Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

Indigenous ancestors and healing landscapes : cultural memory and intercultural communication in the Dominican Republic and Cuba

Pesoutova, J.

Citation

Pesoutova, J. (2019, January 23). *Indigenous ancestors and healing landscapes : cultural memory and intercultural communication in the Dominican Republic and Cuba*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/68891

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License:	Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/68891

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

Leiden University Repository

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/68891 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Pesoutova, J.
Title: Indigenous ancestors and healing landscapes : cultural memory and intercultural communication in the Dominican Republic and Cuba
Issue Date: 2019-01-23

CHAPTER 3. Natural Man in the Caribbean Paradise: the origins of colonial discourse

The history of healing landscapes is to be understood as a part of a broader landscape transformation, including material and conceptual aspects, which went hand in hand with the introduction of new religions and medicinal cultures into the region. This chapter highlights a few European influential ideas in the first written references to Caribbean peoples and landscapes that are fundamental to the discussion of the complex transformations of healing landscapes in the Caribbean after European conquest. This brief review of the representation of the indigenous peoples sheds light on the role of the colonial sources in shaping people's relation with the landscape, with history and, more specifically, with those who lived on these islands long before the European invasion of five hundred years ago.

The first European accounts of the Caribbean region have traditionally been described as motivated by the economic and political interests of the colonizer. The search for trade routes and ways to extract resources, was accompanied by religious zeal, imperial ambitions and ideologies, which were expressed in colonial discourse. All these motivations were interwoven and mutually reinforced each other, having their impact on human practices and institutions.

When analyzing the first written accounts about the indigenous peoples, the flora and fauna of the Greater Antilles, we should consider the influences of Ancient Greece and Rome, in particular the idea of a Golden Age, described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Herodotean and Plinian monstrous races, and the Aristotelean argument that some men are slaves by nature.[42] References to the Golden Age are especially prominent in the writings of Italian authors, such as Christopher Columbus, Petrus Martyr D'Anghiera, and Amerigo Vespucci, who depict the Caribbean in conformity with Ovid's rhetoric about happy, simple, naked people without work, law, war or illness, living in a biblical or rather classical idyllic landscape with a vivid and fecund land where men had no adversities or discomforts (Levin 1969). The myth of the Golden Age seems to have been easily fused with the Judeo-Christian idea of Paradise, the same motif that strongly charged the (in)famous voyage of Columbus to the New World (Levin 1969 in Lemaire 1986; Hofman 2008).

According to Lemaire, the West that Columbus was forced to head to (in his wish to arrive in China while avoiding the military presence of Islam in the East), was associated with Atlantis, and the garden of the Hesperides. During his first journey, Columbus (1492) admired Cuba as one of the most beautiful islands that his eyes had ever seen, full of very good ports and deep rivers, beautiful mountains, with calm seas, abundant fruits of amazing flavor, and singing birds. On several occasions Columbus calls the Gulf of Paria and La Vega (Cibao valley in the Dominican Republic) paradisiacal regions (Pérez Memén 2000). His account has traditionally been interpreted in the context of his agenda to promote the colonial enterprise. His explicit comparison of these lands with paradise might be understood as a common expression among believers but also as a real wish of a pious man to locate the Earthly Paradise. By renaming these Caribbean places according to European sacred referents, like Monte Cristi or Montserrat, Columbus clearly projected his worldview and knowledge of sacred European places onto the local landscapes, giving them new meanings by which these until then mysterious parts of the world became integrated into the European concept of Divine Creation.

The European values and beliefs are also displayed in the accounts about the original inhabitants of the islands. Columbus' description of the Lucayos, the most repeated description of Caribbean indigenous

[42] For the influences of the worldview of classical antiquity on the accounts of Americas see Mason (1990) and Haase & Reinhold (1994).

peoples, may serve as an example (1961 [1492]). In describing the way, he took possession of San Salvador in the name of the Spanish King and Queen and with a ceremony of gift exchange, Columbus portrayed the Lucayos as poor, naked, friendly, of good will and easy to be converted to Christianity. Since the exotic regions were, according to Mandeville's travel accounts, full of deformed creatures, such as antipodes, sciapods and anthropophagi, which Mandeville supposedly encountered during his journey to the East, Columbus emphasized the well-formed physique of the indigenous peoples of Greater Antilles (Mason 1990).[43] The emphasis on the form of the bodies might be also rooted in the beliefs of classical authors such as Pliny, Aristotle, and Hippocrates in physiognomy, according to which the physical appearance of people was seen as an indication of their character. Unlike D'Anghiera, Columbus viewed "the nakedness" of the natives not as an indication of their uncivilized nature but as a consequence of their poverty (1961 [1492]). Columbus' knowledge of the classical authors' writings about mysterious beings that were living in remote regions is apparent when he describes sirens (later identified as *manatís*) and cannibals (Columbus 1961).

