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Abyssal Shores: The Caribbean Coastline Untold

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Abyssal Shores: The Caribbean Coastline Untold
By Charly Verstraet

Abyssal Shores is an interdisciplinary work that draws upon ecocritical and spatial, decolonial and postcolonial, diaspora and transnational studies to investigate Caribbean literature and art. More specifically, this dissertation considers how Caribbean writers and artists from 1939 to the present reclaim agency over the landscape they were alienated from in neo/colonial discourses on the region. This dissertation analyzes the representations of the Caribbean shoreline from its global consumption as a tropical paradise to a place of historical and cultural formation. In the tourist discourse, the Caribbean is associated with the beach trope, which erases other narratives about the region's landscape. The Caribbean environment has a depth that holds the memory of the region and its people, connecting history and geography through the landscape. If academic scholarship has noted the relationship between ecocritical and cultural studies in the Caribbean, the overwhelming area of investigation has focused on water. The shoreline, by contrast, has been largely ignored by research. My thesis attempts to remedy this gap, exploring how Caribbean cultural producers claim subjectivity and sovereignty in representing the shoreline. I argue that Caribbean coastal areas should be studied not only in their flat horizontality but also, and particularly, in their profound verticality. Abyssal shores proposes an in-depth examination of the shore to reflect how Caribbean writers and artists reinscribe an imaginary proper to the region. Chapter 1 highlights Patrick Chamoiseau's L'empreinte à Crusoé (2013) and acknowledges the shore as a site of (dis)connection and (dis)empowerment, where colonial narratives must be told again. Chapter 2 examines the imagined Caribbean of global discourses in the works of Suzanne Césaire, Jamaica Kincaid, Edouard Glissant, and Edouard Duval-Carrié. Chapter 3 investigates how Aimé Césaire and Péan Stanley turn the beach from a site of diasporic trauma to a transcendental place. Abyssal Shores tackles the intricate balance between telling and untelling the Caribbean coastline, suggesting that literature and art dismantle a hegemonic perspective of the shore in order to transmit the continually growing layers of Caribbean cultural and historical representations.

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To my family, fireflies that surface in the night

Acknowledgments

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The acknowledgements, the last words of this dissertation, are the part always read first. My dissertation is indebted in many ways to the countless people that supported me throughout the writing process. My work, just like the shore, is layered with incalculable academic and emotional encouragement. If this dissertation cannot retrace with exactitude all the contributions I benefited from, this book certainly gathers them. If words are not enough to express my sincere gratitude, I am simply grateful for all the people who have helped me along the way. Thank you.

I am indebted to my dissertation adviser Dr. Valérie Loichot. I am extremely thankful to have worked with such a talented scholar and such a caring adviser. She influenced my dissertation with her meticulous reading coupled with her invaluable advice. Her critical eye and generous feedback have pushed me further in developing an original perspective in my academic work. Much of the work tackled in this project is also inspired from her innovative research and her love for literature. Along her side, I have learned to wear the many hats of the profession. I hope to be as extraordinary of a teacher and mentor to my students than she was to me. I hope someday I will be able to extend the same intellectual and emotional generosity she provided me with.

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I am also grateful to my fellow colleagues at Emory University and other institutions for their encouragements and care. Thank you to Franck Andrianarivo, Jeffrey Landon Allen, Nathan Dize, Jeanne Jégousso, Raphaël Lauro. I owe my friend and fellow scholar Antoine Duhamel more than he can imagine for our passionate discussions on risk and vulnerability to natural hazards about the shoreline. I would also like to thank Patrick Chamoiseau for sharing anecdotes about Glissant and Césaire's experiences with the shoreline, as well as for his literature that continues to inspire my work.

I would like to finish my acknowledgments with my family, the heart and soul of this dissertation. My parents, my brothers and sisters whose patience, love and encouragement never left me throughout my work on this dissertation. My wife, Paula Verstraet, has supported me in every step of this journey. From the many shores we walked on in the Caribbean and beyond to the kindhearted mediation you provided me during the suffering and the pleasure of writing in my second language, I am forever grateful for your unconditional love and devotion. My son, Leo

Verstraet, has made this project about the landscape more and more relevant each day with his smile and happiness. In him, I see our future. *Merci à vous deux!*

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List of Abbreviations

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Key texts are abbreviated as follows:

EC	Chamoiseau, Patrick. L'empreinte à Crusoé. Paris: Gallimard, 2013.
SP	Kincaid, Jamaica. A Small Place. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.
GC	Césaire, Suzanne. Le grand camouflage; écrits de dissidence (1941- 45). Tropiques 13-14 (1945): 267. Paris: Seuil, 2009.
IL	Duval, Carrié. Imagined Landscapes. Miami: Perez Art Museum of Miami, 2013.
PR	Glissant, Edouard. Poétique de la Relation. Paris: Gallimard, 1990.
Cahier	Césaire, Aimé. Cahier d'un retour au pays natal. Paris: Présences africaines, 1939.
"La plage"	Stanley, Péan. "La plage des songes." La plage des songes. Montréal:
WU	Duran, Alejandro. *Washed Up*. 2011-2013. www.alejandroduran.com/.

Preface

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The premise of this dissertation lies deep within personal experience. In the summer of 2014, to celebrate the graduation of my master's degree, my wife and I went on a trip to Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. We had bought the all-inclusive package last minute and being young students with almost no income, we took pride in the financial deal we secured. We realized much later the financial cut was taken on the local population working for the resort. Even before getting to our final destination, the journey triggered some questionable events. I remember being on the plane, watching two retired American couples from South Carolina get drunk on free cocktails made with Caribbean rum. I remember being a part of the herds of tourists that were packed into buses at the Punta Cana airport like cattle in a pen. I remember passing houses and people that looked very different from the photographic images that proliferated on the website through which we booked our trip. All these moments announced the jumbled reality that had been sold to us.

When we arrived on the shores of our Punta Cana resort, we saw the spectacle that had primed our pre-conceived notions of the Caribbean. The hotel beach decor was planted: the white sand was sparkling, the blue turquoise water was clean with a swimming net to delineate a designated area, and the sun was shining high in the sky. The beach was secluded with security guards who were watching our private hotel beach, prohibiting locals from entering, bathing, or loitering near the premises. A few clever Haitian men still managed to pass. Some were selling paintings, others worked on a commission for a local company to take tourists on excursions. Some admitted their illegal status in the Dominican Republic during our conversations and, in a superficially bragging

way, expressed their enthusiasm for older white women[1]. One of them succeeded in seducing one. He is showing me an image of his German wife married six months ago, twice his age. I just see a white woman attracted by a young exotic black man. He tells me that in six more months he will go to Europe and apply for permanent residency. I smile awkwardly. I don't remember seeing *that* in the online brochure.

We decided to venture along the beach, despite the fact that wandering outside of hotel premises was unadvised by the security guards. After a couple of hundred meters, the contrast between what we saw and the visual economy that was built around the beach of our hotel was drastic. Sargassum, a foul-smelling seaweed whose rapid growth is believed to be attributed to global warming and pollution, was burying the beaches adjacent to the resorts. The unpleasant rotten smell of the large brown seaweed overwhelmed our sense of smell. There was trash, apparently acting as a fertilizer to the Sargassum, everywhere. There was dead wildlife, notably a handful of young sea turtles, washed ashore, resting like any other piece of trash on the sand. One turtle, eyes closed, slouched on the sand, catches our attention. We can see a net wrapped around its upper left arm. We walk for a bit longer until we see a man and his two sons picking up the trash from the sand and placing it in a white trash bag. He looks at us and waves. I smile awkwardly. I don't remember seeing *that* in the online brochure.

I left the same way I came, knowing nothing about Caribbean culture, filled with more questions than answers. I came to realize that this trip was not about the Caribbean—it was about me all along. Never had I been so confronted with my own race, gender and culture. Never had I been put so in front of the consequences of my actions. I did not have to look in the mirror to see my

own reflection, I just had to go to the Caribbean and see the financial and cultural power that I imposed on other peoples' lives that I did not even know. I just had to see my footprint on the region. I was part of a structure that perpetuated power relations between nations, between individuals. Writing about the shoreline is therefore a sort of restitution for buying into the beach trope and perpetuating the touristic discourse hurting the Caribbean today.

This one-week experience pointed out the structural violence rooted in tourism in the Caribbean, particularly the systemization of a visual representation of the region. Since then, I have spent my time researching alternative narratives about the shoreline, which became the core of this work. The study notably asks key questions: What image of the Caribbean shore prevails on a global scale and which representations were silenced in the process? How do Caribbean writers and artists reclaim the shoreline they were alienated from? And, more importantly, how does reinscribing the shore with Caribbean culture and history through literature and art allow us to rethink the Caribbean space within a local, regional and global frame? These questions about landscape, power and narratives lie at the core of my work and are found within the many writers and artists I engage with in this project.

Introduction

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> Le lecteur ou l'érudit est quelqu'un qui veut un espace plus horizontal, qu'il peut élargir le plus vastement possible. L'écrivain va le plus profondément sur l'espace le plus limité
> (Dany Laferrière)

While writing, Edouard Glissant enjoyed drawing in his notebooks. A sketch of the beach above is found in his manuscript of “Cahier des premiers jets,” which includes a draft of Poetics of Relation and echoes two of its chapters, "The Black Beach" (135 - 142) and "The Burning Beach″ (221 - 225). Glissant draws a purple volcano from which blue water jets out and coats a yellow beach. He adds the description: "L'eau d'en dessous, du volcan à la plage...” [The water from below, from the volcano to the beach...] In this short sentence, three organic elements are outlined (water, the volcano and the beach); their interconnectedness is pointed out semantically by the adverb "below." Below denotes what is beneath, under, underneath. If the geological relationship between water, the volcano and the beach certainly exist, it is hidden. In the act of sketching, Glissant invokes what is concealed from sight. In the Caribbean, the shoreline should not be seen literally, but envisioned in an imaginary.

In the touristic discourse, the Caribbean coastline is constantly overlooked, and destitute of cultural and historical substance. Because of the touristic globalizing machine, the Caribbean, according to critic Mimi Sheller “has become a global icon which encapsulates a deep history of relations of consumption, luxury, and privilege” (Sheller, 2). To counter this tireless image, this dissertation aims to contextualize the shoreline as a site of cultural formation and expression — "Le lieu est incontournable" (Glissant, 2006, 186). Its driving hypothesis, directly taken from Glissant's drawing, suggests that the Caribbean shoreline is an abyss. Coastal areas should be

studied not only in their flat horizontality but also, and notably, in their profound verticality - “l’eau d’en dessous, du volcan à la plage…” Coastlines must be examined in depth, or "below" the surface as Glissant writes, to grasp their cultural and historical significance.

"Abyssal Shores" is set in the Caribbean Sea, fully engaging with Glissant's arc-*en-mer,* a play on the French word “arc-en-ciel” [rainbow], with *ciel* [sky] being replaced by *mer* [sea] as the connector (1990, 222). The sea ties places and acts as a space for encounters. This dissertation connects multiple places such as Haiti, Martinique, Antigua, and Mexico. However, these places cannot be bound to explicit socio-political/geographical boundaries. Slave trade historically, economically, and politically linked continents such as Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Today, migration routes left open in people’s journeys reinforce the tie between the Caribbean, France, Canada, and the U.S. Within this geographic and cultural Relation,[1] many languages emerge, notably English, French, Kreyòl and Spanish, at times used together.[2] This diversity exposes how the shoreline lies at the crossroads of local, national and global as well as minority and ethnic narratives.

The primary texts analyzed in this dissertation were produced between the mid twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. The texts I deal with are not studied in a

[1] Coined by Edouard Glissant, the term “Relation” (with a capital R) refers to “les retentissements des cultures, en symbiose ou en conflit […] dans la domination ou la libération, qui ouvrent devant nous un inconnu sans cesse proche et différé, dont les lignes de force se devinent parfois, pour se dérober aussitôt.” (Glissant, PR, 146).

[2] In Introduction à une poétique du divers, Edouard Glissant wrote: “j’écris en présence de toutes les langues du monde” (1996, 39-40).

chronological order. As Glissant explains, the history of the Caribbean "could not be deposited gradually and continuously, like sediment" (1981, 61). Caribbean literature is marked with the same features. As I will demonstrate, some more contemporary texts or paintings are more affected with colonial endeavors such as Patrick Chamoiseau while others more dated transcend at times their historical and cultural contexts such as Aimé Césaire or Suzanne Roussi Césaire. During this time period, three movements of cultural resistance emerge. The first phase I identify, analyzed in chapter 1 consists of the inscription of the shoreline as a repository of colonial trauma. In rewriting the myth of Robinson Crusoe, Martinican writer Patrick Chamoiseau acknowledges the shore as a site of loss, (dis)connection and (dis)empowerment where colonial narratives must be told again. The second phase, investigated in chapter 2, considers the imagined Caribbean in global discourses. Martinican writer Suzanne Césaire, Antiguan essayist Jamaica Kincaid, Martinican poet Edouard Glissant and Haitian painter Edouard Duval-Carrié critique the cultural consumption of the region before reinventing the Caribbean space in order to reclaim it. The third phase, featured in chapter 3, examines representations of the shore from migrant and ecocritical studies perspectives. Martinican poet Aimé Césaire and Haitian-Canadian writer Péan Stanley transforms the beach from a site of diasporic trauma to a transcendental place. In each of the identified stages, the shoreline incessantly returns to questions of sovereignty in time and space.[3][4]

[3] The collective study of works of fiction writers, poets, photographers, and painters return to the objective of this prospectus, which is to examine the coastline from diverse perspectives rather than a hegemonic narrative.

[4] Sovereignty in regards to the coastline is the right and power to define oneself and its *entour*.

Writing and painting about the Caribbean landscape tackle notions of power, tropes and narratives through language. The linguistic designation of the land affects discussions over domination and resistance. In the tourist discourse, the Caribbean environment tends to be associated with words such as paradise or tropics. Many writers, some tackled in this dissertation, such as Antiguan writer Jamaica Kincaid, Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat, Martinican writers Suzanne Roussi Césaire, Aimé Césaire, Edouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau among others, have noted such attributes given to the landscape in the Caribbean. The most iconic and generic representation of the region is the beach. In the tourist discourse, the Caribbean means beach. The beach trope contains images and a narrative that frames the Caribbean under an idyllic location and pre-conceived notions. Upon hearing the word in a global capitalist narrative, pictures of the sun, sea and sand appear. The term beach is fully embedded in an imaginative space emptying resident from the representation and dissociating the local population from the landscape. As such, even though, Caribbean writers use the term beach in their works, this dissertation tends to favor the notions of shore or coast. The terms shore or coast help in creating a distance with the global capitalist narrative of the Caribbean and provides a much wider and deeper geography than the beach encompassing an element such as the sea.

This dissertation also aims to be detached from Western notions about the landscape such as nature or environment which tend to highlight linguistically and historically a separation between people and the land[5]. Instead, Glissant offers an alternative with the word *antou,* adapted into French as *entour*, to discuss the Caribbean landscape (see "La querelle avec l'Histoire" in Le

[5] By the notion of "West," I mean all cultures from Europe and that originated from Europe which subvert a dominant conception of the world.

Discours antillais, 222-229). In the Caribbean, the *entour* is the repository of its history and identity. In Entours d'Edouard Glissant (2013), literary critic Valérie Loichot explains that "l'entour désigne un lieu-paysage porteur de mémoire, de langue dans le naturel et le culturel, l'écologique et le politique sont indiscernables" (11). The *entour* therefore indicates a continuum between landscape and history. Literary critic Carrie Noland states that Glissant "is mobilizing an unremarkable, symbolically neutral word (as opposed to 'paysage,' 'nature,' or 'environnement') and charging it with a new meaning and function within the economy of his own text" (163). The word *entour* abolishes the division between the human and non-human worlds. Noland points out that the prefix en in *entour* "denotes the movement of entering" (163). In the Caribbean, the individual is therefore plunged historically and culturally in the *entour*. In Le Discours antillais (1981), Glissant emphasizes the historical relationship between the *entour* and people: "Notre paysage est son propre monument: la trace qu'il signifie est repérable par-dessous. C'est tout histoire" (21). The Martinican poet relates the verticality of the landscape in the Caribbean. The *entour* has a depth which holds the memory of the region and its people, thus connecting geography and history through the landscape. The word *entour* therefore allows a reflection on the dynamic between culture, language and landscape.

In the Caribbean, the landscape is constitutive of the region's history and culture. Much secondary research has tackled the conversation between ecocritical and cultural studies[6]. The

[6] Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley with Caribbean Literature and the Environment (2004), Elizabeth DeLoughrey with Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures (2007), Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley with Postcolonial Ecologies (2011) laid the ground for environmental studies in the Caribbean.

main area of investigation, the blue humanities,[7] has seen an abundance of academic scholarship. In her introduction of "What the Sand Remembers," ethnographic critic Vanessa Agard-Jones points out that "water has irremediably made its place in Caribbean and African diasporic studies," before arguing that sand has not received such scrutiny (325). In the same vein, the coastline has not obtained large-scale attention yet, though many recent historical and cultural works have emerged in the recent years. Examples of the push for studies in regards to the coastline include (1) John Gillis's The Human Shore (2012), which reviews a human history of coastal civilization from 100,000 years ago to the present; (2) Nicholas Allen, Nick Groom, and Jos Smith's Coastal Works (2017), which investigates the cultural imagination affiliated with the coast over the Irish and British archipelago (2-3); (3) Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens's Archipelagic American Studies (2017), which proposes to shift America from continental to archipelagic thought. In line with these works, this dissertation reimagines coastal areas as layers of a cultural multiplicity, reflecting on its history, present, and future. Through the investigation of literary

[7] For an introduction to the Blue Humanities, please consult Steven Mentz, "Towards a Blue Cultural Studies: The Sea, Maritime Culture and Early Modern English Literature," Literature Compass, 6, 5 (September 2009): 997 – 1013; Hester Blum, "The Prospect of Oceanic Studies," PMLA, 125 (2010): 770-79; Susan Gillamn, "Oceans of *longue durées,"* PMLA, 127 (2012): 328-34; John R. Gillis "The Blue Humanities: In studying the sea, we are returning to our beginnings," Humanities 34:3 (May/June 2013): https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/mayjune/feature/the-blue-humanities. See also John R. Gillis and Franziska Torma, eds., Final Frontiers: New Currents in Marine Environmental History (Isle of Harris: White Horse Press, 2015) and Kerry Bystrom, Ashley L. Cohen, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Isobel Hofmeyr, Rachel Price, Meg Samuelson and Alice Te Punga Somerville, "ACLA Forum: Oceanic Routes," Comparative Literature, 69 (2017): 1-31.

works and visuals arts[8], I intend to explore how Caribbean cultural producers claim subjectivity and sovereignty in representing the shoreline.

"Abyssal Shores" examines the ways in which Caribbean writers and artists, some located in the region (Martinique, Haiti), others, members of the diaspora (U.S. and Canada), respond to the burden that is globalization with cultural production. My research reconsiders the shoreline in the Caribbean vis-à-vis its neocolonial consumption, providing a compendium of (1) the cultural, economic, and political exploitation of the Caribbean coast rooted in tourist, globalized and hegemonic discourses and practices; (2) the creation of alternative narratives that places the shoreline in contemporary debates within a local, national and global frame while embodying a form of resistance and cultural expression. The goal of this dissertation is to go beyond the controlling image of Caribbean people and their surroundings by presenting literal, allegorical, and metaphorical representations of the coastline in an environmental, diasporic, and postcolonial framework. "Abyssal Shores" pays particular attention to the power of aesthetics transformation, that of a shoreline narrative reinscribed in a Caribbean imaginary.

Chapter 1

Literature on the Shore: Tracing Patrick Chamoiseau's Robinson Crusoe

Between Rousseau, Jules Verne, Saint John-Perse, Derek Walcott, Michel Tournier, Samuel Selvon, and John Maxwell Coetzee, reading the adventures of Robinson Crusoe is akin to walking on a never-ending beach, as Daniel Defoe's novel has been rewritten (and will continue to) an

[8] While not trained as an art historian, I wish to use methods of literary analysis in order to highlight the narrative quality of visual production. Within every image stands a narrative.

infinite amount of times. Amongst this wealth of literature, Patrick Chamoiseau adds his grain of sand to the Crusoe myth with L'empreinte à Crusoé (2017), a story inspired by Daniel Defoe's and Michel Tournier's respective novels. The originality of Chamoiseau's narrative resides in its structure: it is a prequel to Defoe's novel, ending where Defoe's novel begins. The origin therefore constitutes a central question in EC. This chapter considers Chamoiseau's contribution and singularity among the abyssal amount of rewritings of the myth of Robinson Crusoe. In addition to the author's intention, this chapter is concerned with the shore as a space of cultural and historical representation and formation in the history of colonialism. It notably positions the beach as a point of arrival – recounting the collective trauma of slave trade through the sand – and as a point of departure – the beginning of the Creole identity. This chapter examines the beach scenes in EC,[9] which relate crucial moments in the evolution of the character Robinson Crusoe — slavery, colonization, and creolization —characteristic of a creole identity. In each of these phases, the beach is that space of recomposition, and a place of (dis)empowerement.

In *L'atelier*, a series of personal reflections on the process of writing EC, Chamoiseau provides insight on how his rewriting of Defoe's celebrated novel functions as a form of contestation to literary traditions and a push of literary borders. While Defoe's Crusoe is a slave trader, the Martinican author changes the castaway narrative to an African enslaved person's perspective. Chamoiseau's narrative choice resides in postcolonial scopes which aim to voice narratives that were silenced in the History of colonialism. Furthermore, Chamoiseau refuses all classification of EC to let language guide the exploration of experiences and feelings in the text.

[9] For the rest of this dissertation, the following acronyms will be used: L'empreinte à Crusoé = EC; Imagined Landscapes = IL; Poétique de la Relation = PR; "Le grand camouflage" = GC; A Small Place = SP; Cahier d'un retour au pays natal = CRPN; La plage des songes = "La plage";

The author's gesture to refuse any form of categorization consists in retrieving a certain form of orality in writing. Nicknamed *le marqueur de paroles*, the Word Scratcher, the author inserts the Creole oral tradition of the storyteller through textuality. Chamoiseau's footprint can be interpreted as the opening of Defoe's novel onto new horizons anchoring the narrative in the history and culture of the Caribbean. As such, Chamoiseau's EC constitutes a border, positioning the myth of Robinson Crusoe on the shore of literary traditions.

Chamoiseau's beach begins as a point of arrival. When Crusoe wakes up on the sand, the question of his origins suddenly arises. The character, at this point, has no name and suffers from a failing memory, which prevents him from remembering the enigma of his arrival. The semicolon, the only form of punctuation used in the story, I would like to argue, translates the trauma or "mental instability" of the character. Through Crusoe, Chamoiseau presents the (his)story of a black slave traveling through the Middle Passage (later revealed by the slave captain who left him there) at the end of his journey. The absence of name and origins conveys the complete obliteration of a collective history of those who were deported. The setting—the beach—is a metaphor of this performed erasure, the waves washing away any traces. Facing this identity gap, Crusoe reconfigures his history from objects found on a sea-wreck, resorting to the power of the imaginary to recover what has been lost.

If the beach reflects the lack of identity, it paradoxically also signals existence. After taking on the name of Robinson Crusoe and undertaking his 'mission of civilizing' the island, the character runs onto a footprint, marking the beginning of his "encounter" with the Other[10]. This meeting is the incarnation of a shoreline consciousness. The beach is a physical margin between

[10] I borrow the term "The Other" from Chamoiseau in EC.

water and land, neither one nor the other, a space in-between. The encounter with the Other sustains this idea. To be confronted with alterity positions the character on the edge, on the margin of his world. After redefining himself, Crusoe has to reconfigure his identity in relation to others. The search for the Other takes Crusoe from isolation to openness, rigidness to resilience, fixity to flexibility.

The character's opening to otherness is extended to the beach which, according to critic J. Michael Dash, becomes the "primal space of poetic creation" (Dash, 358). In the last chapter of the book, entitled *The Artist*, Crusoe returns one last time to the footprint. Through the addition of elements of the *entour*, the character turns the imprint into a work of art (Chamoiseau, EC, 216). The transformation of the footprint into an aesthetics marks Chamoiseau's "Ecopoethics" (Kassab-Charbi, 2012, 76). Coined by literary critic Samia Kassab-Charbi, the neologism Ecopoethics refers to the melange of the words ecology, poetics and ethics, fundamental notions in Chamoiseau's writing. *Ecopoethics* translates a way to ethically conceive the world, to think within the *entour* and not outside of it. It vouches for an acceptance of the totality of the word without totalizing it. Rewriting the myth of Robinson Crusoe is Chamoiseau's call for a poetic approach to ethics.

Chapter 2

This is not the Caribbean! Global Representations of the Caribbean Shore in Edouard Duval-Carrié and Edouard Glissant

The question of ethics in regards to tourism is central in Jamaica Kincaid's narrative pamphlet. In A Small Place (1998), she reveals the double-standard that materializes in the exploitation of her native island of Antigua. Her reader-accusing "You," used as the pronoun of

narration, indicates the generic attitude and assumptions towards the Caribbean islands, far from the corruption, exploitation and poverty endured daily by the local inhabitants. Bursting the picturesque imagery into pieces, Kincaid focuses on the native people and their sufferings, so often absent in the tourist imaginary. Suzanne Césaire, although in a less brutal but nevertheless critical way, takes a similar approach to unveil the exotic facade. Around her concept of "grand camouflage," she admits how the beauty of the *entour* blinds (S. Césaire, 2009, 84). The Antillan *entour*, commonly seen as a paradise, handicaps the local population, thereby invisible.

S. Césaire and Kincaid reveal the hidden Caribbean, by *unveiling* a reality that is not shown or known through words. In their respective works Imagined Landscapes (2014) and Poetics of Relation (1990), Edouard Duval-Carrié and Edouard Glissant have the same intent but use a different method to resist cultural superimposition. The two Edouards propose a different image of the coastline to redefine their *entour* and instill it with cultural and historical meaning. Rather than exposing the lives of the local inhabitants, Duval-Carrie and Glissant let the *entour* speak.

To offer an alternative to the global touristic image, Duval-Carrié and Glissant must first *d(Eco)lonize* the gaze. I call d(Eco)lonizing the act of dismantling the politicized representation of the *entour*. In his 2014 exhibit IL, Duval-Carrié responds to two 19th century painters, Martin Johnson Heade and Albert Bierstadt, both part of the Hudson River school, who were commissioned to paint an exotic Caribbean to attract investors and reinforce the US expansion in the region. In *The Burning Beach*, Glissant reacts to the objectification of the *entour* by the traveling companies that "sell the Tropics" (PR, 221). Painting with glitter for Duval-Carrié and describing the beach as burning for Glissant are techniques used to create alternatives to cultural imperialism. Exit the coconut, exit the sandy beach, exit the turquoise sea. The Caribbean has rains and volcanoes.

The redefinition of the *entour* continues with colors. In Prismatic Ecology, Lawrence Buell indicates how our imaginary associates colors with concepts. He points out "the specious- ness of reducing “ecology” or “ecocriticism” to “green.”" (ix). In the same vein, the Caribbean colors are often illustrated as vivid to accentuate a welcoming, warm, and paradisiac space. In this generic representation, certain hues seem to have been left out. Black, grey, and purple rarely appear in the touristic imagination. Duval-Carrié and Glissant respond to such a violent colorful representation by affirming that darker colors not only represent but are the Caribbean.

For both Edouards, the black of the *entour* transcribes a fragility that positions the Caribbean as a dangerous place, due to its hostile environment (insects, illnesses), and a place in danger, attributable to its vulnerability to natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes). For Duval-Carrié, purple, grey and black also show the disappearance, dispossession of lands, bodies, and narratives at the hands of colonization. For Glissant, it is the right to Opacity that is claimed through the color black in the relationship between the volcano and the beach.[11] In the color black is inscribed the impossibility to comprehend and thus reduce (Glissant, 1990, 204).

Glissant and Duval-Carrié's intentional exclusion of vivid colors acts as a refusal, rejection, resistance to a cultural imposition and proposes an alternative reading: an *Unreading.* What I call *Unreading* (la *délecture* in French inspired from Glissant's *déparler*[12]) marks the impossibility to be read in total transparency and at the same time the act of "un-reading" a preexisting reading.

[11] Glissant’s Opacity is the right to remain untranslatable to a reducing external image. In Opacity lies the acceptance not to understand people and cultures.

[12] Glissant’s *déparleur* refers to a person who speaks and that people fail to understand because “Ils [les gens] [...] n’ont pas toujours les codes [pour le comprendre]” (Kassab-Charfi, 2008, 347).

The black of the *entour* suggests the rewriting of hegemonic narratives as much as the emphasis on a reconfigured history - (what Glissant would call *non-histoire*) and the Glissantian imperative for Opacity (Glissant, 130-131) [13]. Facing a globalizing Transparency, the Caribbean fights, as I argue in chapter 2, for its *Unreading*.

