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Amerindian Memory and Native Resistance in Francophone Caribbean Literature

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Amerindian Memory and Native Resistance in Francophone Caribbean Literature

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Amerindian Memory and Native Resistance in Francophone Caribbean Literature
By Erika V. Serrato

"Amerindian Memory and Native Resistance in Francophone Caribbean Literature" uncovers the ways in which questions of indigeneity have shaped Francophone Caribbean literature. I argue that thinkers, writers, and creators explore indigeneity through works of fiction, youth literature, ethnographic texts, petroglyphs, and sculptures. Amerindian figures, whether appearing in historical accounts or in contemporary renditions, convey a message of resistance against oppressive groups and project their memory onto the ensuing generations who will write their story. Jean Métellus' *Anacaona* (1986) and Edwidge Danticat's *Anacaona, Golden Flower* (2005) illustrate the authors' interest in fostering the memory of Haiti's first great icon. Recreating the region's fractured history unavoidably and necessarily blurs the Amerindian past with that of those who endured the Middle Passage and were then forced to call the islands home. I trace the ways in which Caribbean communities have defined self and other and argue that literary, political, and aesthetic movements such as *Indigénisme*, *Antillanité*, and *Créolité* aid in the cultivation of nativity. I analyze Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (1944) along with his *Contribution à l'étude de l'éthnobotanique précolombienne des Grandes Antilles* (1942), Patrick Chamoiseau's *Solibo magnifique* (1988) and Raphaël Confiant's *Ravines du devant-jour* (1993) with their *Éloge de la Créolité* (1989) as well as Édouard Glissant's *Discours antillais* (1981) and Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989). Traces of the Caribbean's pre-conquest and colonial periods play a decisive role in the memory of the community's past. I examine the tenuous nature of Guadeloupe's petroglyphs and physical remains in slave cemeteries, and their mediation via museums and official observations. The commemoration of clandestine events further problematizes my discussion of spatial memory, which also includes the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" memorial in Martinique and M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!* (2008). This dissertation posits indigeneity as the driving force behind literary and cultural productions in Francophone Guadeloupe, Haiti, and Martinique.

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Contents

Illustrations

Introduction

Anacri et la dernière écaille (2014) tells the story of a young boy from Koussalaoua (in current day Grande-Terre, Guadeloupe) who makes a costly sacrifice so as to help Joulouca, a powerful deity, and thereby reestablish order on the island. He dies only to be revived within the story. He wakes up with no memory of his name, only of the pain he suffered.[1] The story takes place in 1493, the same year as the arrival of Columbus. Anacri embodies the memory of near death and the promise of survival. The children's book is Thierry Petit le Brun's first. He is a Guadeloupian photographer who has published "de nombreux ouvrages naturalistes" with training "en arts plastiques" (*Anacri*, 80). The author supplements his paratext with maps, sketches, pictures of plants endemic to the island that were used by Anacri's people as well as of sea animals, an engraving by LeClerc that first appeared in Jean-Baptiste du Tertre's *Histoire générale des Antilles*, a current-day photograph of Anse à la Gourde – where Anacri's tale takes place – as well as a picture of a table of historical interpretation placed in la Pointe à Cabrits created by Petit le Brun himself. The ensemble of word and image in the book generates a cultural object that imparts knowledge all while reinforcing the young reader's interest in and acceptance of Guadeloupe's Amerindian past. Petit le Brun's interest in Amerindian traces, the natural history of the Caribbean, botany, and archaeology, are not a lone instance. This dissertation argues that questions of indigeneity have been instrumental in literary and cultural productions in the Francophone Caribbean

[1] "-Tu as accompli une grande chose, lui [Owinipoucayo] dit-il.
Sais-tu qui tu es? Le regard perdu il fit non de la tête. Il ne trouvait plus son nom, il se souvint de la douleur à son bras, il savait qui était Owinipoucayo mais il ne savait plus son nom." (73)

(Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Haiti). My project examines the reigning portrait of Amerindian figures in the cultural landscape of the region, the processes of indigenization for the populations that followed (including but not limited to descendants of enslaved Africans), and the negotiation of space within the region's collective memory.

Through pointed examples drawn from novelistic fiction, travel narratives, texts that are ethnographic in nature, memorial art, and rock engravings, I aim to elucidate questions of indigeneity such as displayed before the reader: Who and/or what constitutes the indigenous? What and/or who is being remembered? Who is doing the recalling? In what structure and for what purpose does the question of indigeneity arise? Ultimately, in this dissertation, I systematize and thereby bring to the fore instances where indigeneity arises in Francophone Caribbean literature. I do this on two levels. First, by focusing on textual and/or linguistic presence where the poetic voice might invoke or claim indigeneity. Second, by examining the strains of memory in Caribbean communities whose fragmented, blurred, and unofficial past accounts for both will and inability to remember a history of mass murder and exploitation.

Continental nation-states in the Americas such as what are now Mexico and Peru have been able to preserve some cultural and historical artifacts from various Amerindian civilizations before 1492. These countries have been able to translate certain remnants into both the identity of the country and the national imaginary. By imaginary, I mean both official acknowledgement on a national scale and explicit and productive presence of a group and/or events into a nation's self-perception. Although still not completely inclusive of contemporary native groups and their plight, Mexico celebrates its

indigenous past. Nezahualcoyotl, the king poet, has been institutionalized to the point that he is taught in grade school (in addition to other indigenous figures), as well as included in the country's currency. The *muralistas* of the 1920's not only brought to the fore Mexico's varied cultural, racial, and class strata, but also focused on the indigenous constituency as defining for the Mexican experience. Benito Juárez, the 26th president of the Mexican republic, was a native of the state of Oaxaca and of Zapotec origin. Nobel prizewinner Octavio Paz's celebrated text *El Laberinto de la soledad* (1950) scrutinizes the particular historical shift that birthed the Mexican psyche. By contrast, such attention to Amerindian heritage and influence has not taken place in the Caribbean, least of all in the Lesser Antilles. The overwhelming majority of histories recognized across the archipelago start with the Conquest, gloss over the decimation of indigenous peoples, and pick up at the beginning of slavery.[2] The few mentions of indigenous peoples present the dissolution of these societies.[3] Bartolomé de las Casas, for example, in pleading to and warning then prince and future king Philip II, seems to advocate for the well-being of the

[2] Namely Thomas Madiou's three-volumed *Histoire d'Haïti* (1847) and, more recently, Paul Butel's *Histoire des Antilles françaises: XVIIe – XXe siècle* (2002). Also see Germán Arciniegas' *Biografía del Caribe* (1966) and Juan Bosch's *De Cristóbal Colón a Fidel Castro: El Caribe, Frontera Imperial* (1993).

[3] Critical studies such as C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins* (1938) and Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) discard a discussion of native presence in the Caribbean. James, in the prologue of his book, sums up the history of the natives in less than one paragraph: "The Spaniards, the most advanced Europeans of their day, annexed the island, called it Hispaniola, and took the backward natives under their protection. They introduced Christianity, forced labour in mines, murder, rape, bloodhounds, strange diseases, and artificial famine (by the destruction of cultivation to starve the rebellious). These and other requirements of the higher civilisation reduced the native population from an estimated half-a-million, perhaps a million, to 60,000 in 15 years" (3-4). Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint* (1940) gives, of all critical studies concerning the Caribbean, the most insight on Amerindian society, consecrating a chapter to "Tobacco Among the Indians of the Antilles."

native inhabitants of the New World islands.[4] Yet his texts display an indigenous body that either appears as already annihilated[5] or finds itself in the process of dismemberment.[6]

I bring into focus the omnipresent absence of native American indigeneity in Francophone Caribbean literature. By omnipresent absence, I mean the way in which references to indigeneity may appear throughout a culture but which may go seemingly unnoticed. This phenomenon may manifest itself in casual references to historical figures such as Anacaona, or as is the case with rock engravings, which seem to adorn the landscape without evidencing the conscious understanding of their cultural value. On the one hand, my analyses bring out the splintered, deeply buried presence of Amerindians and, on the other, I point out the subtle burying of the bodies and the subsequent inscription of newer, Afro-creolized ones. The case of Petit le Brun's fictional novel, his interest in Amerindian history, the resonance of nature, and contemporary Caribbean subjects' identification as the islands' natives and descendants of Amerindians

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[4] "constándole a Vuestra Alteza algunas particulares hazañas dellos, no podría contenerse de suplicar a su Majestad con instancia importuna que no conceda ni permita las que los tiranos inventaron, prosiguieron y han cometido que llaman conquistas, en las cuales (si se permitiesen) han de tornarse a hacer, pues de sí mismas (hechas contra aquellas indianas gentes, pacíficas, humildes y mansas que a nadie ofenden) son inicuas, tiránicas, y por toda ley natural, divina y human condenadas, detestadas y malditas" (*Brevísima relación*, 72).

[5] "Las islas de los Lucayos, que están comarcanas a la Española y a Cuba por la parte del Norte, que son más de sesenta con las que llamaban de Gigantes y otras islas grandes y chicas, y a que la peor dellas es más fértil y graciosa que la huerta del Rey, de Sevilla, y la más sana tierra del mundo, en las cuales había más de quinientas mil ánimas, no hay hoy una sola criatura" (*Brevísima relación*, 77).

[6] "Hacían apuestas sobre quién de una cuchillada abría el hombre por medio, o le cortaba la cabeza de un piquete, o le descubría las entrañas. Tomaban las criaturas de las tetas de las madres por las piernas, y daban de cabeza con ellas en las peñas" (*Brevísima relación*, 81).

encapsulates the very phenomenon I develop in this dissertation. I argue that the false memory of never witnessed, long-lost Amerindian peoples haunts Francophone Caribbean literature. Amerindian figures, whether real or imagined, manifest an immaterial presence: they lack names, they are not full-fledged characters, they are shape-shifters.[7] Yet they linger. Glissant, in *Le Discours antillais* (1981), articulates that exploring the past is both the sentence and the saving grace of Caribbean writers and descendants of transplanted African peoples.[8] I suggest that recreating this fractured, unofficial past unavoidably and necessarily blurs the Amerindian past with that of those who endured the Middle Passage and were then forced to call the islands home.

One need not look far in the past or in literary culture to find instances of this erasure and reinscription. Puerto Rican singer Cheo Feliciano's "Anacaona" tells the story of the Taino cacica who was betrayed, captured, tortured, and burned to death.[9] Though the song begins by acknowledging the female leader's Amerindian origins ("Anacaona, *india* de raza cautiva. Anacaona, de la región primitiva."[10]), it nonetheless ends with a change: "Esa *negra*, *negra* que es de raza noble y abatida … / La tribu entera

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[7] Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* (1969) encapsulates the monstrous, animalistic, and foreign indeterminacy in the person of Caliban.

[8] "Le passé, notre passé subi, qui n'est pas encore histoire pour nous, est pourtant là (ici) qui nous lancine. La tâche de l'écrivain est d'explorer ce lancinement, de le 'révéler' de manière continue dans le présent et l'actuel. Cette exploration ne revient donc ni à une mise en schémas ni à un pleur nostalgique. C'est à démêler un sens douloureux du temps et à le projeter à tout coup dans notre futur, sans le recours de ces sortes de plages temporelles dont les peuples occidentaux ont bénéficié, sans le secours de cette densité collective que donne d'abord un arrière-pays culturel ancestral. C'est ce que j'appelle *une vision prophétique du passé*" (226-7, Glissant's emphasis).

[9] Although famously performed by Cheo Feliciano, "Anacaona" was authored by Tite Curet Alonso. The lyrics can be found via this link: http://salsaclasica.com/cheofeliciano/liricas.asp?aid=1&tid=1

[10] [Anacaona, Indian of a captive race. Anacaona, from the primitive region.] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

la llora porque fue buena *negrona*. Y recordando, recordando lo que pasó la tribu ya se enfogona."[11] Feliciano's song reveals the equivocal use of Amerindian figures. The historically accurate *india* has been Africanized, becoming *negra* instead. Using Anacaona seems to attempt to capture both *pre* (the Amerindian body) and *post* (the African body) the arrival of the colonizer. The Amerindian who appeared at the beginning at the song no longer exists. It is the African body that takes front and center by the end of the song. This substitution exemplifies both the problem of Amerindian effacement and the predicament of African indigenization that I belabor in this project. I examine this phenomenon as well as the incorporation of African threads into Anacaona's narrative in Chapter 1. Though ultimately murdered, Anacaona represents not only a long-suffering body but also a warring spirit, as she was captured following an attack on Spanish settlement La Navidad.[12] I proffer that it is defiance and resistance vis-à-vis colonial powers that connects memories of Amerindian resistance with the insular experience of revolt (later voiced by Afro-creolized Francophone Caribbean writers).