Chanca's report (2011 [1494]) about the anthropophagi, which was based on the finding of four or five human bones in a house of the people called Caribes during the second voyage to the New World, can also be interpreted as having been influenced by Pliny's description of the Chalybes tribe. Pliny had already mentioned the Chalybes as people that feed on human bodies and that lived on some exotic islands centuries ealier. Although the members of Columbus' crew never witnessed anthropophagous practices, they rapidly interpreted the cultural elements they did not understand in terms of their expectations, formed by such ancient images, and so reinforced their bias, which was later used as a justification for their enslavement. The fact that bones were removed from their original context may be interpreted in multiple ways, varying from secondary burial practices to forms of ancestral veneration. In contrast, the human bones deposited in the European churches were seen as relics of Saints, or ossuaries that contained a moral message.[44] Nevertheless, Chanca's colored portrayals appealed to European fantasies and fears about foreign others and had a lasting influence on subsequent accounts of indigenous peoples of the Lesser Antilles.

Soon after the discovery, the Caribbean islands became the region where all kinds of mysterious beings lived. Cannibals are said to be visiting Amazons living on Madanina, who like those women of Lesbos were dangerous to man, luring Spanish men into their caves (D´Anghiera 1992 [ca. 1505-1511], pp. 73-74, see Fig. 1). Considering the narrative registered by Friar Pané about Matinino as an island where the first ancestor left the first woman, these accounts might not be totally invented but inspired by the oral traditions of indigenous peoples and rephrased according to ancient Greek motives (Pané 2011 [1498]). At the same time, these narratives, as in the case of the *Sirenas*, might reflect more the European imagination than real observances or information obtained from the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean.

[43] Mandeville's accounts are most likely based on Pliny's Natural History written more than a thousand years earlier (Mason 1990). For more on John Mandeville's travels see Macleod Higgins (1997).

[44] One of the famous Spanish ossuaries is the one of St. Mary's Church in Wamba, on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. The epitaph on one of the walls says: "As you look (now), I (once) looked. As you see me, you will look. All ends in this (form) here. Think about it and do not sin" (own translation).

Figure 1 German Illustration from the Mundus Novus of Amerigo Vespucci (1509).[45]

The first accounts of the Caribbean were quickly used as a justification for the conquest. Forty years before Columbus sailed to the Caribbean, Pope Nicholas V issued a Papal bull to the Portuguese King Alfonso V that all "saracens, pagans and other enemies of Christ" can be put into slavery, to take all their possessions and property (the bull Romanus Pontifex, Newcomb 1992). Acting on the bull, the Portuguese expanded their colonization in West Africa and enslaved the local inhabitants. Soon after Columbus' report on the Caribbean islands, the Spanish Catholic royals Isabel and Ferdinand were granted possession of these lands by Pope Alexander VI (the bull of *Inter Cetera* 1493).[46] One group of the native inhabitants of these islands – those who welcomed the Europeans in a friendly manner – was described as people apt to be converted to Christianity and to become loyal vassals of the Spanish crown. They were depicted as unclothed, helpless people: their land was not defined in terms of formal ownership and land titles. Another group – the ones who resisted the invasion – were seen as warlike cannibals, enemies of free trade and true religion, and who also did not possess any rights. This dichotomy between peaceful Arawaks and warlike Caribs has been preserved in many historical sources until today (Hulme 1986).[47]

[45]Vespucci, A. (1509). *Diss büchlin saget wie die zwē durchlüchtigstē herrē her Fernandus K. zů Castilien und herr Emanuel K. zů Portugal haben das weyte mör ersůchet unnd funden vil Insulen, unnd ein Nüwe welt von wilden nackenden Leüten, vormals unbekant.* Gedruckt zů Strassburg: Durch Johānē Grüniger.

[46] See the "Demarcation Bull Granting Spain Possession of Lands Discovered" of Pope Alexander VI, reproduced with English translation in The Gilder Lehrman Collection *(www.gilderlehrman.org).*

[47] Hulme (1986) summarized the big narrative as follows: *"The Caribbean islands had been populated first by the gentle agriculturalist Columbus had met on his first voyage, who turn out to have been called Arawaks; and then by the fierce, man-eating and nomadic Caribs, who were renowned for stealing Arawak women, and who over several centuries had chased their enemies up the chain of islands as far as Puerto Rico. The Island Arawak proved too fragile to resist the adversities of the Spanish presence, falling victim to the twin evils of new virus and enforced slavery, and rapidly died out. However the militant Island Carib defended their islands so ferociously that the Spaniards left them alone and turned their attention to Mexico"* (Hulme 1986, pp. 47-48). As Hulme suggests, much of this information is doubtful but it has been consistently repeated.