Chapter 3

Between Memories and Dreams: Reading the Shore in Aimé Césaire's and Stanley Péan's Caribbean Diasporic Narratives

The transformation of the shore also travels and evolves with and within Caribbean writers. Martinican poet Aimé Césaire is considered one of the fathers of Caribbean literature. His oeuvre has been foundational for many Caribbean authors who echo his words and ideas in their respective texts. Haitian-Canadian writer Stanley Péan is one of these writers directly inspired by Césaire. His text "La plage des songes" (1988), eponym of his short story collection, directly borrows words from Césaire's poem Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939). Both texts seem incompatible due to the context in which they were written. Césaire's poem is set in anticolonial literature while Péan's short story tackles the contemporary displacement of Haitian in Québec. Yet, in addition to intertextuality, what ultimately links Césaire and Péan is how the beach becomes a transcendental place imagined in the loss of the homeland caused by the displacement. This chapter

[13]"Notre conscience historique ne pouvait pas 'sédimenter," si on peut ainsi dire, de manière progressive et continue, comme chez les peuples qui ont engendré une philosophie souvent totalitaire de l'histoire, les peuples européens, mais s'agrégeait sous les auspices du choc, de la contraction, de la négation douloureuse et de l'explosion. Ce discontinu dans le continu, et l'impossibilité pour la conscience collective d'en faire le tour, caractérise ce que j'appelle une non-histoire." (Glissant, Le Discours antillais, 1981, 130-131).

is concerned with the literary genealogy between Césaire and Péan, examining the representations of the beach at the junction of ecocritical and migrant studies. For Césaire, the beach is an agent of resistance to colonial oppression and the space where new political and cultural approaches are imagined. As for Péan, the beach is transformed from a site of diasporic trauma to a home. This chapter reflects on how writers recount the experience of migration *through* the *entour* and *with* the *entour*. In Césaire and Péan's works, the beach constitutes a versatile space that simultaneously layers past and future; memories and dreams.

Césaire's Cahier provides a colonial reading of the shoreline with two distinct stages. The first phase indicates how the shore holds a historical value recounting the trauma of slave trade and slavery during colonization. In the *entour*, Césaire presents allegories of the mutilated black body exposing the atrocities of slave trade or the plantation system. The second phase engages the struggle of the *entour* with the struggle of the residents vis-à-vis the colonial system. In the poem, the political resistance to colonial oppression in the Caribbean materializes through people and the land. *La plage des songes* becomes the space where an apocalyptic moment is imagined which not only reveals the agency of the *entour* onto humans but also conveys to Césaire an early Anthropocene consciousness. In the Cahier, the beach carries a geographic and historical volume that spreads from the trauma of slavery to a sentiment of political sovereignty in times of decolonization.

Similarly to Césaire, Stanley's short story, "La plage," proposes two images of the shore. The first phase looks at the transgenerational trauma that occurred due to the loss of place in the context of the Haitian *dyaspora*. Following the life of Evelyne, a Haitian migrant woman in Québec, the narrative positions the beach as a traumatic place that symbolizes the collective loss of life that occurred during transnational journeys in the Caribbean. The second phase revolves

around a healing of the past and a way to find one's place between the homeland and the adoptive land. The juxtaposition of these two places constructs a new interior space - *la plage des songes* - in which reality and fiction are embedded into one another. The beach therefore forms a transcendental home where the experience of exile is materialized. The term "transcendental home" is a notion I borrow from literary critic Martin Munro and adapt to the beach that I position as a substitute place for a lost home. In Péan's text, the beach ultimately ceases to have an ecological function. The Haitian-Canadian writer presents the beach as an internal process of construction, combining reality and fiction in the imaginary. The beach is the creation of a world.

Ultimately, this dissertation revolves around revealing the shore as an abyss, hence its title, *Abyssal Shores*. The term abyssal must be interpreted in two ways: the first aspect is a critique of neo/colonial narratives of the Caribbean. The region often falls under a globalizing, reductive, and prettifying image that dissociates the inhabitants from the *entour*. The abyss thus denounces the profound obliviousness of the global tourist discourse in examining and experiencing superficially the Caribbean shoreline; the second aspect returns to the agency writers and artists claim in reimagining and reenvisioning the Caribbean space. By restituting historical and cultural significance to the shoreline, the Caribbean cultural producers I tackle in this dissertation provide an array of complex images to make it "un lieu incontournable" (Glissant, 2006, 186). The abyss refers to the impossibility of fixing the representations of the shoreline in the Caribbean. The constant motion of the shore results in the impossibility to define it, a key idea that runs throughout the chapters.

Chamoiseau claims "l'objet de la littérature était avant tout d'essayer de se rapprocher de ce que nous ne pouvons pas dire" (Chamoiseau in *L'express*, 2012). The Caribbean suffered an

erasure of narratives through colonialism. As a result, the history of the region relies in paradoxically telling histories that cannot be told. Adapting Chamoiseau's idea to an ecocritical perspective, writing the Caribbean shore attempts to explore what cannot be told, what I conceive as the *Caribbean Coastline Untold*. Through the imaginary, the shore provides images and experiences of the Caribbean space that relate its history and culture, even though not in its entirety. Suzanne Roussi Césaire adds a layer to Chamoiseau's notion with her concept of camouflage attributed to the Caribbean *entour*, later developed by Duval-Carrié and Glissant,. She states that the *entour* cannot be revealed but distinctively reveals itself – refusing the imposition of a narrative and providing agency to the landscape along the way. Embracing Suzanne Césaire's concept, the *Caribbean Coastline Untold* exposes how the shore cannot be told but rather tells itself. Finally, Césaire and Stanley further pushes the notion of *untelling* the shore through its fictionalization. Through literature, the shore can be reformed, reshuffled and reconfigured. Coastlines that are physically and geologically distinct in reality can be superimposed and mixed in fiction. The idea of the *Caribbean Coastline Untold* thus entails rethinking the shore, not as a place that grounds, but more as a space that destabilizes by breaking established structures. "Abyssal Shores" therefore tackles the intricate balance between telling and untelling the Caribbean coastline, suggesting that literature and art dismantles a hegemonic perspective of the shore in order to transmit its continually added layers of representations of Caribbean culture and history.

Literature on the Shore — Chapter 1

Tracing Patrick Chamoiseau's Robinson Crusoe

. . . . . .

Introduction

When evoking the literary inspiration of L'empreinte à Crusoé[14] (2012), Patrick Chamoiseau explains that "A chaque maturité de conscience, les sentimenthèques servent à commencer" (EC, 245). The term *sentimenthèque*, a neologism, is the contraction of the French words *sentiment* and *bibliothèque*. It refers to a series of books for which Chamoiseau has a particular fondness, a sort of affective library that influences his works. Chamoiseau draws from his *sentimenthèque* before he begins writing[15]. The creation of EC is thus steeped in the love of reading. During his youth, the Martinican writer reads Daniel Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe (1719) and becomes "vraiment marqué comme des millions d'enfants dans le monde. Je m'étais mille fois imaginé sur l'île déserte. Et je savais que tôt ou tard j'en ferais quelque chose" (EC, 237). The adventures of Robinson Crusoe appeals to the reader's imaginary and transports him or her into a particular universe. Writing relates an elsewhere, *un ailleurs*, which Chamoiseau's reader discovers along the character's journey.

If reading opens onto a particular world, it also allows to escape another one. In the very act of reading Defoe, Chamoiseau breaks out from the authority of the family circle. As the

[14] For the rest of this chapter, the following acronym will be used: L'empreinte à Crusoé = EC.

[15] In Ecrire en pays dominé (1997), Chamoiseau defines his term *sentimenthèque*: "Comme toujours quand je me lance à l'abordage de moi-même, les livres-aimés, les auteurs-aimés, me font des signes. Ils sont là. Ils m'habitent en désordre. Ils me comblent d'un fouillis. Tant de lectures depuis l'enfant m'ont laissé mieux que des souvenirs: des sentiments. Mieux qu'une bibliothèque, une sentimenthèque." (24).

youngest of a five-children family, the *négrillon*[16] is subjected to rules and directives by his older brothers and sisters. The young Chamoiseau endures a life on which "pesait beaucoup d'interdits:" "les grands pouvaient faire des choses qu'on ne pouvait pas faire" (Rue 89). On the contrary, Defoe's character, alone on his island, has no restrictions. There is no moral or social control that hinders his being into the world. Robinson Crusoe is free to organize "son temps et son espace" the way he desires (Rue 89). Crusoe's freedom to follow his own aspirations fascinates Chamoiseau. In his afterward to EC, philosopher Guillaume Pigeard de Gurbert also extends this individual freedom to the island of Martinique itself. He writes "Cette solitude parfaite lui figurait un îlot de liberté dans le carcan familial et sans doute, au-delà, le rêve d'une île indépendante dans son pays dominé" (Gurbert, 1). The history of colonization is embedded in the imaginary of Crusoe.

This chapter is concerned with the shore as a literary figure, notably exposing how it constitutes a space of cultural and historical representation and formation in the history of colonialism. The shore forms a place where the past, present and future of African enslaved people come together. The recollection of a fragmented history as well as the beginning of a new life in an unknown place arise from the shore narrative in Chamoiseau's text. This chapter also pays attention to literary spaces and their shores. It examines how Chamoiseau's rewriting of Defoe's novel functions as a form of contestation to literary traditions and a push of literary borders. The shore therefore becomes a powerful metaphor that challenges geopolitical boundaries anchored in literature. This study also approaches questions of language and subjectivity which, I argue, are

[16] *Le négrillon* is the nickname Chamoiseau gives his younger self in the trilogy Une enfance créole (1990, 1994, 2005).

related to the shore in an allegorical sense. The literary style and language of Chamoiseau is infused with his native tongue and culture, Creole. In addition to their geographic marginalization, Creole language, history, and culture have long been positioned on the margins of the centralized culture of Hexagonal France. Chamoiseau's writing materializes into a space that negotiate the borders between French and Creole influences, besides the English shores that come with Defoe's novel.

Rewriting the myth of Robinson Crusoe undoubtedly carries a postcolonial weight when re-envisioned in a Caribbean space. Traces of Defoe's character as a slave trader, which might have gone unnoticed for a young Chamoiseau, surfaces in EC. As Chamoiseau writes, "Il faut parfois une vie pour comprendre son enfance" (EC, 238). In his rewriting, the Martinican author changes the castaway narrative from a slave trader's to an African slave's perspective. The shift of narrators operates a resistance to colonial domination and exclusion performed through the power of literary imagination and also reclaims the Caribbean space with representations of histories that are silenced. Chamoiseau's narrative is divided into two intertwined segments: one reproduces the succinct log entries of the slave ship's captain; the other follows the life of a castaway who wakes up on a beach and has to rebuild his entire world alone. Gradually, the story reveals that the Captain is Robinson Crusoe, a direct participant in the tragedy of the Middle passage. Upon Crusoe's orders, his crew knocked his African "cabin boy"[17] unconscious in

[17] During colonial times, the term *boy* was a pejorative nickname given to servants of colonists. It notably conveyed a sense of superiority and paternalism. The quotation marks emphasize the historically loaded meaning which comes with the term "boy." Yet, to avoid confusion with quotes from the text, the word will be kept without quotation marks.

response to his uncooperative behavior towards slave traders and abandoned him on a deserted island. The initially unnamed cabin boy, whose past remains largely unknown, elects the name of Robinson Crusoe after finding it plated on a harness at his awakening on the beach[18]. The reconstruction of his life occurs through various stages of consciousness triggered by a mysterious footprint in the sand. The very last captain's log recounts the reunion between the captain, the real Crusoe, and the cabin boy, who took on his identity. The cabin boy is shot dead by the captain's crewmembers, while in turn, the captain is mysteriously cast away.

The originality of Chamoiseau's text emanates from his narrative structure: it is a prequel to Defoe's novel, ending where Defoe's novel begins. The reverse chronology has a double effect. First, it points out power relations in the yield of narratives about the history of colonialism. Chamoiseau asks to consider: whose story should be told first? In the act of memory in recounting the slave trade, Chamoiseau positions the perspective of the African slave ahead of the slave trader or colonizer's account. This deliberate authorial decision challenges the primacy of European production of historical narratives. Second, it questions the legitimacy of Defoe's novel as the origin of the Crusoe myth. Chamoiseau's Robinson Crusoe, even though written three centuries later, comes before Defoe's, as if the origin "est en avant de nous" (EC, 243). Drawing on German and French philosophers Heidegger and Edgar Morin, Chamoiseau calls for the necessity to

[18] To differenciate the captain from the "cabin boy" who both carry the name of Robinson Crusoe in EC, I will refer from now on to the first one as Robinson Crusoe and the second as Crusoe.

imagine new beginnings rather than following the same literary paths and traditions. The origin is therefore an act of creation.[19]

The origin constitutes a central question in Chamoiseau's text. Indeed, the author simultaneously positions the beach as a point of departure and arrival in the life of Robinson Crusoe. The origin holds a double meaning, referring both to past and future. To tackle this complex dynamic, I offer a spatial reading of Patrick Chamoiseau's L'empreinte à Crusoé, notably discussing the positioning of the shore as a space of poetic creation. This chapter is orchestrated in three movements, First, it examines how the very act of writing embodies the particularities of the shore. Second, it demonstrates how the single-person narrative of Robinson Crusoe embodies the collective trauma of slave trade through the sand. Finally, it sketches the portrait of the Artist presented by Chamoiseau through the transformation of a footprint in the sand into an aesthetics. In other words, this analysis engages with the literature of the shore as a space of recomposition, and a place of (dis)empowerement.

[19] In his *Atelier*, Chamoiseau specifies that he borrows this idea from Heidegger and Edgar Morin: "Nous revenons au commencement de la pensée, mais aussi au commencement de l'art. L'origine est moderne, et bien plus: elle est en avant de nous comme le répète Edgar Morin, Heidegger aussi. Et c'est vrai que tout vie, que tout art, ne vaut que dans son rapport à l'impensable initial. Le premier éclat de conscience fut navré par l'inconnu de l'existant et la terrifiante absurdité de la mort. Voilà ce qui s'agite dessous toute tentative d'ordonner au réel, magies et religions, de le penser ou de l'esthétiser. Voilà l'aventure fondamentale. Voilà l'empreinte." (243). For more details on the concept of origin in Heidegger, consult Jean Baudrillard and Edgar Morin's La violence du monde (2003).

Literary Shores

If written more than three hundred years ago, Defoe's hypotext—the source of countless rewriting—is now, more than ever, a story of the present. With L'empreinte à Crusoé, Patrick Chamoiseau reinvents the Crusoe myth in order to examine the problem of individuation in the modern world: "J'aime […] cette distorsion qui fait que mon Robinson pense et parle comme maintenant. […] Ce qui importe c'est la situation d'existence en rapport avec nos défis d'aujourd'hui, tout le reste est déjà épuisé et de fort belle manière" (EC, 242). Chamoiseau proves the timelessness of the Crusoe narrative, which can be adapted to current debates. Yet, a critical question arises: What are the contemporary challenges that the castaway narrative tackles? This section attempts to situate Chamoiseau's contribution to the literary genre that is the story of Robinson Crusoe. It focuses particularly on the inspirations behind the process of rewriting before moving onto the literary intentions of Chamoiseau's text, which I argue constitute a literary shore.

Between Rousseau, Jules Verne, Saint John-Perse, Derek Walcott, Michel Tournier, Samuel Selvon, and John Maxwell Coetzee, and so many more[20], reading the adventures of Robinson Crusoe is like walking on a never-ending beach, as Daniel Defoe's novel has been rewritten (and will continue to be rewritten) an infinite number of times. French writer Michel Tournier even qualifies "le mythe comme une histoire que tout le monde connaît déjà" (189). The

[20] For a more detailed analysis of the *Robinsonade* in French and English literatures, consult Acquisto, Joseph, Crusoes and Other Castaways In Modern French Literature: Solitary Adventures (University of Delaware Press, 2012); Weaver-Hightower, Rebecca, Empire Islands. Castaways, Cannibals and Fantasies of Conquest (University of Minnesota Press, 2007) and Spaas Lieve and Brian Stimpson, Robinson Crusoe: Myths and Metamorphoses (Palgrave Macmillan, 1996).

story of Crusoe has turned into a myth itself due to its well-known framework. In his reading of Robinson Crusoe, French philosopher Jacques Derrida points out the paradox of intertextuality that occurs when taking on Defoe's legacy. He notably connects the character's survival to that of the novel:

> Or, cette survie, grâce à laquelle le livre qui porte ce titre nous est parvenu, a été lu et sera lu, interprété, enseigné, sauvé, traduit, réimprimé, illustré, filmé, maintenu en vie par des millions d'héritiers, cette survie est celle d'un mort vivant. (193)

At each rewriting of the castaway narrative, Defoe's novel simultaneously dies and survives. The many adaptations of the Crusoe story kills Defoe's text more every time while still keeping it alive, as these alterations feed on the essence of the original plot. The power of the literary trace resides in its concurrent disappearance and appearance through writing, rewriting, and unwriting[21].

Amongst this wealth of literature, Patrick Chamoiseau adds his grain of sand to the Crusoe myth with L'empreinte à Crusoé (2017), a story inspired by Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Michel Tournier's Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique (1967). Among "[ces] deux masses de lumière," Chamoiseau sneaks his way into the literary space, "l'interstice," to append his own footprint on the archetype of Crusoe (EC, 240). The writing of 'his' Robinson Crusoe follows "les péripérities de Defoe ou de Tournier, [avant de] les recomposer à [s]a manière comme un palimpseste, l'image initiale est tout au fond, puissante et belle, et à mesure qu[il] la travaille elle s'estompe et autre chose apparaît au-devant, comme une extension, un possible désenfoui…La musique du fond demeure." (EC, 242). The author links both Defoe's and Tournier's narratives, adding his own touch throughout the novel, as exemplified in the footprint scene. Defoe's Crusoe

[21] Unwriting is what I call the process of Un-write a pre-existing writing. In other words, it means to break free from the conditioning of the world. See chapter 2 for a more detailed explanation on this concept.

discovers another man's footprint; Tournier's Crusoe realizes it is his own; and Chamoiseau's Crusoe transforms it into a work of art. Chamoiseau even describes his gesture to recover Defoe and Tournier's texts as a palimpsest, an image that comes to life in EC when Crusoe recovers "l'étrange petit livre" from the shipwreck (EC, 36). The book is a poem by Parménide, on which the character inscribes pieces of Heraclite's text. This literary amalgamation generated by Crusoe mirrors Chamoiseau's rewriting of Defoe and Tournier's stories[22].

The Martinican writer's Crusoe is constructed from other writings, as "toute création est en quelque sorte une variation" (EC, 246). In her article entitled "De l'Emprunt à L'Empreinte: Naissance de l'artiste selon Chamoiseau," literary critic Samia Kassab-Charfi plays on the polyphony of the French word *Empreinte*, footprint, which she transforms into *Emprunte*, a neologism born at the junction of *emprunt* and *empreinte*. She asserts "l'Empreinte est toujours une Emprunte: elle est en tout cas une étape entre l'Emprunte ancienne et la future qui se prépare" (Kassab-Charfi, 167). Writing incessantly calls and works with others, generating an ever-evolving intertextuality. Lorna Milne's "L'empreinte à Chamoiseau" extends the analysis on the interconnection between texts in Chamoiseau's EC. The dialogue begins with "le titre même du livre, avec sa double référence au *Robinson Crusoé* de l'Européen Daniel Defoe et aux *Images à Crusoé* du Guadeloupéen Saint-John Perse, ainsi que son jeu à la fois sur le lien étymologique entre l'empreinte (du pied) et l'impression (sur papier)" (Milne, 2). The Martinican author feeds on the imaginary of other writers, "des strates déjà présentes" (EC, 245), to create his own

[22] The influence of Glissant's writing onto Chamoiseau's transpires. Heraclitus is a significant thinker present in Glissant's philosophy. For a deeper analysis, consult Leupin, Alexandre. Edouard Glissant, philosophe: Héraclite et Hegel dans le Tout-Monde. Paris: Hermann, 2016. 382.

narrative. In *L'atelier de l'empreinte*, Pascal, Saint-John Perse, Derek Walcott, Edouard Glissant, Edgar Morin, Guillaume Pigeard de Gubert are writers and philosophers Chamoiseau mentions as influences on the realization of EC. This multitude of writers and thinkers, a diverse *sentimenthèque*, present in his text exemplifies what Glissant calls the solitary and solidary disposition of a literary work.

Although Chamoiseau's EC undoubtedly refers to other works, it nevertheless brings a Creole perspective to the Crusoe myth. In Crusoes and Other Castaways in Modern French literature (2012), Literary critic Joseph Acquisto makes a distinction between anglophone and francophone rewritings of the castaway narrative. The anglophone tradition is more rooted in "the colonial enterprise" of the Crusoe legend (Acquisto, 14). Acquisto notably cites literary critic Richard Philipps who claims the story of Robinson Crusoe positions "Britain at the "imperial" center and colonies like Crusoe's island at the margins" (Phillips, 17). The literary imaginary of the Crusoe story embodies a discourse of conquest—expansion and control over colonial territories—particularly visible when the character exercises a ruling power over nature, simultaneously legitimizing colonization. The insular narrative constitutes an instrument of imperial authority over colonial landscapes, spaces and bodies. According to Milne, the Crusoe imperial adventure preeminent in anglophone literature provokes a reaction through alternative narratives. Writers such as Derek Walcott with Remembrance and Pantonime (1980) or John

Maxwell Coetzee with Foe (1986) propose postcolonial rewriting of Defoe's novel to counter the mastery of the insular space[23][24].

The French tradition, for Acquisto, differs from the anglophone one in reinterpreting the Crusoe story. The first translation of Defoe's novel into French is dated from 1720—one year after its English publication—testifying to the keen interest in Robinson Crusoe and offering several centuries of possibilities for rewriting the myth. Acquisto notices that "in the French tradition of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the castaway story gradually interiorize adventure, treating analysis, or as I will often call it, introspection, and the associated acts of reading and writing, as a kind of adventure" (15). French literature offers a more philosophical narrative, a sort of introspective account on the nature of a solitary adventure on the island. The action is substituted with the reflection, the adventure with the analysis. For example, Crusoe's return to England in Defoe's text disappears in the French tradition. Acquisto further pushes the contemplative aspect, as it not only applies to the character but to the reader as well. He writes, "I understand the term "solitary adventure" in two senses: first, the characters, themselves are isolated adventurers; but

[23] As Milne precisely points out, Aimé Césaire's Une tempête (1969), an adaptation of Shakespeare's play, enters this postcolonial rewriting prerogative in the French tradition.

[24] For a postcolonial reading of the Crusoe myth, notably looking at Walcott's Pantomime (1978) and Coetzee's Foe (1986) critique of colonialism and reappriopriation of the island space, consult Fallon, Ann Marie, Global Crusoe: Comparative Literature, Postcolonial Theory and Transational Aesthetics (Ashgate, 2013); Payner, Jane, J.M. Coetzee and the Paradox of Postcolonial Authorship (Routledge, 2009) and Spivak, Gayatri, "Theory in the Margin: Coetzee's *Foe* Reading Defoe's Crusoe/Roxana." Consequences of Theory: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1987 – 88. Ed. Jonathan Arac and Barbara Johnson. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1991, 154-80.

beyond this, I claim that the act of reading itself can be considered a solitary adventure" (Acquisto, 5). The solitary dimension is therefore doubled in the act of writing and reading, engaging with a collective individual exploration.

If Patrick Chamoiseau incontestably follows the French tradition through an introspective journey (as shown in part three of this chapter), he opens his writing to the postcolonial scope of the Anglophone world, which denounces the horrors of slave trade and colonization. Milne explains that "L'empreinte est la première Robinsonnade en cette langue qui aborde aussi explicitement les réalités esclavagistes et coloniales, non seulement en nommant le métier du capitaine, mais dans le mouvement anticolonial du protagoniste même" (10). The romanticism and the exoticism which gave prominence to the Crusoe story disappears in Chamoiseau's rewriting to unveil the brutality of slavery. As Gubert says, "Après le Robinson de Chamoiseau, il n'est plus possible de lire le Robinson de Defoe en toute innocence comme un simple roman d'aventures" (2). The author opens new doors for reading, calling attention to details in Defoe's novel that were previously dismissed by its writers and readers. EC arises as "la parole la plus belle ne fait que signaler le silence original qui l'affole." (254). Chamoiseau's literary initiative also resides in recovering a memory that has been silenced, kept unknown. His intervention speaks of the violence of slavery that has been omitted and must be acknowledged. In Mémoire des esclavages (2007), Edouard Glissant claimed that "Nous vivons le monde, nous avons besoin de toutes les mémoires" (177). Following this intent, EC wards off oblivion by shifting the narrative's point of view from the slave master to the slave.

This rewriting related to recalling memories must, however, recede from the historical narrative to focus on the exploration of individual consciousness. Chamoiseau contends:

"Renoncer à l'histoire et semer des possibles, infiniment" (EC, 243)[25]. History is exclusive and excluding as it confines certain stories into a narrative. By contrast, the author proposes to envision the world in a multitude of possibilities that does not reduce the various experiences to a tailored unicity. Chamoiseau even explodes the conception of the text. In *L'atelier*, Chamoiseau writes: "Le roman est peut-être européen, le dire est assurément humain" (EC, 254 – 255). The author marks a rupture with the Western literary tradition as his writing renunces any classificiation of the novel. Chamoiseau notably explains:

> Je ne fais plus de distinction entre essai, roman, poésie, etc. J'écris toujours dans la gamme émotionnelle d'une poétique. Je suis d'emblée dans cette déflagration-là. Dès lors, la matière langagière devient en soi un élément de signifiances, c'est à dire un déploiement d'explorations, de connaissances poétiques, de prospectives errantes, de saisies de l'indicible, de fréquentations de l'impensable, de danses avec l'obscur et de sensible tous azimuts ... C'est l'unique processus qui existe: déployer un langage. (Chamoiseau in Verstraet, 136).

[25] In an interview with French newspapers *L'express*, Chamoiseau further explains the contemporary purpose of literature: "l'objet de la littérature n'est plus de raconter des histoires, mais d'essayer d'opérer des saisies de perceptions, des explorations de situations existentielles, qui nous confrontent à l'indicible, à l'incertain, à l'obscur. Nous devons apprendre à fixer l'impensable et nous débarrasser de toutes ces béquilles que nous avons déployées via l'esprit magique ou le religieux. L'objet de la littérature, ça n'est plus cette conception illusoire qui voudrait organiser le monde par un récit ou une narration, avec un début, un milieu et une fin." For the full interview, see Chamoiseau, Patrick. "Chamoiseau: l'objet de la littérature n'est plus de raconteur des histoires." Entretien avec Baptiste Liger. L'express. 6 March 2012. Web. https://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/patrick-chamoiseau-l-objet-de-la-litterature-n-est-plus-de-raconter-des-histoires_1089728.html

Chamoiseau refuses all sorts of literary categorization of his texts to let language guide the exploration of experiences and perceptions in the narrative. The emotional scale present in his writing is connected to the human aspect discussed in the second part of the following sentence: "le dire est assurément humain." The adventures of Robinson Crusoe, even though embedded within a colonial imaginary reflective of the time period in which it was written, crosses time and space as it raises questions of humanity.

When Chamoiseau writes "Le dire est assurément humain," he also undoubtedly invokes the act of articulating words through speech.[26] undoubtedly invokes the act of articulating words through speech. Chamoiseau's narratives are known to transmit a certain form of orality in writing, inserting the Creole oral tradition of the storyteller through textuality. The author even introduces himself as *Le marqueur de paroles*, the Word Scratcher, in texts such as Solibo Magnifique (1988) or Texaco (1992), illustrating the oral dimension of his literature. In EC, orality is introduced through the semicolon, the only punctuation mark in the narrative. For Chamoiseau, the semicolon conveys "l'idée du flux de conscience" (EC, 239). This narrative technique allows the reader to access Crusoe's thoughts as they unfold in his mind, namely the rhythm, the ruptures, the repetitions, the silences. The semicolon "est un passeur d'énergie" (EC, 240). Whereas the period and the comma isolate, the semicolon connects and creates a certain fluidity between the sentences. All these modalities appear in Creole folktales through the intonation of the storyteller's voice. The semicolon is also a way to break free from the French literary tradition. Chamoiseau, in a humorous manner, defines it as "[une] Sorte de contrebandier très cool que les belles-lettres ont pourtant traité comme télégraphiste de la nuance. Erreur." (EC, 240-241). The amusing term "très

[26] The emphasis on the words "Le dire" is my own.

cool" refers to a familiar register and conveys a certain form of orality in this sentence. It marks a rupture with the formal prose style that characterizes the refinemenent of the French literary tradition. A mocking tone also surfaces in the term "les belles-lettres," referring to French literature known for its aesthetic value, which often ignored the importance of the semicolon. Balzac, notably La veille fille (1836), is acknowledged by Chamoiseau in this regard but at the same dissociated; "ce n'est pas le point-virgule de Flaubert," rather "de la saisie qui ne raconte pas" (EC, 239). Writing with the semicolon opens new literary horizons, anchoring the narrative in a culture—Creole—and in a place—the Caribbean. Through the usage of a particular literary punctuation, the writer connects the borders between the French and Creole cultures. The semicolon becomes a literary shore where the French language is soaked in a Creole imaginary.