The apparent interchangeability of native Amerindian with transplanted African bodies materializes as a response to the historical exploit and extermination of said bodies as well as the ensuing repression. To return to the example of Petit le Brun's Anacri, his readers take away a socio-cultural dimension that will come to bear on their perception of the island's past and present inhabitants. Humanizing and rendering visible

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[11] [That black woman, that black woman of noble and downed race…/ The entire tribe cries for her because she was a good négresse. And remembering, remembering what happened the tribe boils over.]

[12] For more details, see Las Casas' "Los reinos que había en la isla Española" in *Brevísima relación de la destruición de las Indias* and Book II, Chapter 9 of *Historia de Indias* (1517). Also in Thomas Madiou's *Histoire d'Haïti*, Tome Premier, Livre Premier.

the island's original inhabitants allows them to identify and include Amerindian heritage in their self-conception and that of others. Visibility and representation are especially important in Petit le Brun's text, as he includes illustrations by both himself and illustrator DiégO. Las Casas, in the *Brevísima relación de la destruición de las Indias* (1552), recounts the story of Taino chief Hatuey who, after being tortured, is asked to reconsider converting one last time before being killed so that he may at least go to heaven.[13] Hatuey asks whether there will be men such as his interrogator – Christian and torturer – in heaven. Upon hearing that there will indeed be men like him, the chief gives a resounding no (92). I expose moments such as these: moments of micro resistance. For, as exemplified with Anacri's sacrifice, Amerindian acts of resistance – even when stunted and fatal – turn out to serve as a model for the new groups of peoples forced to inhabit and work the islands.

The sentiment conveyed in Feliciano's 1972 continues to be concentrated and cast. Indeed, writer Edwidge Danticat, vocalist Emeline Michel, and composer Daniel Bernard Roumain presented the world premiere of "Anacaona: The Golden Flower Songs" on March 20, 2015. In an Emory University interview[14], Roumain explains the place held by a historical and cultural figure such as Anacaona:

> As a Haitian-American composer, I am excited by the notion of storytelling from a perspective informed by my own Haitian culture and heritage, and how Haitian people have their own history — one that spans

[13] Hatuey's story also appears in Las Casas' *Historia de Indias* in Book III, Chapters 21 and 25.

[14] Emory University commissioned the Haitian/Haitian-American artists' piece for the Creation Stories Project.

> back many centuries — and, as has always been the case, involves strong, powerful women, at its core.[15]

Roumain emphasizes Anacaona's central place in Haitian history. Anacaona's indigeneity, however, seems to be missing from a *conversation* about her importance. Edwidge Danticat has authored a children's book concerning Anacaona's life entitled *Anacaona, Golden Flower* (2005). Though Danticat makes it clear that Anacaona is an Amerindian princess in the text, the cover of the book representing the historical figure/character feeds the discussion of Amerindian erasure and Afro-creolized indigenization. Her memory has been absorbed by that of greater Haitian history. Yet this absorption is laden with tints and textures. As I argue in Chapter 2, Danticat's Anacaona expresses her civilization's resonance throughout the island and her desire to be remembered for the way her people lived pre-conquest.

Evoking Amerindian figures constitutes, in Francophone Caribbean literature, a spectral ebb and flow of being and non-being, silence and speaking, active struggle and passive dismemberment. "Les Nuits amérindiennes en Haïti," a series of literary and cultural events that took place in Haiti in May 2015 and put together by both private and public Haitian and Canadian organizations, must be noted. After centuries of genocides, struggles, erasure, and inscription, Haïti faced Ayiti.

> Le mot *Ayiti* est un nom indien signifiant « terre haute, terre montagneuse ». Les premiers habitants de l'île étaient des femmes et des hommes à la peau rouge appelés Indiens. Ce sont les premières leçons d'histoire. Puis

[15] Interview can be found at http://news.emory.edu/stories/2015/03/er_take_note_daniel_roumain/campus.html

> le génocide a décimé ces peuples, et l'oubli efface la mémoire. Je dis, comme si j'en avais rêvé, que le paradis des Indiens se trouve aux Abricots, village au sud d'Ayiti.
>
> Lorsque j'arrive dans une ville, je cherche la présence et l'amitié des Indiens. Si *Les nuits amérindiennes* se déroulent en Haïti, c'est parce que nous avons une histoire et une mémoire communes avec les peuples des Premières Nations. Nous avons un passé commun (colonisation, exploitation, etc.). Aujourd'hui, nous marchons ensemble pour convoquer des lendemains de lumière.
>
> Les auteurs des Premières Nations portent en eux l'espérance du monde à travers cette *urgente sommation du réel*. Les auteurs des Premières Nations portent en eux la flamme, la voix et la sagesse des Ancêtres. Ils nous donnent la main, scandant américanité et indianité, questionnant notre présence au monde. *Les nuits amérindiennes* rappellent que nous sommes tous des Indiens d'Amérique. ("Nous sommes tous des Indiens d'Amérique")

Canada-based Haitian writer and founder of publishing house Mémoire d'encrier Rodney Saint-Éloi's words in the program presentation to the "Les Nuits amérindiennes en Haïti" proceedings both give Amerindians a warm welcome back to history and signal the present Haitian population's return to the island's origins – and as such must be nuanced. This project is not only timely, it is overdue. Regarding the many and problematic questions of indigeneity, there can be found extensive scholarship in the United States

and Canada.[16] Movements such as Standing Rock Native American Reservation's protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016 raised awareness of Native American struggles in the United States. Notably, the demonstrations showcased the way in which the protection of lands continues to be associated with the country's original peoples. In Latin American countries such as the aforementioned Mexico and Peru, the indigenous have found a place (albeit restricted) in cultural, historical, and political discourse.[17] No systematic study of the kind exists in the Caribbean as of yet. Shona Jackson's *Creole Indigeneity* (2012) is pioneering. Jackson zeroes in on the geographic and political marginalization of the indigenous population of Guyana as well as on the labor process that culminated in the "indigenization" of the transported peoples of African countries and India. Jackson's efforts in bringing to light the political, economic, and literary place of the indigenous serve as a model for my own. My dissertation analyzes the modalities of Amerindian representation, indigenization, and the role of the islands' spaces in the retrieval and formation of historical memory. As exemplified by my recourse to historical materials and popular culture, written and oral stories, archipelagic and mainland speakers/writers of French, Spanish and English, this project touches on indigenous, francophone, Caribbean, plantation culture, Latin American, and memory studies.

In order to better reach and/or understand diverse modalities of remembrance and forgetting, my dissertation profits from a variety of methods. I use close reading analysis,

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[16] Craig Womack's *Red on Red* (1999) synthesizes the need for stronger theoretical framework.

[17] In Mexico, for example, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) oversees the preservation of manuscripts and other historical artifacts. The Códice Chimalpahin is the latest of manuscripts to be curated, archived, and displayed online: http://www.codicechimalpahin.inah.gob.mx

theories of race, politics, as well as memory studies. The different levels and modes of interpretation allow for a better estimation of the mechanics behind the inclusion, beseeching, or iteration of the indigenous. Glissant's elucidation in *Poétique de la relation* (1990) that to understand is an attempt to incorporate (and, in so doing, besiege) is ever present in my mind.[18] Understanding entails absorbing and making something one's own. Yet questions of indigeneity are severely lacking in the Caribbean, effectively experiencing the very subsumption we fear in striving to understand. Amerindians of the Caribbean have been eliminated twice: once by conquest, a second time by their obfuscation in literary, historical, cultural, and artistic representations. This phenomenon encapsulates what Gayatri Spivak describes as "epistemic violence" in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (283). Amerindians find themselves "the silent, the silenced center" of Caribbean expression (282). The case of Anacaona illustrates the appropriation of a historical figure who, though indeed forms part of Haitian culture and history, nonetheless suffers the amputation of her indigeneity.

I adhere to Doris Garraway's blurring between what is considered history and mere representation in *The Libertine Colony* (2005). I agree that meaningful stories arise as a result of "reinterpreting narrative sources" (14-5). My reading of authors' interpretations of Amerindian figures, of the discourse surrounding physical remains of the islands' Amerindian and first African populations, as well as nature's role in their naturalization reveals a larger narrative of the history of the Caribbean. As such, the

[18] "Il y a dans ce verbe comprendre le mouvement des mains qui prennent l'entour et le ramènent à soi. Geste d'enfermement sinon d'appropriation. Préférons-lui le geste du donner-avec, qui ouvre enfin sur la totalité" (206).

depth and breadth of this project give the most thorough appreciation of the fragmented and reconfigured Amerindian figures such as they appear in Francophone Caribbean literature. The juxtaposition of a 500 year span and wide-ranging genres (from Las Casas' accounts to Petit le Brun's children's book) is essential in understanding the set up and contexts that gave way to the representation of an always disintegrating, voiceless, yet omnipresent indigenous subject.

I organize this project into the three main concepts that serve as perimeters for indigeneity and its intimations of memory and resistance: person, nature, and space. Indeed, fictionalized historical figures carry the memory of Amerindians in Francophone Caribbean literature. Amerindians have left traces of their existence on the islands. For example, newer populations pick up techniques of survival and resistance such as fleeing to and hiding in the mountains and uses of the flora. Actual Amerindian traces in the form of rock engravings as well as physical remains of the first African arrivals serve as reminders (albeit subdued) of the community's past. These reminders, however, are elusive and as such present a continual negotiation. In addressing this network of indigeneity, memory, and resistance, I respond to Petit le Brun's declaration regarding his place within the history of his island : "La Guadeloupe, l'endroit d'où je viens, où je vis, est la somme de strates d'époques différentes. Même si nous sommes tous des transplantés, nous sommes d'ici. Comprendre ce passé, c'est aussi mieux savoir de quoi nous sommes héritiers" (Vidal, 2). His demonstrably vested interest in Guadeloupe's Amerindian heritage, his native status, and his perception of archeology, topography, flora, and fauna as a way to learn about history and the island's first inhabitants point to the multilayered and compacted history of the Caribbean. My examination of each *strate*

and its modality within the imaginary in the Francophone Caribbean seeks to better appreciate the ways in which Amerindian memory survives.

Before moving on to the description of each chapter, I would like to offer a note on language. I use the term "Amerindian" throughout this project. This choice stems from two reasons. First, the discussion on ethnicities and creolization (which takes place in Chapter 2) introduces multiple terms as well as a discussion on naming and the words "indien" and the pejorative "zindien." Second, the word "amérindien" in French is often used more readily than "indien" as a more accurate term that signifies "Indians of the Americas." As an example, a tour guide during my visit to the Parc archéologique des Roches gravées informs me that the curator of the park has officially changed the discourse it disseminates so that the term "Amérindien" is used instead of specific groups such as Taino, Arawak, or Carib. He added that this commitment on the part of the park recognizes the limited verified information even specialists have on each group. The "Espaces amérindiens" catalogue for the Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne Edgar Clerc coincides with the tour guide's statement. The book makes consistent references to "Amerindiens," even when discussing archeological findings with anthropological support.[19] My decision to use "Amerindian" seeks to avoid

[19] See, for example, statements such as "Les cranes ainsi transformés présentaient un aplatissement du front et de l'occipital, correspondant aux canons esthétiques et identitaires des communautés amérindiennes, au même titre que les peintures, les tatouages et parures corporelles." (59) / "These transformed skulls show a flattening of the forehead and the occipital bone, corresponding to the aesthetic and identity of these Amerindian communities. These customs are also evident in paintings, tattoos and other body adornments." (ibid.) or "A partir des plans et relevés de fouilles, des vestiges découverts et en les confrontant aux ethnographiques qui nous renseignent sur les modes de vie des Amérindiens d'Amazonie, il est possible de proposer une reconstitution de la vie des communautés amérindiennes installés à l'Anse à la Gourde il y près d'un millénaire" (71) / "By comparing the recovered remains and their associated excavations

unnecessary confusion and, by following the Francophone tradition, permits a more accurate translation *and* reading of texts where the word appears.