The religious bias towards peoples of different religious systems was often formulated in the rhetoric of Classical Antiquity. Peoples who were *not yet* Christians but were capable of being converted were described as if they were living in another time, in the case of the accounts about the Caribbean: in the Golden Age (see D'Anghiera ca. 1505-1511, p. 79*)*.

The dismissal of any values associated with the beliefs and cultures of other peoples was convenient as it automatically justified the expropriation of the lands and later the establishment of the *encomienda* system.[48] The conversion would then also automatically civilize the peoples, and simultaneously give rights to the Catholic King and Queen over these lands. As Esteban Deive suggested, the *encomienda* was, in fact, disguised slavery (Deive 1980). The encomienda that legalized forced labor in the spirit of the salvation of the indigenous souls and became a justification of conquest.

Before the conversion, it had to be determined whether these peoples were even capable of it. The missionaries and encomenderos disagreed about whether the indigenous peoples were capable of being converted to the "true religion", and as such of becoming "civilized". Friar Ramon Pané was assigned to write about the beliefs of the natives in order to see if they could be instructed in the Christian faith. Pané (2011 [1498]) concluded that some of them, under strict supervision would be able to be converted in a mild way, whereas others needed to be persuaded by force. [49] To support his argument, Pané mentioned examples of conversions or miracles, which occurred during his stay with the indigenous peoples of Hispaniola. Distorted by his religious-political agenda and cultural bias, Pané's account is the only known first-hand information about indigenous worldview and origin narratives in the Greater Antilles.

The base of the disputes about the ability to convert was disagreement about whether indigenous peoples of the Greater Antilles are slaves by nature or not. This dispute is also illustrative of how man and the environment were viewed by the Spaniards of this period as interrelated. Less than ten years after the Pope issued the first bull for land demarcation and appropriation for Spanish royals, the Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos challenged the legitimacy of the harsh treatment of the natives of Hispaniola. Montesinos' preaching led to disputes about the legitimacy of enslavement, particularly in the Antilles, with Las Casas as the best-known defender of the indigenous peoples. Montesinos had to return to Spain to explain his position in front of a series of commissions and the Spanish king. There, the royal preacher Gregorio justified slavery by the Aristotelean argument that Caribbean peoples are slaves by nature their geographical position.[50]

The commission produced a document in which Queen Isabel insisted that indigenous peoples should be treated as free men while at the same time endorsing the *encomienda* system. This in the end resulted in the Laws of Burgos, which state that the principal obstacle in correcting the 'vices' of indigenous peoples

[48] The *encomienda* was a legalization of servile labor, which in practice was very close to slavery (Sued Badillo 2003; Deive 1980).

[49] In contrast, Oviedo for example argued that the indigenous peoples could not be converted. He claims that they were far removed from wanting to understand the Catholic faith, and this was conditioned literally by their physical characteristics: "just as their skulls are thick, so is their reasoning bestial and ill-intentioned as will be related further on with respect to those aspects of their rites, ceremonies, customs and other matters of some ilk as may occur to me (*Natural History* Lib.I, p. 125).

[50] To summarize briefly, the aim of Aristoteles' argument about some people being slaves by nature was that barbarians were by nature slaves and Greeks by nature their masters. Berbers (name of the same origin as barbarians) of North Africa, the Turks, the Scythians, the Ethiopians, the Irish, the Vikings, the Germanic peoples, and European "pagans" (also Czech) all have been called barbarians. Aristotle's division between real citizens and natural slaves was based on the imperfect spiritual condition of the slave himself: inequality was seen as an inherent aspect of the order of the universe. In his view, the universe was characterized by a duality in which one element naturally dominates the other. In man the ruling element is intellect and the subordinate is passion. Natural man's intellect was dominated by his passions (Pagden, 1987, p. 42). The classic work on how the Aristotelean doctrine of natural slavery was used during this dispute is the book of Hanke (1959). In related vein, John Mair argued that the inhabitants of the Antilles were slaves by nature because they: "*live like beasts on either side of the equator; and beneath the poles there are wild men as Ptolemy says in his Tetrabiblos. And this has now been demonstrated by experience, wherefore the first person to conquer them, justly rules over them because they are by nature slaves. As the philosopher (Aristotle) says in his book the Politics, it is clear that some men are by nature slaves, others by nature free; and in some men there is a disposition to slavery and that they should benefit from it, by nature barbarians and slaves are the same."* (Pagden 1987: 38).

would be the fact that their dwellings are remote from the settlements of the Spaniards: although they serve the Spanish, they return to their dwellings where they immediately forget what they have been taught and go back to their customary idleness and vices (The Laws of Burgos 1512). Instruction in the Catholic faith was promoted as being essential *"for the health and rescue of their souls"*.[51]