Chamoiseau's footprint on the Crusoe story shows that the castaway narrative is one story in constant movement, ever-changing due to its incessant rewritings that push the boundaries of the myth further and further. In this sense, I argue that the act of writing, unwriting or rewriting, illustrates the particularities of the shore. The setting of EC – the beach – is a metaphor of this performed variation, the waves partially or fully washing away traces to let new ones appear. Crusoe's footprint on the sandy beach is thus Chamoiseau's footprint on the literary world of Crusoe. The traces on the *plage* symbolize the traces on the *page*. Like the sedimentation of the sand caused by weathering, erosion and water gravity, all the narratives that compose the Crusoe myth are affected by time and space, and all the future rewritings that have yet to come. Each rewriting positions the story of Robinson Crusoe on the edge of the shore, opening the narrative to new interpretations, new perspectives.

The Black Robinson Crusoe

The shore is often depicted as a liminal space due to its transitional state between land and water. However, it also marks a place set in a particular geographic location. If both nuances appear in EC (see part one *Literary Shores* for an interpretation of the shore as an in-between space), Chamoiseau favors the second variation in the beginning of his story, where Robinson Crusoe wakes up on a beach. By opening the narrative with the unknown arrival of his character on the island, the author raises a compelling question: Where does this character come from? What led to Crusoe's mysterious appearance? By positioning the beach as Robinson Crusoe's final destination, the narrative suggests, and eventually reveals, that there is a place of origin and a journey. Establishing the beach as a point of arrival implies the existence of a point of departure. This section pays particular attention to the construction of the narrative, which sets the beach as the destination of the character's journey; it opens onto a spatial imaginary that allows the reading of Robinson Crusoe through the lens of slavery. It notably argues that Chamoiseau's Robinson Crusoe, a Black cabin boy, embodies the collective trauma of the Middle Passage[27].

[27] French writer Alfred Séguin wrote a novel entitled *Le Robinson noir* (1877). The originality of Séguin's text resides in introducing a black Robinson Crusoe. Yet, despite his skin color, the character reproduces the same colonial and imperialistic endeavors as Defoe's Crusoe. In Empire Islands: Castaways, Cannibals, and Fantasies of Conquest (2007), literary critic Rebecca Weaver-Hightower exposes the altered versions of the Crusoe myth based on race (Séguin) or gender (Charles Dibdin's Hannah Hewitt, or the female Crusoe). She criticizes these narratives which, by contrast with postcolonial rewritings, don't "challenge the underlying ideology of the island fantasy but instead draw upon that ideology in the service of the disenfranchise" (240).

From the very first lines of EC, writing the shoreline presents a compelling paradox between space and narrative. The story starts when Crusoe, after twenty years on the island, returns to the beach on which he awoke[28]. Upon first sight of the place, the memory of his awakening arises. "Cette plage de commencement" is therefore a space associated with remembrance, as it constitutes a place that unlocks past recollections (EC, 22). Yet, if the shore relates a certain phase of reminiscence from Crusoe, it also conveys a broken memory. Indeed, Crusoe remembers his 'birth' on the island but his memory fails him in recalling his previous life. Chamoiseau writes, "revenue à ce point de depart, la question de mon origine me traversait l'esprit: je ne savais toujours pas comment j'avais atteri-là, et ni quand ni pourquoi" (EC, 22). While the character, through affective consciousness, is fully aware of his awakening on the beach, he holds no recollection of any past events before his exile. Crusoe can engage with the beach as a starting point but lacks the capacity to address it as a point of arrival. His memory is therefore troubled as some traces of the past are faded. The shore becomes this place that simultaneously connects and disconnects the character to his own hi/story.

The fragmented memory of the character appears in the very form of the text. Chamoiseau uses the semicolon as his only form of punctuation in the narrative. The absence of capital letters and periods creates a rhythm where the literary expresses a continuum of thoughts and emotions:

> et si le curieux petit livre rescapé du naufrage de la vieille frégate n'avait jamais atteint à mon clair entendement, j'avais maintenu jour après jour le geste de l'ouvrir, l'envie de le feuilleter, la coutume de le lire, pratiqué cette liturgie d'en recopier très souvent au hasard ses phrases

[28] At the end of the book, the captain's log reveals that Crusoe has indeed survived for fourteen years, instead of twenty, on the island. It is clear that the character can therefore only estimate the length of his journey, as he has no tool helping him measure time. Time is contingent on perception.

> énigmatiques ;
>
> cela faisait longtemps que je n'étais pas revenu-là, en cet endroit où j'avais touché terre à l'équinoxe d'automne, inaugurant sans le savoir encore l'éternité d'une tragédie dépourvue de témoins; (EC, 21)

Crusoe's thought process is unsteady. He first discusses the valuable practice of reading on a regular basis before dwelling on the beach on which he washed up. An idea comes to mind, quickly followed by another, without ever being linked. Crusoe jumps from the present, a daily activity, to the past, his arrival on the island, revealing the psychological and temporal fracture in the character's mind through writing. Chamoiseau also emphasizes the confusion that occurs through the up-tempo pace created by the semicolon. He writes, "le point-virgule n'arrête pas mais précipite, quelquefois il suspend légérement, mais précipite quand même. Savon." (EC, 246)[29]. The intriguing choice of verb, *précipiter*[30], indicates both the incessant speed as much as the violent throw of an individual into the void. The text's punctuation thus translates Crusoe's spatial and temporal disorientation. The literary frames the reader in the mental uncertainty of a man who has lost his bearings when awoken to a new world.

[29] If Chamoiseau uses a period in this sentence, it is important to distinguish between the narrative – his rewriting of Robinson Crusoe which uses the semi-colon - and *L'atelier* – the notes on the construction of the narrative where period are used –.

[30] The verb *précipiter* establishes echoes of Glissant's words from "La barque ouverte" in Chamoiseau's writing: "Le ventre de cette barque te dissout, te précipite dans un non-monde où tu cries" (Poétique de la Relation, 1990, 17)

To answer the enigma of his arrival, the character undertakes the quest of his identity via the imaginary. The exploration begins with a shipwreck washed ashore a few hundred feet from where Crusoe first landed. From the ship emerges the possibility of an explanation about his unclear situation:

> je m'étais imaginé survivant du naufrage de ce navire que j'avais découvert échoué dans la mâchoire des cayes, à quelques encablures du lieu de mon réveil; une frégate que j'avais explorée et pillée comme une caverne orientale, comme une chronique du monde occidental, relique de toute l'humanité, et qui m'avait fourni le matériau du commencement, ou du recommencement; mais j'avais eu beau fouiller les vestiges mémoriels – livres parchemins registres qui au fil des ans sont tombés en poussières – je n'avais rien trouvé qui eût pu m'expliquer ce que je faisais-là, ni pourquoi j'y étais, d'où je venais et surtout qui j'étais;" (EC, 22-23)

The sea wreck sparks Crusoe's imaginary. The character envisions himself as the miraculous survivor of a suken ship. However, a thorough inspection of the boat proves unsuccessful. He finds no remains of his past life, as if the past has been eradicated, leaving Crusoe puzzled about who he is. If the lost man cannot affirm with certainty where he comes from, Chamoiseau leaves clues in regards to his identity, notably the shipwreck that embeds the individual story into the global history of slavery.

Glissant, who undeniably inspires Chamoiseau's way of writing and thinking[31], situates the beginning of the Caribbean culture in the slave ship transporting Africans from the Old to the New World; he notably claims that the slave ship's hold "est une matrice, le gouffre-matrice" (PR,

[31] Chamoiseau calls Glissant "mon maître." He often cites him in interviews or conferences and has co-written a number of essays on National Identity and Borders with Glissant.

18). In personifying the boat as a belly – "cette barque est ta matrice, un moule, qui t'expulse pourtant" (PR, 18)," "Glissant unexecpectedly transforms the ship itself into a womb, from which a 'new' people will emerge" (Radovic, 476). The boat is thus marked as "a place of a distinct creole culture" (Radovic, 477). This birth is replicated with Crusoe imagining the sea wreck as a place of origin – "je m'étais imaginé survivant du naufrage de ce navire" (EC, 22) – before being expelled onto the beach. Chamoiseau's text recreates the displacement of the enslaved during slave trade through his character's first experience with the abyss, or what Glissant calls "le ventre de la barque" (PR, 18). Crusoe is presented as an individual forcibly brought to the island, who must reconstruct himself in an unknown place.

This new birth – *renaissance* – continues with the naming of the character since Crusoe's amnesia provoked the absence of name. Yet, at his awakening on the beach, he finds a harness entangled in between his legs. This harness "portait une inscription sur l'une de ses lanières brodées; un seau de propriété, calligraphié à l'ocre rouge; un nom, le nom d'un homme;" (EC, 25) With the discovery of the inscription, the lone man takes on a name "avec bien entendu cette inscription sans origine et sans assignation: Robinson Crusoé" (EC, 25). Crusoe has no guarantee the name is his but his presence on the island as "la seule survivance capable d'assumer un nom d'homme" (EC, 25) reinforces his legitimacy to take it as his own. The naming of the character is the result of a coincidence, leaving one to wonder whether it is appropriated by Crusoe or by the situation. Indeed, does the character choose to be named Robinson Crusoe or do the circumstances and location reframe the individual into the myth? Later in the story, the captain reveals in his log that the finding of the harness was not an act of fate. After abandoning the man on an island, he voluntarily left his harness: "Pour l'aider, je lui avais fait passer mon baudrier à la taille, avec mon nom gravé dessus, un beau sabre, et quelques vivre dans une barrique" (EC, 228). The absence of

a name and the symbolic gesture of naming alludes to slavery. Although it is difficult to generalize naming practices during slavery, it was not uncommon for the owner of slaves to be a name-giver, erasing away original names to assign new ones[32]. In this case, Crusoe, a slave, is assigned a name by his master – the captain, also the real Robinson Crusoe – through the act of setting the harness around the legs of his slave. Slavery is marked through the naming of the body.

The authority of the captain over black corporeality presents the colonial reality of the Robinson Crusoe story. In *L'atelier de l'empreinte*, a series of personal reflections on the writing of EC, Chamoiseau quotes Defoe's novel, "Dans nos entretiens, je leur avais souvent rendu compte de mes deux voyages à la côte de Guinée, de la manière de faire la traite…" pointing out Robinson Crusoe for trading human lives for "des bagatelles [little things]" (EC, 241). The author follows the citation with a comment relating his deception: "C'est triste: le Robinson de Defoe était un négrier" (EC, 241). The story of Robinson Crusoe somehow loses its splendor as it renders the representation of a dark moment of human history. The myth of a man lost on a deserted island is stained with the history of colonialism. EC takes on the theme of slavery as well. Similar to Defoe's, Chamoiseau's Robinson Crusoe is a slave holder, detailing his journeys to Saint-

[32] For further study on the practices of naming to subjugate African enslaved people during colonial times, consult Moore, Richard B.. "The Name 'Negro' – Its Origin and Evil Use" In W. B. Turner and Joyce Moore Turner (eds.) Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings 1920-1972. London, England: Pluto Press, 1960; Handler, Jerome S. and Jacoby, JoAnn. 1996. "Slave Names and Naming in Barbados, 1650 – 1830" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 53, no. 4 (October 1996): 685-728; and colonial history and Caribbean genealogy specialist Guy Granuun's webpage on "Researching African-Caribbean Family History":

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/familyhistory/next_steps/genealogy_article_01.shtml

Domingue and Brazil[33] (EC, 16). The captain even owns a plantation in Brazil, proving his guilt, not only in the deportation of slaves but in their exploitation as well (EC, 229). If Robinson Crusoe exercises a power over black bodies, he also dictates the narrative over these bodies. In EC, the captain is the key to the slave's story. Only he knows, and reveals, his identity and origin. If the slave can recount his survival on the island, only the captain explains why. In other words, Robinson Crusoe produces knowledge of the past—he is the maker of history.

The revelation of the slave's past arises in the very last captain's log. In reality, the main character is a Dogun man called Ogontemmêli[34]:

> Il n'avait plus rien à voir avec ce jeune moussaillon dogon, instruit du Coran et de textes égyptiens, habile en presque tout, que j'avais récupéré en mes jeunes années de commerce sur les côtes africaines. Il avait effectué plusieurs voyages avec moi entre les mondes anciens et le monde nouveau. A l'époque, il s'appelait Ogontemmêli, fils d'une lignée de grands chasseurs savants, mais je n'ai jamais eu la certitude que ce fût-là vraiment son nom […] Jusqu'au jour où le filin lui fracassa le crâne, et s'il survécut, il en garda une altération si grave de son esprit qu'il ne savait plus qui il était ni ce qu'il faisait sur le navire. Le plus embêtant fut que son comportement était devenu étrange, de folie pure, avec des extravagances qui jetaient la crainte dans l'équipage et risquaient d'attirer sur nous le mauvais œil. En désespoir de cause, ne sachant où le mettre, je le fis enchainer dans la cale avec notre marchandise de l'époque, ce qui nous soulagea mais qui acheva sans aucun doute de lui ruiner l'esprit. Il supportait très mal tous ces captifs entreposés dans la

[33] During colonial times, Saint-Domingue is the French side of Hispaniola, currently known as Haiti.

[34] Ogontemmêli makes an appearance in one of Chamoiseau's earlier novels, Ecrire en pays dominé (1997, 197), and echoes the existence of Ogotemmêli, a bling Dogun hunter, whose presence is recorded in a series of interviews on Dogun culture with Marcel Griaule, a French ethnologist. See Griaule, Marcel. Dieu d'eau: entretien avec Ogotemmêli. Paris: Editions Fayard, 1997.

> soute, et ces cadavres que chaque matin nous jetions à l'eau, au fil de notre navigation vers le continent neuf. Nous avions pourtant pratiqué ce commerce ensemble, à une ou deux reprises sur les côtes de Guinée, sans que cela lui cause un souci. (EC, 227)

Ogontemmêli was acquired by the captain during one of his trades on the West coast of Africa. Due to his substantial education and array of skills, the young Dogun became a cabin boy, or the captain's personal assistant. While Ogontemmêli participated in slave trade under Crusoe's guidance, a severe concussion rendered him amnesic. This oblivion changes Ogontemmêli's behavior and forces the captain to chain him up in the ship's hold with other enslaved people. This decision shifts the perspective as the character now starts with a clean slate and looks at the tragic situation with fresh and critical eyes. Upon seeing the terrible living condition of the captives, Crusoe's indignitation arises. Chamoiseau's narrative choice to move Ogontemmêli from an authoritative to a subjugated position not only relates the suffering and unfair treatment that happened during slave trade but also positions the reader in the middle of these atrocities. Through Crusoe, the readership shifts from perception to experience; it lives through the brutal conditions that enslaved people underwent.

The realization of the extreme violence of the Middle Passage materializes in the disappearance of bodies thrown overboard. The captain explains there was "ces cadavres que chaque matin nous jetions à l'eau » (EC, 227). Once again, Chamoiseau's description of this tragedy echoes one of Glissant's essays entitled "La barque ouverte" in Poetics of Relation (1990). It notably details the balls and ballast attached to the captives' bodies, designed to weigh them down when thrown into the sea. These were later deteriorated by the water, to the point where they turned green: "Le gouffre est de vrai une tautologie, tout l'océan, toute la mer à la fin doucement

affalée aux plaisirs du sable, sont un énorme commencement, seulement rythmé de ces boulets verdis" (Glissant, PR, 18). On the sand beneath the ocean, rests the weight of History—the eroded balls and chains imprisoning their cadavers, who, unlike Ogontemmêli, did not finish the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. As ethnographer Vanessa Agard-Jones rightfully claims, "sand is born of, and speaks of, that erosion" (339). She adds that "Today's sands are yesterday's mountains, coral reefs, and outcroppings of stone. Each grain possesses a geological lineage that links sand to a place and to its history, and each grain also carries a symbolic association that indexes that history as well" (Agard-Jones, 326). The erosion of bodies and of the chain balls resonate with the process in which sand is formed. All these elements now compose and are part of the ocean floor. In the *déportement* of the African population to the New World, the sand becomes a powerful metaphor where traces of bodies and memory are ever present[35].

If EC recounts the life of Ogontemmêli as an intimate experience, defined not only by his sole presence on the island but also by his search of his own personal identity and origins, the articulation of the story reflects a larger history. The hold relates Crusoe's personal suffering to the collective trauma of the Middle Passage. It is important to stress the word collective, rather than community. As Glissant elucidates through his terms of "non-nous-encore" or "non-monde"

[35] As literary critic Véronique Petetin accurately points out, Glissant chooses the word *déportement* rather than *déportation* to define the displacement of the African population during the Middle passage. *Déportement* carries the idea of a veering while deportation entails a geographic expulsion. Petetin also explains the use of the term *déportement* as a gesture by Glissant to singularize the tragedy of slave trade, that is to say "nommer autrement ce qui est autre, inventer son proper langage, mais de façon à faire entendre" (Petetin). This subtility is lost in the English language, hence my intent in keeping the French word déportement employed by Glissant.

(Glissant, PR, 19), there is not a community consciousness, as of yet. The We is not yet constituted; it is an individual solitude that is shared with other solitudes, an I that is collective, or as Chamoiseau puts it in *L'atelier* "Ici le "je" est un troupeau" (EC, 242). What connects all these individuals is the shared experience of the abyss, as Glissant calls it, which refers to the ship's hold, the oceanic depth, and the unknown destination (PR, 18–20). Chamoiseau's EC presents these three experiences. After his journey in the ship's hold, Crusoe lands on the beach beginning his adventure in the New World. While, by contrast, many died during the crossing and rest on the ocean bed. The sand on which Ogontemmêli wakes up is therefore linked to the sand at the bottom of the ocean. What separates Crusoe from some of his companions of the Middle passage is that he survived the journey while, unfortunately, some did not. The sands between the shore and the ocean floor, however, are forever entangled in the experience and memory of the *déportement*.

The figure of the Artist

The previous section analyzed the colonial imaginary offered through the positioning of the beach as a point of arrival in EC. This section proceeds with a similar intention by focusing on the imaginary drawn from the beach; however, this time as a point of departure since "le plus beau, le plus juste dans la remémoration, c'est quand elle pressent un avenir" (EC, 255). This beach of beginning, *commencement,* is also a space of renewal, *recommencement*, where Crusoe recomposes his identity in phases. The reconstruction happens through the encounter with a footprint on the sand, "le tout possible," which disrupts Crusoe's world and confronts him with

the unthinkable, the presence of the other on the island (EC, 71)[36]. I argue that Crusoe's diverse approaches vis-à-vis the footprint reflect different perspectives in regards to the shoreline, namely discerning it as a space of insularity, exposure and poetics. By following the progression of Crusoe through different stages of consciousness, EC ultimately the role of the artist according to Chamoiseau.

Chamoiseaus' literature is an exploration of not only the Creole culture, language and history present in all his texts, but also, of his characters, whose identities change throughout the story. In her book Patrick Chamoiseau: a Critical Introduction (2012), literary critic Wendy Knepper notices "his [Chamoiseau's] writing takes the form of a conversion narrative in which a central figure is represented as undergoing a transformation of consciousness" (Knepper, 154). Traces of this initiation trope are visible in many of his texts, such as l'esclave vieil homme et le molosse (1997), Un Dimanche au cachot (2007) or Les neufs consciences du malfini (2009). EC continues this trend as Crusoe undertakes several rites of passage from "L'idiot," via "La petite personne," to finally turn into "L'artiste." Within the twelve-year span on the island, the character goes through experimental phases, which propel the recomposition of the self. As Chamoiseau claims, "[i]ci, l'aventure est intérieure et mentale" (EC, 242). Crusoe's metamorphosis is impregnated with the features of the story's setting: the beach. Whether it be wind, water, trees,

[36] In EC, Chamoiseau uses both terms: the other and the Other. The other alludes to the presence of a distinct individual on the island. In a private correspondence with the author, Chamoiseau describes the Other as followed: "l'étranger;" "la nature et tout le vivant;" "l'incertain, l'impossible, l'insondable, les mystères;" "L'impensable (l'en-dehors de la pensée)" (Chamoiseau with Verstraet). The Other, according to Chamoiseau, is therefore a person, an event, the *entour* which fragments one's world and forces oneself to face the unexpected.

volcano, etc, the shore constitutes a dynamic space incessantly altered by a large variety of forces, echoing the constant evolution of the character. In his respective evolutions, the character is therefore interlocked with the place and the place with the character.

The first phase entitled "L'idiot," begins with Crusoe's awakening after the shipwreck followed by the vain search for an origin and identity. To counteract the instability that submerges him, the character tries to exercise control over the island. The lonely man, similarly to Defoe's Crusoe, transports Western civilization to the island. He will therefore recreate social norms based on the world he comes from. Every day, Crusoe executes "la levée de [s]on petit Drapeau" before reading "la Constitution qu['il] avait rédigée il y avait bien longtemps" in order to establish "de[s] règles fondamentales [qu'il] prononçai[t] chaque jour" instaurait un rempart entre moi et cette île" (EC, 37). The routine continues with "quelques articles de mon Code pénal, trois de mon Code civil, six de mon Code du commerce" he recites out loud (EC, 37). In this no man's land, Crusoe established law and order, proclaiming and legitimizing his authority. The constitution, the flag and the judicial codes instituted are all symbols of a nation-state with at its head Crusoe. The bureaucracy and legal system put in place confines the land into a territory – a space where the character maintains a jurisdiction and has proper rights on. Crusoe's vision of the *entour* is incompatible with *la pensée du littoral* – the thought around the shoreline – which escapes any form of domination and supremacy. The shore cannot be conceptualized, it cannot be reduced to a system. Yet, Crusoe attempts to frame it with norms and conventions.

Beyond the institutionalizing of the island, Crusoe undertakes farming, adding "tout un lot de procédures autour des animaux, des pâturages, des champs" (EC, 37). As Pigeard de Gubert puts it, Crusoe established "[une] île-objet" with the idiot "tout entier absorbé à coloniser

l'environnement extérieur où il a d'abord été jeté pour s'en faire un milieu adapté à ses besoins" (319). The island is relegated to an exploitative state from an agricultural and administrative standpoint. The judiciary and executive authority performed through decrees and laws reinforces his position as sovereign to a domesticated space. Crusoe's accomplished claim - "cela, je l'avais réussi; j'étais devenu un fondateur de civilisation" (62) – is reminiscent of colonial times, with empires transposing their Western culture onto the rest of the world while reducing the *entour* to a mode of exhaustive production.

Crusoe's civilization is put at risk when confronted with the unconceivable. While walking on the beach, the character notices a footprint, "une empreinte d'homme" (EC, 43), delineated in the sand. The trace not only signifies the presence of an other on the island but also poses a threat to the world Crusoe built. Fear takes hold of the character, who starts running "comme un possédé, sans trop savoir si c'était vers le sud, vers le nord ou vers l'est" (EC, 44) before locking himself up in his cave: « une fois à l'abri derrière la palissade, je rapportai les six échelles, bloquai avec les pierres ad hoc le petit pont-levis, les trois poternes, et les deux herses de bois clouté ; fermai les meurtrières qui se dissimulaient dans la haie d'épineux que j'avais plantée dense à même la palissade" (EC, 45). The lexical field of an inaccessible fortress, with words such as "palissade," "échelles," "pont-levis," "poterne," "herse," and "meurtrière" marks the voluntary confinement of the character, who is terrified by the imaginary of the Other, which ultimately pushes him to seclusion. In *L'atelier*, Chamoiseau notes "Le pire dans l'isolement c'est quand il ouvre à aucune solitude" (EC, 249). Crusoe refuses any contact with the Other and even shuts down his whole life, cloistering himself to a concealed space. Many of the character's actions are found in his perception of the surroundings. The sea, "ce mur," has annihilated all of the character's early attempts to get out of the island (EC, 39). Unable to escape, Crusoe is stuck in a place with no

contacts with the outside. The shore forms an impenetrable and hard boundary. The external presence materialized in the footprint shatters his whole world of isolation.

Yet, Crusoe slowly recovers from his initial fright and, rather than remaining isolated from the danger, he takes his fate into his own hands: « aiguisées par la terreur, les dispositions guerrières me revinrent très vite » (EC, 52). To counter the menace of the footprint, the character goes on the offensive to repel the invader: « l'intrus était chez moi, et c'est moi qui devais le traquer; le trouver et le tuer » (EC, 60). The alliteration in "t" in "traquer," "trouver," and "tuer," relates a harmful sound, transmitting the violence of the hunt that grows in Crusoe's mind. The character declares war to the other and will only attain peace once the issue is settled. The perception of the footprint on the beach provokes two distinct reactions: isolation and destruction. The outcome, however, remains the same: the disappearance of the Other. Whether totally disregarding or eradicating the Other, Crusoe intends to eliminate any other human presence from his life. The island has already been conquered and must be protected against outsiders. This territorializing of the space and rejection of the Other is reminiscent of colonization: "La puissance coloniale est d'abord un état d'esprit. C'est la marche aveugle de la raison qui va du Même au Même et jette l'Autre au cachot des oubliettes" (Pigeard de Gubert, 329). The idiot is characterized by his will to standardize the world, removing all forms of alterity. This withdrawal from difference presents the island as an insular space, impermeable to disparity.

Realizing the absurdity of his behavior, Crusoe completely changes his perception vis-à-vis the other. Rather than closing onto himself, he opens up by welcoming the stranger to the island – "ce n'était pas un intrus, c'était un autre" - marking the transition from *L'idiot* to *La petite personne* at the same time. The relationship to the outsider is compellingly different. An intruder

is a person entering a space without being welcomed or having permission. An other, by contrast, refers to a distinct person. While the first term conveys a negative connotation, the second is much more neutral and relays a sense of equality. The outsider is not considered a threat anymore, just a different entity. The second phase, inspired by Tournier's novel, offers a Crusoe who is more sensitive to otherness (EC, 237 – 238). The lonely man sees an opportunity to reconnect with humanity in alterity: "l'exaltation de rencontrer cet autre, de reprendre contact avec une part humaine, me remplissait de joie" (EC, 83). The character even worries about his own appearance – "j'étais affligé de ce que j'étais devenu réellement" (EC, 83) – or his deteriorating language which sounded like "un grognement incertain" (EC, 82), translating the character's fear of not being recognized as a human being. Without any distinct human physiological or linguistic features, Crusoe is just "une bête griffue, grognante, agitée, hystérique," that is to say a decomposition of the human being by the *entour* (EC, 85). The bewilderment of his human body is seen as a regression by the character. Instead of maintaining a refined and civilized being, his body and human characteristics deteriorate, jeopardizing his identification. Crusoe's humanity is claimed through visual recognition by the other. From the openness to otherness arises a touch of humanism in Crusoe—the meticulous attention to the human condition in a wild environment.

After rethinking his new relationship with the Other, Crusoe also reconsiders his approach with the *entour*. The character no longer positions himself at its center. Crusoe is part of the *entour*, just like the many living forces that constitute it: "l'île tout entière; je la percevais maintenant telle une multitude qui me touchait, m'agrippait, me pressait de partout, comme si j'étais plongé dans une foule de présences, impérieuses et remuantes; oui, seigneur même si c'est difficile à croire: *des présences* ! ..." (EC, 156). The island is no longer a possession, a motionless object at the disposal of Crusoe, but rather "une infinie mosaïque de présences" (EC, 156). The materialization

of the *entour* dear to the idiot fades to let the multiplicity of living organisms thrive. Crusoe, however, underlines that in this multiplicity, resides the uniqueness of each of these presences: "J'entretenais avec chaque arbre, chaque espèce de bestiole, de même qu'avec les lieux fermés ou les vastes paysages, des rapports dont l'évidente continuité restait indéfinissable, c'en était un délice" (EC, 163). The *entour* becomes indefinable as it escapes any form of description. The presences that compose it offer an intensity that goes beyond any possible measurement, *une démesure*. This démesure is reminiscent of the function of the black beach in Glissant's PR that I investigate in Chapter Two.