Anacaona as Amerindian Paradigm: Chapter 1 focuses on texts where the figure of Anacaona articulates her unique position at the crossroads of history. It encompasses Bartolomé de las Casas' first-person account and moves to 20th century texts, namely Jean Métellus' play *Anacaona* (1986) and Edwidge Danticat's children's book *Anacaona, Golden Flower* (2005). I zero in on Las Casas' legacy of Amerindian fragmentation and the seed of the eponymous heroine's fatal flaw. My reading of Anacaona' language showcases the breakdown in communication between the Spaniards who have invaded her land and her own understanding of the world. I suggest that Métellus and Danticat, as would-be descendants, write texts that manifest a refinement in characterization. In particular, the way in which she bridges temporalities, including the foreshadowing of her death and that of her people, indicates our authors' willingness to foster her memory for the current population of the Caribbean, including the diaspora and its posterity.

Becoming Native: In 1942, Suzanne Césaire urges for a more symbiotic relationship between humans and nature: "Il est exaltant d'imaginer sur ces terres tropicales, rendues enfin à leur vérité interne, l'accord durable et fécond de l'homme et du sol. Sous le signe de la plante" (74). Césaire sees the nearing internal truth of an overdue syncing of man with his surroundings. As illustrated by Haiti's *roman indigéniste*, the indigenous goes off on a series of reconfigurations, culminating in the

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to ethnographic data about Amazonian indigenous lifeways, it is possible to propose a reconstruction of the life of Amerindian communities living at Anse à la Gourde more than a millennium ago." (72)

creation of a new native capable of affirming "cette terre, la nôtre" (S. Césaire, 75). In Chapter 2, I display and analyze literary techniques and ideological processes of indigenization by which descendants of African extraction come to identify as the Caribbean's "new" natives. I focus on a subtle but consistent literary discourse surrounding the landscape. I argue that the new peoples who inhabit the island "read" the landscape, translate and interpret Amerindian cultural traces, and inscribe themselves into this new native position. I suggest, for example, that texts such as Jacques Roumain's *Contribution à l'étude de l'ethnobotanique précolombienne des Grandes Antilles* works towards the formation of the new Caribbean native. Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (1944), Patrick Chamoiseau's *Solibo Magnifique* (1988), and Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989) help us reconsider what constitutes the indigenous in the Francophone Caribbean.

Engraved Memory: Chapter 3 takes us out of the text and into *la terre*. Glissant's persuasion that the landscape stands complicit in not only witnessing but also experiencing history prompts my evaluation of the ways in which the Caribbean landscape has and continues to employ and rehearse the population's memory and collective imaginary.[20] Hurricanes Marilyn (1995) and Lenny (1999) resulted in the revelation of numerous Amerindian rock engravings, raising the amount of known petroglyphs from 313 to "nearly 1,200" in Guadeloupe (Richard, 137).[21] Through a

[20] "L'individu, la communauté, le pays sont indissociables dans l'épisode constitutif de leur histoire. Le paysage est un personnage de cette histoire. Il faut le comprendre dans ses profondeurs." (*Le Discours antillais*, 343)

[21] Citing Cornelius Dubelaar, Richard writes that "Guadeloupe encompassed more than 50 percent of the reported petroglyph sites in the Lesser Antilles," even before the heavy rains and violent winds of Marilyn and Lenny unearthed "newer" engravings (137).

critical reading of pre-Columbian petroglyphs in Guadeloupe's Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne Edgar Clerc, the Parc archéologique des Roches gravées at Trois-Rivières as well as modern memorial art in the form of the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" in Martinique's Anse Caffard, I dismantle the machinations of memory working behind the inscriptions. My guiding questions address who means to remember what, what is lost, and what, in the community's memory, can be preserved.

Working at the intersection of historical, aesthetic, philosophical, ethical, and social inquiry that is the field of memory studies[22] (I return to the term in Chapter 3), I bring out the tensions and connections between history and memory, that is, between the demise of the Amerindian people of the Caribbean as well as the forced acculturation of enslaved African peoples and what is and has been remembered through the landscape and its markers, namely the "Cap 110" monument and the petroglyphs. I read the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" in light of Pierre Nora and James E. Young's analyses concerning the exteriorization, supplanting, and displacement of memory for, as I argue, the "Cap 110" materializes as a monument that, at best, misdirects the remembrance and, at worst, blocks it altogether, leaving the spectral illusion of memory. My aim is to trace the engraving's translation to meaning and into the contemporary writer's text. Reading the petroglyphs puts our ear to the ground, listening to the voice recorded long ago.

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[22] "Over the past two decades, the relationship between culture and memory has emerged in many parts of the world as a key issue of interdisciplinary research, involving fields as diverse as history, sociology, art, literary and media studies, philosophy, theology, psychology, and the neurosciences, and thus bringing together the humanities, social studies, and the naturals sciences in a unique way. The importance of the notion of cultural memory is not only documented by the rapid growth, since the late 1980s, of publications on specific national, social, religious, or family memories, but also by a more recent trend, namely attempts to provide overviews of the state of the art in this emerging field and to synthesize different research traditions." (Erll, 1)

This dissertation constitutes the first systematic attempt to unearth the Amerindian from the collective imaginary in Francophone Caribbean literature. The ambiguity of a fragmented past haunts writers: Las Casas, Du Tertre, Breton, Roumain, Condé, Glissant – they all follow traces, they all leave traces. We must follow the trace and see what remains. With this project, I strive to answer that question through varying levels of examinations, reaching from the *feuille* of the page to the *feuille* on the ground. What is the reigning silhouette of the Amerindian? Where does such portrayal come from? The gaping absence of Amerindians in the Caribbean has given way to the development of other groups' relationships to the land. The new natives explore and work this connection. The landscape, in turn, operates as both language and palimpsest through which the Amerindian can be found. The Amerindian in nature, however, is far from any cut and dry representations in the tradition of the *bon sauvage*. What is inscribed, read, erased, and reinscribed on the palimpsestic nature of the Americas is a similitude of resistance – both resisting nature itself and along with it –. The landscape's complicit nature, as demonstrated by Guadeloupe's latent petroglyphs, allows the community to plunge into the wave of remembrance and forgetting.

Remembering instances of Amerindian legacies and remnants in our contemporary times allows us to further appreciate the Caribbean as a region that encapsulates the colonial project's series of intense and enduring events. My focus on Amerindian figures, processes of indigenization, and the spaces that evoke the Caribbean's historical episodes brings to the fore the often forgotten influence and heritage of Amerindian peoples on the region's current population make up and identity,

as exemplified by their literary and cultural productions. Remembering in this context, as I argue throughout this project, becomes an act of resistance and survival.

Chapter 1 Anacaona as Amerindian Paradigm

The island known today as Hispaniola was once divided into six independent domains: Marien, Maguana, Magua, Xaragua, Higuey, and Ciguayo (Tyler, 7).[23] These provinces or *cacicazgos* were led by *caciques* (supreme chief or leader). William F. Keegan writes that "identification of caciques was crucial for the Spanish conquest" (73). The anthropologist explains that focusing on a few single individuals allowed the Spaniards to "extract tribute" in a much more expeditious manner (ibid). Keegan details the importance of focusing their attention: "At the time of the Spanish conquest, two *caciques* (Caonabó and Behecchio), allied through marriage, are reported to have been paramount *caciques* (*matunherí*) that together ruled most of Hispaniola (Keegan 2007)." (73) Wedged and invisibilized by Keegan's two commas and the punctuation of Caonabó and Behecchio's reigns ("allied through marriage"), Anacaona became the most powerful cacica on the island. Though female leaders were not rare cases in Taino society (in fact, power was passed on matrilineally[24]), the historical crossroads in which she lived render Anacaona a memorable figure.[25] Anacaona, sister to Behecchio, ruler of Xaragua, and wife to Caonabó, ruler of Maguana, comes to lead half of the island following their deaths.

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[23] The spelling of Amerindian names and places may change from author to author. I reproduce the spelling of the author whose writing or argument I examine at any given moment.

[24] For more information concerning inheritance and succession, see "Believers of Cemíism" in José R. Oliver's *Caciques and Cemí Idols*.

[25] "Despite this traditional division of labor among the sexes, many scholars believe that Taino society was quite egalitarian and that women chiefs were not uncommon." (Figueredo and Argote-Freyre, 3).

Long before the weight of Anacaona's civilization fell on her shoulders, she was known throughout the island for her gracious movements and eloquent speeches, most often in the form of performances known as areytos.[26] Figures such as Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, who puts to paper his interactions with Anacaona and other prominent Amerindians two decades following her death, notes her demeanor and the way in which she commanded through the spoken word. In this chapter, I examine representations of Anacaona in literary texts from Francophone authors. In particular, I examine the ways in which both enemies and allies perceive her, how the fictional version of the historical figure expresses herself, and her place in history such as surmised by herself or others. Focusing on a single character across texts – particularly one of such historical importance – highlights deviations for the first documents that reference her and, by extension, Amerindian characters. The similarities between the different versions of Anacaona reveal the memory she has left behind for the region she once reigned, and beyond. I focus on Anacaona's voice and its varying modulations, ranging from a sort of aphonia to excess of speech. Instances of her expression (be it voiced or muted, spoken or written) allow us to appreciate her authors' evocation of the Caribbean's Amerindian past and the legacy of Anacaona's memory in the region's cultural imaginary.

Writing about or from the viewpoint of Anacaona seems to come at least once every generation in the Francophone Caribbean. Haitian theater specialist Ginette Adamson notes, for example, Frédéric Burr-Reynolds and Dominique Hippolite's novella

[26] "Held on a field or a ceremonial plaza, the *areyto* used a combination of narration, poetry, singing, and dancing to tell events from the past or comment on more recent events such as a birth or a death. *Areytos* were even used to rally the villagers into battle with rival families or other villages." (Figueredo and Argote-Freyre, 5)

Anacaona (1927), Jacques-Stephen Alexis's short story "La Fleur d'or" in *Romancéro aux étoiles* (1960), and St. Arnaud Numa's *Anacaona, reine martyre* (2014, 11-2). While Anacaona lingers in the imaginary of authors whose native territory she once walked, literary and cultural critics have missed the opportunity to not only document but also, and ultimately more important, to undertake an in-depth analysis of what her portrayal comes to represent for Amerindian history, the period in which the author writes, and the question of indigeneity in the Caribbean literary landscape. The sole work I have located and attained is Catharina V. de Vallejo's 2015's *Anacaona: La construcción de la cacica taína de Quisqueya. Quinientos años de ideologización*. As the title indicates, Vallejo explores the changing ideologies Anacaona comes to embody through time. The book does consecrate a section to works written in French. The works' breadth, though a much needed addition to the study of Anacaona across the Caribbean, nonetheless impedes a thorough analysis of any one individual text. No critical analysis of her figure exists within the field on literary and cultural studies in the Francophone Caribbean. With this chapter I seek to shift the focus to include both Anacaona and, more generally, the study of Amerindian characters. It is my goal to work towards readings that are not only *sui generis* and in their own cultural context, but also as part of the literary tradition of nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century writers in the francophone Caribbean. The countries of origin of the authors I have chosen (Haiti, the Haitian Diaspora, and Martinique) reflect the contemporary Caribbean author's interest in the region's Amerindian past. To this end, my analysis begins with Las Casas' chronicles. Though not a francophone writer, his remains the leading voice in Amerindian accounts. His writings

are thus essential for establishing and tracing portrayals of Anacaona in particular and Amerindians, generally.