With the increasing complaints about the treatment of the *encomendados*, the Hieronymite Interrogatory of 1517 should provide a response to the question of the indigenous peoples of Hispaniola could live as free vassals and be placed in villages close to Spanish settlements for their protection. The testimony of the Hieronymits is unanimous in their agreement about the inability of the natives to govern themselves; their self-government in liberty would mean that they would continue to practice their religious ceremonies and dances (*areítos*), and establish new settlements far away from (and beyond the control of) the Spanish population (Anderson-Cordova 1990). Without a doubt, these "testimonies" were biased by the interest in the benefits that the Spanish would receive from the continued indigenous enslavement. However, it is likely that during this period much of the indigenous worldview was still remembered and was in the process of becoming reinterpreted as a result of religious encounters with other belief systems, including those originating from West and Central Africa. It is also to be assumed that the acceptance of Catholic beliefs varied greatly among individuals and communities, some indigenous people converted to Catholicism (especially those who were instructed in it from early childhood), some went obligatorily to church, while preserving their own worldviews, and others were never baptized.

Following Montesino's appeal for religious conversion and treatment of indigenous ancestors, Las Casas (1556) depicted Hispaniola as fertile and full of natural resources, arguing that these were favorable conditions, in Aristotelean terms, for the natives to have a soul and be rational beings. Following Columbus' idea that somewhere there should be a paradise port, Las Casas states that actually the entire island looks like an earthly paradise (La Casas 1566, Vol. 1, Book 1, Cap. 2).[52] This qualification would create even more contrast with the crimes that the Spanish colonizers had committed in the Indies, the main issue that Las Casas tried to denounce. Later, in 1552, he published his observations and ideas in *A Very Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*.

The climax in the discussion about the legitimacy of the Spanish conquest was the Valladolid debate (1550 – 1551) between Las Casas, "the Protector of the Indians", and Sepúlveda, a chaplain and defender of Spanish empire's right of conquest. Sepúlveda argued that the natives were natural slaves as defined by Aristotle, and that it is legitimate to save those endangered by human sacrifices, to end and exorcise the crimes of the man-eaters, and to wage war against infidels. Las Casas opposed him in pointing out that Aristotle's model of the natural slave cannot be applied to the indigenous peoples, using Vitoria's argument

[51] The instructions regarding the treatment of the indigenous peoples do not only include information about the position of the villages and the crops cultivated there, but also stipulate that every village should have a building to be used as a church, with an image of Our Lady and a bell where they could pray after the day of (forced) labor. The same document also decrees that the performance of their dances (*areítos*) should not be prevented, or else the indigenous peoples would cause great harm. If we were to interpret *areítos* as a means of transmitting the indigenous religious and historical teachings, this instruction paradoxically supported the continuity of the indigenous beliefs.
The emphasis on the instruction in the Catholic faith led to another directive: that all sons of chiefs from the island should be given to friars of the Order of St. Francis so that they might be taught; thus, after four years when returning to the *encomienda*, they might teach others. One year later it was requested in an amendment that the order of St. Dominicus amend the previous ordinances, that treatment of the indigenous women and children had to be gentler, and that those who became competent to live by themselves and lead a kind of Christian life would serve as Spanish vassals, paying tribute as is the custom in Spain (Doña Juana Amendments, 1513).

[52] In contrast, Bernardo de Mesa used the insular position of Caribbean indigenous ancestors as the argument for depicting them as barbarians and therefore natural slaves (Pagden 1987, p. 48). According to Mesa´s view: "*their nature does not allow them to have perseverance in the virtue, which is due to their insular position naturally less persistent, because the moon is the lady of the waters, in whose center they inhabit, this causes vicious habits that they incline to similar acts"* (cited by Las Casas 1986 [ca. 1557], p. 35). The inconsistencies of his argument were easily pointed out by Las Casas (*ibid.*), who argued that, if true, the same should apply to peoples of England, Sicily, Candía, and the Baleares because these peoples also live on islands where the moon controls the waters.

that natives are reasonable in their own way.[53] In his opinion, they could not be barbarians because that would be in conflict with nature, as everything in nature was normally perfect as created by God.[54]

As part of his defense, Las Casas tends to overemphasize the characteristics of indigenous peoples being easy to obey, serve, and convert to the Roman Catholic religion. Las Casas (1552) describes the indigenous peoples as the humblest of God's creatures, the most peaceful, who lack hatred or desire for revenge. According to him, they were also a very delicate people, who die easily because of hard work or illnesses, as they were poor people without property, ambitions or greediness. All these arguments fitted in with his plea that these peoples were capable of receiving the Christian faith. Las Casas did not mind whether they themselves wanted to, because as father of the children he would know what was best for them. This argument about the fragile nature of the indigenous peoples together with the harsh treatment under the encomienda system have served as a main reason for the prohibition of *encomienda (New Laws 1542)*, and later also as an explanation for the rapid disappearance of the indigenous population in the Greater Antilles. Even after the prohibition of the *encomienda* system, indigenous people could still be enslaved if they were captured while resisting Spanish authority or accused of cannibalism.