If the cycle of *La petite personne* is characterized by an explicit openness to the world, it is also defined by its process of renewal, or *recommencement*. After an incessant search for the other, and many deceptions along the way, Crusoe returns, once again, to the first footprint. He notices a new one next to it: "*une autre empreinte était là*"[37] (EC, 139). The character decides to place his foot in the footprint, only to realize that the traces left on the sand are actually his:

> c'est en tremblant que j'avançai mon pied, seigneur, que je l'y posai, tandis mon cœur se liquéfiait, que des larmes débordantes de mon cœur s'apprêtaient à jaillir par mes yeux et mes oreilles ; je me sentis mourir quand mon pied se posa sur la forme ; il s'y ajustait si bien que je ne pouvais plus rejeter l'idée que cette empreinte mystérieuse n'était autre que la mienne; (EC, 139 - 140)

Here, Chamoiseau reproduces a famous scene from Tournier's novel. Following this ultimate deception in the possibility of meeting the Other, Crusoe destroys the trace and operates a shift in

[37] Italics in original. Chamoiseau emphasizes the importance of the event, the appearance of a new footprint, in Crusoe's lonely life.

the search of the Other, this time not externally but internally. The recomposition of the character opens the notion of otherness in oneself, the presence of alterity in his own individuality[38]. This new birth transpires through an earthquake – "la terre se mit à onduler" (EC, 181) - echoing Edouard Glissant's *la pensée du tremblement*. In Traité du Tout-monde (1997), Edouard Glissant defines *la pensée du tremblement* as "la pensée sysmique du monde qui tremble en nous et autour de nous" (128). "Elle résiste aux raidissements des pensées de système et aux emportements des systèmes de pensée […] Elle ouvre l'identité sur le rapport à l'Autre et sur le change qui provient alors de l'échange, sans que cette identité en soit perturbée ni dénaturée." (128). The thought of Trembling entails to live the world with constant changes and disruptions. Rather than certainty, it calls on contingency. The thought of Trembling counteracts systemizing and configuring thought - what Western ideas and value proclaimed historically. In recognizing an Other in himself, Crusoe accepts a part of unpredictability and uncertainty in defining his life on the island. He does not stand his ground but embraces the flow. Living in the moment and movement brings the second stage of Crusoe's evolution to an end.

This ever-changing thought process surfacing in *la petite personne* directly contrasts with *l'idiot*, whose life on the island was left stagnant: "Depuis que j'avais la certitude que cet Autre était là, et qu'il y vivait avec intensité, je mesurais à quel point jusqu'alors mon espace était resté figé" (EC, 96). The cycle of *La petite personne* is distinguished by a space, not fixed and rigid, but

[38] In L'empreinte à Chamoiseau, literary critic Lorna Milne calls this gesture "un réflexe "diffractoire" (5). On the poetics of "diffraction," see « Patrick Chamoiseau, mise en abyme et diffraction » in *Tracées de Patrick Chamoiseau*. Ed by Samia Kassab-Charfi. Lecce: Interculturel Francophonies, vol 22, 2012. 129-141.

in motion. Language itself encompasses the mobility in the very term of this second phase, *La petite personne*. Chamoiseau, proper to his own literary universe, blends the Creole and French languages in his writing. The author is notably known for his insertion of Creole words and phrases as well as Creole sentenced-structures in French. *La petite personne* enters this dynamic as Chamoiseau adapts a creole word, a Glissantian form of linguistic detour, into French. The term child in Creole, *Timoun*, literally translates as *petite personne* into French. Chamoiseau creolizes the French language, marking language as movement and escapes the stiffening of a system of thought. This idea to break free from a certain structure and reduction is also present in an awareness of the character as a *petite personne* vis-à-vis the *entour*. In the first phase, Crusoe believed himself to be at the center of the world, dictating every move with laws and decrees. This second phase is the recognition of his own smallness in relation to the magnitude of the *entour*. The incommensurability of his surroundings, including the shoreline, reveals the vulnerability of Crusoe. The immense and unlimited scale of the *entour* make the human body miniscule and fragile.

After Crusoe realizes the extent of the world, a third phase, entitled *L'artiste,* begins. It presents the poetics developed by Crusoe around the footprint that shattered his world. The disappeared footprint makes its umpteenth comeback and no longer fits the character's foot. The trace is then transformed by Crusoe into an artistic piece as the character adds a multitude of elements of the *entour* to the imprint, such as "de[s] coquillages merveilleux, des basaltes somptueux, des écorces noires polies, des silices d'un bleu profond; de petits assemblages de bambous et d'écailles" enhanced by light, sound and the wind (EC, 216). This work of art remains "très fluide et très changeante, et jamais épuisée," the unthinkable ever-present underlining "l'empreinte en son mystère" (EC, 216). In her article "L'empreinte à Chamoiseau," Milne

indicates that “l’artiste pratique une véritable « poétique de la Relation » ”(6). Poetics of Relation (1990) refers to a text written by Edouard Glissant in which he describes two fundamental notions: Poetics and Relation. Poetics relates a vision of the world, which calls on “le plus sensible, le plus créatif, le plus productif, le plus imprévisible de l'humain” (Chamoiseau, 2017). Relation signifies “la quantité finie de tous les particularités du monde sans en oublier une seule” (Edouard Glissant, 2004). A *Poetics of Relation* is thus opposed to all systems of thought that would fixate and reduce an identity or a culture. Rejecting unicity, it considers the undefinable, the unthinkable, and the unpredictable as modalities of the world. The verticality—Glissant calls it *la Filiation*—that was so important to *L’idiot* is replaced with *une étendue,* which vouches for an acceptance of the totality of the world without totalizing it (PR, 59 – 75). Crusoe’s artistic piece offers a *Poetics of Relation* as all the elements of the *entour* complete each other, while still having their own particularities such as the shellfish, bamboo trees or silica, all parts of the shoreline and the footprint. Even though Milne’s connection between the two Martinican writers is convincing, it puts Chamoiseau in a student position vis-à-vis Edouard Glissant. It is indisputable that Chamoiseau’s literature has been inspired by Glissant. Yet, his writing is also different from Glissant’s. Therefore, in addition to a Poetics of Relation, Chamoiseau’s writing also produces an *Ecopoethics*. Coined by literary critic Samia Kassab-Charbi, the neologism Ecopoethics refers to the mélange of the words ecology, poetics and ethics, fundamental notions in Chamoiseau’s writing. *Ecopoethics* translates a way to ethically conceive the world, to think within the *entour* and not outside of it. In EC, the transformation of the footprint into a work of art indicates resides in *Ecopoethics* thought.

The composite presences contained in the footprint are no longer useful to Crusoe. The *entour* is but a presence that has lost its instrumental function. Consequently, the character does

not seek to understand the trace, “ou de lui deviner une quelconque origine” (EC, 217). He simply accepts "qu’elle était posée-là, inscrite dans la masse argileuse que le sable habillait” before claiming: " je pouvais à présent la vivre, l’éprouver et m’en nourrir ainsi” (EC, 217). Echoes from Glissant rise again, notably his 2010 lecture at Institut du Tout-Monde entitled “rien n’est vrai, tout est vivant.”[39] Glissant’s compelling assertion reveals that there is no absolute truth in the world since everything is in constant motion. When Crusoe claims to “live the footprint,” no universal truth is transmitted. Rather, there are only experiences to be lived. The assemblage of these experiences into a work of art “transformèrent la plage en un lieu insolite” (EC, 217). The place itself is found impregnated with the unpredictable. Through the trace, the beach becomes the "primal space of poetic creation" (Michael Dash, 358). The shore is also infused with a poetics and rejects any conceptualization. It exceeds any form of standardization to express *le vivant*, that is to say what cannot be confined. From this impossibility to frame the shore, the figure of the artist creates, as “L’œuvre d’art est ce qu’il existe de plus attentif à l’impensable de l’être” (Chamoiseau, EC, 236). Only the artist can express the inexpressible. The second chapter of this dissertation continues the exploration of the ineffable state of the Caribbean shoreline. It notably exposes how art and literature reveal the historical and cultural depth of the Caribbean shore, so often erased in the touristic discourse.

[39] “Rien n’est vrai, tout est vrai” is also the epitaph written on Edouard Glissant’s grave in Le Diamant cemetery in Martinique. For a detailed discussion of the inscription, see Valérie Loichot’s “Edouard Glissant’s Graves” in *Callaloo*, Vol 36, issue 4, 2013. 1014 – 1032.

This Is Not the Caribbean! Chapter 2

Global Representations of the Caribbean Shore
In Edouard Duval-Carrié and Edouard Glissant

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Introduction

In her 2014 essay, "Find Your Beach" published in The New York Review of Books, British writer Zadie Smith narrates her New York City life in the neighborhood of Soho. Holding her newborn in the middle of the night, she notices a beer advertisement on a wall that reads "Find your beach." The ad features a bottle of beer on the backdrop of a turquoise blue sea and white sand. Simple but straight to the point. To the New York lifestyle, the "find your beach" commercial offers what locals potentially seek leisure and isolation. The beach represents a place that brings satisfaction and contentment, a space of achieved desires and aspirations. As American writer Roxane Gay accurately puts it, "The beach becomes a kind of utopia – the place where all our dreams come true" (Gay, "Why The Beach Is a Bummer"). The beach carries a power of attraction: that of fulfillment.

If the ad described by Smith does not precisely detail the beach in question, it nevertheless embodies the characteristics Westerners give to the Caribbean shoreline[40]. The branding and

[40] The famous ad refers to the Mexican beer Corona, which runs a yearly marketing campaign with the beer featured on a beach. The Wall Street Journal notably reports the ad's 25th anniversary on air in 2015: "The commercial is remarkably simple with no people, no dialogue, no product and very little action—just a cabin, a few palm trees and a whistled Christmas carol. The spot is meant to capture the essence of Corona as a "passport to carefree enjoyment," said Jim Sabia, chief marketing officer of Constellation Brands Inc." (Tadena). Constellation Brands Inc. is a major beer supplier of imported beers to the United States. Sabia

marketing of the Caribbean as an earthly paradise in the tourist imaginary is incessant and promotes the site as an idyll. A quick Google search of images of the region only portrays a generic and iconic representation of the shore. In the tourist discourse, the Caribbean means beach. Not just any beach: a beach with sparkling white sand and turquoise blue water, a description that will emerge at multiple times throughout this chapter in the works of various writers and artists examined. This cliché image of the Caribbean is what I call the *beach trope*. The *beach trope* constitutes a systematized image of the Caribbean, which empties the space of its inhabitants (either rendered silent or invisible) and defines the Caribbean space only through the beach. In other words, the beach trope has two effects: it frames of the Caribbean into a blatant fabrication via its *entour* and it asserts social and cultural power within the structure of an imposed narrative.

This chapter reflects on the imagined Caribbean in global discourses. It considers the cultural consumption of the Caribbean *entour* and the hegemonic depiction that come with it—namely, the beach trope, with its iconic images (sun, sea, sand) and stereotypical colors that impose a vocal and visual representation, created by colonialism and furthered by global capitalism. More importantly than the fabricated portrayal of the region in the Western world, this chapter explores how Caribbean writers and artists reinvent the Caribbean space in an attempt to create alternate narratives and proclaim agency over their place. This chapter engages with theoretical concepts, such as Opacity, Transcendance, and non-histoire, through an ecocritical lens. My corpus is wide in scope, featuring Martinican writer Suzanne Roussi Césaire, Antiguan writer Jamaica Kincaid,

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later adds in the article that "We have something that's a masterpiece. Why mess with it?" The Corona ad established the perfect example of usurpation of the landscape. It frames the Caribbean *entour* into a globalized postcard image, omitting any other meanings the region could take. Fundamentally, the emptiness which characterizes the ad also represents the emptiness of knowledge about the Caribbean.

Haitian artist Edouard Duval-Carrié and Martinican poet Edouard Glissant[41]. In all their works, these authors and painters respond to the paradisiac island narrative that defines the Caribbean in global markets. Yet, I identify two distinct trajectories in their literature and art, notably in their form. In the first trajectory, Suzanne Césaire and Kincaid propose a postcolonial perspective on the region, deploring the invisibility of the islands' inhabitants imposed by Western infatuation with the attractive landscape. Both writers, Césaire with a particularly gendered approach, shed light on the structural violence that makes the local population disappear. In the second trajectory, Duval-Carrié and Glissant assume a more ecocritical position by transforming the representation of the Caribbean *entour*. The main part of this study emphasizes Duval-Carrié and Glissant's endeavor to reclaim the Caribbean space through its landscape; yet, Suzanne Césaire and Kincaid provide a fundamental view into colonial and imperialist oppression, notably displaying the resulting devastating effects on the inhabitants of Caribbean islands.

Suzanne Césaire's "The Great Camouflage" (1945) and Jamaica Kincaid's A Small Place (1988) discuss how the Caribbean *entour* conceals an underlying violence and complexity. While Kincaid vilifies the dismissive tourist resort system and its consumers with anger, Césaire adopts a subtler approach by revealing how the beauty of the *entour* camouflages harsher realities. For both authors, the beach image is so powerful that it erases the local population's accounts of poverty, subjection and oppression. As Suzanne Césaires writes it, "il fait certes trop beau, ce jour-là, pour y voir." (273). In this context, writing becomes a means of uncovering the touristic veil. As Gay writes, "The beach is a place lovelier in theory than practice" (Gay, "Why The Beach Is a Bummer"). The beach certainly holds an appeal in a Western imaginary; yet, the

[41] I will keep Suzanne Césaire's full name for the rest of this study so that her individuality is not camouflaged by her husband's shadow, as discussed later in this essay (see part 1).

instrumentalization of the beach trope in the Tropics holds a more tragic side, that of a colonial past transformed into a neocolonial system perpetuated through Caribbean tourism.

Césaire and Kincaid's essays reveal the hidden Caribbean by *unveiling* a reality that is not shown or known, through words. Their writings act as a form of resistance to a narrative that renders the native population invisible. In their respective works Imagined Landscapes (2014) and Poetics of Relation (1990)[42], Haitian artist Edouard Duval-Carrié and Martinican poet Edouard Glissant have a similar intent, which is to distance themselves from the touristic discourse. However, more than modes of resistance, their artistic and literary productions engage with a process of transformation. Their oeuvres propose alternative images of the coastline to redefine the *entour* and instill it with cultural and historical meaning. Rather than exposing the lives of the local inhabitants, Duval-Carrié and Glissant let the *entour* speak.

To summarize, this chapter offers a reading of Suzanne Césaire and Kincaid's literary works and emphasizes how their texts reveal the hidden aspects of the Caribbean scenery. It then focuses on two essays by Edouard Glissant, "La plage noire" and "La plage ardente," and two paintings by Edouard Duval-Carrié, "The Landing of Columbus" and "After Heade: Moonlit Landscape," which draw on similar intentions to reclaim sovereignty over Caribbean culture. Both Glissant and Duval-Carrié's works counter the cultural superimposition generated by the touristic discourse with cultural production that reinscribe a Caribbean imaginary into the *entour*. At the crossroads of works by the two "Edouards," a gesture of appropriation, rather than rejection, emerges. This study unfolds in three parts. First, it reveals Suzanne Césaire's and Kincaid's movement of resistance in seeing past the Caribbean coverup; second, it presents Duval Carrié and

[42] For the rest of the essay, the following acronyms will be used: GC for "The Great Camouflage", SP for A Small Place, IL for Imagined Landscapes and PR for Poetics of Relation.

Glissant's artistic and literary processes of transformation in reaction to cultural imperialism; and finally, it examines how the Caribbean can only be read through its Unreading. Unreading, a notion that I will reintroduce in the third section of this chapter, is an innovative method of reading the Caribbean space. It combines two notions – the impossibility of being read in total transparency and the act of "un-reading" a preexisting reading. In other words, this analysis emphasizes the brush strokes and the words—produced by Caribbean artists and writers—that topple Caribbean imaginary, with the imaginary of the Caribbean, or the global representation of the region.

The Caribbean Coverup

"The Caribbean is not an idyll, not to its natives."
(Derek Walcott)

The Caribbean embodies an image. While historically and culturally diverse, the region often falls under the "sea, sun and sand" trope. Tools generated by consumer society, for instance TV commercials, cruise brochures, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.), disseminate a paradisiac portrait, while the corporations that sell the "dream," such as cruise lines, hotel chains, and travel agencies, profit from it. The Caribbean imagery, sustained by what Patrick Chamoiseau calls le "tourisme-roi" in Ecrire en pays dominé (1997), prevails and overshadows all other accounts of the region (Chamoiseau, 19). While the holiday discourse frames the Caribbean, tourist experiences perpetuate the myth. Sheller notices that "[t]he Caribbean is consumed both in travelling representations (texts, images, signs) that bring the Caribbean to the consumer, and by travelling consumers who organize their experience and perceptions of the Caribbean through

existing visual regimes" (38). The consumption of the region is the direct result of institutional and personal endeavors. This section concentrates on the relationship between invisibility and the *entour* in the Caribbean, notably by revealing sides of the region that are concealed from sight. Suzanne Césaire and Kincaid's literary works question the responsibility and agency of this cultural blindness.

The question of accountability in regards to tourism is central to Kincaid's narrative pamphlet. In A Small Place (1988), she uses the accusing pronoun "You" to directly place the responsibility on the reader for the touristic image of her native island of Antigua. At the beginning of the essay, the second-person pronoun appears ambiguous in defining its targeted audience. The denomination "You" can refer to either an individual or a group of people. However, Kincaid reinforces individuality later in the essay with a self-centered fantasy of the island: "You see yourself taking a walk on that beach, you see yourself meeting new people […]. You see yourself eating some delicious, locally grown food. You see yourself, you see yourself…" (13). More than a reference to singularity,"You" also carries an accusing tone, pointing a finger at a specific reader. Its incessant repetition throughout the essay incriminates the audience and creates an accumulation of blame that ultimately results in Kincaid's provocative claim— "A tourist is an ugly human being" (14). The term "ugly" vilifies tourists for their lack of morals. Tourist discourse imposes an image with devastating effects and embodies a new form of colonialism.

To criticize the unethical behavior of tourists, Kincaid assesses the implications and impacts of their travel. She starts her essay by retracing the journey of a visitor from the airport to the hotel. The incipit asserts: "If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see" (3). The sentence is divided into two segments: a first part, an if-clause, which relies on a conditional present, and a second part, "this is what," which reports facts in the present tense. On the one hand,

the phrase emphasizes a possibility. On the other hand, it displays an accurate predictability. Kinkaid foresees every aspect of a tourist's journey in Antigua from the airport's name, customs, taxi drivers, currency, among others before finally arriving at the hotel and enjoying the holiday destination. The author's aptitude to foretell main events associated with tourist travel with such precision is a nod to how the beach trope is a fabricated product constructed by the capitalist system. Positioning the Caribbean as an earthly paradise removes every ounce of humanity from the island in favor of profit and personal gain. Power structures engulf the tourist in a fantasy bubble.

The distance between the tourist imaginary and the harsh reality of the local inhabitants is gradually exposed in the text through a binary vision of the island. The narrative incessantly moves back and forth between the two images of the Caribbean *entour* and the daily lives of Antiguans:

> That water? Have you ever seen anything like it? Far out, to the horizon, the colour of the water is navy-blue; nearer the color of the water is pale, silvery, clear, so clear that you can see its pinkish-white sand bottom. Oh, what beauty! Oh, what beauty! You have never seen anything like this. […] You must wonder what exactly happened to the contents of your lavatory when you flushed it. […] Oh, it might all end up in the water you are thinking of taking a swim in; the contents of your lavatory might, just might, graze gently against your ankle as you wade carefree in the water, for you see, in Antigua, there is no proper sewage-disposal system (12-13).

In this passage, the beauty of the island ostensibly stands out. The sea and the beach are described as if they were a postcard image, notably through the rich shades of blue. The sand, with its pleasant colors, also contributes to the paradisiac picture. However, Kincaid, with heartfelt irony, shatters the portrait and reveals what the water composition contains—human waste and excrements. The author points out the tourist's oblivious encounter with their own feces in the pristine water of the Caribbean. Kincaid's passage sullies and mocks the tourist, dirtying at the

same time the idyllic image the tourism discourse conjures up. Her critique exposes how detrimental colonial and neocolonial practices have been to her native island, notably exposing its poor infrastructure. The absence of a sewage system translates into water pollution and lack of sanitation, putting human health and ecological life at risk. Kincaid's eye-opening binary description of Antigua creates a gap between the generic attitude or assumption towards the Caribbean islands and the corruption, exploitation and poverty endured daily by the local inhabitants. Kincaid's narrative focuses on the native people and their suffering, so often absent in the tourist imaginary. Towards this invisibility, the author amplifies a voice of anger, a last resort vis-à-vis a sanitizing capitalist system of consumption.

Suzanne Césaire, although less forward but nevertheless critical, takes a similar approach and unveils the exotic façade created by the touristic discourse. Around her eponymous feminine-oriented concept of "Great Camouflage," she admits how the *entour* disguises realities. The dissimulation starts with the author herself, Suzanne Roussi Césaire, whose writings lived in the shadow of her husband, the immense and solar poet Aimé Césaire, relegating her to position of "wife" for several decades. The great camouflage may refer to Suzanne Césaire's personal experience since her work did not receive nearly as much critical attention as Aimé's[43]. While still

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[43]It is undeniable that Suzanne Césaire's life raises more questions than answers. To explain this sudden halt in writing, Daniel Maximin states that it is "le feu cannibale de ses propres écrits" et "en allée jusqu'où l'écriture ne puisse plus suivre" that reduced Suzanne Césaire to silence (21). Literary critic Gilles Bounoure refutes this explanation as it "concorde mal avec les engagements et la personnalité même de Suzanne Césaire, son adhésion concrète au surréalisme, et le sens très évidemment politique de ce dernier texte ["Le grand camouflage"]" (128). In her article, "Suzanne l'aimée de Césaire" in the French newspaper *Libération*, Nathalie Levisalles suggests that if given the freedom to choose, Suzanne Césaire may have

largely unknown today, her writings, under the influence of Guadeloupean writer Daniel Maximin and the French publishing company Seuil, have reemerged as a collection of essays under one book entitled Le grand camouflage (2009), increasing her visibility and impact in Caribbean literature.

From Suzanne Césaire's literary achievements, only seven of her texts remain; seven essays in which camouflage extends to the act of writing itself. Césaire's poetics are marked by the historical context in which her works were produced. In 1940, France falls to Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The Vichy regime, headed by Maréchal Pétain, takes control of the country; the administration operates under a political agenda of collaboration with the occupier. Admiral Robert, nominated as High Commissioner for the French Antilles in 1939, subjects Martinique to the Vichy regime until 1943. His presence (and that of his troops), even if subtlety camouflaged, is perceptible in Suzanne Césaire's opening lines: "Il y a plaquées contre les îles, les belles lames vertes de l'eau et du silence" (267). The life *an tan Robé* [in time of Robert] is remembered as a dark period for the Antilles, marked by a lack of basic needs and the absence of freedom of expression (hence Suzanne Césaire's literary camouflage to avoid censorship.) The Vichy ideology, according to historical critic Eric T. Jennings, was set on two principles, which were done by "first hardening an already ruthless colonialism; second, and more ironically, by introducing to the empire Pétain's cherished themes of authenticity, tradition, and folklore" (2001,

made different choices in her life. See Levisalles, Nathalie. "Suzanne l'aimée de Césaire." Libération [Paris] 23 April 2009. Web. 29 June 2018. http://next.liberation.fr/livres/2009/04/23/suzanne-l-aimee-de-cesaire_554226

3)[44]. Facing these drastic measures, the French colonies suffer with full force a wave of hunger and imposed nationalism.

In his introduction to GC, Maximin explains that a resistance emerges to this political oppression: « loin de rester silencieusement soumises, les Antilles entrèrent rapidement en résistance » (9). Many leave for other islands such as Dominica and Saint Lucia to join De Gaulle's movement, *La France libre*; others stay and fight against the political and social oppression on their own island[45]. For Suzanne and Aimé Césaire, the dissidence comes with the creation of a new cultural journal entitled *Tropiques,* which was edited between 1941 and 1945 and featured 11 issues. In her article, "Suzanne Césaire, la poésie en partage," cultural critic Gabrielle Said discusses the journal's name, *Tropiques*, which already anchors its essays in a place—the Tropics—known for its dense vegetation. She also returns to the Greek etymology of the French word "tropique," signifying "le changement des saisons ou la révolution du soleil, mouvement

[44] For a deeper historical analysis on the impact of the Vichy regime in the French colonies, consult Eric T. Jennings' Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940 – 44 (2004) or Ligia T. Domenech's Imprisoned in the Caribbean: The 1942 German U-boat Blockade (2014), pages 57 – 63.

[45] In his article "La dissidence aux Antilles (1940 – 1943)," History critic Eric T. Jennings writes that between 1940 and 1943 "4000 à 5000 Antillais s'échappèrent, au peril de leurs vies, pour rallier les îles anglais de la Dominique et de Saint Lucie (sans doute le plus connu de ces jeunes dissidents fut-il Frantz Fanon). Là, ils rejoignirent les forces francaises combattantes, en passant auparavant par un stage de formation militaire aux Etats-Unis, au Canada ou en Grande-Bretagne." (Jennings, 60). For more details, consult Jennings, Eric T. "La dissidence aux Antilles (1940 – 1943)." *Vingtième siècle, Revue d'histoire*. Numéro 68, Oct-Déc 2000: 55 – 71.

cyclique essentiel à la constitution de l'imaginaire antillais promu par Suzanne Césaire" (Said). Thus, in the term *Tropiques*, there is a notion of time, never still, ever-changing. Said also relates that "tropique" refers to "*trope*, à la métaphore, et souligne la place essentielle de la poésie dans la revolution de la langue, de la pensée et de l'imaginaire" (Said). The journal's name *Tropiques* suggests an *entour* transcended by poetry, a place that becomes a metaphor.

This power of transformation through lyricism appears in Suzanne Césaire's 1945 essay The Great Camouflage.[46] Through poetic writing, she portrays the beach as a site of social and political critique of colonization. The writer describes a group of civil servants working in the French colony of Martinique, casually lounging on the beach[47]: "Il y avait sur la plage quelques 'fonctionnaires métropolitains'. Ils étaient posés là, sans conviction, prêts à s'envoler au premier signal. Les nouveaux venus ne s'adaptent guère à nos 'vieilles terres françaises'" (270). The civil servants adopt a typical attitude towards the Antilles, one of leisure and desire to lay on the white sand facing the blue sea. The region is seen as a transitory place, an iconic image of relaxation, ease and availability. Yet, the beach encompasses a more figurative aspect, as it constitutes an in-

[46] In "Beyond the Great Camouflage: Haiti in Suzanne Césaire's Politics and Poetics of Liberation," literary critic Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel notices a difference in Suzanne Césaire's writing style, which evolved before, during and after her five-month trip to Haiti in 1944 with her husband Aimé Césaire. For "The Great Camouflage," Joseph-Gabriel points out that "her [Suzanne Césaire's] voice finds a new lyricism that is largely absent from the manifesto style of her previous essays."

[47] The French civil servants are usually called "Métros" or "Métropolitains" in the Antilles (Zoreilles for La Réunion and the Polynesian islands) and define a part of the population living in the *Départments d'outre-mer* (Overseas Departments) who originate from Metropolitan France. Their length of work typically lasts only a few years before returning to Hexagonal France.

between space between land and water—a border of two bodies and a site of passage further confirmed by the bird metaphor in the excerpt. Literary critic Valérie Loichot notices how "the French civil servants are turned into birds by the metaphors of being 'perched there' and 'ready to soar' before claiming that "the reference to the Europeans' flight alludes both to their transient position in Martinique and to their lack of responsibility" (2013, 163 – 164). The civil servants, who represent the French state, only remain in the region temporally as they can't adapt to "our 'old French land.'" The use of quotation marks by Suzanne Césaire underlines an ironic stance towards colonization and the secondary status of the colonies in the French empire. The sudden departure of these civil servants translates their refusal to see the Caribbean for what it really is: a land (and its people) that has been neglected in lieu of its attractive *entour*.

Anthropological historian Michel Rolph-Trouillot asserts that "the production of traces is always […] the creation of silences" (1995, 27). The colonial milieu fosters this idea as it promotes the paradisiac stereotype of the Antilles. The beach trope provokes the disappearance of the local population's living conditions: "En attendant, le serf antillais vit misérablement, abjectement sur les terres de "l'usine" et la médiocrité de nos villes-bourgs est un spectacle à nausée. En attendant les Antilles continuent d'être paradisiaques et ce doux bruit de palmes…" (270). In this excerpt, the repetition of the gerund "en attendant" indicates the ongoing subjected position of the Antilles towards the French empire. The Martinican labor force is continually dismissed, as its *entour* is attractively presented with lush vegetation and beautiful beaches. Suzanne Césaire's description exposes how the landscape can be detrimental to its people, who become concealed from sight. Cultural critic Patty Patullo points out this double-effect, similar to two sides of a same coin, of the *entour*, which is at once the Caribbean's asset and impediment:

> It is the fortune, and the misfortune, of the Caribbean to conjure up the idea of 'heaven on earth' or 'a little bit of paradise' in the collective European imagination […] the region, whatever the

> brutality of its history, kept its reputation as a Garden of Eden before the Fall. The idea of a tropical island was a further seductive image: small, a 'jewel' in a necklace chain, far from centres of industry and pollution, a simple place, straight out of Robinson Crusoe.[48] (Pattullo 1996: 142)

Suzanne Césaire's work relate the paradise trope that predates the mass tourism era, described above by Patullo. Her essay exposes a time entangled in the snares of the colonial regime where civil servants and ex-patriates enjoyed a beach that was not yet consumed on a such a large as it is today. Yet, the connections between what Suzanne Césaire describes and later reported by Kincaid and Patullo demonstrates the generative role of her work which announces the future expansion of the tourist industry. The Caribbean is both a utopia and a dystopia, what Aimé Césaire would later describe as an "avatar d'une version du paradis absolument ratée – c'est bien pire qu'un enfer" in his poem "Calendrier lagunaire" (L.14-15). In the representation of the Caribbean, only the paradise narrative persists; the complex reality of its *entour* vanishing from history.