The texts and references I include in this chapter reflect the temporal range of Anacaona's resonance across fields, including but not limited to ethnohistory, anthropology, archaeology, and literary and cultural studies. As previously mentioned, Las Casas' chronicles provide the most adjacent interaction with Anacaona and her civilization as she knew it. I examine *Historia de las Indias* (first published unabridged in 1875) in the first section of this chapter (Hanke, XXXIII). The rationale for this text is twofold. First, Las Casas begins to write this account in 1527 (Henke, xviii). Second, the text contains the most information regarding Anacaona. I analyze Las Casas' writings in *Historia de las Indias* and theorize what his own language reveals about the inception of Anacaona's portrayal. I refer to *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552) throughout the chapter so as to check Las Casas' own account. I move to twentieth century literature and examine Jean Métellus' play *Anacaona* (1986). Jean Métellus exiles himself in France from Haiti while still a young man and yet his extensive literary corpus display a continued interest in the founding of his native Haiti. In the spirit of widening the circle and highlighting connections between different literary circles, I have chosen to include Edwidge Danticat's *Anacaona: Golden Flower* (2005). Danticat is a New York-based writer of Haitian extraction. Despite the fact that Danticat writes in English and publishes mainly in the United States – a country she moved to as an infant – she nonetheless has made the experience of Haitian subjects (both within Haiti and as part of the Diaspora) the focal point of her career. As such, she has shown interest in cultivating and promoting Haitian culture and experiences beyond her country of birth.

Last, I read Édouard Glissant's novel *La Case du commandeur* (1981) as belonging to a tradition in the portrayal of Anacaona and Amerindians.

While I did not intend to choose only Haitian authors for my central arguments, I do want to point out that it reflects the import of Anacaona's legacy for Haiti. Laurent Dubois writes about the foundational nature of Amerindian names in *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*:

> long before the Europeans appeared, the indigenous inhabitants had their own names for the land. Among them, as early Spanish chroniclers noted, was Ayiti – "land of mountains." It was this name that the founders of Haiti reached back to in 1804, seeking to connect their struggle for freedom from slavery with the earlier battles of indigenous peoples against Spanish invaders. (17-8)

The fight for independence evoked the desire to look to the past – pre-conquest – and identify with the first peoples who inhabited the island. Haiti's founding fathers identify with the struggles of Amerindian peoples against foreign invaders. Anacaona, one of the most famous "casualties of war," was no casual victim. The place she occupied while alive signified a threat until erased. The most powerful cacica indeed represented the latent possibility of revolt. In the words of Métellus' Frère Buyl, "Un vaincu est toujours un vainqueur potentiel" (61).[27] Anacaona and the influence of her areytos could command an uprising in any given moment.

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[27] "The vanquished are always potential victors" (404). English translation of Métellus's *Anacaona* by Susan Pickford. The 2014 edition includes translations into English, Spanish, and Kreyòl.

The recreation of Anacaona's voice reveals to the contemporary reader her place in the pantheon of Haiti's national heroes. She is both individual and universal. Anacaona evokes Haiti's past and yet also symbolizes life before conquest and the violence of colonialism. She stands as a paragon of subversion for the greater Caribbean and beyond. She is infallible but ultimately powerless against colonial forces. Ever present in the memory of Haitians, Anacaona continues to sing about revolt and posterity.

1.1 Violence and shifting referents

In 1492, the year of the so-called discovery of the New World and its conquest, Spanish scholar Antonio de Nebrija publishes his compendium of the Spanish language *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (originally *Grammatica Antonii Nebrissensis*). The text itemizes and details the parts of speech, attempting to standardize Castilian Spanish. Nebrija's prologue and presentation to Queen Isabella I of Castile arrays the order of grammar and that of peoples:

> Cuando bien conmigo pienso muy esclarecida reina: y pongo delante los ojos el antigüedad de todas las cosas: que para nuestra recordación y memoria quedaron escritas: una cosa hallo y saco por conclusión muy cierta: que siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio: y de tal manera lo siguió: que juntamente comenzaron. crecieron. y florecieron y después junta fue la caída de entrambos (11).

Nebrija arrives at the conclusion that language is the companion of empire ("siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio"). He goes on to explain that normalizing the rules of speech translates into the homogenization of the empire's subjects across its realms. Grammar must be uniform in order for the empire to be in good working order. Language, like empire, is born, blooms, and eventually dies. Homogenizing grammar throughout the empire requires rooting out other systems. Through a reading of discourses surrounding Amerindian presence and expression, it is my contention that this was the case in the Caribbean.

Bartolomé de las Casas provides the basis for the perception and representation of Amerindians in the Caribbean. In the case of Anacaona, Las Casas unwittingly passes on the qualities that are echoed across various versions of her fictional avatars. Anacaona appears in a handful of chapters in *Historia de las Indias* (1527), namely Chapters CXIII, CIV, CVI in Book I and Chapter IX of Book II. Additionally, Anacaona appears in one chapter of the *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552). In this short section, I focus on *Historia de las Indias*. The chapters where Anacaona appears encapsulate her hallmark qualities and the forces that undergird Amerindian-European relations. In particular, I focus on Las Casas' discourse regarding Amerindian reactions to the events around them and the Spaniards' own use of language.

In an incident where the most prominent of Amerindians board Spanish ships in order to witness the naval prowess of the Spaniards, Anacaona refuses to board a canoe and chooses instead to go with Bartolomé Colón and her brother Behechio on much

larger and finer Spanish ships.[28] The novelty of the ships and the way they move in the water frighten Behechio and Anacaona. Las Casas describes them as "atónicos espantados" or, roughly translated, "frightened atonics" (448). Las Casas' description of Behechio and Anacaona aligns with the child-like concept he cultivates throughout his chronicles. Characterizing them as "frightened atonics" also introduces the question of language, namely its awkward and dangerous misapprehension. The word "atónico" is no longer recognized by the Real Academia Española. The entry on the printed 2001 version directs the reader to the word "átono" (243). The entry for "átono" gives the concept's Greek origin and denotes the word's specific use in grammar as "inacentuado" ("unaccented"). The English translation of "átonico," "atonic," enriches our understanding of Las Casas' description as well as its entry into the contemporary writer's imaginary. The English translation and most common use of "atonic" identifies a syllable without accent or stress. This linguistic role signals the lack of voice during speech. Las Casas communicates the voicelessness of Behechio and Anacaona when they believed their lives to be in peril. It is interesting to note that the word holds a secondary meaning in the physiological domain: "Wanting tone; characterized by want of tone or nervous elasticity in the system." The word connotes the lack of muscular tone or nervous plasticity. The secondary meaning is deeply rooted in physical limitations, one void of any one distinctive tonality. This additional dimension to the definition of atonic brings together the two major descriptors for Amerindians in the Caribbean: voice and physicality or, rather, voicelessness and vulnerability. I would like to point out that all

[28] Bartolomé Colón is Christopher Columbus' (Colón) brother and person in charge during the latter's absence.

entries for “atónico” and “átono” in Spanish are adjectives. The Oxford English Dictionary does recognize a substantive word but the language in which Las Casas wrote does not. Las Casas doubles up on adjectives without a solid base – a noun – for whom he is portraying: “atónicos espantados.” The text manifests Las Casas’ insistence on description all while displaying the impossibility of concretizing Amerindian experience or existence.

The wonders (“maravillas había oído” [440]) Las Casas reports to have heard the first time Anacaona appears in his texts find their apex in Chapter IX of Book II. The chapter encapsulates Anacaona’s life and death as well as the mechanics at work in the clash of cultures. Las Casas’ description of the attack on Anacaona and her court’s death lays the ground for its echo across history:

> Tenía concertado que los de caballo cercasen la casa y los de fuera y dentro estuviesen aparejados, y que cuando él pusiese la mano en una pieza de oro que tenía a los pechos colgada, comenzasen a atar a los señores que dentro estaban y a Anacaona, primero secadas las espaldas, y después hiciesen lo que más les estaba mandando. *Ipse dixit et facta sunt omnia.* (237)

> Now, the plan was for the horsemen to surround the house and wait for the signal inside: the comendador was to put a hand on a gold piece he wore around his neck and his men would then draw their swords, tie up the Indian princes—including Anacaona—and wait for further orders. *Ipse dixit et facta sunt omnia* (Collard, 98).

Las Casas recounts how Bartolomé Colón had orchestrated to give horse-mounted men a signal by touching the golden necklace he was wearing. Las Casas displays a powerful image. Gold, power, and language are forever entwined in his account of history. An Amerindian group of characters are sentenced via the very material that fueled the desire to conquer the New World: gold. Alternative readings of the historical events following the so-called discovery of the New World (e.g. religious conversion) could not discard the fact that materials goods and foodstuffs were sought through various means and sent back to Spain. Las Casas himself cites greed and hypocrisy in his condemnation of those who abused Amerindians. I will come back to Las Casas' criticism at the end of this section. For now, let us focus on Las Casas' narration of the massacre.

I am particularly interested in the Latin phrase following Bartolomé Colón's mandate: "*Ipse dixit et facta sunt omnia"*: "He spoke and all was there." This sentence presents Colón in a godly position of power who reigns over creation and destruction. Las Casas describes omnipotent speech and yet it was the finger upon the gold that sets off the massacre. The concept of non-verbal communication reverberates in the text, as Las Casas repeats it. Anacaona and 50 of her court members stare at the men who surround them. They look at the Spaniards and await cues so as to know how to respond. In particular, they expect Colón to speak ("esperan la habla del comendador mayor" [238]). Colón carries out the plan orchestrated and explained by Las Casas:

> No habla, sino pone en la joya que a los pechos tenía la mano; […] sacan sola a Anacaona maniatada; pónense a la puerta del caney o casa grande gentes armadas, que no salga nadie; pegan fuego, arde la casa, quémanse

> vivos los señores y reyes en sus tierras, desdichados, hasta quedar todos, con la paja y la madera, hechos brasa. (237-8)

> But the comendador does not speak; instead, he puts his hand on the jewel on his chest; [...] Anacaona alone is let outside; armed men guard the door of the *caney* to keep anyone from leaving; they set fire to the house, burning alive all those kings who, together with the wood and straw, were soon turned into burning embers. (98)

The preposition "sino" ("but," "but rather") redirects Colón's commands. He does not speak ("No habla") but rather responds to the anticipation of Anacaona's court with a physical gesture of touching his golden and bejeweled necklace. The signal holds the previously agreed referent of the Amerindians' apprehension as well as their ensuing death. Anacaona's hands are tied and she is taken out of the room. No other person leaves the room. Armed guards secure the room and set it on fire. Las Casas' direct, factual phrases give an almost mechanical and unavoidable account of events ("pegan fuego, arde la casa, quémanse vivos los señores y reyes en sus tierras"). Lords who are kings in their own realms are burned alive. Men, hay, and wood meet the same fate as they end up as incandescent embers. Las Casas' addendum to the Latin Vulgate's "ipse dixit et facta sunt" describes an end rather than genesis. Thus Colón's words mark the end of those closest to Anacaona and the leaders of their realms. Colón's gesture also signals the source of colonial violence and the moment's reverberation across history, as their death is reimagined and presented time and time again. Édouard Glissant, for example, as I hold in this chapter's last section, will echo the link between burning embers and speech.

Las Casas does not detail Anacaona's death in the same manner he does her court. He does account, however, for why her death was different: "a la reina y señora Anacaona, por hacelle honra, la ahorcaron" (238). Anacaona's hanging sets her apart in recognition of her noble station. The head of her people is symbolically and physically impaired permanently, leaving the rest of the body unattended. The form of her death also happens to crush her vocal apparatus. Anacaona, who Las Casas had described as very courtly in her speech in an earlier chapter ("muy notable mujer, muy prudente, muy graciosa y palaciana en sus hablas y artes y meneos" [442]), is unable to retrieve air from the lungs that supplied her speech. Her most acclaimed quality is directly annihilated at the source. Anacaona's sudden death and Las Casas' terse portrayal become crystallized in the work of Caribbean authors who write about the moment and protract it in an attempt to tie the loose ends of history.

