both locally and internationally. Although it did not meet with the success of *The Last of the Just*, the Jewish saga that won its author the Goncourt Prize in 1959, Schwarz-Bart’s novel has become a classic of French Caribbean literature. The fact that a sculptor seized upon it to erect a monument, in Guadeloupe itself, is therefore a decisive moment in the museification of this legendary figure.

More should be done to understand and prevent iconoclasm in small colonial ‘islands’ such as the French Antilles. While poetry and novels may help, it is finally the ‘busts’ and ‘statues’ that truly fill the gap of a hitherto suppressed history, both locally and internationally. A statue makes the novel known in public space. It has the same ‘popularizing’ effect as the graphic novel: it is significant that both *La Mulâtresse Solitude* and *Ti Jean L’Horizon* have now become graphic novels (Unesco 2014; Larney 2022). Slowly but surely, the novels by both André and Simone Schwarz-Bart have become ‘*patrimoine national*’ of the French Caribbean.

Conflictual ‘*Patrimoine*’ and Curating the Caribbean at High Risk

Iconoclasm remains a violent act of protest against a given order. In the Caribbean, the statues that have been dismantled represented the colonial order and the long-lasting dominance of the ‘*métropole*’ over islands which became overseas departments of France in 1946. The example of the statue of a former slave and ‘national’ heroine, Solitude, based on the novel *La Mulâtresse Solitude*, teaches us another phenomenon: in spite of its tremendous success – the novel having led to theatre plays and graphic novels (Unesco 2014) – the virtual erasure of its author’s name gives in to speculation about a certain ‘*misogynoir*’ and even biased reception, by black male curators and novelists alike, towards non-French Caribbean initiators. A similar conflictual heritage and ‘*patrimoine*’ can be seen, for instance, in Surinam

where a Jewish cemetery (Gyssels 2021) is now under high duress because it documents the involvement of Sephardic Jews in the slave system and plantation economy in both the Guianas and the Caribbean archipelago.

The ethnic origin of the author André Schwarz-Bart even leads to conjectures about a certain intolerance towards cultural brokers who are perceived as strangers by the prominent theorists of ‘*créolité*’ and ‘*antillanité*’ (Gyssels 2014). While Édouard Glissant heralds the promotion of a museum/culture that stresses creolization and cultural diversity as its strength, and banning racial stereotypes, in the end, Guadeloupe’s prestigious museum’s goals have probably not been met, as the visitor moves across its different rooms in which diversity (starting with the linguistic one) is barely represented.

Solitude is eliminated from the collection. Guadeloupe’s ‘female Black Jacobin’ appears to be permanently banned from the exhibits, which further problematizes the subjectivity of exposing cultural heritage in the Caribbean. Museology remains a delicate issue, as Sally and Richard Price have shown in their comparison of three new museums featuring the New World’s links with slavery (one in Belize, one in Madrid, one in Cayenne) (Price and Price 1995). Decolonizing the Caribbean monuments and public spaces symbolizing the traumatic past, runs, in various ways, the risk of renewed iconoclasm.

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