Las Casas' influence is notable in various chronicles, present-day historiography and cultural memory. Benzoni, in his *La Historia del Mondo Novo* (1565), for example, extended Las Casas' criticism of the Spanish crimes in the Americas; his work happens to be the major inspiration for de Bry's *Grand Voyages* (1590-1634), images from which are frequently used as illustrations in many popular books and museum exhibitions (see Figures 2 and 3).[55]

---

[53] Vitoria, theologian, jurist and professor at University of Salamanca states that the hypothesis of Aristoteles about natural slavery cannot be applied to indigenous peoples because even though they seem to be without reason they are still capable of reasoning given that they have cities, laws and commerce (referring to the states of Mesoamerica and the Andes). Even their capacities and qualities were somehow lacking in comparison with Europeans as demonstrated by the (supposed) presence of cannibalism, human sacrifices, sodomy and the lack of literacy, yet they had enough attributes to be called human and as such they could not be natural slaves (Pagden, 1987; Lemaire, 1986). While criticizing the violent religious conquest of the natives, Vitoria still believed that to intervene in their countries in order to exercise the right of guardianship was just. In this way he anticipated the European attitude of later periods treating America (and Africa) as an immature continent (Todorov 1982, p. 149).

[54] Las Casas (1552/1966, pp. 33 -34) writes: *"Todas estas universas e infinitas gentes, a todo género crio Dios los más humildes, más pacientes, más pacíficas y quietas: sin rencillas ni bullicios, no rijosos, no querellosos, sin rencores, sin odios, sin desear venganzas que hay en el mundo…"*

[55] Different illustrations were published earlier, already since 1565. For the history of the publication of different engravings see the Introduction of the edition of 1979.

Figure 2 The dogs of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa attacking indigenous peoples by de Bry (1594/1979).[56]

Figure 3 De Bry's (1594-1595/1979) illustration based on Oviedo's treatise about the religion of peoples in the West Indies.[57]

[56] The image Bry, Theodor de, 1528-1598, engraver (1594). *The religious ceremony of the Indians.* Theodor de Bry's America. Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries. Retrieved from https://digital.lib.uh.edu/collection/p15195coll39/item/74.
The accompanying text of this illustration argues that Balboa conquered the prince (cacique) of Esquaragua with his subjects because they were dressed up in women's clothes. He considered it such a sin that he took about forty prisoners and let his dogs devour them (*Bry 1594/1979).*

[57] Bry, Theodor de, 1528-1598, engraver (1594). *The religious ceremony of the Indians.* Theodor de Bry's America. Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries. Retrieved from https://digital.lib.uh.edu/collection/p15195coll39/item/74. Fig. 3 illustrates how de Bry engraved Oviedo's description of a religious ceremony on the island of Hispaniola. The accompanying text describes how during this feast a procession led by the cacique was guided to the temple of a behique where the statue of a zemí was located, and accompanied by drumming, singing of traditional songs,

The noble savage idea in Lesser Antilles

While the reports about the Arawak, Carib and Tupi peoples in the coastal area of South America as well as the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of the Andean world set the tone for the discussions about indigenous peoples in the 16th century, the encounter with the North American natives was crucial in the next phase of the theorization about the development of human nature and society, and about the relationship between culture and environment (Lemaire 1986; Mitchell & Scheiber 2010). Over the course of the 17th century, the dichotomies barbarian vs. civilized and pagan vs. Christian were replaced by the opposition of natural man vs. citizen. This tendency is particularly characteristic of the works of Hobbes and Locke.[58] Their opinions have precedents in the colonists' arguments in Hispaniola and Cuba.

By the middle of the 18th century, differences among people were explained by schemas that combined long outdated 'conjectural prehistories' with more recent ideas about cultural and biological evolution that brought all humans under one progressivist unilineal historical continuum. The non-European cultures were categorized according to the absence or presence of European technological traits and modes of subsistence (McNiven & Russel 2005, p. 38 - 42). Over the course of the 18th century, depending on the agenda of the author in question, the other is again dehumanized as brutish barbarian or romanticized as a noble savage, which had been earlier described in the rhetoric of a Golden Age. The most prominent writers that applied the latter idea to the Caribbean were Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre (1667) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1751).[59] Rousseau, drawing on Du Tertre, popularized the concept of the noble savage (see Hulme 1986).

Rousseau's objective – criticizing French society, comparing it to examples from other cultures, in order to improve it – is not as problematic as the way in which the author expressed his arguments. In his view, the indigenous peoples of the Lesser Antilles remained in the past, being at a different stage of development.[60] In evaluating the current promotions of environmental protection, on the one hand, and of neocolonial exploitation on the other, we should be aware of this long tradition of pervasive colonial discourse, well established in classic works.