The non-verbal communication of Spaniards – including Las Casas' own chronicling shortcomings – exercises power over Amerindian life and death. Las Casas himself can neither justify nor explain the massacre that takes away Anacaona's life. He holds not only Bartolomé Colón responsible but also Nicolás de Ovando, the highest ranked Spanish official on the island. The latter claims to have rebuked the Spaniards who have been cruel to the natives. Las Casas cannot find proof of Ovando's disapproval of Colón's actions and cites Ovando in claiming that the massacre was in anticipation of an attack, showing Ovando to be in contradiction with himself.[29] Las Casas writes of

[29] The events leading to Anacaona's death by hanging resonates the end of Cuauhtémoc, the last ruler of Tenochtitlan. Spanish Conquistador Hernán Cortés takes him prisoner after the fall of Tenochtitlan and hangs him on the way to Honduras after rumors circulated that he and other Mexica noble prisoners were planning an insurrection. For

Ovando that he speaks as a blind man ("habla como hombre ciego" [239]). This sensorial simile tells the reader that Ovando speaks as if he had not witnessed or had knowledge of the events that took place. In this light, the massacre is a non-event and the people who burned become non-persons. Anacaona's court is erased from Ovando's purview and consequently from his official records. Furthermore, Las Casas adds that Ovando fills his writings with "ripio" ("habla como ciego y que hinche todo su escribir de ripio, sea cualquiera" [239]).[30] That is, Las Casas accuses Ovando of deliberately inflating his works with superfluous words and phrases. Ovando's words are trite or empty. He voids the existence and reality of the massacre only to load linguistic and conceptual falsehoods. The worthlessness of language used by figures of power such as Ovando leaves him a suspect figure.

Nebrija's dictum that language is the partner of empire encapsulates the conceptual forces governing colonial events. Las Casas' own writing lets slip the impotence of language or the speaker's unwillingness to grasp. Language is indeed complicit in empire. Nebrija's "recordación y memoria" (recalling and memory), however, fail. He fails to remember that language can also haunt. To be sure, twentieth century writers who write about Anacaona contend with the invisibilization and linguistic maneuvering present in Las Casas' account.

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more information see Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (1576).

[30] *Diccionario de la lengua española*, "ripio": "Palabra o frase inútil o superflua que se emplea viciosamente con el solo objeto de completar el verso, o de darle la consonancia o asonancia requerida." "Conjunto de cosas inútiles dichas de palabra o por escrito."

1.2 Language and the grammar of conquest

Jean Métellus' 1986 play carries Anacaona's name and yet the reader/viewer has access to a range of characters' viewpoints. We are privy not only to dialogues but also to surreptitious asides. Though the leading Métellus specialist, Ginette Adamson, has noted the playwright's interest in Haiti's history, no in-depth analysis of the play exists to date. Jean Métellus is born in 1937 in Haiti's city of Jacmel, a place known as Yaquimel under Behecchio's reign (Hall, 139). Métellus goes on to teach mathematics in a lycée from 1957 to 1959. He immigrates to the French capital in 1959 following the François Duvalier suppression of union leaders, a role Métellus exercised. Métellus begins to study medicine and linguistics and becomes a leader in his field (Adamson 2004, 364). The author's scientific work on linguistic neurology eclipses his already vast literary corpus.[31] He publishes 11 novels, over two dozen collections of poetry, numerous essays, and five plays by the time of his death in 2014. Métellus' literary works display a keen interest in exploring the country he left behind as a young man. In *Anacaona* (1986), the Haitian author reimagines Haiti's first great character to reach mythical proportions and projects it to the stage. Métellus' Anacaona is a mature ruler whose daughter is now an adult herself (or at least old enough to consider marriage).

My analysis touches on the value of language and the inheritance of memory. I examine the dynamics of Anacaona's language in the first part of this section. In the second, I focus on Métellus' portrayal of Amerindian and African interrelations. This first

[31] Métellus' official website itemizes over 180 scientific publications, his participation in a dozen volumes on various subjects, more than twenty years' worth of conference presentations, and the direction of over 50 dissertations and theses. For more information, see http://www.jeanmetellus.com/menu/notices-biographiques-et-litteraires/bibliographie-scientifique/

section highlights Anacaona's carefully negotiated use of language. I demonstrate the generative capacity of her words and songs. I argue that her use of language regulates her people and the natural world. The Spaniards' arrival imposes a culture of profit that devalues the value of her speech. I thus present a text that contradicts Édouard Glissant's interpretation of *langue* versus *langage*, where one understands in one's language – and not in the language that is spoken to us. In this sense, the language of Métellus' Anacaona shows us the impossibility of translation from one *langue* to another when undergirded by power.

Queen Anacaona's subjects hold her "chant" in high regard. Songs such as the one she performed at her wedding to Caonabo, "J'annonce et je rassemble," are known throughout Haïti – Quisqueya – Bohio (35).[32] A variety of characters link her "chant" with her being queen throughout the play, as if her ability to reign over the word translated into her reigning over the land:

> DEUXIÈME INDIEN. Sa voix s'enroulait autour de l'assistance
>
> Envoûtait femmes et hommes
>
> On titubait après l'avoir écoutée
>
> Voilà comment cette femme devint Reine:
>
> par le verbe
>
> par la danse
>
> par le chant (35)

[32] Métellus uses these alternative, village names for the conglomerate of cacicazgos Anacaona inherits.

SECOND INDIAN. Her voice rolled around the audience

Bewitching men and women alike

We stumbled and reeled after hearing her

That was how the woman became queen:

through the word

through dance

through song (379)

Métellus nullifies her blood rights by making her speech the source of her reign. Anacaona, insofar as she is able to reify her status, appears to embody language. She, however, is indefinable. Her subjects express her ineffable nature and, in so doing, confirm her unparalleled use of language.[33] Words cannot adequately apprehend Anacaona while her speech overpowers those who hear her. The way in which Anacaona wields language gives her words the power to create and persuade. Her speeches are magnetic to such degree that she draws in both the natural world and her subjects. Métellus conflates the effect of Anacaona's words with a fertilizing agent. Indeed, some of her subjects report the drawing force of her words and suggest an inherent drive to create. Passing references such as "Un essaim d'hommes nobles se courbait à pieds, ils voulaient répudier leurs épouses pour avoir la joie d'ensemencer son ventre" reveal a

[33] "Si vous rencontrez un homme capable d'évoquer en plein soleil, à l'heure du midi et par un jour éclatant de printemps, à l'aide de mots, à l'aide de simples mots un soir d'été avec sa pleine lune, son champ d'étoiles, ses insectes fantomatiques, aux ailes jaunes, aux antennes rouges, aux yeux de braise / Alors celui-là, qui a ce pouvoir sur les mots / Pourra décrire la Reine Anacaona" (35). / Should you meet a man at the height of the / midday sun on a dazzling spring day capable of using plain words to describe a summer / evening's full moon, a field of stars, ghostly / insects with gilded wings, red antennae, and / eyes burning like coals / That man, who wields power over words / Could describe Queen Anacaona." (379)

crucial rapport between Anacaona and her role vis-à-vis the island (35)[34]: Anacaona becomes an avatar of mother nature. Her words boast the power of seeds and pheromones in that she catalyzes actions and procreation. Métellus' portrayal of Anacaona as mother nature is problematic in its repetition of the woman's body as nature-womb trope. The fact that Anacaona not only speaks but also that she possesses the latent power of destruction modifies the stereotype. The reader bears witness to an androgynous and malleable power that can act for the creation *or* destruction of life. Anacaona's confidante and oracle Altabeira tells her she needs to sing and awaken both her husband's Caonabo's ire and that of the realm in order to defeat the Spaniards:

> ALTABEIRA. Reine de tous les Sambas
>
> Reine des fleurs et Fleur des Reines
>
> Votre chant servira
>
> À mettre debout les hommes du pays
>
> À ébranler les vivants
>
> À ressusciter nos fils
>
> À donner la parole aux arbres, aux animaux,
>
> À donner une voix aux pierres, aux ruisseaux, aux étangs
>
> À faire trembler cette terre sous les pieds de l'Amiral
>
> À faire hurler la mer contre les bateaux des étrangers
>
> À faire vivre ! (39)

[34] "A swarm of noblemen were bent at her feet, / offering to repudiate their wives for the / pleasure of seeding her belly" (379).

ALTABEIRA. Queen of all the sambas

Queen of flowers and flower of queens

Your song will serve

To bring the men of this land to their feet

To stir the living

To breathe life back into our sons

To give the gift of speech to our trees, our animals

To give voice to our stones, our streams, our lakes

To shake the ground beneath the Admiral's feet

To make the sea scream at the foreigners' boats

To help us live! (383)

Anacaona speaks and sings for the voiceless. She advocates for her people as well as the island's natural make up ("arbres," "animaux," "pierres," "ruisseaux," "étangs"). Her chant will make the earth tremble and the seas turn against the boats of the intruders. Her voice will make the landscape come alive. Anacaona reigns over nature in that she provokes its blossoming, reproduction, and could will its revolt.

The triangulation of Anacaona's person, language, and nature announce her defeat, as language is nullified by the new grammar forced upon the island. Métellus encapsulates the power of language and the reigning order in pre-Columbian history within the character of Anacaona. He dramatizes the clash of cultures and shows their incompatibility – to the detriment of cultures native to the Americas. I suggest that Métellus exercises the full semantic weight of the concept of grammar. By grammar, I mean not only the system of a language but also the transferred sense as defined by the

Oxford English Dictionary: “The fundamental principles or rules of an art or science.” The grammar of elements that govern the two main groups in Métellus’ text (that is, Amerindian ruling groups on the one hand and European naval officers and the clergy on the other) is untranslatable. The most immediate shift in grammar constitutes the new order imposed by the foreigners and their razing premises, commodities, and persons. The Spaniards take over Cacique Guakanagarik’s domain and hold its inhabitants and the territory hostage, when not eliminated. The linguistic grammar brought by the Spaniards spoils communication and the power of Anacaona’s words. This slow but long-lasting consequence of differently-valued language truncates the deeply-rooted and far-reaching effect of Anacaona’s words. Her speeches constitute hope and a promise. Her previously mentioned wedding song, “J’annonce et je rassemble,” points to her powers of assembly and the trust in the continued future she symbolizes. Frère Buyl, a Spanish clergyman, knows Anacaona’s repute and recognizes the threat she poses :

FRÈRE BUYL. Cette femme est à craindre en effet

Car il est dit « Au commencement était le Verbe

Tout fut par lui

Sans lui rien ne fut

De tout être il était la vie

Et la vie était la lumière des hommes…

Le Verbe était la lumière véritable…

Et le Verbe s’est fait chair »

Prenons garde que le sien ne s’incarne

Et ne galvanise l’ardeur de ses frères

C’est ainsi d’ailleurs qu’elle est devenue Reine
Qu’elle a supplanté tous les descendants de son vieux frère
mort Bohéchio,
Par la puissance du dire
Tout sauvages qu’ils sont, ils ont une connaissance intuitive
du verbe
Il faudra sûrement se débarrasser d’elle
…
Par son verbe Anacaona est le principal adversaire de
l’évangélisation
Il faut la rendre inoffensive le plus vite possible
Et qu’aucune colombe n’aille lui porter des nouvelles de
son époux ! (92-3)

BROTHER BUYL. The woman is indeed to be feared
For it is written “In the beginning was the Word
All things were made by him;
and without him was not any thing made that was made.
In him was life; and the life was the light of men
The Word was the true light…
And the Word was made flesh”
Let us care lest her word be made flesh
And galvanise her brothers’ ardour
Indeed, this is how she became Queen

> Supplanting all the descendants of her aged
>
> brother Bohechío, now dead
>
> By the power of her words
>
> Savages they may be but they have an intuitive
>
> grasp of the Word
>
> We will be rid of her
>
> ...
>
> Anacaona's words make her the arch-enemy of evangelism
>
> We must neutralize her as swiftly as possible
>
> And may no dove bring her news of her husband! (436-7)

His religion and training as a priest informs Frère Buyl's belief in and, more importantly, his distrust of the Word's incarnation. He fears that Anacaona's speeches will galvanize her people into action. It is especially important for her to remain ignorant of her husband's death, for the news would embolden her directives and attempt another attack such as that in La Navidad. Frère Buyl and other representatives of the Spanish Crown wish to abort the genesis of Anacaona's people. They, too, are complicit in the description of Anacaona's language use as analogous to speaking and, in so doing, creating the nation.