The relationship between *entour* and visibility lies at the heart of Suzanne Césaire's concept of Great Camouflage. In the closing lines of her essay, the author subtly details how the landscape shines to the point of sightlessness: "si mes Antilles sont si belles, c'est qu'alors le grand jeu de cache-cache a réussi, c'est qu'il fait certes trop beau, ce jour-là, pour y voir." (273). The powerful appeal of the *entour* is blinding, generating a rush of emotions and a lack of judgment towards the Caribbean. Critical thinking left aside, *le dépassement du regard*, the overcoming of

[48] Pattullo points out a compelling paradox in regards to the myth of Robinson Crusoe. The tourist imaginary has turned Defoe's narrative from a story of a castaway into a romanticized adventure. The wilderness of the island is therefore seen as an experience rather than a misfortune. In chapter one of this dissertation, Chamoiseau, by contrast, exposes the tragedy of the Middle Passage through the character of Robinson Crusoe.

the milieu, beyond the facade of the *entour* is unattainable, as beauty gives sight but not vision. Suzanne Césaire even compares the act of seeing with a game of hide-and-seek; the *entour* hides the rest of the Caribbean life so well that it becomes impossible to find. These last lines, according to literary critic Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, also constitute Césaire's camouflage as an act of resistance. She claims "Césaire's Caribbean is not a passive victim of reductive representations" before asserting that "it [The Caribbean landscape] actively shields its most inner realities from outside scrutiny" (Joseph-Gabriel). The *entour* withdraws into a certain form of opacity, a density which makes it difficult to discern. The camouflage enacts a purposeful blinding to protect itself and "determines the terms on which it reveals both its beauty and pain" (Joseph-Gabriel). Suzanne Césaire proposes a camouflage that is not uncovered but that discovers itself—a subtilty that has escaped—as shown in the next section, imperialist narratives of the Caribbean.

dEcolonization

"Le poète navigue aux profondeurs. Par sa voix, la terre naissante crie."
(Edouard Glissant)

The Caribbean is a hostage. Its *entour* has been confined by a colonial narrative in order to fulfill economic and political aspirations. Its global representation as an untouched-land from the 15th to the 20th century is the result of power relations between the region and neighboring countries, the latter eager to acquire new territories[49]. In their artistic and literary works, Duval-

[49] For a general analysis on the use of culture as a tool of imperialism, consult Said, Edward. Culture and Imperialism. New York: Vintage, 1994.. For a more detailed analysis on the relationship between culture and imperialism in the Caribbean, see Sheller, Mimi. Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies.

Carrié and Glissant point out the global power relations visible in the depiction of the *entour* and perform a dEcolonization of the gaze. I call dEcolonizing the act of dismantling a politicized, dominant, and detrimental representation of the *entour.* The term dEcolonization is a portmanteau word between *Eco* and *Decolonization*. It indicates an ecological colonization of a space; that is to say, an aesthetic consumption of the landscape by Western nations, corporate and consumers. Through dEcolonization, artists and writers bypass external hegemonic narratives of the *entour* to form new accounts of Caribbean history and culture. This section aims to contextualize the imperialist representation of the Caribbean before assessing Duval-Carrié and Glissant's transformations of the *entour*. In Duval-Carrié and Glissant's works, geological features largely ignored in imperial portrayal of the region, particularly rain and volcanoes, break the touristic image. In other words, by exposing the historically destructive dissimulation of art, Duval-Carrié and Glissant produce distinct images of the Caribbean through its *entour*.

Edouard Duval-Carrié's art is driven by History. Every stroke of his paintbrush is derived from meticulous groundwork, notably through "reading History and original documents" (Bogues, 34). In this sense, the artist's exhibits form "a synthesis of [his] historical research" (Bogues, 34). Yet, more than recounting past events, Duval-Carrié's work transcends historical narratives. His paintings propose an alternative version of History to that of the colonizers, forcing the audience to ask itself: Whose history is represented? Whose narrative is on the canvas? His 2014 exhibit at the Perez Art Museum in Miami (PAMM) entitled Imagined Landscapes is no exception. In a show featuring eleven mural-size paintings and two chandelier sculptures, Duval-Carrié critiques

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London: Routledge, 2003; Thompson, Krista A. An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

the social construction of the Caribbean through its landscape. The exhibit looks at 19th century U.S. paintings that defined the Caribbean space as a lush tropical scenery. Through his paintings, Duval-Carrié points out the political forces that claimed ownership of the Caribbean space via its *entour*. The landscape has been altered into a paradise narrative by a colonial discourse.

The fabrication of the visual imaginary of the Caribbean landscape is traced throughout different periods of colonization. In her book Consuming the Caribbean (2003), Sheller investigates the European consumption of the Caribbean through products, landscapes and bodies from the 15th century to the early 21st century. Her second chapter "Iconic Islands: Nature, Landscape, and the Tropical Tourist Gaze" explores the images of tropical islands created from a European perspective, which notably portray Caribbean landscapes as paradise on earth. The images' purposes and effects are outlined in Sheller's three phases in the representations of the Caribbean. The first, the period of "discovery," transpires in the 16th and 17th centuries and marks the exploration of the region in an effort to assemble a collection of botanical knowledge. The second, entitled "scenic economy," occurs in the 18th century and offers a scenic panorama of land being developed for agricultural motives, "placing the viewer in a position of mastery" (Sheller, 66). The third part takes place in the 19th century and emphasizes romantic imperialism, which is to say the production of "a vision of untamed tropical nature" to arouse a sense of "adventure and romance" (Sheller, 37, 66). Tobias Ostrander, chief curator at the PAMM, claims that Edouard Duval-Carrié's IL responds to these three aesthetic stages.

IL was born from paintings of the Hudson River School (HSR) artists, who participated in a 19th century artistic movement that arose in the US set to provide a romantic vision of landscapes. Painters such as Martin Johnson Heade, Frederic Edwin Church, Albert Bierstadt, among others, traveled to the Caribbean or other areas of Latin America to create large-scale canvas of landscapes

that praise the power of nature. To increase the great scale of a particular landscape, humans were omitted in the HSR paintings. The artists also chose lighter colors to accentuate the reflection of the water and the sky. The idea was to create "an emotional and sensual engagement with the world" (Ostrander, 104). However, the artists' romantic portrayal of the landscapes took on a more lucrative motive. In An Eye for the Tropics (2007), art history critic Krista Thompson tackles the politics of visual representation in the Anglophone Caribbean[50]:

> The origins of how the English-speaking Caribbean was (and is) widely visually imagined can be traced in large part to the beginnings of tourism industries in the British West Indies in the late nineteenth century. Starting in the 1880s, British colonial administrators, local white elites, and American and British hoteliers in Jamaica and the Bahamas embarked on campaigns to refashion

[50] Krista Thompson provides an exhaustive list of the British and U.S. companies and artists who participated in the social construction of the Caribbean tourist image: "Photographic images played a constitutive role in this process. To create new and alluring representations of the islands, the colonial government and British and American corporations in Jamaica and the Bahamas (most notably, the British firm Elder, Dempster and Company and the American United Fruit Company) enlisted the services of many British, American, and local photographers, artists, and lantern lecturers, including James Johnston, James Gall, Bessie Pullen-Burry, W. H. Hale, and Joseph Kirkpatrick in Jamaica; and Albert Bierstadt, Jacob Frank Coonley, Fred Armbrister, William Henry Jackson, James Sands, John Ernest Williamson, and Stephen Haweis in the Bahamas. Collectively, through photographs, postcards, photography books, illustrated guides, stereoviews, and lantern slides, these image makers created a substantial repertoire of visual representations of the islands. These pictures were instrumental in imaging the islands as tropical and picturesque tourism destinations." (4-5). For further details, please consult Thompson, Krista A. An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

> the islands as picturesque ‘‘tropical’’paradises, the first concerted efforts of their kind in Britain’s Caribbean colonies. (Thompson, 4)

Heade, Church, and Bierstadt were all commissioned by the US government in the 19th century to create an image of an exotic and picturesque Caribbean. The purpose was to attract investors to the region to buy land and industrialize the area. Ostrander explains that, “Their [the HSR painters’] engagement with the region was economically motivated and directly tied to the United States’ economic interests” (104). The canvas had to notably display an overview of the landscape to incite on its profit potential, as the paintings were set to define and "sell" the Caribbean. The US expansion materialized through culture. In Culture and Imperialism (1993), literary and cultural critic Edward Said points out how culture, more than a representation, can be a tool of imperialism. He states: "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. (xiii)." Reading these paintings not only reveals the desire for expansion in the Caribbean but also, and especially, the power to dictate a narrative, an image that would turn to the US’ advantage.

Martin Johnson Heade and Albert Biersdadt created a biased account of the Caribbean coastline in their portraits. In *View from Fern-tree Walk*, painted in Jamaica in 1887, Heade depicts a colorful landscape with a view on the coast and the sea, the sun shining through a blue sky with white clouds, absent of people, which creates an "adventurer" feeling to the canvas. The absence of people entices an immaculate, untouched land that can, and must, be ceased by foreign investors. This trope was perpetuated by Bierstadt's *The Landing of Colombus* (1893) where the same repetitive traits are visible: white beach, blue sea, rich environment, and palm trees with coconuts idealistically arching around the newcomers. In his painting, Bierstadt emphasized the encounter between Colombus and the Amerindians, who are bowing to the invaders. Colombus

and his crew, however, seem to celebrate their new acquisition with joyous screams, fists and flags up in the air. The scene is one of welcome and acknowledgment from the "Indians," which seems to reinforce their subordinate position vis-à-vis the foreigners. Art clearly projects an illusion on the realities of Caribbean landscape, portraying devoted subjection vis-à-vis the colonizer and virginity and beauty of the land.

To Duval-Carrié, these paintings are an invention. They are fabricated images with a political purpose, but hold no significance in understanding what the Caribbean really is.[51] In other words, they are a deliberate camouflage, as Suzanne Césaire writes it, of Western colonialism and expansion. To return to Said's argument—in culture is embedded imperialism. Duval-Carrié's response to these paintings is not meant to completely erase them, but rather, to transform them. The *View from Fern-tree Walk* becomes *After Heade: Moonlit Landscape* and *The Landing of Colombus* turns into *After Bierstadt – The Landing of Colombus*. Duval-Carrié's paintings constitute a reaction to Heade and Bierstadt, as he names his works directly after theirs. It is a translation of Heade's and Bierstadt's works into contemporary times, an update on the narratives they portrayed.

This contemporary adaptation starts with Duval-Carrié's most provocative and notable change to Bierstadt's canvas. In *After Bierstadt – The Landing of Colombus,* a row boat appears in the center of the painting; on it, eight famous figures are outlined. Among them are Christopher Colombus, easily recognizable at the head, followed by Daffy Duck, Mickey Mouse, Marie-

[51] See Perez Art Museum Miami. ""Imagined Landscapes" with Edouard Duval-Carrié and Tobias Ostrander." Youtube. 30 April 2014. 53:23. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kZQ-kDZEfw&frags=pl%2Cwn

Antoinette, Bugs Bunny, Mister Potato-Head, Batman and Minnie Mouse. Looming behind is a threatening gunboat reminiscent of "the USS Machias [that] dropped anchor in the harbor of Port-au-Prince" in December 1914, which would mark the beginning of a twenty-year long US occupation of Haiti (Laurent Dubois, 204)[52]. Associating colonial figures with anachronistic cartoon characters (mostly from Disney) creates an obvious comical effect; nevertheless, this association holds a certain value in regards to cultural imperialism. The juxtaposition articulates a sense of continuity of invasion from past to the present, from a military colonization to cultural globalization. Duval-Carrié draws similarities between political and commercialized expansion, notably their respective power of global imposition on the domestic culture.

The visual systematization of the region, like glue, sticks the Tropics to the sun. In response to this association, Duval-Carrié chooses to move from one assumed geological feature to another, typically dismissed in European depictions of the Caribbean. In each of his paintings, he substitutes sunny skies with rain. To create the image of rain, he uses aluminum sheets, which he spray-paints with black and royal blue. He then draws over the sheets with silver glitter glue and seals them with clear resin[53]. The use of glitter stands out in his technique, as it is brought in direct contrast

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[52] In his interview with Tobias Ostrander at the Perez Art Museum in Miami, Duval-Carrié relates stories of fear that circulate around gunboats in his native island of Haiti: "if there is a rumor of political instability in Haiti, [people say that] a gunboat would be standing right outside the port" (Duval-Carrié). See Perez Art Museum Miami. ""Imagined Landscapes" with Edouard Duval-Carrié and Tobias Ostrander." Youtube. 30 April 2014. 53:23. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kZQ-kDZEfw&frags=pl%2Cwn

[53] Rather than using glitter, Duval-Carrié reveals he wanted to "sugarcoat" his paintings: "Had I been able to do it with sugar, I would have made it with sugar" (Turner). Sugar would have reinforced the ties between

with the dominant black background of his paintings[54]. In the painting, glitter provides a bright, shimmering, reflective light which sparks the audience's attention. It expresses Duval-Carrié's rupture with the usual Caribbean depiction of its weather: "Glitter offers a glistening image, like after it rained" (Ostrander). Through these techniques, the artist offers a new shiny image of the Caribbean, one produced by rain rather than the sun. The transformation of the *entour* acts as a refusal of the exoticization of the Caribbean and reaffirms a less idealized picture of the region. It confronts meteorological romanticism with a graphic reality.

Through the glitter technique, Duval-Carrié also brings the influence of Haiti and the Vaudou religion into his art. In "Tropical Values: The Imagined Landscapes of Edouard Duval-Carrié," Tobias Ostrander indicates that the contrast between glitter and the black background "recalls the sequins of Haitian Vodoun flags, which are used during night processions when their sparkling surfaces reflect the candles and moonlight that accompany the rituals" (103). Glitter takes on a commemorative and sacred aspect. Duval-Carrié's paintings convey the mortuary rituals that are conducted to celebrate the ancestors. In her article "Mirror Mausoleums, Mortuary Arts,

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the colonial plantation era and the contemporary consumer exploitation of the region, linking the past to the present. For more information, see https://hamptonsarthub.com/2014/07/15/art-review-glitter-flirts-in-edouard-duval-carrie-imagined-landscapes/

[54] In an art review entitled "Glitter Flirts in "Edouard Duval-Carrié: Imagined Landscapes," Duval-Carrié states that if given the choice, he would have picked sugar over glitter: "I just wanted to sugarcoat the whole thing! Had I been able to do it with sugar, I would have made it with sugar." For further details, please consult Turner, Elisa. "Art Review: Glitter Flirts in "Edouard Duval-Carrié: Imagined Landscapes." Hamptons Art Hub. 15 July 2014. Web. https://hamptonsarthub.com/2014/07/15/art-review-glitter-flirts-in-edouard-duval-carrie-imagined-landscapes/

and Haitian Religious Exceptionalism," art history critic Kyrah Malika Daniels examines how mirrors and reflective surfaces are rituals for the dead. She notably asserts that "the notion of mirrors and reflective waters as residence of the Lwa (the spirits) and *zansèt*, the ancestors" before indicating "the use of mirrors on gravesites as portals to otherworldly dimensions" (Daniels, 963)[55]. Duval-Carrié's IL offers a reflection that connects the world of the living to the world of the dead. The spirits of the ancestors and the gods remain present even though invisible to the mortal world. The artist's canvas also function as an homage paying tribute to the dead and claiming they are not forgotten. As Daniels accurately puts it, "to reflect is to remember" (977). In the same vein, Duval-Carrié's glitter, a literal reflection similar to a mirror, enhances a figurative reflection, the commemoration. In the last section of this chapter, I will return to the remembrance aspects of Duval-Carrié's paintings found in the color black.

Furthermore, Duval-Carrié's mirror effect also constitutes a critique of the Western gaze over the Caribbean space. Indeed, a mirror is a reflection of what stands in front it. In the case of Duval-Carrié, it is the audience that admires his canvas. The artist's paintings therefore offer a reflection of the spectators who are looking at the canvas. The audience sees itself in Duval-Carrié's works. The mirror effect, provoked by the sparkliness of glitter, positions the viewers in the paintings. Duval-Carrié's artistic move can be seen as invitation to participate in the rituals. Yet, the painter's intention can be interpreted as an introduction of a white and Western audience

[55] Kyrah Malika Daniels explains that in the Haitian Vaudou religion, the dead leave earth to live in "the spirit real beneath the ocean" (958). The world of the dead is therefore an underworld. For futher details, see Daniels, Kyrah Malika. "Mirror Mausoleums, Mortuary Arts, and Haitian Religious Exceptionalism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 85, No. 4, December 2017, 957 – 984; Loichot, Valérie. Water Graves. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. 2019.

to their own gaze, that is to say the detimentral eye of the tourist that continually frames the Caribbean into the beach trope. Glitter therefore positions the viewer in front of his/her own damaging discourse. Duval-Carrié points out who is responsible for the systematization of the beach trope globally.

If 19th century art was a call to invest in the Caribbean, more than a century later, the process was incontestably successful. The implementation of US tourist resorts throughout the Caribbean grew considerably and irresponsibly, to the point where culture was buried under the beach trope, as seen in Jamaica Kincaid and Suzanne Césaire's essays earlier in this chapter. Similarly, Edouard Glissant reports how the history of Martinique was overlooked in front of the exciting beaches. In Le Discours antillais (1981), the poet describes the southern part of Martinique, where the trunks of coconut trees served as an (unsuccessful) means of transportation for slaves to join Toussaint Louverture's revolt (Glissant, DA, 32). In recent decades, this historical account associated with the *entour* has been threatened by economic forces: "Ces plages sont à l'encan. Les touristes les réclament" (Glissant, DA, 32). The beaches are auctioned, sold to the best offer, usually that of foreign investors who supply the important tourist demand. Literary critic Daniel Racine provocatively compares the global capitalist system, which put "the beaches and other parts of the island […] at the disposal of tourist companies and their customers, a modern substitute for the plantations" (621). The tourist resorts are a system of exploitation (of the *entour* and its inhabitants) in order to accumulate a considerable amount of wealth.

Glissant, in his essay, "The Burning Beach," in Poetics of Relation (1990), presents this objectified state of the Caribbean and its inhabitants. He writes: "La plage est à découvert, sans surprises, comme prisonnière" (Poetics of Relation, 221). The beach seems to be naked, exposed, defenseless, like a vulnerable woman. It is at the mercy of an external force, one that

could seize it. Unexpectedly, "les tourists flâneurs" take possession of it when "[ils] y étendent leurs linges" (221)[56]. The possession, or dispossession, happens through an action, harmless at first, but detrimental in the long run due to its geographical context. The very act of laying a towel down on the sand is the cause of "hills that stand ragged" or the "devastated mangrove" (Glissant, 221). The towel symbolizes the tourist, who through his or her habitual greed and overconsumption, alter an environment s/he doesn't own. Through a simple deed, tourism represents oppression and devastation.

Yet, the beach does not remain passive in the face of repression. Glissant reveals what lies behind the facade:

> Sous l'image de convention, telle qu'on la voit développée – ou résumée – dans les films publicitaires, aux Etats-Unis ou au Japon, image luxueusement mortifère par quoi on vend un pays ("Les Antilles pour pas cher"), sous l'insipide apparence, nous retrouvons l'ardeur d'une terre. Je vois la derision de l'image, et je ne la vois pas. Je surprends le frémissement de cette plage, dont les visiteurs s'écrient qu'elle est si jolie, ou si typique, et je vois qu'elle est ardente (221)

In a Kincaidian way, Glissant drills down on the difference between what "they" see and what "he" sees. Yet, it is not the life of the native people that he reveals but rather his own vision of the *entour*. The poet answers to the dreamlike images of the Caribbean ("convention," "luxueusement," "jolie," "typique," etc.) with one word: "ardent." "Ardent" comes

[56] Interestingly enough, in the original French, Glissant uses the Martinican creole word "linge" - "les tourists flâneurs y étendent leurs linges" (221) - to reference the tourists' towels. If the term "linge" refers to the symbolic object, the towel being the mere representation of the tourist, it also denotes a profound subjectivity, a native point of view, due to its linguistic denomination.

from the latin *ardere* meaning "brûler"—to burn. Rather than being an attractive place, the beach is dangerous, even violent, with its heating sun, which can cause major damage to the human body. "Ardent" also suggests "la parole du volcan" with its "vases d'eau rouge qui gougloutent leurs brûlures de place en place" (Glissant, 222). Glissant designates volcanic hotspots, returning to "ces profondeurs [qui] naviguent sous la mer en ouest et sous l'océan en est" (222). For him, in the horizontality of the beach is inscribed a verticality. The ardor of the white sand recalls the ecological formation of his island of Martinique, "cette terre née du crachat brûlant des volcans" (Zlitni-Fitouri, 194).

Writing the sand as fiery or volcanic takes on a more figurative tinge, that of the *entour*'s refusal to be objectified by the tourist milieu. The burning aspect of the sand establishes its anger towards a fixed and fabricated image of the beach. Glissant thereby dissociates the *entour* from its "apparence," as the appearance only stresses superficiality (222). Instead, the poet advocates for "une désapparence"[57] – a disappearance or disappearing – which first forms a movement of *désappropriation* of the *entour*—the renunciation of a pasted image—and second, signals "[la] profondeur," a depth where a Relation can emerge but remain invisible at its surface (187)[58]. The

[57] It is important not to confuse the word *désapparence* with the term *disparition*, both translated into English as disappearance. Betsy Wing, translator of the English version of Poétique de la Relation (1990), distinguishes in between the two by adding an extra dash "dis-appearance" (206).

[58] In regards to his concept of Relation, Glissant notably explains in the section "Relié (Relayé), Relaté" the term *désapparence*: «La Relation relie (relaie), relate. Domination et résistance, osmose et renfermement, consentement de langage et défense des langues. Leur totalisation ne produit pas un procédé net, ni perceptible avec certi- tude. Relié (relayé), relaté ne se combinent pas de manière conclusive. Leur

final section of this chapter furthers the idea of *désapparence* by examining the colors often overlooked in the Western portrayal of the Caribbean. This section moves away from an *entour* considered through a historical framework to history examined through an ecocritical framework.

(Un)Reading the Landscape

"A beach burns their memory."
(Derek Walcott)

The Caribbean is all colors. In his introduction to Prismatic Ecology (2013), literary critic Lawrence Buell indicates how our imaginary associates colors with concepts. He points out "the specious- ness of reducing "ecology" or "ecocriticism" to "green."" (ix). In the same vein, the Caribbean has always been associated with vivid colors. In the touristic imaginary, a rainbow of colors emerges. The turquoise blue water; the white sandy beach; the brown trunk of coconut trees; their yellowish-green leaves; the blue sky; the white clouds; and the vegetation, green as far as the eye can see. This multicolored portrait depicts a warm, welcoming and paradisiac place. Through its vivid colors, the Caribbean is an enticing holiday destination, promising a luxurious, dreamy and fantasized experience. In this representation, certain colors are left out. Black, grey, and purple rarely appear in the touristic discourse of the Caribbean. For the West, these colors symbolize monotony, sadness and platitude, terms far from the image attributed to the Caribbean. The goal of this section is to go beyond the generic, systematic colors that define the Caribbean from the

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mélange en désapparence (ou profondeur) n'est pas marqué, en surface, d'un révélant. La poétique de la Relation fait tressaillir ce révélant, par solliciter l'imaginaire." (Glissant, 1990, 187)

19th century to today and to show how *darker colors*, more than just representing the Caribbean, indeed are the Caribbean.

Duval-Carrié's paintings have always been colorful. He uses a multitude of diverse shades in his art, exemplified in « La traversée » (1996) through « le général Toussaint enfumé» (2003)[59]. In 2014, for Imagined Landscapes, his style undergoes a dramatic change. Devoid of vivid colors that used to decorate his canvas, black, grey and purple now dominate. In "Tropical Values, the Imagined Landscapes of Edouard Duval-Carrié", Ostrander states that the artist had been subject to critique for the extreme use of colors in his previous works[60]. He writes, that "This change [to the color black] may indicate a critique of his previous work, which is known for its strong use of color and is often described as informed by Haitian folk art" (104). However, Duval Carrié's thoughtful choice in using black goes beyond responding to critiques; it defies the standard palette of colors used by artists to exoticize the Caribbean. In Heade and Bierstadt's paintings, the sun shines and illuminates the beach. In Duval-Carrié's paintings, by way of contrast, the sunlight disappears to give way to the color black; the artist voluntarily deprives his paintings of color to suggest a night setting. Duval-Carrié unveils another side of the *entour*, one that is less welcoming and more hostile. For him, the Caribbean is also a place "full of mosquitoes, weird insects and snakes," where "malaria" could easily be caught (Duval-Carrié in Perez Art Museum Miami). Far from the image of beauty, the painter introduces the region as a hostile, inhospitable and

[59] These works can be consulted on Edouard Duval-Carrié's website http://duval-carrie.com/archives/

[60] The critics of Duval-Carrié's works point out that the painter plays into the idealized motifs of the Caribbean and Haiti. Yet, Duval-Carrié's status as a transnational artist puts him simultaneously in a consumer-oriented and marginal position. To allow the dissemination of his work, Duval-Carrié carries traces of exoticism. However, his paintings also resist the exotic representations of the Caribbean. See chapter 3 for a deeper analysis of this tension in Caribbean transnational writers and artists.

aggressive space. Duval-Carrié, through his paintings, shows his audience that the Caribbean is not all sunny and shiny, but it can also be dangerous.

If the Caribbean can be a danger, it can also be endangered. Glissant's "La plage noire" alludes to the ecological hazards that impact the region in a harmful manner. The poet underlines the fragility of the islands facing environmental catastrophes:

> Alors la plage est battue d'un vent qu'on ne ressent pas sur le corps, c'est un vent secret. Les vagues viennent haut près du rivage, elles se forment à moins de dix mètres, vert campêche, et sur une si petite distance elles déchaînent leurs galaxies incalculables. Les branches des mancenilliers et des raisiniers de mer dessinent un saccage qui, sous le plus tranquille soleil, met en mémoire l'ouvrage de la mer nocturne. Des algues brunes couvrent la ligne entre le sable et la terre, tassées là par l'assaut invisible. Des cocotiers déracinés sont tombés en travers comme des corps désemparés. Sur leur trace, jusqu'à la butte de roches qui balise le Morne Larcher au loin, on sent la force d'un cyclone dont on sait qu'il va venir. (Glissant, 135)

In this passage, Glissant gives a meticulous description of a cyclone's arrival. From the beach to the coconut trees, from the wind to the algae, a cyclone is a devastating force that can have severe consequences. Hence, the term "corps" – bodies- is repeated twice in this paragraph, emphasizing the possible deaths to come. The cyclone's presence can be sensed – "on sait qu'il va venir." This awareness not only translates a knowledge about the environmental signs that announce a cyclone, but allude to the fact that the inhabitants have experienced the cyclone's anger before. Once the storm has passed, the white sand beach turns black because of deposits brought by the storm. The black beach, as Glissant's title suggests, evokes the aftermath of a cyclone. Thus, Glissant shows that the Caribbean is a fragile space at the forefront of recurring ecological catastrophes due to its

exposed geographical location[61]. Portraying it as a paradise disregards its vulnerability to natural and human-made hazards.