During the Enlightenment, colonial knowledge about the indigenous peoples of the Americas contributed to new thoughts about human nature and its development. Using colonial data to support their arguments, evolutionists transformed the biological and cultural divide established by colonial discourses into a temporal and structural divide (Mitchell & Scheiber 2010). Evolutionary developmental schemas

festive attires, purging, and offerings. The statement that the being to which these offerings were brought was Cacodaemon, the devil, shows de Bry´s difficulty in understanding the indigenous religion. Las Casas is one of the standard references for those who argue that the indigenous peoples in the Caribbean became rapidly extinct, and his work, frequently used by later authors, forms part of the present-day educational system. Finally, Las Casas' idea of the native peoples as innocent children waiting for European protection was expanded by Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) who further idealized the indigenous peoples in order to contrast them with the decadence of Europe, a tendency that regained popularity over the course of the 18th century.

[58] Hobbes applied the idea of the savage to North American peoples, which he called natural men who lacked knowledge or morals. Hobbes argued that their character was comparable to that of prehistoric Europeans: both were considered closer to nature than the contemporaneous Europeans. Placed back in time, indigenous peoples in Hobbes' account are like Las Casas', not yet in the same historical phase as the Europeans. This opinion intersects with the first modern ideas about the history of religion, in which animism is often placed as preceding "real religions". Unlike Hobbes, Locke considered the state of nature as a state in which people are placed by God and are free and equal if they behave in accordance with the norms of natural law, governed by reason. In his classic *Second Treatise* (1690) on property, he argued that the earth is the communal property of all humans; every person has a property right when his labor raises the value of the object. Although he admitted that hunting and collecting was a way of modifying the state of nature, he did not consider it to be a proper use. His lack of knowledge about native agriculture (or lack of willingness to investigate this further) led him to legitimize the expropriation of the indigenous lands by European colonizers.

[59] Du Tertre described Caribbean indigenous inhabitants as the true youth of the world resembling the earlier Golden Age motif. Du Tetre imagined these as: *"the happiest, the least vicious, the most sociable, the least deformed, and the least afflicted by disease in the whole world. For they are just as nature produced them, that is to say living in great and natural simplicity: they all equal, almost without knowledge of any sort of superiority or servitude […] they are all of a good build, well proportioned, large and powerful, so energetic and healthy that it is common to see amongst them old men of a hundred or a hundred and twenty […] who have hardly any white hair, their foreheads marked by hardly a wrinkle* (Du Tertre as cited in Hulme 1986, p. 230).

[60] For the most recent insights into complex transformations of indigenous peoples of Leeward Islands see Mans (2018).

referred to other cultures as living examples of the early stages of human development and to Europeans as progressive producers of history (McNiven & Russel 2005, p. 12). Europeans were characterized as literate and civilized, in opposition to the illiterate natives who were bound by their traditions and customs, which, being incompatible with future progress, were forecasting their imminent extinction.

The first academic works about indigenous heritage in the Dominican context were produced in the 19th century and according to them the indigenous peoples were representatives of the first phase of human development (for an overview see Ulloa Hung 2016). Even after Cuban (1902) struggles for independence from Spain, the regions were faced with series of periods of oppression such the neocolonial occupation of the US in Cuba (1899-1902), Platt Amendment (1901-1934), Machado's (1925-1939) or Batista's dictatorships (1952-1959), and others including the US embargo (since 1960 until present). Similarly, after the Dominican (1821) struggles for independence Dominicans were soon faced with the Haitian occupation (1822-1844), US military interventions (1916-1924, 1965-66), or Trujillo's dictatorship (1930-1961). The following examples will show that also revisionist studies of these later periods did not manage to escape to perpetuate of the colonial discourse.

Indigenous past as the beginning of the Dominican nation

References to indigenous ancestors should be seen in the light of the turbulent years of nation-building. The Haitian revolution (1791 – 1804) posed a great ideological threat to the slave-holding states of the Americas. While this historical event was a positive symbol of emancipation and the end of a crime against humanity for many, in the Dominican context this was overshadowed by the Haitian occupation of the Dominican state, which followed soon after the revolution and as such left a profound imprint on the construction of the Dominican national identity.

One of its leaders of the movement for independence, Juan Pablo Duarte, aimed to integrate the Dominican nation, while differentiating the population from the Haitians by extolling its Hispanic identity, its allegiance to Catholicism and its relative whiteness. In their quest for an own national identity, the founders of the Dominican nation drew on the indigenous ancestors as a factor that distinguished them from Haitians and Spaniards (García Arévalo 2008).