Métellus' *Anacaona* undergirds the productive power of speech such as referenced by Glissant. The Martinican writer remarks that "crier" – a cry, shout, or yell – impels creation ("créer") in the act of naming. The creole word's polysemy seems to inform the Haitian playwright's impression of Anacaona. She holds to her belief in language until her very end. She tells her confidante Altabeira her continued faith in the

change that language can affect all it touches : "Marchons d'un pas ferme vers l'avenir / Avec la complicité des mots / Ils ont la force de métamorphoser / Les objets qu'ils touchent / Les soucis qu'ils frôlent" (47).[35] Her stubborn belief in the power of speeches, communication, and her inability to learn the new grammar of colonial force leads to her ultimate demise. Nameless speakers make passing references to the gods' obsolete ability to transmit their wishes ("Les étrangers sont là et le ciel reste muet ! / Que ferons-nous sans vous, ô dieux, ô Zémès ?" [29][36]), the oracle and advisor to Anacaona tells her "Dans les temps de désordre et de gigantesques vibrations / Les paroles n'ont pas le même sens qu'en temps de paix" (52).[37] Those around her discern a change in the rhythm of their lives and the operation of language. Anacaona notices a change in linguistic valence but cannot see the new order and values of linguistic exchange.[38] When asked where she places her trust ("Si vous perdez confiance en vos dieux / Et si vous n'avez pas confiance en vos armes / Où placez-vous votre confiance ?" [109][39]) her answer continues to be that of communication: "Dans l'échange qui permet de s'expliquer / De

[35] "Let us step out to meet the future with a bold gait, / With the complicity of words / They have the power to bring about change / In the objects they touch / The concerns they skim" (390)
[36] "The foreigners are here and the skies remain silent! / What will we do without you, O gods, O Zemis?" (373)
[37] "In times of upheaval and vast vibrations / Words do not carry the same meaning as in times of peace." (395)
[38] Anacaona exclaims "Ô terre silencieuse, vertigineuse !" (47) ("O silent, dizzying land!" [390]) and later "Ô peuple sans repos / Tu seras vaincu par un peuple sans parole / Qui ne fonde sa gloire que sur la naïveté des autres, sur leur innocence." (76) ("O people without repose / You are to be defeated by men not of their word / Whose glory is merely rooted in the naivety of / Others, and their innocence" [419])
[39] "If you have lost trust in your gods / And have no trust in your weapons / What do you trust in?" (453)

comprendre, de se faire entendre" (ibid).[40] Her failure to recognize the new grammar upon the island signals her end and that of her people. She believes in the possibility of mutual understanding. Her inability to realize a profound difference beyond linguistic difference makes her oblivious to the collective urge that drives the cultural grammar of the foreigners, namely the determination to obtain gold and controlling the island's resources.

Métellus works both along and against language. The trained linguistic neurologist's sensibility to the centrality and fickleness of language allows him to forge a vision of history where Anacaona's linguistic gift and her fate are inextricably intertwined. The Spanish invaders puncture the tradition of faith in language and its congregating faculty with the introduction of worthless language. Their falsehoods and consequent desecration of both land and human bodies set in motion the disunion of the people and the physical dismemberment of its individuals. The sophistry displayed by the Spaniards' language – most notably their asides – reveals their true intentions or reactions to the audience or reader. It is not a matter of legitimate misunderstanding but rather a willing alteration of linguistic value. Whereas Anacaona and her people value the productive and nurturing aspect of language, the foreigners focus on profit. Explicit references to language such as Frère Buyl's nod to the generative function of *le Verbe* are at odds with the religious concept and their putative reasons for their arrival to the New World. Anacaona wonders "Quel rapport y a-t-il entre l'or et leur dieu ? / Que présage

[40] "In dialogue and mutual exchange / Leading to understanding and our voice being heard." (453)

cette croix qu'ils portent tous sur le cœur ?" (40).[41] The actions of the invaders bespeak the veracity of their intentions: gold concretizes their interest in material wealth.

Yaquimex, "Résistant indien, habitant de Xaragua," recognizes a rift between the role of a poet and that of a leader: "Le poète naît Roi, c'est pourquoi vous êtes Reine… Mais il ne peut être Roi qu'en cessant d'être poète" (105).[42] Yaquimex resounds both Anacaona's subjects and her enemies' allegation regarding her rise to power. Anacaona becomes queen thanks to her initial capacity as the people's poet. It is Yaquimex's suggestion that the role of king is sovereign to all others that elucidates "le Verbe"'s ultimate impotence. Interestingly enough, Yaquimex's declaration further suggests a gendered difference between roi and reine, where in order to be a "true" roi, a reine must cease to perform any other role that takes away from the full weight of the roi, a true potentate. Métellus entitles his play after Anacaona and yet she is far from a relentless heroine. In fact, Métellus opens up the space where Caonabo's role presents a much more tenable historical alternative of Amerindian culture in the Caribbean. Métellus writes Caonabo in the style of medieval *chanson de geste*:

> CAONABO. Caonabo le brave, le preux, le coléreux
>
> Caonabo, terreur des étrangers de tous les horizons
>
> Caonabo aux mains nourries d'orgueil, de sang, de fierté
>
> Caonabo à la parole redoutable de vaillance et violence
>
> Vous délivrera des Blancs qui nous dévorent

[41] "What is the bond between gold and their god? / What portents lie in the crosses they bear on their chests?" (383)
[42] "Poets are born kings, hence why you are queen… / But they can only reign by renouncing poetry." (449)

Debout, braves nytainos chargés de larmes et de mots! (42)

CAONABO. Caonabo the courageous, the fearless, the wrathful
Caonabo, the terror of foreigners wherever they may hail from
Caonabo, whose hands are steeped in blood and imperious pride
Caonabo, whose word is formidable in its valour and violence
Will deliver you from the white men who are devouring us
On your feet, faithful nytainos, with your burden of tears and words ! (385)

Recurring adjectives such as "le preux" and allusions to his heroic deeds tie Caonabo to the knightly tradition. Caonabo's people laud his bravery and physical prowess and see it as a reflection of his people's might.[43] Texts of the genre such as *La Chanson de Roland* illustrate the canonization of loosely based historical characters into foundational myths. Roland's *haut faits*, the focus on a collective struggle, and a homeland free of foreign invaders echo in Métellus' portrayal of Caonabo. Caonabo's "braves nytainos," too, evoke the feudal hierarchy of Charlemagne's vassals. It is Caonabo's hallmark quality,

[43] It is perhaps not by coincidence that Caonabo's fierce qualities are partly explained by his Arawak origins and the fact that he is from what is now Guadeloupe, an island that has jokingly – though historically – held the reputation as rougher (as in less civilized and kind) than its counterpart Martinique. The Haitian author seems to tie contemporary perceptions of Guadeloupians to Caonabo's mythical persona, making them inheritors of his and his people's characteristics.

his wrath, that retains the latent power of reification. His warring ways become the accent and cadence of his communication with the world. I would like to point out that Métellus denotes Caonabo's *parole* as formidable in courage and violence ("Caonabo à la parole redoutable de vaillance et violence"). I suggest that Caonabo's actions (his *geste*) may commence a dialogue with the Spaniards because they speak the language of physical aggression. Anacaona does not speak this language and is therefore unable to ever grasp the very inability to communicate with them. Others' grasp of the dilemma reveal Anacaona to be unfit and doomed to fail. Yaquimex joins the ranks of those who tell Anacaona that words are no longer to be trusted. In fact, he is the only character to tell her directly that the aggressors are not worth the most minuscule of value measurements: "La parole de ces hommes ne vaut pas une seule / racine de manioc, / Ni un seul épi de maïs" (111).[44] Yaquimex's direct and unequivocal statement in the language of Anacaona's country elucidates the complete demolition of her way of life: the language of fertility and production is no longer the reigning grammar of the island.

The eventual encounter between Anacaona and Nicolás de Ovando, the most powerful foreigner on the island ("Gouverneur espagnol"), epitomizes the futility of Anacaona's faith in "le / pouvoir / De communiquer, de parler, de mettre nos / sentiments en paroles" (159).[45] Ovando reiterates Frère Buyl's reference to le Verbe's origins but adds the declaration of careless ignorance: "Il est vrai que je n'ai jamais bien compris, je me / contente de répéter selon les moments" (160).[46] Ovando's rote statement surprises

[44] "The white man's word is not worth a manioc root / Not a single ear of corn." (455)
[45] "the power / of dialogue, of speech, of turning emotions / into words" (501)
[46] "True, I have never fully grasped the meaning of the words, I simply repeat them at the right moment" (502)

Anacaona, who links speaking well with catalyzing positive actions ("Vous vous contentez de répéter sans comprendre! / Vous qui parlez si bien!" [160]).[47] It is not clear how the two (or the conversation with Frère Buyl, for that matter) are able to carry on a conversation. Métellus' play toys with the suspension of disbelief. It is up to the audience/reader to reconcile listening to a historical conversation with the breakdown of linguistic communication. Their exchange lays bare the centrality of language and the ultimate defeat of Amerindian oral communication. The dialogue between her and Ovando will be the last she experiences before the monologue delivered as she hangs. With her last words she announces the great difference between their respective legacies: she will be remembered for resisting "pendant près de onze lunes" while the transgressors will be cursed by their descendants. Métellus' text privileges the word and, along with it, the way in which it carries (and effaces) memory. Anacaona realizes that dying in this way will make her "la grande Dame d'Ayti" (168). Her only regret is not living to be "Reine des Marrons nègres et indiens" (168). Anacaona holds fast to her belief in language. Her purview, however, expands to include the island's native inhabitants *and* the African population brought by the Spaniards who also refuse the violent imposition of their grammar. A nameless witness describes her death thus:

> L'INDIEN. Vêtue d'un pagne de coton blanc orné de fleurs, la
>
> langue pendante et les lèvres bleues
>
> Les seins entourés de colliers de fleurs
>
> Une mousse noire jaillissait de sa bouche teintant ses

[47] "You simply repeat them without understanding! / You, with all your fine words!" (502)

guirlandes et son pagne
Tandis que le vent disséminait ses cheveux dans toutes les directions
Avec une violence et une insistance telles qu'on le croyait chargé de transmettre un adieu muet (168-9)

THE INDIAN. Clad in a white cotton nagua adorned with flowers, her
tongue swollen and her lips blue
Her breasts ringed with wreaths of flowers
Black froth spilled from her mouth, staining her garlands and her nagua as the wind streamed her hair all around
Violently, insistently, as if to transmit a mute farewell (510)

The nameless "Indien" focuses on her physical remains and pays particular attention to Anacaona's speaking apparatus: "la langue pendante et les lèvres bleues." The dark substance that springs from her mouth stains her loincloth and the flower wreaths around her neck. The Amerindian body is conspicuously absent from the dialogue. This could be due to the fact that there are bodies actively involved in the delivery of the text. It is, after all, a play meant to take place on the stage. Anacaona's lifeless body brings the heretofore absent body to the front of the audience/reader's attention. The witness of her death translates the physical appearance of her remains as a message of sorts. The wind

disseminates her hair in all directions in such a violent and insistent way that it carries a semantic charge of "un adieu muet." Anacaona's vocal impotence attains potency at the moment of her death. The loss of her physical vitality transforms into an itinerant, successful message. Written language plays no part in Métellus' text – and yet the "mousse noire" stemming from Anacaona's lips leaves behind a message on her person. The dark foam could act as writing ink.[48] Its color elicits the skin color of the "Marrons nègres et indiens" who will write her story. The foam conjures the image of water reaching shore, perhaps alluding to the African arrivals she never reigned over but who will nonetheless inherit her island's history. The wind – which carries sound and runs through her hair – howls as she dies. Her body joins the elements in relaying a message.