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed Suzanne Césaire's idea of blindness invoked by the beach. The shore has an innate attractiveness that it causes the inhabitants and reality of Martinique to remain unseen. In the same vein, Duval-Carrié presses on the relationship between invisibility and *entour*. Yet, by contrast with Suzanne Césaire, the artist exposes how invisibility actually makes other aspects of the *entour* visible. Not everything in the *entour*, just like not everything in a culture, can be discerned. The hidden, the out-of-sight, must be taken into account; and, sometimes, it is when one sees the least that one actually sees the most. Indeed, in Duval-Carrié's painting, the dominant use of black facilitates the appearance of another color: purple. Scattered throughout the branches of the trees, purple creates, according to Duval-Carrié, a "mysterious" side to the painting. This secret, puzzling characteristic assigned to the *entour* is accentuated when purple first undulates, then fades away before reappearing brighter; this creates a spectral effect. Painting with purple affirms a presence, invisible, but nevertheless present. Yet, this presence does not take a solid human shape. There are no arms, heads, legs, or bodies, only shapes

[61] For ecological and human-made hazards, consult DeLoughrey, Elizabeth M., Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley. Caribbean Literature and the Environment. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005. 23 – 26; Baver, Sherrie L. and Barbara Deutsch Lynch. Beyond Sun and Sand: Caribbean Environmentalisms. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006; Rhiney, Kevon. "Geographies of Caribbean Vulnerability in a Changing Climate: Issues and Trends." *Geography Compass*, 9, 97 – 114; Siegel, Katherine J. et al. "Sovereign States in the Caribbean Have Lower Social-Ecological Vulnerability to Coral Bleaching than Overseas Territories." Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, Volume 286, issue 1897, 2019. Web.

and silhouettes. In his interview with Ostrander at the Perez Art Museum, Duval-Carrié reveals that "they are spirits," adding that "purple is the color of death in Haiti" (Duval-Carrié in Perez Art Museum Miami).[62] The color purple denotes the presence of an absence, of a body that no longer exists and whose soul only remains. Duval-Carrié explains that adding purple is a way "to pay homage to the Indians that perished and to the Africans slaves that were victimized in this situation.[63]" Even if their bodies are no longer visible in the painting, the Karibe people and the slaves are part of the picture. Their existences are memorialized. Adding purple to the paintings serves as a commemoration, a remembrance of these deaths.

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[62] In Haiti, the color purple is a reference to the Vaudou loa *Bawon Samedi*, the god of death. He is the guardian of the cemetery and he oversees the spirits of the dead in the underworld. *Bawon* also has the capacity to heal the dying approaching death. Reading Duval-Carrié's painting in the Haitian vaudou spectrum allows to conceive the purple as the color of Bawon Samedi who presides over the dead. For a deeper analysis on Bawon Samedi, consult Davies, Carol Boyce. Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences and Culture. Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio, 2008. 821-822; Cosentino, Daniel. "Who Is That Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap? Transformations of Eshu in Old and New World Mythologies." The Journal of American Folklore, vol 100, No. 397, Jul – Sept 1987, 261 – 275. For a deeper analysis on Vaudou in Haiti, see Bellegarde-Smith, Patrick. Haitian Vodou: Spirit, Myth and Reality. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006; Cosentino, Donald J. Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1995; Dayan, Colin. Haiti, History and the Gods. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998; Michel Claudine and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith. Vodou in Haitian Life and Culture: Invisible Powers. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

[63] Duval-Carrié uses the colonial term "Indians;" more specifically, he talks about the Karibe tribe that was eradicated in the Caribbean after the European colonization of their lands.

The addition of purple provides a new interpretation of the color black in Duval-Carrié's paintings. Tobias Ostrander insists on the symbolism associated with the color black, which "speaks to what is so often hidden from view: the violent histories both past and present that are kept in the shadows. The mysterious figures that the artist has added to several of these landscapes [....] speak to the ghosts of indigenous and African spirits that haunt these places, continually reappearing, brilliantly, and demanding to be seen" (107). The color black calls attention to the absence of narratives, the stories that have been left out in global History – a History from below. Heade's *View from Fern-tree Walk* enters this imaginary, as no people appear whatsoever. The landscape looks deprived of any bodies. By adding a "spirit," « After Heade: Moonlit Landscape becomes a witness to this other side of History" (Duval-Carrié in Perez Art Museum Miami). The color black has a performative effect. It challenges dominant discourses and acts as a call for imperialist narratives, notably in art, to be told again.

For rewriting to become unwriting, other versions of the History of the Caribbean must be accessible. However, with colonization, slave trade and imperialism, a new question arises: How does one rewrite without any archives (whether they are oral or written)?[64] History written from

[64] In Modernity Disawoved (2004), literary critic Sibylle Fischer asks a similar question in regards to historical archives during slavery in the Caribbean: "How can we show what has been silenced if we have no account against which those silences show up?" (20-21). Fischer mentions fictions, not as a tool to replace the historical gaps, but rather as a space to imagine alternative narratives: "the only way for a critical study to proceed is by measuring what is said against what is not said.Sometimes the only way to understand what was said is by insisting on what might be veiled." (Fischer, 21). In Silencing the Past (1995), historian anthropologist Michel Rolph-Trouillot takes into account how power silences voices in the production of history. He states that "any historical narrative is a bundle of silences" before adding that "the production

an imperialist perspective replaced and violently erased Carribbean History, leaving gaps in historical discourses. In Eloge de la Créolité (1989), Martinican writers Jean Barnabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant state the truncated memory of the Caribbean: "Notre Histoire (ou plus exactement nos histoires) est naufragée dans la chronique coloniale. La mémoire collective est notre urgence. Ce que nous croyons être l'histoire antillais n'est que l'histoire de la colonization des Antilles" (37). Rewriting from fragments via the imaginary is a possibility. Yet, Duval-Carrié does not fill the holes; on the contrary, he uses them to transmit the tragedy of loss and obliteration. The color black emphasizes emptiness and the erasure of narratives. These gaps must not be filled; they must remain empty, preserved, whole, to pass on the trauma that the Caribbean has suffered. Emptiness is not nothingness. It holds a presence. These holes are part of and become History.

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of traces is always also the creation of silences" (Rolph-Trouillot, 27-29). For a range of works on the archives in the Caribbean, see Rolph-Trouillot, Michel. Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995; Fuentes, Marisa J. Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvannia Press, 2016; Stoler, Ann Laura. Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010; Taylor, Diana. The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003; Walters, Wendy W. Archives of the Black Atlantic: Reading Between Literature and History. Abingdon: Routledge, 2013; Bastian, Jeannette A. and co. Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives reader. Sacramento: Litwin Books and Library Juice Press, 2018; Fischer, Sibylle. Modernity Disawoved: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution. Durham, Duke University Press, 2004.

To describe the dislocation of the Caribbean consciousness, Glissant creates the term *non-histoire*. He defines this expression as "ce discontinu dans le continu, l'impossibilité pour la conscience collective d'en faire le tour" (Glissant, DA, 224). The diasporic trauma of colonization fragmented Caribbean history. Due to the performed historical erasure, the collective memory did not form in a continuous way. Glissant even resorts to the French idiomatic expression "faire le tour," which means "to go around it" in a literal sense and "to examine it from all angles" in a figurative sense. *Un tour* in French is also a sort of delineated path, an encircling pathway one can walk on. In the collective memory of the Caribbean, the path is broken; it is made of ruptures that forbid a historical exploration. Caribbean history holds a tormented chronology, which results in a lack of linearity. Yet, *non-histoire* is still a form of history. The term just adapts the notion of time to Caribbean history. The negation responds to the conceptualization of the term *history* as conceived in Western thought: linear and whole. *Non-histoire*, by contrast, relates the experiences of a community that suffered the trauma of colonization and, as a result, whose history is disjointed and fractured. *Non-histoire* is therefore a reconfigured nonlinear history. Similarly, in Duval-Carrié's *IL*, the color black references the imposed void that took place in Caribbean history. The discontinuity and fragmentation of a Caribbean consciousness appears through the spirits in the trees. The presence of the ancestors is acknowledged but cannot, however, be discerned with certainty. The collective memory remembers the dead but cannot retrace their bodies and stories in a linear way. In Duval-Carrié's work, the color black is *non-histoire*, which is to say a history that is plunged into opacity.

Glissant's "La plage noire" advocates for the acceptance of the invisible side of a culture through the *entour*. While the beach is generally described as white and flat in the touristic

discourse, the Martinican poet presents *la plage du Diamant en Martinique*, Martinique as black and abyssal[65]:

> La plage du Diamant, dans le Sud de la Martinique, vit d'une manière souterraine et cyclique. Dans les mois d'hivernage, elle se réduit à un couloir de sables noirs, venus on dirait des côtes d'en haut, là où la Pelée ramage ses frondaisons de laves brisées. Comme si la mer entretenait un commerce souterrain avec le feu caché du volcan. Et j'imagine ces nappées sombres en roule sur le fond marin, convoyant jusqu'à l'espace aéré d'ici ce que l'intensité du Nord a mûri de nuit de cendres impassibles. (Glissant, 135)

In this passage, Glissant details the impossibility of fixing the beach's image. First, the beach « vit d'une manière cyclique » with a « hivernage » that sees « un couloir de sables noirs » appear while during « les mois de carême […] la réinstallation du sable blanc » operates[66]. The color of the sand varies according to the seasons. The surroundings also play their part in determining the color of the sand. The black sand, in this extract, comes from "un commerce souterrain" between the beach and the volcano. Glissant gives a very business-oriented description of the relationship between the two entities. The key-term is "souterrain," as it accentuates the hidden aspect of the Relation between the beach and the volcano. The trade operates on a different scale, out of reach and out of bounds. The exchange is done in a clandestine manner, remaining secret and unseen.

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[65] In his book chapter "Martinique/Mississippi: Edouard Glissant and Relational Insularity," Dash explains the cultural and historical significance of the Diamond rock to Glissant's literature and imaginary. See Dash, Michael J. Martinique/Mississippi: Edouard Glissant and Relational Insularity."LookAway! The US South in new World Studies. Ed, by Jon Smith and Deborah Cohn. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. 94 – 109.

[66] There are two seasons in Martinique: *l'hivernage* which corresponds to the rainy season from June to November and *le carême*, the dry season, which lasts from December to May.

The invisibility is reinforced by “ces nappées sombres en roule sur le fond marin.” The murky waters that Glissant details highlight a certain density. The unsettled sediments create the turbidity of the water, giving it a certain form of opacity. The lack of limpidity makes the shore unreadable.

Glissant's description of the beach of Le Diamant embodies his philosophy. Drawing on “The Black Beach” in Poetics of Relation, J. Michael Dash explains “the mechanism of *opacité/altérité* is suggested not only in this topography but in the sand itself” (181). In the geography or geology lies Glissant's concept of Opacity. Opacity, before all, must be defined as a form of resistance to Transparency. Transparency falls under the “processus de la ‘compréhension’ des êtres et des idées dans la perspective de la pensée occidentale” (PR, 204). Glissant adds: “Pour pouvoir te ‘comprendre’ et donc t’accepter, il me faut ramener ton épaisseur à ce barème idéel qui me fournit motif à comparaisons et peut-être à jugements. Il me faut réduire.” (PR, 204). Transparency is realized in the reduction of the irreducible density of the Other, to ‘understand’ him/her. It is an imposition: that of assessing an individual to an outsider’s scale of measurement. Transparency is a model aimed at diminishing the obscurity of the Other to make him/her knowable and accessible.

In reaction to Transparency comes Opacity. Literary critic Celia Britton writes that “the right to opacity, which Glissant claims is more fundamental than the right to difference, is a right *not to be understood*” (19). Britton returns to “the etymology of the French verb “comprendre” [to understand; the root of which, *prendre*, means to take]” to point out that “Glissant discerns a gesture of “taking” the world and bringing it back to oneself” (20). In Glissantian terms, to understand is not to perceive the intended meaning but, rather, to reduce one’s existence to a system. Opacity is not a gesture of appropriation but of re-appropriation. It is a way to refuse the gaze of the Other, the rejection to be objectified. On the contrary, it equates to

liberation, acceptance and respect of the Other's difference. Opacity is a preservation of one's difference. So when Glissant writes: "We demand the right to Opacity!" (PR, 189), he asks to accept no universal truth and to remain impenetrable against any form of domination.

Adapting Glissant's concept of Opacity to the black sand, the beach (or the Caribbean itself) instigates the absence of any sovereign narrative over its space to avoid any reducible objectification. The beach claims its right to be unread. This endeavor, which restitutes a cultural imaginary unique to the Caribbean and refuses an outsider's scale of representation, is characterized by what I call an Unreading – *une délecture* – of the *entour*. *La délecture* (inspired by Glissant's *déparler*[67]) marks the impossibility to be read in a total transparency and the act of "un-reading" a preexisting reading at the same time. It as much claims the rewriting/unwriting of hegemonic narratives as a new approach to a reconfigured History based on the Glissantian imperative for Opacity. Facing a globalizing and touristic Transparency, the Caribbean, and its *entour*, strives for its Unreading. The third chapter of this dissertation digs further into the question of transcendence of the Caribbean shoreline. It examines displacement narratives, notably Aimé Césaire's Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939) and its intertextual fragments derived in Péan Stanley's short story "La plage des songes," and in Dany Laferière's L'énigme du retour (2009).

[67] For Glissant, the *Déparleur* articulates a language s/he is the only one to understand because people "n'ont pas toujours les codes, [...] les clés » to fully grasp the meaning of what s/he says (Glissant in Kassab-Charfi, 347). For a deeper analysis, please consult Kassab-Charfi, Samia, Zlitni-Fitouri, Sonia,et Loïc Céry, *Autour d'Édouard Glissant : Lectures, épreuves, extensions d'une poétique de la Relation* (2008), Dominique Chancé's *Édouard Glissant: Un traité du déparler* (2017) or J. Michael Dash's « No Mad Art: The Deterritorialized *Deparleur* in the work of Edouard Glissant » (2001) in *Paragraph*, 24 (3), 2001, p. 105-116.

It then questions how these literary works transgress the diasporic trauma inscribed in the shore, or fail to do so.

Between Memories and Dreams — Chapter 3

Reading the Shore in Aimé Césaire's and Stanley Péan's Caribbean Diasporic Narratives

. . . . . .

Introduction

Martinican poet and politician Aimé Césaire is considered to be one of the foundational pillars of the Caribbean literary landscape. The astonishing richness of his writing combines abundant lyricism with militant and political consciousness. Césaire's oeuvre has reached generations of readers throughout the world. Admiration for his work has also sparked writers to claim a literary lineage with Césaire, incessantly quoting or echoing the poet's words and ideas. Martinican writer Raphaël Confiant claims that "[s]ans Aimé Césaire, il n'y aurait eu ni Frantz Fanon, ni Édouard Glissant, ni Bertène Juminer, ni Guy Tirolien, ni René Depestre, ni Jean Bernabé, ni Patrick Chamoiseau" (18). In his article *"*Aimé Césaire: The Bearable Lightness of Becoming*,"* literary critic J. Michael Dash explains how the members of the créolité movement considered Césaire to be "the father of the Martinican people" (737). In Eloge de la Créolité (1993), Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant write "nous sommes à jamais fils d'Aimé Césaire" (18). Chamoiseau even recognizes Césaire as the "maître-marronneur" (Dash, 737)[68].

[68] The legacy from Césaire claimed by all Caribbean writers must be moderated. Indeed, even though Caribbean writers acknowledge and claim Césaire to be a founding literary figure, many have also heavily criticized and dissociated themselves with Césaire. Confiant's Une traversée paradoxale du siècle (1993) notably reveals a fraught relationship with Césaire. Literary critic Ching Selao mentions the paradoxical admiration and resentment Confiant has for Césaire: "Raphaël Confiant y va d'une charge contre l'auteur du célèbre Cahier d'un retour au pays natal en affirmant d'entrée de jeu que son livre « se veut le cri sincère

Literary critic Ching Selao brings a feminist perspective into the study of Césaire's legacy among Caribbean writers, which tends to be considered a "manly matter" (Selao, 2016, 73). She notably studies the paradoxical relationship between Césaire and Guadeloupean writer Maryse Condé. Condé criticized Césaire and his Négritude as early as the 1970s' but still expresses her immense literary debt to the poet[69]: "elle avoue en ce qui la concerne que "si Césaire n'existait pas, je crois que je ne serais certainement pas écrivain" (Selao, 2016, 74)[70].

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d'un fils qui estime avoir été trahi par ses pères et en l'occurrence par le premier d'entre eux, Aimé Césaire" (Selao, 2012, 36). Patrick Chamoiseau also offers an ambiguous relationship with Césaire. If he recognizes the poet as a foundational literary and cultural figure for the region, he also portrays Césaire distantly from the residents of Martinique in his literature. In Chronique des sept misères (1986), when the "djobeur," Pipi, meets the mayor of Fort-de-France, the communication seemed broken, accentuated by the fracture between the use of Creole and French: "Voyant Aimé Césaire lui-même marcher à sa rencontre, l'embrasser, le declarer Martiniquais fundamental, Pipi devint ababa. Bégayant, transpirant, il ne comprit plus rien à ce qu'on lui demandait et se révéla incapable d'expliquer ses méthodes. Césaire, patient, questionnait gentiment. – Mais comment faites-vous pour converser les tubercules d'ignames aussi longtemps sans qu'ils germent? – Hein? Quoi? Kesse ti di missié lime? (Que dis-tu?)" (Chamoiseau, 200).

[69] Césaire defines *Négritude* as "la simple reconnaissance du fait d'être noir, et l'acception de ce fait, de notre destin de noir, de notre histoire et de notre culture" (Legum, 1965, 151).

[70] For a complete analysis of Condé with the Francophone Caribbean father figures that represent Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, see Selao, C. (2016). "Maryse Condé et les pères fondateurs de la Caraïbe francophone." *Études françaises*, *52* (1), 73–90.

In the same vein as Selao's work on Condé, this chapter aims to analyze a literary genealogy that has been ignored by scholarship on Francophone Caribbean writers. Indeed, the ecocritical heritage between Césaire and Haitian-Canadian writer Stanley Péan has been noted by literary criticism but never fully engaged with. The intent of this chapter is to remedy this gap by attempting to explore Péan's intertextuality with Césaire to see how Péan goes beyond Césaire's legacy. This chapter specifically looks at Césaire's Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939) and Péan's "La plage des songes" (1988) to highlight the literary genealogy between the two writers[71]. Both of these works were their respective authors' very first published texts. Césaire's poem is considered a landmark of Caribbean and anticolonial literature. The poem criticizes racial and colonial oppression and is characterized by the *Négritude* movement of which he was one of the founders. Péan's short story recounts the experiences of the Haitian diaspora in Québec and explores the tension between fiction and reality in the migrant narrative. While the contexts of these texts set them apart, Césaire's poem and Péan's short story share common themes, such as diasporic narratives of displacement, the formation of subjectivity as an individual and collective process, the role of literature as a homeland and the presence of the beach as a site of trauma.

The first connection lies in both Césaire and Péan recounting the experience of migrants and exiles. Péan is a fiction writer, translator, scriptwriter and journalist. He was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in 1966 and, during the same year settled into his new home in Jonquière, Québec with his parents. Péan grew up between the Haitian and Canadian cultures, both present in his literature. If Péan's position as a migrant writer does not raise any debate among scholarly debates,

[71] For the rest of this chapter, I will use the diminutive forms Cahier to refer to Cahier d'un retour au pays natal and "La plage" to mention the short story "La plage des songes."

Césaire, by contrast, tends to be read by postcolonial scholarship within a global Black literature frame in the context of anticolonial struggles, such as Négritude or Pan-Africanism. As such, Césaire's relationship with migration studies is frequently overlooked. Although Césaire cannot be considered a migrant writer, I argue nevertheless that he carries a migrational consciousness, fundamental to his poem Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939)[72]. In the poem, Césaire discusses his personal exile from Martinique in his late teens to early twenties to pursue his studies in Métropole France and the collective exile the African diaspora suffered from during slave trade. In the Cahier, the term homeland holds a large array of interpretations, referring to places like Martinique and Africa or more figuratively to spaces like the collective consciousness of the oppressed or the notebook itself. If Césaire eventually returns to Martinique, he cannot physically come back to Africa. This chapter focuses on how Césaire recovers traces of Africa, given the impossibility to return to the homeland.

Similarly to Césaire, the question of return in Péan's "La plage des songes" (1988) is less significant than claiming the heritage of the homeland. Péan's exilic experience is a result of his family's displacement to Canada in order to escape the atrocities carried out by the Duvalier dictatorship and his *tontons macoutes* (1957 – 1986). Whether it is through dreams or memories, the Haitian writer retrieves Haiti but at no point contemplates a return to his country of origin.

[72] Between 1939 and 1994, literary critic Pierre Laforgue counts 11 editorial changes, some minimal, others more significant, made to the Cahier. The historicity of the poem's writing exposes the successive layers of CPRN. Similarly to the sedimentation that occurs on the shore, Césaire's writing process reveals how the depth of the Cahier was formed in time, with time, and throughout time. I will work with the 2000 edited version of *Présences Africaines*.

Ultimately, what links both of these works is the depiction of the transgenerational trauma that occurred due to the loss of place –the African continent for Césaire and Haiti for Péan. Yet, if the absence of place of origin is intrinsically linked in the texts of these two writers, both operate on a different scale. Césaire engages with the global history of the African diaspora, emphasizing colonial structural violence in the contemporary Caribbean. Péan, by contrast, experiences firsthand the trauma of displacement at the contact of his family. Césaire's text engages with a larger temporal and spatial scale in comparison to Péan's text, a notion of *thick space* and *thick time* I will return to in the first part of this chapter.

The second connection revolves around Péan symbolically retrieving a piece of home through Césaire's literature. For Péan, the trauma involved in the spatial loss of the country of origin is passed on by his family. Citing Césaire and referring to the Cahier in his own text becomes a way to recover the Caribbean culture that was taken away from him, beyond familial narratives. Exile comes with a price, that of a disconnection with the homeland's culture and *entour*. Literature can give a taste of home, substituting the void of the culture of origin with images and experiences reminiscent of home. The presence of Césaire is therefore a way to connect with the place that was lost during his transnational move and reclaim a cultural and literary heritage from which he was cut off. Péan's recovery of the homeland materializes through literature, similarly to Césaire's concept of *Négritude* that materializes in the poem.

In addition to the intertextuality between Césaire and Péan, and perhaps more importantly, this chapter looks at how transnational writers rewrite the beach trope in the Caribbean. In the first chapter of this dissertation, we examined how the beach is a site of cultural and historical representation and formation in the history of slave trade. In the second chapter, we investigated

how Glissant and Duval-Carrié responded to global representations of the Caribbean. In this chapter, the tropical paradise narrative completely disappears from Césaire's poem and appears only superficially in Péan's short story. For Césaire, the beach is not flat; it has a geographic and historical volume that spreads from the trauma of slavery to a sentiment of political sovereignty in times of decolonization. It also sets the stage for an early modern critique of environmental degradation. Césaire's representations of the shore balance precise allegories of the mutilated black body to describe the atrocities of slavery with tangible descriptions of a marginalized space in the French colonial system.

Péan, by contrast, provides much more abstract images of the beach. The vague descriptions of the shore in the short story tackle the question of fictionalization of the homeland. The Haitian author recognizes a part of fiction in his writing, which is characterized by the nostalgia for the country of origin. Haitian-Canadian writer Dany Laferrière, Péan's compatriot in exile of sorts, writes: "[e]t s'il y a une chose qui est loin de la vérité, c'est la nostalgie" (2002, 31). The geographic displacement from Haiti to Canada leads to an idealization of home which intensifies with nostalgia. The distance with the country of origin accentuates the distance with reality. While Haiti continues to be in the present, the country remains fixed in the past in Péan's memory. Péan's homeland continues to live in his dreams, frozen in his diasporic memory of a particular place and time. If in Césaire's Cahier, the beach is embedded in a political stance vis-à-vis the colonial system, Péan's short story favors a more intimate approach, in which the beach becomes the site of an introspective negotiation between the country of origin and that of adoption. In Péan's short story, the beach trope, fictionalized through literature, is infused with an experienced diasporic identity.

The interest of this chapter was sparked by four words about the shore—"la plage des songes"—written by Césaire in Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939) that, later, Péan uses as the title of his collection of short stories La plage des songes (1988) as well as for the first titular short story. Studying Césaire and Péan side by side is a challenging task to undertake. Césaire is considered to be a founding father of Caribbean literature, with abundant scholarship published on his works. By contrast, Péan, although recognized as an important literary figure in Québec, has not yet received significant attention by academics. If ecocritical and geographical studies of Césaire's work have grown bigger in recent decades, it still nevertheless remains trivial compared to postcolonial approaches to the poet's literature[73]. My intent is to pursue the ecocritical exploration of Césaire's work by analyzing a particular space – the beach – that has not been tackled yet. In the Cahier, Césaire only engages with the shore sporadically but, nevertheless, provides rich descriptions linking the struggle of the *entour* to that of its residents. As for Péan, the beach forms the central site of his first short story. It represents a place of disorientation but also, I argue, of recomposition. Péan transforms the beach from a site of trauma into a home. In both the Cahier and "La plage", the beach constitutes a liminal space. The shore simultaneously

[73] For an analysis of different parts of the landscape other than the beach in Césaire's literature, consult Dash, Michael J. "Le cri du Morne: la poétique du paysage césairien dans la littérature antillaise." Soleil éclaté. Mélanges offerts à Aimé Césaire à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire par une équipe international d'artistes et de chercheurs. Ed by Jacqueline Leiner. Tübingen: Narr, 1984. 101 – 110; Heise, Ursula K. "Surréalisme et écologies: les metamorphoses d'Aimé Césaire." *Ecologie et Politique*. Issue 36, June 2008. 69 – 83; Licops, Dominique. "Naturalizing Identity, Politicizing Nature: Metaphors of Identification in the Work of James Clifford, Paul Gilroy, and Aimé Césaire." *Special Issue: Convergences and Interferences. Newness in Intercultural Practices,* Vol. 8, 2001. 53 – 68.

becomes the place that paradoxically connects and disconnects—the country of origin from the country of adoption, the past from the future, a sense of belonging from a sense of alienation. The beach embodies the displacement of the migrant writers in Césaire and Péan's literatures.

This chapter offers a reading of Césaire's *Cahier* and Péan's "La plage" around the depictions of the beach. It notably looks at the literal and allegorical representations of the shore from a migrant studies and ecocritical studies perspective. The intersection of these two fields is noted in the term *la plage des songes* appearing in both works. The phrase portrays the challenge of migration through the *entour*: staying connected to a lost place while adapting to a new life. *La plage des songes* constitutes a versatile space that simultaneously layers past and future; memories and dreams. The first part of this chapter examines Césaire's Cahier, which engages the social and historical aspects of colonization with the shore. The poet reinscribes the Caribbean history of the slave trade and slavery in the landscape. The poetic writing of the beach allows Césaire to move beyond the nature/culture schism characterized by the colonial system and to link the struggle of the land to the struggle of the inhabitants. The political resistance to colonial oppression in the Caribbean therefore materializes through people and the land. The second part focuses on Péan's short story and the shore as a cultural contact zone[74]. It notably discusses the tension between

[74] In her 1991 keynote address to the Modern Language Association, literary critic Mary Louise Pratt defines the term "cultural contact" as the "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (34). Adding an environmental component to Pratt's notion of *cultural zone*, I claim the shore itself is a cultural zone in Césaire and Péan's writing.

reality and fiction, between the country of origin and of adoption in transnational memory. The originality of Péan's migrant experience felt through his family provides alternatives positions of the migrant narrative. "La plage des songes" moves the beach from a site of migrant trauma to a transcendental home. All in all, this chapter offers a reflection on diaspora and ecocriticism, namely how writers recount the experience of migration *through* the *entour* and *with* the *entour*. The transitional space that the shore represents mirrors the in-betweenness of the migrant.

The Shore is a Line

"Quand je veux me connaître, je me lis dans le paysage"
(Aimé Césaire)

Writing the place – etymologically translated as *geo-graphy* – in the Caribbean casts a spatial trauma in the collective historical consciousness. Slave traders shipped millions of Africans to the region to work on lucrative plantations—that is, if they survived the journey. The violence of the Middle passage therefore cut off individuals from their homeland. The Caribbean *déportement*, as Glissant calls it, forced the population of a continent into a dis-place-ment, disrupting the attachment to the land of origin (Glissant, 1990, 17). In other words, what characterizes the birth of Caribbean culture is the loss of place. The division between people and the land in the Caribbean was maintained by the plantation economy that was instituted. As literary and environmental critic Elizabeth DeLoughrey points out, "the violence of plantation societies

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The beach constitutes the site where the country of origin and of adoption meet and negotiate a space of representation.

ruptured continuous human relationships to place" (2011, 265). Césaire's poem sharply features the schism between people and land. However, Césaire also provides narratives that incorporate the landscape in identity formation. The compexility of the relationship to the land in Césaire's poem translates the ecological alienation created by the colonial era as well as engages with a historical and political dialectic with the *entour*. Alternating between images of an empirical reality and allegories of the beach, this section reveals how the shore becomes a site of colonial repression and marginalization in the poem. Ultimately, it sheds light on the poet's ecocritical perspective in the Cahier and argues that Césaire positions the shore as a site of anticolonial resistance.