The *indigenismo* of this period represented for many a glorification of the extinct peoples which should be recovered and acknowledged as symbols of the real authentic origin of the nation, while others saw *indigenismo* as a movement that obscured - for ideological reasons - the participation of the slaves of African descent, who should be considered more fundamental to the Dominican historical processes (García Arevalo 2008).[61] Both currents in this regard follow the traditional colonial racial categories, which equate race with cultural knowledge, and simplify the intercultural dynamics at the outset of the historical becoming of the Dominican society.

During the Trujillo´s Era (1930 - 1961), the indigenous history was represented in an opposition to the African roots of their Haitian neighbors. The term "indio" was generalized in the Dominican self-perception in a way that changed the category "mulato" into "indio oscuro".[62] Trujillo's discriminatory policies of racial purification, exiling dark skinned Haitians, culminated in 1937 in a Persley massacre of thousands of

[61] One of the prominent Dominican historians Moya Pons (2008) describes this situation as follows: *"By calling themselves Indians, Dominicans have been able to provisionally resolve the profound drama that filled the most of their history: that of being a colored nation ruled by quasi-white elite that did not want to accept the reality of its color and the history of race. Somehow the Dominicans assimilated the romantic discourse of the indigenista writers of the 19th century, and found it instrumental in accommodating their racial self-perception to the prejudices of the elite, by accepting their "color" while denying "their race"* (Moya Pons 2008, pp. 141 -142).

[62] Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina (1891 –1961) was a Dominican dictator, who ruled the Dominican Republic until his assassination in May 1961. It is estimated that his rule caused approximately 50,000 victims – possibly more than half of them in the infamous Parsley Massacre.

Haitians. This horrific event is still very much alive in the memory of the people, and is recalled again and again, especially during the statelessness crisis when the official authorities threated with large-scale deportation of peoples of Haitian origin. Trujillo's racist policies were extended by Joaquín Balaguer, president of the Dominican Republic for 16 years until 1986. In his Eurocentric discourse, he profiled the Dominican citizen as a Hispanic Christian white man, and blamed Haitians for "ethnic decadence". In this light, it is clear that the studies on the indigenous history or heritage have been haunted by the social context wherein ideologies were present that do not fit into the value system of a democratic society.

Indigenous ancestors during the formation of the Cuban nation

The reference and identification with Cuban indigenous ancestors was also central in the construction of Cuban national identity as distinct from the traditional colonial masters, as well as from that of the later U.S. occupiers (Catá Backer 2008) or of the US imperial imposition of the embargo after the revolution.

Continuing with the idea noble savages, José Martí (1889) idealized Cuban natives as premature unspoiled fruits of nature and portrayed them as passive, immature, fragile, simple, innocent infants, needy children, without clothes, unable to protect themselves and in need of a protector (Martí 1889).[63]

Influenced by European romanticism and nationalism, Latin American *indigenismo* views the indigenous peoples as relics of the past and identified with them in order to distance themselves from a foreign oppressor, and to exalt the beauty of nature, to which the indigenous peoples were seen as being very close (see Fornaris 1862), to compare the situation of the young nation with the oppressed first inhabitants.

The limited access to the archives in Spain led to a reliance on the writings of Las Casas, which were considered the most critical of colonial oppression. Las Casas' critiques of Spanish crimes, together with his account of the Hatuey, proclaiming that he would rather go to Hell than Heaven if the Spanish should go to heaven, have been until now adopted as a symbol of the first martyr and defender of the fatherland against foreign domination (Catá Becker 2008).

After the Cuban Revolution, drawing on the writings of Martí, Fidel Castro used the indigenous resistance as an example in one of his speeches in 1985 commemorating the Cuban revolution. Like Hatuey, the first warrior, first leader, and first martyr of the fatherland, Cubans should fight against these intrusions (Catá Becker 2008).

The indigenous past in Dominican and Cuban History textbooks

Formal education is one of the important building blocks of the collective memory about the indigenous past. Educational institutions provide one of the major mechanisms through which power is maintained and challenged (Preiswerk & Perrot 1978). Together with teachers´ beliefs (see Aguilar 2018) history textbooks

[63] The following is a part of the Martí's La edad de oro (1889) Las ruinas Indias: "*Unos [indigenas] vivían aislados y sencillos, sin vestidos y sin necesidades, como pueblos acabados de nacer; y empezaban a pintar sus figuras extrañas en las rocas de la orilla de los ríos, donde es más solo el bosque, y el hombre piensa más en las maravillas del mundo. Otros eran pueblos de más edad, y vivían en tribus, en aldeas de cañas o de adobes, comiendo lo que cazaban y pescaban, y peleando con sus vecinos. Otros eran ya pueblos hechos, con ciudades de ciento cuarenta mil casas, y palacios adornados de pinturas de oro. Y gran comercio en las calles y en las plazas, y templos de mármol con estatuas gigantescas de sus dioses. Sus obras no se parecen a las de los demás pueblos, sino como se parece un hombre a otro. Ellos fueron inocentes, supersticiosos y terribles. Ellos imaginaron su gobierno, su religión, su arte, su guerra, su arquitectura, su industria, su poesía. Todo lo suyo es interesante, atrevido, nuevo. Fue una raza artística, inteligente y limpia. Se leen como una novela las historias de los nahuatles y mayas de México, de los chibchas de Colombia, de los cumanagotos de Venezuela, de los quechuas del Perú, de los aimaraes de Bolivia, de los charrúas del Uruguay, de los araucanos de Chile.*" Martí's remarks on indigenous resistance are as follows: "*Running away to the mountains where they were defending themselves 'with stone and water jumping the streams from shore to shore firing the spears*." Martí´s argument was not the same for other Latin American states where he acknowledge the importance of indigenous peoples in the nation-building.