The play's dénouement reveals Métellus' preoccupation with the dissemination of Amerindian memory to the arriving African populations and the unresolved matter of language. We thus move on to the second part of this section and examine perceived and constructed ethnicities. I maintain that Métellus creates a narrative that ties in populations of African descent into Amerindian history. Métellus rewrites historical accounts beyond creative license and as such displays his interest in a literal rewriting of history. Yaquimex, Anacaona's aforementioned assistant and would be "Résistant indien," does

[48] The similarity between my reading of Anacaona's blood-as-ink foam and Martiel's death in Congolese writer Sony Labou Tansi's *La vie et demie,* in addition to suggesting Métellus' reading of the novel, would support Ginette Adamson's statement that Métellus' reader can discern a nod to political struggles around the world: "Si Jacques Stéphen Alexis a rapproché le génocide des Indiens à la lutte de l'indépendance qui se jouait à Vertières en 1802, Jean Métellus en établit le lien avec le présent, celui d'Haïti aujourd'hui. Le spectateur pourra lui-même faire le rapport avec d'autres événements contemporains, celui du Rwanda, de la Bosnie, de l'Irlande ou de l'Algérie. C'est un appel aux opprimés qu'ils doivent s'engager, mais aussi un réveil des Occidentaux pour qu'ils prennent conscience du rôle qu'ils ont joué et jouent encore dans l'histoire et leur part de responsabilité" (1996 249).

not appear until Acte 3 – Scène 2 (of 4 Actes). Yaquimex shares the news that the Spaniards have brought another group of people to the island in order to make up for the rapidly decreasing Amerindian population, who are less and less able to successfully cultivate the land (98). The priestess and "Confidente d'Anacaona" Altabeira qualifies the new workforce by adding "Les Espagnols les fouettent, les battent / Ils paraissent plus forts que nous" (98).[49] Yaquimex's contribution to the play pushes for the interaction between Amerindians and enslaved Africans. He claims to have communicated with them "par signes." More importantly, Yaquimex tells Anacaona that they communicated their plans to go along until they get a read on the country's landscape ("Ils m'ont laissé entendre qu'ils font semblant d'être gais jusqu'à ce qu'ils connaissent bien le pays" [99]).[50] Seeing them toil and somehow communicating with them gives him the certitude that the Spaniards will not submit the enslaved Africans for very long:

YAQUIMEX. Avec ces Noirs les Espagnols n'iront pas loin
Ils sont plus résistants que nous
S'ils rient le jour et chantent en travaillant
Le soir ils se réunissent et parlent d'échapper à leur sort
Ce sont eux qui m'ont donné l'idée
Qu'on peut se battre contre les Espagnols
En se réfugiant dans les montagnes (99)

YAQUIMEX. The Spanish will not go far with these black men

[49] "The Spaniards whip and beat them / They seem stronger than us" (442)
[50] "They have given me to understand they pretend to be happy until they have learned the lie of the land by heart" (443)

They are more recalcitrant than us

They may laugh by day and sing as they work

But by night they meet to plot their escape

They were the ones who gave me the idea

Of fighting the Spanish

By seeking refuge in the mountains (443)

Yaquimex does not question the notion that African bodies would be better suited for physical exertion. Instead, he espouses a view held by advocates of native people's humanity, namely Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. Las Casas argued infamously that indigenous peoples of the Americans were not suited for arduous tasks and were, in fact, weaker than the most fragile of European nobility.[51] Yaquimex's report on Africans aligns him with the rationale that aided in the continued acceptance of African bondage. I suggest that the representation of Amerindian concession to African physical dominance is part of a larger, nuanced project on the side of Métellus to tie the African narrative to Amerindian history. Métellus' play incorporates historical facts and cultural information to the fictitious rendition. The historical details present in the textual play would be lost in the theatrical depiction. One such detail that becomes a central part of the character

[51] "Son así mesmo las gentes más delicadas, flacas y tiernas en complisión y que menos pueden sufrir trabajos, y que más fácilmente mueren de cualquiera enfermedad, que ni hijos de príncipes y señores entre nosotros, criados en regalos y delicada vida, no son más delicados que ellos, aunque sean de los que entre ellos son de linaje de labradores." (*Brevísima relación*, 76) / "At the same time, they are among the least robust of human beings: their delicate constitutions make them unable to withstand hard work or suffering and render them liable to succumb to almost any illness, no matter how mild. Even the common people are no tougher than princes or than other Europeans born with a silver spoon in their mouths and who spend their lives shielded from the rigours of the outside world. They are also among the poorest people on the face of the earth…" (Griffin, 10)

Yaquimex is his assertion (displayed above) that the newly-arrived Africans thought to escape to the hills *before* the concept occurred to the peoples native to the island: "*Ce sont eux qui m'ont donné l'idée* / Qu'on peut se battre contre les Espagnols / En se réfugiant dans les montagnes" (99, my emphasis). Taking refuge in the mountains, however, was chronicled as an Amerindian practice long before the arrival of the first African slaves by figures such as Las Casas. Indeed, Las Casas mentions this very concept in the section regarding Hispaniola of the *Brevísima relación*: "Y porque toda la gente que huir podía se encerraba en los montes y subía a las sierras huyendo de hombres tan inhumanos…" (82).[52] Las Casas' writings communicate that not only was this escaping to the mountains an occasional phenomenon but also that *all who could* did this ("toda la gente que huir podía").[53] Not only does the cultural information Métellus provides throughout *Anacaona* point to his having researched Amerindian chronicles but he also explicitly references Las Casas via Frère Buyl's encounter with Anacaona.[54]

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[52] "And, since all those who could do so took to the hills and mountains in order to escape the clutches of these merciless and inhuman butchers…" (Griffin, 16-7)

[53] In fact, Las Casas writes that fleeing to the mountains also took place in Cuba: "Después de que todos los indios de la tierra desta isla fueron puestos en la servidumbre y calamidad de los de la Española, viéndose morir y perecer sin remedio todos, comenzaron unos a huir a los montes…" (*Brevísima relación*, 93) / "Once all the inhabitants of this island found themselves in the same hopeless predicament as had those on Hispaniola — that is, they were either enslaved or foully murdered — some began to flee into the hills while others were in such despair that they took their own lives" (Griffin, 29-30).

[54] Frère Buyl tells Anacaona "C'est le grand Las Casas qui a jugé nécessaire d'éviter aux Indiens qui sont de même couleur que nous le travail de la terre et de l'imposer à ces Nègres qui sont propres aux durs travaux" / "The great Las Casas deemed it necessary to spare the Indians, who share our skin colour, the need to work the soil and impose it instead on the Negroes who are suited to hard labour" (464) and then "C'est le grand Las Casas qui a recommandé à la couronne d'Espagne de soulager l'infortune de votre peuple et de faire peiner à sa place ces animaux noirs, dénués de raison" (121) / "The great Las Casas made recommendations to the Spanish crown that your people's misfortunes

Métellus' rewriting of chronicled history connects the African practice of marronage to older, Amerindian practices. Resorting to the land for refuge, marooning, would thus constitute the continuation of a native practice. Métellus plants the seeds of the inchoate Haitian nation.

Why else, then, omit such a key component of the history of Amerindian life and death? One possible answer is the aforementioned intent to weave African elements into Amerindian history by assigning their role primacy in the timeline of Amerindian decline. Métellus does not mention the chronicled escape to the mountains practiced by Amerindian people in *Anacaona*. His reader would be equally shrouded by the altered version of history presented as an audience member on-stage production. Yaquimex embodies Métellus' historical conflation of Amerindian and African inhabitants. He ends the play with Yaquimex letting out the battle cry "Aya bombé, Aya bombé!" (172). The character who intends to join the Africans who have fled to the mountains closes with words of resistance. The words spoken by Yaquimex will resonate throughout Haiti's history. Marie-Agnès Sourieau and Kathleen M. Balutansky reflect on the various difficult episodes that Haiti and its people have endured throughout history in *Écrire en pays assiégé*:

> *La liberté ou la mort !* Ces mots jaillissant du désespoir des Taïnos – les indigènes originaires d'*Ayti* – quand ils se sont rendu compte que les Espagnols étaient venus prendre leurs terres et les asservir. Cet appel a été repris par les esclaves africains lorsqu'ils ont compris leur sort dans le

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should be eased by having these black beasts, devoid of reason, labour in your stead." (464)

> nouveau monde. *Libète ou lanmò* est devenu ensuite le cri de ralliement pendant la révolution. (14)

> *Freedom or death !* These words formed the desperate cry of the Taïnos – the indigenous Haitians – when they realized that the Spaniards had come to take over their land and enslave them. *Libète ou lanmo* was also the cry of the African slaves when they took full measure of their enslavement in the New World. These words became the rallying call during the Revolution. (29)

Aya bombé, Aya bombé!: The Amerindian expression and its meaning – liberty or death – remains despite its indeterminate origins (e.g. Taino or Arawak). Much like the ghost of Anacaona and the vague smokes of the words she spoke, the cry for "liberty or death" comes back time and time again. Métellus himself answers a question posed by the nameless Amerindian who witnesses Anacaona's death, "Qui parlera d'elle?" (169): all those who answer "libète ou lanmò!" Métellus conflates Amerindian and African histories in the Caribbean. His play illustrates the belief in a shared past. The memory of conquest, subjugation, and destruction feeds his rewriting of history. This gesture points to the transformation of the Caribbean native into a series of interconnected networks where languages, cultures, histories, races, and ethnicities collide, cohabitate, and grow together. Anacaona disseminates her voice and it is writers like Métellus who recover and gather her call for revolt.

1.3 Writing as archeological device

Anacaona, Golden Flower (2005) centers around the eponymous Caribbean cacica and her coming of age. Her narrative takes place throughout the region of what is now Haiti and tells Anacaona's life story from before the rite of passage that marked her entrance into womanhood up until the attack on Spanish fort La Navidad, once she is wife to Caonabó (cacique of Xaraguá) and mother to their child. Author Edwidge Danticat was already an established, award-winning writer by the time she wrote Anacaona's story. The narrative unravels the unsettling, inexplicable changes preceding, during, and following the profound break in Anacaona's understanding of the world upon contact with Spanish conquistadors. Danticat's Anacaona articulates her experiences, projects her place in history, and illustrates the major cultural shift in the Caribbean (and, by extension, the rest of the so-called New World). Anacaona's first-person writing, speaking, and telling counteract the voiceless fragmentation displayed in earlier chronicler's texts.

Danticat tackles the dilemma of writing and recording this particular historical character's story before the narrative even begins. In an "Author's Note," Danticat lays out the unique nature of her heroine: "Unlike most other young women of the Royal Diary series, Anacaona did not read or write and would not have kept a diary in the traditional sense of written accounts of her daily life. Anacaona's Taíno people, however, had many other ways of recording things crucial to them" (3). Scholastic Inc.'s Royal Diaries series showcases the stories of major historical figures who held a royal place within their societies and has a geographic and temporal range from the Nile's Cleopatra, France's Eleanor, Russia's Catherine the Great, Angola's Nzingha, India's Jahanara, to

Hawaii's Kaiulani, and beyond. All the books from the Royal Diary series follow the literary device of a diary or epistolary novel. The reader encounters the royal figure's voice as a first-person narrator. The absence of script writing in Amerindian recording practices in the Caribbean poses a unique problem to creating a diary narrative in Danticat's book. Danticat addresses the significance of "areitos" – performances in both danced and spoken form – in a culture that lacked writing in the traditional sense of the word. She explains that this medium was used to communicate history and mythology in lieu of conventional writing.