The title of Césaire's poem can be misleading. Naming his poem Cahier d'un retour au pays natal literally evokes a return to the homeland. It is the come back from an *ailleurs* that supposedly constitutes the purpose of the poem. Indeed, the poet's goal is to return to his native land, whether it be Martinique (his birth place) or the African continent (the collective site of origin). Yet, in his essay "NEGRITUDE, la grammaire de Caliban" (2010), literary critic Jacques Coursil explains that "il ne s'agit pas chez Césaire d'un rêve de Libéria" (Coursil). This phrase refers to the enslaved people, who, when freed from slavery in the 19th century, were given the choice to return to Africa to settle in the new nation of Liberia. Césaire's poem is not meant as a return to the motherland, but rather to recover "cette Afrique dans la terre des trois Amériques, si pleines d'Europe" (Coursil). Coursil adds that "dans les Amériques, la culture européenne a laissé peu de place aux cultures précolombiennes, africaines et autres" (Coursil). The Cahier must therefore not be examined as a physical return to a place that was lost, but rather as the reinsertion of an imaginary that has been dismissed[75]. Césaire's poem is devoted to retrieve traces – his

[75] In his book entitled Aimé Césaire (1997), literary critic Gregson Davies claims "the poem describes not only a single return, but a series of abortive returns that are superimposed on each other" (22).

African traces—that were erased. The colonial violence of the slave trade caused a memory lapse in historical narratives in and on the Caribbean[76].

In the Cahier, the poet superimposes his text with a collective consciousness, one that recounts the trauma of colonialism. The literary text can, via the imaginary, associate the past and the present through broader and thicker geographies and temporalities. In their article "Weathering: Climate Change and the 'Thick Time' of Transcorporeality" (2014), gender and literary critics Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker elaborate on the concept of "thick time," which they qualify as "a transcorporeal stretching between present, future, and past, that foregrounds a nonchronological durationality" in the context of climate change (561). Neimanis and Walker explain that our bodies are thick with environmental elements that surround us (570). Similarly, in Césaire's poem, the notions of *thick space* and *thick time* that I borrow from Neimanis and Walker, operate on thick geographies and thick temporalities through literature. To the environmental concern of Neimanis and Walker, I add a thick historicity stressing the intersection of environmental violence and that of slave trade. The Cahier condenses the colonial experience, spanning over several centuries and places, in the *entour* implicating the act of remembering through geography. The shoreline, geologically formed over milleniums, is positioned as a direct witness of the atrocities of the Middle Passage:

> Que de sang dans ma mémoire! Dans ma mémoire sont des lagunes. Elles sont couvertes de têtes de morts. Elles ne sont pas couvertes de nénuphars. Dans ma mémoire sont des lagunes. Sur leurs rives ne sont pas étendus des pagnes de femmes.
>
> Ma mémoire est entourée de sang. Ma mémoire a sa ceinture de cadavres! (Césaire, Cahier, 35)

[76] For a rich analysis on the power of production of narratives in the Caribbean, see Rolph-Trouillot, Michel. Silencing the Past. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.

Césaire emphasizes the erasure of memory caused by the tragedy of the Middle Passage when he writes, not once but twice, "In my memory are lagoons" (27). Lagoon, or *lagune* in French, shares the same Latin root (*lacuna)* as the French word *lacune,* or gap/shortcoming. In a figurative sense, lagoons are a void inflicted by colonial erasure. They are holes that represent a man-made emptiness, an after-effect. The lagoon, a common coastal feature that forms with the erosion of the shore, which allows the water to penetrate the sandbards or barrier islands, therefore emphasizes the loss of memory. The lagoon of memory in the Caribbean is thus engulfed by water, a more powerful and devastating force which carries the power to gradually wear away narratives. Coupled with the image of the lagoon arises the lexical field of death, with words such as “sang,” “têtes de morts,” or “cadavres,” which highlight the violence of slave traders who killed enslaved Africans. The shore therefore reveals the brutality of the slave trade through the eradication of black bodies and narratives.

The shore, compellingly enough, is also defined as what it is not. Indeed, Césaire states that the lagoons “are not covered with water lilies” and that on their shores “are not spread women’s loincloths.” Two images stand out in the assertion: first, water lilies—a symbol of fertility and blossoming— and second, “pagnes de femmes”—a common article of clothing worn in Africa. By asserting the absences of these symbols in the lagoons and on their shores, Césaire points out to the sudden severing from Africa. The historical and cultural legacies coming from the place of origin have been broken and disrupted. In a literal sense, a lagoon refers to a body of water separated from a larger stretch of water by a low sandbank or coral reef. Even though the lagoon could be perceived as a place that connects, Césaire emphasizes it as a place that separates. The rupture between the lagoon and the sea represents the violent disconnection that occurred between Africa and the Americas during colonization.

If the shoreline reveals the historical gaps caused by slavery, it also embodies the physical abuse enslaved people suffered. In the poem, the beach is personified as a maroon chased by a mastiff, metaphorical for the sea. Cesaire writes: "[…] la mer la [la plage] frappe à grands coups de boxe, ou plutôt la mer est un gros chien qui lèche et mord la plage aux jarrets, et à force de la mordre elle finira par la dévorer, bien sûr, la plage et la rue Paille avec" (*Cahier*, 19-20). Through the shoreline, Césaire reproduces a scene of colonial time—a scene of *marronage*[77]. To break away from their place as commodities to their masters, some enslaved people escaped the plantations; however, if caught, the fugitives had parts of their bodies amputated. Césaire makes a clear reference to the *code noir*, a slave code edicted in 1685 to regulate relations between slaves and masters in the French colonies:

> L'esclave fugitif qui aura été en fuite pendant un mois, à compter du jour que son maître l'aura dénoncé en justice, aura les oreilles coupées et sera marqué d'une fleur de lis une épaule; s'il récidive un autre mois pareillement du jour de la dénonciation, il aura le jarret coupé, et il sera marqué d'une fleur de lis sur l'autre épaule et la troisième fois, il sera puni de mort. (Article 38, *Code noir*, 1685).

For any enslaved person caught attempting to escape for freedom, History is thus registered and felt in the body. Literary critic Hortense J. Spillers calls "narrative of the flesh" the violent history

[77] In L'esclave vieil homme et le molosse (1997), Patrick Chamoiseau calls "une décharge" the moment a slave escapes from the Plantation (27). The *décharge* is the rush of emotions accumulated and released when running away. In the Caribbean imaginary, a maroon flight's to freedom is tracked by a mastiff – a symbol of the overwhelming presence of fear and physical brutality during colonial times. Chamoiseau higlights the corporeal violence and the human cost dogs could inflict on fugitives. The mastiff thus embodies the repressive regime of slavery.

of slavery marked onto the body (67). She explains that "The anatomical specifications of rupture, of altered human tissue, take on the objective description of laboratory prose-eyes beaten out, arms, backs, skulls branded, a left jaw, a right ankle, punctured; teeth missing, as the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives, the canine patrol, the bull" (68). The notion of flesh refers to all the flesh that was stripped away from the body and that suffered the horrors of slavery. The materiality of the flesh puts the black body in a space of captivity and mutilation. A slave is forbidden to go beyond the limits of the plantation, a space that Glissant calls a "lieu clos" (PR, 77). In Césaire's imaginary, the island, similar to a plantation with its designated bounds, constitutes a space closed onto itself, forbidding emancipation without suffering severe consequences[78]. Chamoiseau's Crusoe holds an identical perception of the shore, regarding it as an insular space that limits (see chapter 1 of this dissertation). The coast is therefore a fixed geographical boundary that endures the violence of water. The shore cannot be overcome. The shore is a line – a line that only divides; rather than connects.

In his long poem, Césaire uses the shoreline as an allegory to present the historical complexity of the Caribbean. Yet, more than revealing the psychological and physical violence of colonization, the shore in the Cahier marks the impossibility of spatial transcendence

[78] In "The Stranger by the Shore" (2017), literary critic J. Michael Dash makes a similar claim around Césaire's writing in A Tempest (1969), as his protagonist does not envision the archipelagic space. "Césaire's Caliban, however, wedded to an imagined and now irrelevant past, remains imprisoned in his island with an open sea and sky." (Dash, 368). For further details, see Dash, Michael. "The Stranger by the Shore: The Archipelization of Caliban in Antillean Theatre." Archipelagic American Studies. Ed by Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017. 356 – 370.

(*dépassement)* and, more importantly, the impossibility of a physical return to the homeland (Africa) to recover a lost heritage. We could argue, in this sense, that Césaire's concept of *Négritude* is a way to transform the frustration of spatial isolation into a transgression to connect with other places and other forms of blackness[79]. The *Négritude* movement, inspired by the Harlem

[79] If the shore limits in the Cahier, Césaire's *Négritude* expands beyond the confinement of the island: "Et mon île non-clôture, sa claire audace debout à l'arrière de cette polynésie, devant elle, la Guadeloupe fendue en deux de sa raie dorsale et de même misère que nous, Haïti où la négritude se mit debout pour la première fois et dit qu'elle croyait à son humanité et la comique petite queue de la Floride où d'un nègre s'achève la strangulation, et l'Afrique gigantesquement chenillant jusqu'au pied hispanique de l'Europe, sa nudité où la Mort fauche à larges andains. Et je me dis Bordeaux et Nantes et Liverpool et New York et San Francisco pas un bout de ce monde qui ne porte mon empreinte digitale" (Césaire, 1939, 66-67). Césaire connects the Americas, Europe and Africa around the notion of blackness. Literary critic Frano Vrančič states that "Le destin des peuples noirs, sur tous les continents, est lié à cet ouvrage [Cahier]" (193). Literary critic Romuald Fonkoua claims "les discours du *Cahier* visaient d'abord à redessiner une image nouvelle du nègre au monde" (4). In 1956, Césaire participates in the *1er Congrès international des écrivains et artistes noirs* in Paris further establishing Négritude as an international movement. For a deeper analysis of Césaire and the relationship to Négritude and Africa, see Davies, Gregson. Aimé Césaire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; Munro, Martin. Shaping and Reshaping the Caribbean: The Work of Aimé Césaire and René Depestre. London: Routledge, 2000. Wright, Michelle. Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the Black Diaspora. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003; Bestman, A. M. "L'Afrique dans l'imaginaire antillais." Neohelicon, volume 31, issue 2, 2004. 303 – 316; Fonkoua, Romuald. "Aimé Césaire: la chair des mots, une conscience noire du XXième siècle." Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines. Vol 48, Cahier 191, 2008. 399 – 418; Magobo, More P. "The Intellectual Foundations of the Black Consciousness Movement." Intellectual Traditions in South Africa. Ed. by P. Vale, L. Hamilton & E. Prinsloo. Pietermaritzburg:

renaissance in the United States, brought writers together from the US, Africa, South America and the Caribbean, including Senegalese poet Léopold Sédar Senghor, French Guyanese poet Léon Gontran Damas, and Martinican poet Aimé Césaire[80]. This international collective gathered around the condition of blackness transcends languages and territories. The writers of the *Négritude* movement therefore claim a space of representation that had always been denied them. However,

University of KwaZulu-Natal press, 2014, 173 – 196; Irele, Abiola. "Introduction." Journal of a Homecoming. By Aimé Césaire. Transl. by Davies Gregson. Durham: Duke University Press. 2017. 1 – 73.

[80] Friend of Aimé Césaire and Croatian linguist Peter Guberina indicates the link between the Harlem Renaissance and the Négritude movements: "La poésie afro-américaine a joué un rôle primordial dans la prise de conscience ainsi qu'au développement de poésie nègre d'expression française. Bien que la langue des poètes noirs d'expression anglaise soit différente, leur sort était similaire à celui des Noirs dans les colonies françaises. Des souffrances communes ont crée une conscience commune" (279). I borrow this translation of Guberina's words into French from Frano Vrančič in his article "la Négritude dans Cahier d'un retour au pays natal d'Aimé Césaire." (Vrančič, 197).

as Glissant's *antillanité* and the *créolité* movement will later point out, Césaire's *Négritude* neglected his creole identity and confined him to the insularity of his blackness[81].

More than reflecting the emergence of a black consciousness, Césaire's Cahier positions the beach as site of political thought and action to denounce the colonial suffocation of the land and its people. In his article "The Uses of Landscape: Ecocriticism and Martinican Cultural Theory" (2004), literary critic Eric Prieto engages with the images of the landscape in Césaire's writing. Prieto claims that Césaire "cannot be considered an environmental thinker; he is, rather, a

[81] In Eloge de la créolité (1989), Bernarbé, Chamoiseau and Confiant recognize Césaire's immense contribution to the Creole culture: « C'est la Négritude césairienne qui nous a ouvert le passage vers l'ici d'une Antillanité désormais postulable et elle-même en marche vers un autre degré d'authenticité qui restait à nommer. La Négritude césairienne est un baptême, l'acte primal de notre dignité restituée » (18). Yet, the three writers also mark a rupture with Césaire's *Négritude*: "Avec Edouard Glissant nous refusâmes de nous enfermer dans la Négritude, épelant l'Antillanité qui relevait plus de la vision que du concept" (21). Literary critic Mamadou Badiane even calls Césaire's *Négritude* "[une] identité noire fixe" (837). For a deeper analysis on the different cultural movements that emerged in the Caribbean, consult Badiane, Mamadou. "Négritude, Antillanité et Créolité ou de l'éclatement de l'identité fixe." *The French Review.* Vol 85, No 5 (April 2012), 837 – 847. Coursil explains that "pour chacun des écrivains, Fanon, Glissant, Condé et Soyinka, la négritude est pour se détruire; elle est passage, détour necessaire, mais non pas fin dernière" (Coursil 2010). Condé accuses the Négritude movement to create an identity illusion: "Les partisans de la Négritude ont fait une grave erreur et ont causé beaucoup de tort aux Antillais aussi bien qu'aux Américains noirs. Nous avons été amenés à croire que l'Afrique était la source. C'est la source mais nous avons cru que nous trouverions une patrie alors que ce n'est pas une patrie. Sans la Négritude nous n'aurions pas subi un tel degré de désillusion" (Condé in Vèvè A. Clark, 116).

political thinker who uses environmental imagery as a rhetorical tool for advancing a sociopolitical argument about *human* nature" (237 – 238). Prieto later indicates that "his depictions of the environment are entirely subordinated to his argument about social and political justice" (238). While I agree with Prieto that Césaire's expression of the landscape serves a larger sociopolitical cause, I also challenge the assumption that the representations of the *entour* are only driven by a human political purpose. In Césaire's poem, the *entour* is given a much larger role than the sole reflection of human political motives. The poet imbricates the world of the *entour* with the human world, what Dash calls precisely a "géométrie topographique de l'engagement politique" (105). The overlapping of culture with the *entour* links the struggle of the land to the struggle of its residents.

The Cahier links social and ecological injustice to denounce colonial oppression and exploitation. The poet connects the oppression of the poor of Martinique to the pollution of the shore. "La rue Paille," which leads to the beach, also exemplifies the consequences of such an exclusion:

> Et une honte, cette rue Paille,
>
> un appendice dégoûtant comme les parties honteuses du bourg qui étend à gauche et à droite, tout au long de la route coloniale, la houle grise de ses toits d'essentes. Ici il n'y a que des toits de paille que l'embrun a brunis et que le vent épile.
>
> Tout le monde la méprise la rue Paille. C'est là que la jeunesse du bourg se débauche. C'est là surtout que la mer déverse ses immondices, ses chats morts et ses chiens crevés. Car la rue débouche sur la plage, et la plage ne suffit pas à la rage écumante de la mer.
>
> Une détresse cette plage elle aussi, avec son tas d'ordures pourrissant, ses croupes furtives qui se soulagent, et le sable est noir, funèbre, on n'a jamais vu un sable si noir […]" (Cahier, 19)

Césaire details the poor living conditions of the inhabitants of Martinique who live in a conglomeration of black shacks. The poverty of the residents is a result of their social marginalization. To emphasize the social inequality between France and its colonies, literary critic Mathieu Perrot analyzes the lexical field of human excretion by pointing out the terms "toits d'essentes" (homophone with the French word *descente* signifying the release of stool) and the "route coloniale," acting as the intestinal transit processing and releasing the local inhabitants into poverty (Perrot, 471). The powerful metaphor of feces presents the local inhabitants as the socially excluded waste of the French colonial system. The peripheralization is also materialized through the beach, which accumulates trash and animal waste. Césaire provides a repugnant image of the beach as a dump. The sand, also black, takes on a different meaning from the notion of *Unreading* of Duval Carrié and Glissant developed in chapter 2. Defined as "funèbre," the black color of the sand exposes a scenery that represents damage and devastation. Comparably, to the local inhabitants, the beach is forsaken, left to cope with a harmful and insanitary ecological degradation. The negligence of the shoreline is a result of colonial power relations between France and its colonies and is directly implicated with questions of social injustice and representation. The shore is therefore positioned not only on the outskirts of land but also on the margins of the French colonial system.

If Césaire recognizes the devastation of the Caribbean space, it is only in comparison to its formidable future. In the beginning of the poem, following his renowned opening line, "au bout du petit matin," signifying the end of the dark period representing colonialism, the author embeds the *entour* within a revolutionary scope:

> Au bout du petit matin, sur cette plus fragile épaisseur de terre que dépasse de façon humiliante son grandiose avenir - les volcans éclateront, l'eau nue emportera les taches mûres de soleil et il ne

> restera plus qu'un bouillonnement tiède picoré d'oiseaux marins - la plage des songes et l'insensé réveil. (8)

In this short but dense passage, the island, just like the shore, carries a thickness – "épaisseur." This time, however, the depth does not reveal the island's history but projects its immense future. The thickness of the land refers to layers from a metaphysical rather than physical standpoint. Indeed, the verb "dépasse[r]," meaning to exceed, implies the incommensurability of the *entour* in a figurative sense. The landscape comes with a substance that outgrows its geological density. Césaire therefore only acknowledges the minimal size of the *entour* with its far wider ability to become sovereign. The poet envisions an insurgency vis à vis colonial powers in the Antilles, hence the use of a prophetic future tense in verbs such as "éclateront," "emportera," and "restera." These verbs associated with terms like "volcan," "eau," "bouillonement" or "picoré" develop the lexical field of revolt, which translates into anger and the search for freedom[82]. Césaire gives an

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[82] In his article "Le cri du Morne: la poétique du paysage césairien dans la littérature antillaise," Dash highlights the influence of *la montagne Pelée*, a Martinican volcano, on Césaire's writing. Dash asserts that "Césaire s'identifie profondément avec ce volcan" (101). The Cahier "est animé par des images d'écrasement et de redressement tirées des oppositions topographiques entre la plaine où l'homme s'enlise dans la passivité et le morne debout où les esclaves marrons se sont réfugiés et qui représente un signe d'eveil provoqué par les souvenirs de l'éclatement de la montagne Pelée en l902" (Dash, 105). The term "les volcans éclateront" in the poem takes on a revolutionary dimension with the explosion of the volcano linked to the uprising of the islands' inhabitants. In the documentary Aimé Césaire: Poet and Statesman (2001), Césaire explains a propos Mount Pelée that "People say the volcano is dead. But no, it is not dead, and that is one of the great lessons, isn't it? The reserve is there. One of these days…… Well, we too, we are going to explode like a volcano. We are not dead. People think we are dead. Don't believe it. We are not as dead as that" (Césaire in Scarboro and Wilcox).

anticolonial scope to his text, urging his fellow countrymen to rise and claim sovereignty over the Caribbean space. More than representing decolonial aspirations, the *entour* constitutes the agent of upheaval against the colonial power. Césaire highlights the *entour*'s ability to make a dynamic change to a place, allowing for new human intentions and beginnings, into perspective. The *entour* constitutes a force that has the power to reshape the world and to transgress the social and political reality of colonization to redefine the Caribbean space. "La plage des songes" makes way to "l'insensé réveil," transforming hopes into an unbelievable reality. The verb *songer* in French means to dream. In other words, it is comprised of an idealization of a world far from the oppressive colonial reality. The shore constitutes a space where social and political transcendence can be imagined. The beach is the place where, before its materialization, decolonization originates.

Yet, Césaire's vision remains in the dream stage. Indeed, if one reads the passage in a more tragic tone, the last part of the sentence "la plage des songes et l'insensé réveil" reveals the shocking and sudden return to reality after a hoped insurrection. The sovereignty of the island is but a fleeting illusion. The uprising thus does not materialize and will remain a desired fantasy. The beach embodies the space where sovereignty is imagined, and yet, still unattainable. If political emancipation is unachieved in the Cahier, literary critic John Drabinski positions Césaire's apocalyptic and prophetic vision as "a retrieval of a properly attuned past" (572). He indicates that "the apocalyptic word more radically clears the paradoxical time-space for a blackness-to-come, written toward a pure future, open to the négritude-subject we do not yet know, but that is, for Césaire, also as old as Africa, rooted in a civilizational past" (568). Drabinski reads Césaire's revolutionary vision as a future moment to retrieve the past, what he concisely calls "the future of retrieval" (568). The apocalypse in Césaire's work aims to set a beginning which aims to

recover a history that was lost through new cultural production: “Qu’y puis-je? Il faut bien commencer. Commencer quoi? La seule chose au monde qu’il vaille la peine de commencer: La Fin du monde parbleu.” (Césaire, 32). Césaire elaborately links the beginning to the end of the world in a movement of revolution. The apocalyptic function of the Cahier is indeed to portray the destruction of the current world in order to clear a space for a new beginning. The apolocaplypse marks the origin of a new relationship to time, an inverted chronology of sorts, which recounts the global history of the black man, so often silenced in colonial narratives. Césaire’s Cahier is therefore an act of creation which reconsiders the pejorative colonial image of the black man to launch the beginning of a black consciousness. As such, the concept of *Négritude* is apocalyptic by its attempt to redefine the word *Nègre* from a racist slur to a mark of dignity and identity inscribed in a history and culture.

If the apocalyptic moment of the poem constitutes the starting point of the *Négritude* movement, it also, and more importantly for our purpose, manifests an ecocritical perspective in Césaire’s consciousness. In the Cahier, the ecocritical discourse of the apocalypse announces two aspects: the first displays the agency of the *entour*. The apocalypse provoked by the land, the volcano, reveals the fragility of the human world. The *entour* escapes any form of human control and holds the power to change the world. The apocalypse transmits the unpredictable authority and agency of the *entour* on humans. The second consists of the human responsibility vis a vis the *entour*. Césaire provides an early Anthropocene consciousness indicating the apocalypse constitutes the result of human action. The damage and alteration brought to the land is caused by human agency. The apocalypse thus appears as the consequence of a negative human impact onto the landscape. Césaire’s apocalyptic moment has therefore two effects: first, it brings agency to the *entour*; second, it points out the responsibility of humans in the degradation of the land. Rather

than the nature-culture dualism that prevailed during colonial times, Césaire asks to consider the human impact on the *entour* and acknowledge the agency of the land vis-à-vis humans. The apocalyptic moment centered around the *entour* raises questions of ethics – the responsibility of human action - and ecological justice – environmental deterioration. *La plage des songes* in Césaire's poem is where the apocalypse is imagined. The beach becomes the site that permits reconsidering the shore beyond European colonialism to favor an approach that connects humans to the *entour*. *La plage des songes* is a call to envision the *entour* with and within the human world. The next part of this chapter continues the analysis of *la plage des songes* as a place of transformation in Stanley Péan's short story.

The Beach is Home

Stanley Péan is perceived as an important literary figure among Canadian writers of Haitian descent. Yet, as literary critic Martin Munro points out, the academic world has barely engaged with his work (Munro, 22). The few studies that tackle his short story "La plage des songes," eponym of the collection, note Césaire's influence on Péan's writing but fail to engage critically with the intertextuality between the two writers. This section aims to remedy this gap, attempting to read Césaire in Péan's work by assessing the importance of the Cahier for members of the Haitian diaspora, the overlapping themes between the two texts contained in the intertextuality of the term *la plage des songes*. In addition to the relationship between the two authors, this section also aspires to examine how Péan adapts *la plage des songes* to the contemporary displacement of Haitians in Québec. This analysis also attempts to outline Péan's allegorical representation of the beach and how it transcends Césaire's image discussed in the previous part. More precisely, it reveals how Péan transforms the beach from a site of trauma and dreams into a home. In addition,

I highlight the singularity of the migrant experience in Péan's writing before looking at the shore as a site of trauma in the contemporary context of the Haitian diaspora. Ultimately, I argue, through Péan's narrative, the beach forms a transcendental home where the experience of exile is materialized. The term "transcendental home" is a notion I borrow from Munro, as explained later in this section, and adapt to the beach that I position as a substitute place for a lost home. In a Kantian sense, the term "transcendental" refers to the lived experience that is transmitted transgenerationally; it therefore focuses on an experience of the mind rather than body (Kant, 426).

From the many shores Haitian writers ultimately landed on, Québec emerges as a privileged space. Countless authors of the *dyaspora* (to use Jean Dominique's term, later borrowed and further examined by Edwidge Danticat) such as Marie-Célie Agnant, Gérard Etienne, Serge Legagneur, Dany Laferrière, Rodney Saint-Elois, Emile Ollivier, Anthony Phelps, Joël des

Rosiers, among others, left Haiti to set anchor in the Canadian province[83][84]. In Théories Caraïbes: Poétique du déracinement (1996), Haitian poet Joël des Rosiers notes two distinct movements of

[83] In The Butterfly's Way (2001), Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat borrows the term d*yaspora* coined by Haitian literary critic Jean Dominique to designate the dis/connection of diasporic Haitians in regards to the homeland of Haiti. Retaining the spelling of the word in its original Creole *dyaspora*, Danticat singularizes the diasporic experience proper to Haitians who constitute the "tenth department" of Haiti, the first nine being "geographic departments" and the tenth a "floating homeland" that gathers all diasporic Haitians (5). Danticat defines *dyaspora* as a "multi-layered meaning of the word" (5). The word includes all Haitians living in both worlds, Haiti and their new home. *Dyaspora* is composed of "all those exiles, emigres, refugees, migrants, naturalized citizens, half-generation, first-generation, American, Haitian, Haitian-American men, women, and children who were living here in the United States and elsewhere" (Danticat, XV). Dyaspora also differentiates diasporic Haitians from the rest of Haitians. Danticat explains that *dyaspora* in Haiti is used an honorific such as Mademoiselle or Madame (XV). The distance between diasporic Haitians and Haiti is therefore reproduced in the civil designation. Danticat even recognizes judgments about diasporic Haitians whose vision of Haiti is discredited due to the spatial distance between them and the country of origin (XV). Many members of the *dyaspora* reside in North America.

[84] For a deeper analysis on Haitian diasporic writers, see Munro, Martin. Exile and Post-1946 Haitian Literature. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007. Munro describes how the novel became a transcendental home for exiled Haitian writers (Munro, 29). For a global study on the relationship between migration and literature in French literature, consult Xavier, Subha. The Migrant Text: Making and Marketing a Global French Literature. Montréal: Mc Gill – Queens University Press, 2016. In her book, literary critic Subha Xavier also considers the weight of the text in relating the migrant experience. Xavier steps away from traditional literary categories (mainly drawn from nation-oriented and postcolonial studies) that define migrant literature as an in-between space. Rather, she proposes a "'migrant' textual practice, not

literary migration from Haiti to Québec. The first wave of migrant writers leaves Haiti after the emergence of a regime of terror. Des Rosiers writes that, "L'histoire contemporaine de la communauté littéraire haïtienne au Canada remonte au début des années soixante, avec l'arrivée des premiers écrivains chassés par la dictature de Duvalier. Ces écrivains étaient membres du groupe Haïti littéraire: Anthony Phelps, Roland Morisseau, Serge Legagneur, René Philoctète et Gérard Etienne. Emile Ollivier après un séjour en France rejoignit le groupe" (Des Rosiers, 180). This generation is characterized by a form of militant consciousness inhabiting the works of the afore-mentioned writers, condemning the exploitation and oppression of the Duvalier regime (Des Rosiers, 180). Hence, in their luggage, "[l]es poètes haïtiens apportèrent avec eux le Cahier d'un retour au pays natal d'Aimé Césaire" (180). Reading Césaire may have provided a way to find words that denounce the brutal and repressive state of the dictatorship as well as the dream to return one day to the homeland.

The second wave of writers came twenty years later with "l'émergence d'une nouvelle génération d'écrivains qui ont été élevés au Québec ou qui y sont nés, de Dany Laferrière à Stanley Péan" (Des Rosiers, 181). Des Rosiers's inclusion of Dany Laferrière on this list can be somehow debated. Laferrière was born in 1953, grew up in seaside town Petit-Goâve, Haiti, before fleeing to Montréal after the assassination of his friend, journalist Gasner Raymond, in 1976. The Duvalier dictatorship forced him into exile after working as a journalist himself in Haiti[85]. Yet, Des Rosiers

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as a literary category but as a mode of writing that is independent of the ethnic or national origins of any given author" (Xavier, 12).