are one of the elements of the education systems that perpetuate specific perceptions and representations, presenting them as historical facts.

When reviewing the content of Cuban and Dominican history textbooks (Vargas 2002, 2007, Callejas Opisso 2010, Albelo Ginnart et al. 2011) it is clear that these have the difficulty to move away from the vocabulary and ideas present in the colonial sources or the later works of the 19th century *indigenistas*.[64] In short, these texts often rely uncritically on historical sources (e.g. Las Casas) as the only authority with respect to indigenous history. Often they portrayed these ancestors in Eurocentric visions of fixed historical developments and include direct citations of some early sixteen century texts without historical contextualization.

The textbooks should not be considered in a socio-political vacuum and in isolation from the practices of school teaching, and other forms of formal education including the role of museums, literature, monuments, and media.[65] This might include the institutionally driven commemoration but also more private ways how peoples relate to the past. The latter can be expressed in oral traditions and other cultural practices within landscapes with many material imprints of the indigenous ancestors. Some of such views are presented in Part II.

The colonial bias has been also influential in studies of and attitudes towards Caribbean religions and medicine. Terms such as witch, evil, idols, superstitions, ghost stories, or backward are often associated with medicinal cultures of the historically marginalized ancestors. The ongoing religious intolerance, adherence to different religious systems and secularization can further help to perpetuate the colonial bias existent in attitudes towards healers, their practices and our ancestral history. The contemporary healing and its history entails a great amount of historical, environmental, medicinal, and knowledge. Regardless own religious beliefs, the medicinal history and ogoing healing traditions offer us great opportunity to learn and reflect upon the ancestral values which are often encoded in religious methaphores and symbols.

The Alienation from Natural Man in the collective memory

In the meantime, several scholars, such as Sued Badillo (1978), Lemaire (1986), Mason (1990), Keegan & Bright (2008), Hofman & Duivenbode (2011), Hulme (1986), Whitehead et al. (1995) Keegan & Hofman (2017), Ulloa Hung & Válcarcel Rojas (2016), have addressed critically the stereotypical image of indigenous peoples of the Lesser and Greater Antilles. While the notion of Carib as warlike cannibals has been discussed on several occasions, the descriptions of the Arawak have been left unchallenged. This might be due to the seemingly positive characteristics of the Arawak as having a peaceful and gentle nature. This picture becomes more problematic when used as an explanation for the rapid extinction, cultural change or uncritical reproduction in the current knowledge system. This image can also lead to alienation from one's own past when phrased according to Eurocentric visions of history as rooted in a particular land and connected to a particular group of people. The past and ongoing archeological and historical research about the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean has been a valid contribution in deconstructing simplified pictures of Caribbean first inhabitants (e.g. Hofman et al. 2014; Keegan et al. 2013; Keegan & Hofman 2017). Different community outreach activities have been initiated to address these colonial biases for the indigenous peoples in the Caribbean context (see e.g. Hofman & Haviser 2015; Rodriguéz Ramos & Pagán

[64] For a recent work on the influence of teachers' beliefs on teaching indigenous history and heritage in the Caribbean see Con Aguilar (2018).

[65] Some of the problematic aspects of Dominican museology have been addressed by Alvarez (2017). Monuments like the Columbus statue in front of Santo Domingo's Cathedral, Columbus' Lighthouse, and other monumental architecture in Santo Domingo all commemorate in a certain way the European colonization but not necessarily those who were colonized. While there are some memorials dedicated to those who offered resistance, such as Lemba or Enrique, more investigations should be conducted into the ways whether and how the life of those subjected during colonialism are memorized.

Jiménez 2016; Con Aguilar et al. 2017). More recent studies have begun to provide new insights into complex indigenous cultural transformation in the colonial period (for an overview see Valcárcel Rojas 2014, 2016). These have helped to nuance the big narrative of rapid indigenous extinction, failed transculturation and such have open to discussion of indigenous legacies in medicinal histories. The next chapter summarizes some of the historical sources regarding the medicine in the studied regions, paying special attention to the role of indigenous ancestors.