[85] In Le cri des oiseaux fous (2000), Laferrière recounts the symmetry between his father and himself: "Papa Doc a chassé mon père du pays. Baby Doc me chasse à son tour. Père et fils, présidents. Père et fils, exilés." (63).

takes into account Laferrière's young age at the time of his migration, as well as his father's forced exile in front of the rising dictatorship. When the first generation of authors fled Haiti because of the Papa Doc regime, most of the writers of the second generation saw their parents do the same. The familial displacement created a singular dynamic for the second-generation, who built a different relationship with Haiti, each with a varying degree of affiliation and remembrance. Des Rosiers explains that "[p]our certains la mémoire d'Haïti est encore très vive, tandis que pour d'autres elle ressemble de plus en plus à une fiction, laissant à l'imaginaire de l'écrivain le jeu avec d'intenses contradictions – c'est-à-dire comme être absolument moderne losqu'on est issu d'une société de tradition" (181). In contrast with renowned writer Laferrière, whose images of Haiti remain vivid, Stanley Péan's relationship to his homeland is more abstract.

Stanley Péan, similarly to Laferrière, was born in Port-au-Prince in 1966; however, his parents moved to Joncquière, a small town in the Québec region, the following year[86]. The Haitian writer thus spent his entire youth in Canada and only recovers traces of the the homeland through narratives from the Haitian diaspora. Upon his return from a trip to Haiti years later, Péan states: "Je ne connaissais Haiti qu'à travers le regard et la mémoire des autres. En un sens, je suis allé prendre symboliquement possession des lieux sur lesquels j'avais seulement fantasmé." (Péan in Nathalie Ollivier, 8). Péan indicates his ambiguous relationship with the homeland as Haiti is an imagined place for the writer. The nostalgia of the country of origin is borrowed from recollections external to his personal identity. The reminiscence materializes as a remembrance by substitution, using memories from other members of the Haitian diaspora in Montreal.

The trauma of leaving Haiti is passed on and remembered; it transcends generations individually and collectively. The place evoked in the title "La plage des songes," is actually

[86] For a biography of Stanley Péan, consult *Île en île*'s page on the writer: http://ile-en-ile.org/pean/

"Montrouis […] la fameuse plage des songes volée à la mémoire de mon père, Mèt Mo" (Péan in Nathalie Ollivier, 8). The shore is simultaneously a site of alienation and affiliation. Indeed, Péan is not familiar with the beach of Montrouis; yet, he holds an intimate relationship with the place due to his father's legacy. The use of the word "volée" – stolen – expresses the act of taking another person's property without permission or right. Stealing designates an unofficial action and questions the legitimacy of memory. This type of memory theft intensifies the importance of telling stories that must be told even though they are not ours. The originality of Péan's writing resides in paradoxically recounting a Haiti he never experienced. *Mèt mo* literally translates to "maître des mots" in French or "master of words" in English. It refers to a storyteller and continues the Caribbean oral tradition practiced in the Péan household while migrating to Québec. The presence of orality in "La plage des Songes" also emerges via a Creole folktale recounting the interaction between *Kompè Makak* and *Kompè Chien*. By inserting a form of orality to his text, Péan also fully inscribes himself in a Creole oral literary tradition with authors such as Joseph Zobel, Edouard Glissant, Raphaël Confiant, and more specifically Patrick Chamoiseau who previously combined orality and literature in their respective texts[87]. The preservation of the homeland through oral language and culture resides at the core of Péan's short story and constitutes the basis of the relationship between the main characters.

[87] Patrick Chamoiseau introduces himself in his early texts as *le marqueur de paroles*. For a deeper analysis on the presence of orality in literature in Chamoiseau's writing, see Chamoiseau, Patrick. « Que faire de la parole? Dans la tracée mystérieuse de l'oral à l'écrit ». *Écrire la « parole de nuit »; la nouvelle littéraire antillaise.* Paris: Gallimard (folio, essais), 1994: 151-158; Mc Cusker, Maeva. Patrick Chamoiseau: Recovering Memory. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011.

In “La plage,” the seven-year old protagonist, Christian Marcellin, oddly resembles Péan. Both Christian and Péan recover Haiti through others. Christian finds a gentle soul in young Haitian immigrant Evelyne Lhérisson, who protects him from racism and bullying (Péan, 24-25). Evelyne also exposes the young boy to Haitian culture, notably through Creole folktales, cooking, and history (Péan, 25). They even converse in Creole, even though Christian speaks a “créole douteux” (Péan, 29). Similar to Stanley’s relationship with Haiti through his father, Christian taps into Evelyne’s memories of Montrouis: “je [Evelyne] me rendis compte avec un surcis de surprise que Christian avait nagé à ma suite à travers les vagues de ma mémoire.” (Péan, 23). The term *vague* – wave – is compelling here as it signifies the rush of memories that inundate Evelyne’s mind. In the Caribbean, water is perceived as a space of memory. For instance, Saint-Lucian writer Derek Walcott with his poem “The Sea is History” and Glissant with his essay “The Open Boat” position Caribbean geography, and more particularly the sea, as the repository of the past and of the region’s history (Walcott 253 - 256; Glissant 17 – 21).

Walcott even proposes a discovery of the past through action and the body, writing “strop on these goggles” to witness and feel the history in the sea (Walcott 254). Likewise, Péan proposes a corporeal experience to experience the past in the water. His character Christian “avait nagé” in Evelyne’s memories. Swimming then leads to the sharing of memory, experiencing the past through a collective space. The act of swimming produces an embodied ecological relation with the sea, a sort of symbiotic relationship between water and the body, a poetic image at the opposite of Césaire’s Cahier where the body is mutilated by water. Péan, by contrast with the Martinican poet, suggests a cohesion between the sea, history and the body; a connection where the body is one with water – *le corps fait corps avec l’eau*. Swimming also transmits a certain humility of the body vis-à-vis the sea. To be immersed in water entails to *be part of* a much larger ecosystem (my

emphasis). The individual is thus humble in comparison to the sea. Yet, *vague* also entails a degree of imprecision, alluding to the fact that memories cannot be discerned with clarity. Time has worn out the past; only splintered memories remain. Péan's term *vague* is somewhat reminiscent of Césaire's *lagune*, stressing memory loss and the inaccurate representation of the past. Both writers use water, the elements that dis/connect the land, to emphasize imprecise memory and diasporic trauma. For Césaire, however, memory imperfection is experienced more like a mental amputation due to the violence of slave. Péan, by contrast, perceives memory as a vagueness caused by the temporal distance with the country of origin.

The influence of Césaire is strongly marked in Péan's text indicating that, in addition to the familial heritage, Péan also reclaims a literary lineage. The familial is completed by the literary as if literature could preserve the homeland in a way the family could not. Literature allows to reconstruct a world through words written on a piece of paper like traces of the homeland that are palpable and intact. Claiming Césaire's heritage thus means to be immersed and become part of the Caribbean (literary) landscape. Péan directly takes Césaire's expression *la plage des songes* and places it as the title of his short story and collection, a double tribute to the Martinican poet. Like his father with the beach of Montrouis, Péan 'steals' Césaire's words and dreams – a sort of homage to the Martinican poet through the act of literary borrowing. The appropriation creates a symmetry between the biological father and the literary father, who both inspired Péan's writing. Both father figures help recover the exilic trauma recounting the homeland. More than a transmission of the home space, the similarity between the two fathers lies in their ability to imagine the beach. For Péan's father, the beach is home; for Césaire, the beach is a dream. Péan combines these two features to make the beach a dreamt home.

By reusing this phrase in his text, Péan relates to Césaire's narrative of exile. Indeed, Césaire's poem problematizes the question of return as indicated in its title Cahier d'un retour au pays natal. Péan adapts the idea of the diasporic displacement from slave trade to contemporary transnational journeys between Haiti and Canada. Yet, as we demonstrated earlier in this chapter, Césaire's poem displays the impossibility of spatial transcendence. The imagined return is therefore materialized through writing (and the *Négritude* movement) by recovering traces of the lost land. In the same vein, Péan recovers his homeland through literature in two ways. First, as pointed out by literary critic Marion Sauvaire, he academically studies Caribbean literature (Sauvaire, 2011). Second, he forms his writing around the migrant experience. Péan uses the literary world to imagine through memories dreams the country of origin. Literature becomes a way to access a space he has not directly known. Similarly to Césaire, Péan positions the imaginary and literature as a medium to recover home.

If Péan harbors the knowledge passed on by the diaspora of the first generation in his literature, he also resorts to imagination to recuperate the country he has lost. The author explains that "[il a] toujours vécu à cheval sur deux univers parallèles: le Jonquière du quotidien et l'Haïti fanstamée" (Péan in Nathalie Ollivier, 8). Péan presents a paradoxical relationship between Haiti and Québec. These two places are established as "deux univers parallèles," yet, Péan is "à cheval" on them. The writer, however, makes a clear distinction between the reality in Québec and the fantasized Haiti. Since a personal experience with the country of origin was out of reach, Péan materializes his relationship with Haiti through dreams. The immigrant experience is then constructed on an interior imagined space. In "De l'exil à l'errance, la diversité des sujets migrants" (2011), Sauvaire notices the particularity for second-generation immigrants to reconstruct the country of origin internally:

> Pour les fils ou petits-fils d'exilés, le pays d'origine ne peut être réapproprié ni par un effort de mémoire, ni par un retour effectif. La résolution de la tension entre le pays rêvé et le pays réel se trouve peut-être dans l'affirmation du pays intérieur. En effet, contrairement à la situation des exilés, pour lui, le pays d'origine n'est pas perdu: il est fictif. Ce pays intérieur est en grande partie reconstruit par l'acte d'écriture, dont il devient un enjeu central. La création du pays intérieur et le projet littéraire de Péan se fécondent ainsi mutuellement.

Sauvaire links the act of writing to the personal construction of the country of origin; both emerging from a moment of creation. Péan's migrant writing is found at the intersection of his uprooting from the country of origin and his establishment in a new space.

The shore as a literary figure and metaphor in "La plage" encompasses these two dynamics between displacement and settlement. The beach simultaneously symbolizes the dislocation of the Haitian diaspora and the transformation of nostalgia into a home. In the short story, Péan shows the transition between two images that are linked to the shore. The writer begins with expressing the displacement. In "La plage," Evelyne recovers the origin through her childhood beach. She evokes "Ce soleil, ces palmiers, ce sable doré, ces vagues turquoises qui avaient fait les joies de mon enfance" (Péan, 20). Evelyne offers a very touristic vision of the beach, fully embedded in what I called the beach trope in chapter 2. This time, however, the exotic Caribbean is not portrayed by the tourists but by a Caribbean migrant character. In The Migrant Text: Making and Marketing a Global French Literature (2016), Xavier contextualizes exoticism in migrant texts within the global literary market. She explains that "migrant texts are written, published, and first circulated within the nation-state and as such always carry with them the traces of exoticism and otherness that allow for their creation and dissemination in the national, and later global literary marketplace" (Xavier, 19). Xavier concedes that migrant texts "are after all cultural products of global capitalism" (19). Péan's description of an exotic beach in the Caribbean is the result of a strategic

marketing decision to allow their writing to become widely diffused. Yet, Xavier stresses that "the migrant text is constantly caught in the lure of, and struggle against, exoticism and otherness" (Xavier, 64). Indeed, if Péan's short story proposes an exotic depiction of the beach, it simultaneously constitutes a space of diasporic trauma, which complicates the exoticism featured in the story.

Evelyne's exotic depiction of the beach of Montrouis can also be interpreted as a sentimental yearning caused by displacement. The descriptive enumeration of the *entour* – "[c]e soleil, ces palmiers, ce sable doré, ces vagues turquoises" (Péan, 20) - translates a longing and affection for an absent cherished place. Nostalgia is fully inscribed in the representation of Haiti in Péan's short story. Evelyne offers a retrospective ideal image of the country of origin. The exotic image of the beach turns out to be a sort of defense mechanism to glamorize and to counterbalance the loss of the homeland. Evelyne thus reconstructs idyllic memories around the shore to adjust to her current diasporic life. Although physically in Québec, the imaginary of the young woman unconsciously brings her back to her childhood beach: "J'étais étendue sur le lit de la chambre d'ami, chez Tante Géralda – je le savais. Et pourtant, ce décor imprécis qui s'estquissait graduellement autour de moi, grève blonde, soleil en reliefs ardents et ciel fondu à l'horizon d'une mer turquoise… Je me serais presque crue à…Montrouis?" (Péan, 26). The beach becomes the site where memories live on. Péan's short story brings a new meaning to Césaire's *la plage des songes*. Indeed, in Creole, the verb *sonje* means to remember. Linguistically, *la plage des songes* evokes the remembrance of the past, the recollection of past events, or places on the beach. When Evelyne returns to the shore, she bathes in "l'écume des songes" (Péan, 27). She recovers Haiti through the beach. *La plage des songes*, in addition to the beach of dreams, becomes the beach of memories.

If the beach in Montrouis makes Evelyne reminiscent of her childhood, it also reminds her of a traumatic experience. As a young girl, Evelyne suffered a tragic loss, for a child, on the beach of Montrouis:

> Je me rappelle une poupée de chiffon que tu avais quand tu étais petite, reprit mon frère. Cette poupée, tu l'aimais plus que tout; tu ne fais pas un pas sans elle. Un jour, nous nous baignions à Montrouis, une vague t'a fait perdre l'équilibre et tu as echappé ta poupée dans la mer… Tu t'es alors mise à hurler pour la ravoir, mais la mer n'écoutait pas et, pour mettre fin à tes pleurs, maman t'a dit que ta poupée était allée faire un tour chez elle, aux Etats-unis, mais qu'elle reviendrait avant longtemps. Et pendant des semaines, tu es retournée à la plage tous les jours pour surveiller la mer. Tous les jours jusqu'à ce que tu t'apercoives que rien, ni tes larmes ni tes prières, ne ramènerait ta poupée… (Péan, 18).

A doll symbolizes childhood, as it tends to be given to children to enhance imaginative play. The toy thus presents an intricate relationship between life and death since a doll constitutes an inanimate object yet enlivened by a child's imagination. A doll can therefore hold a different meaning and represent a baby or a child. Young Evelyne gives a motherly affection to her doll, and when a wave carries it away, Evelyne is completely shattered. The disappearance is felt like a death as nothing "ne ramènerait ta poupée" (18)[88]. Evelyne expresses her sadness and denial through tears and prayers. She still hopes her doll will be back someday, suggesting refusal to accept the devastating reality. More tragically, the doll is also the symbol for all the drowned whose bodies were never recovered in the Dyaspora. The beach constitutes the site of a tragedy,

[88] Later, in the short story, the death of the doll [this is a fascinating formula: how can a doll die? explain] is referenced again when Christian dies, Evelyne says: "Il fallait que Christian entende, il ne vait pas mourir pour rien lui aussi…" (Péan, 35).

with the sea portraying a force that has taken away a dear loved one. In "La plage," Evelyne tried to compensate the loss of her doll with Christian, who she protects and brings back in a fantastic way through her memories on the beach of Montrouis. The substitution marks the attempt to overcome the mourning and the emptiness of the death.

Danticat also brings another dimension to Evelyne's traumatic event. In The Art of Death (2017), Danticat explains a subtlety in the Creole language that inherently links migration with death. She writes, "In Haitian Creole, when someone is said to be *lòt bò dlo*, "on the other side of the water," it can either mean that they traveled abroad or that they have died" (Danticat, 22). The double-meaning offers ambiguity towards the toy. Indeed, Evelyne's doll has not necessarily joined the realm of the dead but, rather, may have migrated. Evelyne's mother confirms the transnational journey narrative when she tells her daughter that "ta poupée était allée faire un tour chez elle, aux Etats-unis, mais qu'elle reviendrait avant longtemps," (Péan, 18). The mother's explanation could be read as an attempt to comfort her daughter. Yet, as we claimed earlier, the doll takes on a different meaning due to symbolic play. The doll represents the millions of Haitians, or in an even larger context, the Caribbean population, that landed on the U. S. or Canadian shores[89]. Towards the end of the short story, Evelyne sees the doll again "sans nom, sans visage,

[89] In their account "The Haitian Diaspora in the United States," the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) quotes the number of Haitian immigrants (first and second generations) in the U.S. as 915.000 for July 2014. The 2016 Canadian census reports more than 150,000 individuals who have a Haitian ethnic origin. For more details, see Statistics Canada. 2017. *Canada [Country] and Canada [Country]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed May 16, 2019).

et sans sexe" (Péan, 34). The lack of singularity of the doll expresses how it could be nobody and anybody. The anonymity reveals a difficulty to identify a single person, as many people share the migrant narrative. The anonymity also points out to the enormous collective loss of life that occurred during exiles and migrations in the Caribbean.

Adding Danticat's explanation of *lòt bò dlo* to the doll leads to another understanding of Evelyne's tragic experience on the beach. The loss of her doll materializes Evelyne's life. When migrating to Canada, the young Haitian woman lost the memories of the space where she grew up. Although Péan does not specify her age when going *lòt bò dlo*, the writer leaves clues on an early departure, noting: "cette partie de moi-même morte trop tôt" (Péan, 34). Evelyne left Haiti at a very young age leaving at the same time her childhood behind. The death of the doll mirrors Evelyne's small 'death' when leaving the country of origin. Indeed, when migrating, one has to reinvent oneself, adapting to the country of adoption's culture. The migrant becomes a new person. As stated earlier, one of the consequences of death is also the void caused by the disappearance of a loved one. Evelyne, however, refuses to cope with the emptiness. As a young child, she used to return to the beach in the hopes of finding her doll. In Québec, as an adult, she comes back to Montrouis through her memories. Evelyne's behavior indicates the difficulty of overcoming migration. The trauma is the result of not accepting a different outcome. Even when her brother Edgard warns her that "Le passé est mort et enterré," Evelyne remains rooted in her position and does not change her habits (Péan, 28). The awakening comes with the metaphorical death of Christian on *la plage des songes*. Christian's death reveals the necessity for Evelyne to recover from her trauma. The doll visits Evelyne and "*elle* avait dit ce qu'Edgard me répétait depuis toujours" (Péan, 34). Evelyne's healing is marked by the acknowledgment of the impossibility of retrieving the past and the acceptance of her migration.

The end of torment begins with new mindset towards the beach and migration. When, years later, Christian becomes an adult, he proposes that Evelyne returns to Haiti with him and his family. Evelyne refuses: “Je ne crois pas que j’irai. Pas de sitôt, en tout cas. S’il est une chose que j’ai apprise au fil des ans, c’est que les plages de la réalité sont rarement aussi merveilleuses que celle de nos songes.” (Péan, 36). Evelyne’s choice can be seen as a gesture to remain at a healthy distance from her suffering. The character remains in a space constructed and healed from the trauma, far from the painful beach of origin. The term “les plages de la realité” also tends to convey a negative connotation when opposing reality to dreams. Experiencing the beach in person could potentially damage the idealization of the landscape and of the homeland. Facing reality would propose a different way of perceiving the beach that could be deceiving and disconnecting for the character. The power of fiction is to imagine alternative stories far from reality. If reality were confronted, Evelyne’s world would shatter.

More importantly, Evelyne’s choice to remain in *la plage des songes* marks a shift in regards to her status as a migrant. Rather than framing her identity in the beach of Montrouis, she makes the conscious decision to enter a new space. Evelyne moves from the beach of her childhood into an imagined one. The transition from reality to fantasy suggests the detachment towards the place of origin to adopt a new form of migrancy. According to Sauvaire, the end of the short story gives the beach “une dimension symbolique, caractéristique de la poétique de l’errance” (Sauvaire). Drawing on Glissant, Sauvaire explains that “l’errance explore le passage liminal entre l’ici et l’ailleurs, le passé et le devenir” (Sauvaire). Errancy is therefore relational since it puts in contact different spaces. Yet, errancy does not mean pointless wandering in the world. Sauvaire clarifies that “la poétique de l’errance pose que toute oeuvre littéraire est émise à partir d’un lieu singulier mais que ce lieu est traverse par de multiplies parcours réels et imaginaires” (Sauvaire).

In the short story, the beach is formed in a similar way. Evelyne's childhood beach is a transformation of the original place into one where different imaginaries (that of the two characters) meet. For instance, Christian's appearances were added to Evelyne's tragic experience: "[a]u bout d'une éternité à errer dans le labyrinthe à ciel ouvert d'un marché public reconstitué par le pouvoir de Christian à partir de mes reminiscences, le petit et moi étions retournés à Montrouis" (Péan, 29). The beach therefore combines two worlds—Christian's and Evelyne's, as well as Haiti and Québec. From this combination emerges the creation of a third space, *la plage des songes*, which constitutes an in-between space between the country of origin and the country of adoption. Evelyne refuses to return; instead, she prefers to wander in the fantasy of the shore.

The choice to remain on *la plage des songes* is not only attributed to Evelyne but extended to the writer himself. Just like his character, Péan anchors his migrant identity in the fictionalization of the beach. The beach could be read as an allegory for Péan's literature, in which he writes his *songes*, memories and dreams. As Césaire writes in his Cahier, *la plage est une page* – the beach is a page –; it forms a space where Péan can express his fragmented identity through words and narratives. In Exile and Post-1946 Haitian Literature (2007), Munro explains that "For many exiled Haitian authors, the novel has therefore become a transcendental home, a common space in which to share, chronicle, and testify to diverse, evolving experiences of exile across different times and places" (29). In the same vein, Péan's short story constitutes a transcendental home for the writer himself. Péan not only portrays different forms of exile through his characters, such as Christian or Evelyne but also, and especially, his own. Péan transcends the spaces of the country of origin and of the country of adoption to make literature his home. The authors' words themselves provide the best conclusion: "enfant du déracinement, je n'avais jamais osé revendiquer une autre patrie que la littérature" (Péan, 1991, 52).

To summarize, Césaire and Péan bring new ways to envision the beach through its fictionalization. In Césaire's case, the beach is an agent of resistance to colonial oppression and the space where new political and cultural approaches are imagined. As for Péan, he transcends the diasporic trauma associated with the beach to make it a home. The first two chapters of this dissertation offered a neo/colonial critique of the representations of the beach, concurrently reinscribing a cultural identity proper to the Caribbean through the shore. The same political duality between colonizer and colonized is present in Césaire's Cahier. Yet, Césaire links the marginalization and degradation of the shore with that of its inhabitants. Colonial oppression has therefore an impact, in addition to the inhabitants, on the landscape. The transnational dichotomy between country of origin and country of adoption fades away to disappear into a new space in Péan's short story. The beach becomes a transcendental place imagined in the loss of the homeland caused by displacement.

Reading a contemporary text by a Haitian-Canadian writer through the lens of a Martinican Negritude poet exposes the diversity of narratives and images that characterize the Caribbean shore. The beach is a place at the convergence of land and sea, constituting a site of contact and ex/change. Likewise, in the intertextuality between Césaire and Péan, the beach trope travels and evolves throughout the Caribbean and beyond. The shoreline is embedded with a perpetual movement between cultures and geographies, images and narratives. In the Caribbean, the beach is not fixed; the space is in constant motion, continually changing and transgressing established and granted frames. Péan even pushes the transformation of the shore in Caribbean literature further. Indeed, in his short story, the beach ceases to have an ecological function. The Haitian-Canadian writer stripes "La plage" of the tourist narrative and of the ecocritical narrative. Péan presents the beach as an internal process of construction, combining reality and fiction in the

imaginary. The beach is the creation of a world. The term *la plage des songes* adds a new dimension to Chamoiseau's rewriting of the past and Duval-Carrié and Glissant's *Unreading* of a history of the present: that of a literary space where homes can be imagined on the shore. When the political and social reality of the Caribbean and of its *dyaspora* alienates individuals from their own land, literature envisions spaces that do not exclude them. Glissant writes "La poésie […] enfante des bouleversements qui nous changent" (2005, 111). If literature does not hold the power to transform reality, words can entice and affect individuals that in turn can destabilize established structures and visions of the world. *La plage des songes* is a place of metamorphoses that affects the reality we live in.

The Caribbean Shore in the World — Epilogue

The shore is a space of contacts. In For Space (2005), cultural geographer Doreen Massey explains how space "[is] constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny" (9). Literary and ecocritic Alexa Weik von Mossner claims Massey's words are "particularly obvious in the case of the beach" since " [t]roughout history, beaches have been spaces of arrival and departure, of contract and trade, and they are also subject to ecological forces such as sea-level rise" (176). The Caribbean coastline is a space that connects with other places, situated at the junction of the local and the global. Literary and ecocritic Ursula Heise claims that the environment must be thought of within a sense of place and a sense of planet. She argues that globalization created two effects: "while some theorists criticize nationally based forms of identity and hold out cosmopolitan identifications as a plausible and politically preferable alternative, other scholars emphasize the importance of holding on to national and local modes of belonging as a way of resisting the imperialism of some forms of globalization" (Heise, 7). As a result of globalization, Heise relates antagonistic consequences between oppressing national identities in a global environment and the stress on the locals in environmental thought from the 1960s' to the present. Around her concept of eco-cosmopolitanism, Heise affirms that it is "imperative to reorient current U.S. environmental discourse, ecocriticism included, toward a more nuanced understanding of how both local cultural and ecological systems are imbricated in global ones" (59). She underlines the importance to think of the environment within the imagination of the global while taking into account a sense of belonging to a place.

This epilogue continues the reflection started by Heise and examines how the Caribbean shore is part of global ecological discourses. It considers how Mexican multimedia artist and

photographer Alejandro Duran's work addresses the overwhelming power of globalization on the Caribbean shore. Duran was born in Mexico in 1974 and is currently based in Brooklyn, USA. His status as a transnational artist is reflected in his work, which investigates the impact of the global culture of consumption on the environmental world. In his series Washed Up: Transforming a Trashed Landscape (2011 – 2014), Duran exposes the marine debris that have washed onto the shore of Sian Ka'an, a Mexican biosphere reserve along the Caribbean Sea, listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. With his team, Duran collects debris and later gathers the objects and arranges them by color for his photo series. Beyond the artistic intent, Washed Up tracks the trash's original site of production. So far, Duran and his team "have documented products that were made in fifty-eight different countries and territories" (Duran). Duran denounces the profound implications of our contemporary capitalist society of consumption. The artwork points out environmental pollution through its use of the plastic trash that accumulates on the shore. By superimposing a protected environmental area with pollutants, the photographer exposes how human impact has no limits. Human activities affect the entire planet, even protected areas,

Looking more closely at his photograph "Mar (sea)" (2013), we can observe that Duran layers his image on three different levels. The upper first section shows a blue sky with white clouds, the middle part displays blue water from the Caribbean Sea, and the third and final part positions the blue plastic objects that form a shoreline of waste as the centerfold. If the picture illustrates a certain uniformity with the presence of the color blue, it also highlights a tragedy built on the contrast of two formidable environmental elements – the sea and the sky – with manufactured products for human consumption. Yet, more than a separation, Duran's image provides a symmetry between the sea/sky with the plastic pollution. The trash can be interpreted as a reflection of the sea and the sky. Even if invisible at times, the debris is part of the ocean and

part of the sky in our planet in the age of the Anthropocene. The bottom and top panels are roughly the same size on the picture, reinforcing the symmetry between the vastness of the elements and the environmental catastrophe. Duran's garbage compilation thus reveals the human footprint on the planet. The carbon emissions produced as a by-product of creating the plastic objects end up in the air. Upon their ultimate disposal into the sea, the chemicals from the objects dissolve into the ocean, contaminating water and threatening marine life. Duran's photograph therefore both exposes how trash accumulates on the Caribbean shores but is also integral part of our global environment.

Duran's exhibit also forces us to reconsider human violence and agency on the environment. Literary and ecocritic Rob Nixon revisits the notion of violence, which tends to be seen as immediate and explosive (2). Nixon, by contrast, coins the term *slow violence,* which he defines as "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (2). Slow violence describes violence over wider and thicker temporal and spatial scales. The effects of climate change and pollution transcend time and space to affect future generations. There is a discrepancy between individuals who cause the environmental violence and those who suffer from it. The question of agency is therefore reconsidered through Nixon's concept since it involves a transgenerational and trans-spatial violence. To return to Duran's work, the accumulation of trash on the shore is a form of slow violence. The trash collected comes from a multitude of places throughout the world and, even though the time of production is more challenging to estimate, the debris found on the shore dates back years or even decades, given the non-bio-degradable state of plastic.

In addition to the effects of humans on the environment, Duran's work advocates for environmental activism. His website contains a tab "take action," on which the artist recommends "simple changes," encourages to "organize a beach clean," offers to "bring Washed Up to you" or "knowledge on the issue" (Duran). Washed Up is rooted in raising awareness on ecological degradation on the shore. The project calls on action to change our human footprint on the environment, a sort of eco-cosmopolitanism of solidarity to refer to Heise's words. Duran's process of transformation of the damage-oriented debris into a work of art forms an aesthetics of global awareness. The Caribbean shore, like other shores of the world, highlights the responsibility of the global population to protect local ecosystems. The Caribbean shore is also the responsibility of Caribbean writers and artists to claim a space and agency in global narratives of the region. Through art of literature, they must raise awareness of the global effects on the site, damaging at the same its culture and history. All the chapters included in "Abyssal Shores" highlight the importance of protecting coastal areas that are highly vulnerable spaces, as much ecologically as culturally. The shore, usually perceived as margin, is central to rethinking the ethical relationship between the local and global.

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