Danticat's hints at other, visual possibilities of communication become explicit further down in the "Author's Note": "Even though the Taínos had no written language, they had petroglyphs – rock paintings and pictographs through which they kept records of their lives" (3). Danticat tells the reader about the existence of petroglyphs and other ways of recording indigenous existence onto the natural world. The lack of writing presents yet another layer of unattainability to already obfuscated pre-Columbian history. Creating narratives based on unofficial history and the visual remnants Amerindians left behind allows authors like Danticat to create a story within an imagined reality of a culture that no longer is. Danticat addresses the predicament of writing about those who did not write in the section following the main narrative entitled "About the Author":

> "Even though the Taínos had no written language," she explains, "they had images and symbols through which they told their stories. I see this diary as a series of images and symbols that could have been put away by a storyteller like Anacaona to be interpreted later. Taíno artifacts are being

> discovered all the time. With each piece found, the story of the Taíno people gets more and more specific, more and more defined." (189)

Danticat imagines the possibility of an Anacaona who inscribes "a series of images and symbols" much like the ones that have been found throughout the Caribbean.[55] Her vision extends to the optimism that we might one day access a more complete story of their daily lives. Danticat forges Anacaona's life story along the same lines. The main character's first entry details how she is able to record her days. Young Anacaona writes that her uncle Matunherí's weaver has created a papyrus-like cloth on which she can record her stories:

> Cuybio has found a way to blend cotton buds into a hard fabric on which I can record my stories, ballads, and some other knowledge that is important to our people. He has seen me many times carving symbols on the plaza walls outside the temple and has remarked that he must find yet another manner for Matunherí's niece, one of Xaraguá's possible future rulers, to record these symbols. (5)

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[55] Françoise de Graffigny's 1752 *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (original publication in 1747) seems to be a clear subtext of Danticat's *Anacaona, Golden Flower*. The epistolary novel follows Zilia's journey from Peru to France and, more importantly, her desire and attainment of knowledge, namely writing. The young woman "writes" to her would-be future husband Aza via "quipos," weaved knots, a traditional form of communication: "Au milieu de cet horrible bouleversement, je ne sais par quel heureux hasard j'ai conservé mes *quipos*. Je les possède, mon cher Aza ! C'est aujourd'hui le seul trésor de mon cœur, puisqu'il servira d'interprète à ton amour comme au mien; les mêmes nœuds qui t'apprendront mon existence, en changeant de forme entre mes mains, m'instruiront de ton sort. Hélas! par quelle voie pourrai-je les faire passer jusqu'à toi? Par quelle adresse pourront-ils m'être rendus? Je l'ignore encore; mais le même sentiment qui nous fit inventer leur usage nous suggérera les moyens de tromper nos tyrans." (21). Zilia hopes that her quipos will serve as interpreter for her emotions. Like Danticat's Anacaona, Zilia leaves the actual transmission for a later date and focuses instead on recording her impressions of both daily life and momentous events.

Much like Cuybio's blended cotton bud creation, Danticat heeds the imperative to "find yet another manner" to convey Anacaona's experience. She entwines the aforementioned "series of images and symbols" into the Western practice of journal writing. Danticat converts petroglyphs – the Caribbean's sole physical remainders of Amerindian existence – into a recording device on which Anacaona can voice her thoughts and from which the reader can access Amerindian life.[56]

Danticat's cognizance of the obfuscation of Haiti's Amerindian past and her receptiveness to its restoration evoke Glissant's pronouncement on the need to explore, meditate, and write about the past in the section "Le su, l'incertain" of *Le Discours antillais*:

> Le passé, notre passé subi, qui n'est pas encore histoire pour nous, est pourtant là (ici) qui nous lancine. La tâche de l'écrivain est d'explorer ce lancinement, de le révéler de manière continue dans le présent et l'actuel. Cette exploration ne revient donc ni à une mise en schémas ni à un pleur nostalgique. C'est à démêler un sens douloureux du temps et à le projeter à tout coup dans notre futur, sans le recours de ces sortes de plages temporelles dont les peoples occidentaux ont bénéficié, sans le secours de cette densité collective que donne d'abord un arrière-pays culturel ancestral. C'est ce que j'appelle *une vision prophétique du passé*. (226-7, Glissant's emphasis)

[56] As the word's Greek origin indicates, a petroglyph is a carving or inscription (glyph) on a rock (petro). I will examine their particular importance in the Caribbean – a region poor in written, pre-conquest records and rich in petroglyphs – in Chapter 3.

Conquest, genocide, slavery, and assimilation effectively produced a past that is "not-quite-history" throughout the Caribbean. Official, recorded history can be read, reviewed, and analyzed from various perspectives. The loss of atavistic languages, customs, and beliefs suspends in the air those whose ties were cut by the colonial project, be it conquest, slavery, or both. The void that is non-history, suggests Glissant, becomes a space that must necessarily be explored for it is only what could have been that will give insight into what might be today. It is this "vision prophétique du passé" that compels Caribbean writers. I understand this compulsion to write about the past and ponder about its details as a practice that allows the author to gain a deeper understanding of how history is made, lost, and how we arrive at the present moment. Danticat looks into an even more oblique space of non-history, one that relies on a few inscriptions and long-buried artifacts. Creating narratives necessitates conjuring the existence of both concrete lived experiences and individual characters as well as surmising what could have happened.

Writing biographical accounts from the position of historical knowledge (albeit the official version of Anacaona's revolt and death) and temporal distance creates an inverse phenomenon of Glissant's "vision prophétique du passé" whereby the characters foresee their cultural apocalypse. Authors such as Danticat and Thierry Petit le Brun – whose character Anacri I referenced in the Introduction – voice and depict Amerindian characters who unknowingly confront the beginning of their civilizations' ends. The reader encounters the characters' voices in the ever present. Our authors, however, write from a position and knowledge of *futur antérieur* where the characters' life-changing adventures and extraordinary accomplishments have expired from the timeline of both

author and reader. The framework of a current, Amerindian civilization that would sustain a deep, intimate, and authentic appreciation of both legacies and contemporary experiences has become obsolete. On the contrary, it is precisely the death of the culture that birthed their characters (based on real-life Anacaona in the case of Danticat, fiction in the case of Petit le Brun's Anacri) that opens the space of certain death and vague historicity. I suggest that Danticat and Petit le Brun, in writing from a position of those who will come to know death, place the objects of their writing into an unsettled, haunting position from which to contemplate the end of their world. At the same time, conjuring their civilization betrays mourning and the inclination to be a part of their world. In this sense, Danticat and Petit le Brun refuse to recognize the Caribbean's loss of its autochthonous inhabitants. Indeed, Petit le Brun and Danticat both write for young readers and yet this fact does not hinder their incorporation of delicate themes such as that of death. Danticat's text manifests this concept, which I call premonitory history, throughout the story.

Danticat's Anacaona has premonitory visions, dreams, and the eerie sensation that certain things will come to pass throughout her life. These sensations are sometimes aesthetic additions for the sake of the story, as when she sees two pairs of footprints (one large, one quite small) on the sand and later realizes they announced her uncle's passing and her pregnancy (105). More often than not, however, these sensations are related to her historically-accurate death, her husband's, or her people's. The rite of passage that commemorates her womanhood, for example, involves the tribe leader (Matunherí) – her uncle – cutting off her hair with a sharp object:

> For a moment I feared my uncle's hands would tremble and he would let the blade fall on my neck. Then I had one of those sensations that the ancestors might be speaking to me, and what they seemed to be telling me was that I might be in a situation like this again one day, but in that future moment something painful might be done to my neck. (27)

The character expresses the fear of a neck pain similar to the hanging that killed the historical Anacaona. In a more explicit reference, she has a nightmare of being taken away by the Kalinas, an enemy tribe whose practices are to "pillage and steal" and who also prepare the reader for the Spanish invaders ("I despise the Kalinas! They pillage and steal. I do understand wars and battles, but I don't understand seizing unearned property and innocent people. I never will!" [50]). Anacaona writes in her diary: "None of my dreams has frightened me as much as the one of the Kalinas taking me away, tying a rope around my neck, and hanging me from a tree" (50). Later, in Marién before the attack against the Spanish fort, Anacaona will see local men "hanging from trees near the plaza walls, the bodies dangling above our heads" (142). These foreshadowing nightmares give the young reader a glimpse of history – for Anacaona does not die within her narrative. Danticat's reader peers at the edge of history but are not thrown over altogether. Having access to Anacaona's thoughts and emotions humanizes the historical figure in the eyes of the young reader. The reader's exposure to violent and frightful events prepares them for the official story of her death, be it in the historical notes immediately following Danticat's text or elsewhere. The reader is required to consider the violence of history without the added stress of witnessing the death of the intimate conscience whose thoughts they have been reading.

As previously mentioned, Danticat begins Anacaona's narrative as a young girl. By the end of the narrative she has gotten married and is a young mother and ruler of Xaraguá as well as Managua, her husband's realm. The reader witnesses Anacaona's formative experiences, including violence and life-threatening events. It is interesting to note that Danticat's characters conform to the longstanding tradition of Amerindian self-immolation and suicide going back to early chroniclers' documents. Spanish Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, for example, writes that Amerindians, desperate to stop the many abuses they suffered at the hands of the Spaniards, resorted to suicide and taking the life of their loved ones.[57] I suggest, however, that Danticat's text imbues her characters with a complexity unseen in earlier texts such as that of Las Casas. This is especially clear in texts where violence is perpetrated by others (as opposed to acts of suicide). Las Casas' description of the brutal retaliation on Anacaona and her people display great pathos.[58]

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[57] "Después de que todos los indios de la tierra desta isla fueron puestos en la servidumbre y calamidad de los de la Española, viéndose morir y perecer sin remedio todos, comenzaron unos a huir a los montes, otros a ahorcarse de desesperados, y ahorcábanse maridos y mujeres, y consigo ahorcaban los hijos. Y por las crueldades de un español muy tirano (que yo conocí), se ahorcaron más de doscientos indios. Pereció desta manera infinita gente." (*Brevísima relación*, 93) / "Once all the inhabitants of this island found themselves in the same hopeless predicament as had those on Hispaniola — that is, they were either enslaved or foully murdered — some began to flee into the hills while others were in such despair that they took their own lives. Men and women hung themselves and even strung up their own children. As a direct result of the barbarity of one Spaniard (a man I knew personally) more than two hundred locals committed suicide, countless thousands in all dying this way." (Griffin, 29-30)

[58] "A todos los otros alancearon y metieron a espada con infinita gente, y a la señora Anacaona, por hacelle honra, ahorcaron. Y acaecía algunos cristianos, o por piedad o por cudicia, tomar algunos niños para mamparallos no los matasen, y poníanles a las ancas de los caballos; venía otro español por detrás y pasábalos con su lanza. Otro, si estaba el niño en el suelo, le cortaban las piernas con el espada. Alguna gente que pudo huir desta tan inhumana crueldad pasáronse a una isla pequeña que está cerca de allí ocho leguas en la mar, y el dicho gobernador condenó a todos éstos que allí se pasaron que fueses esclavos, porque huyeron de la carnicería." (*Brevísima relación*, 86-7) / "All the others were massacred, either run through by lances or put to the sword. As a mark of respect

He emphasizes that such cruelty could not have been merited by what he considers meek beings.[59] Whether Las Casas' affect constitutes a necessary rhetorical device to appeal to Prince Philip of Spain's graces or a genuine interest in Amerindian well-being, it nonetheless materializes as a subdued representation of voiceless subjects, effectively turning them into objects devoid of agency. By comparison, Danticat's Anacaona wonders to herself about other characters' emotional states, their thought processes, and asks them directly about their own suffering. Danticat's incorporation of Anacaona's interlocutors make her diary a plurivocal artifact of Amerindian realities. Anacaona writes of her deceased grandmother and of the enemy Kalinas' taking away women (alluding to but not quite putting into words the intimation of their sexual abuse). Her older brother Behechio's first wife Yoruba cannot bear the homesickness she feels and the fact that she becomes pregnant.[60] She takes her own life by ingesting "poisonous

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and out of deference to her rank, Queen Anacaona was hanged. When one or two Spaniards tried to save some of the children, either because they pitied them or perhaps because they wanted them for themselves, and swung them up behind them on to their horses, one of their compatriots rod up behind and ran them through with his lance. Yet another member of the governor's party galloped about cutting the legs off all the children as they lay sprawling on the ground. The governor even decreed that those who made their way to a small island some eight leagues distant in order to escape this bestial cruelty should be condemned to slavery because they had fled the carnage." (Griffin, 22)

[59] "Y más afirmo, que hasta que todas las muchedumbres de gentes de aquella isla fueron muertas y asoladas, que pueda yo ceer y conjeturar, no cometieron contra los cristianos un solo pecado mortal que fuese punible por hombres." (*Brevísima relación*, 87) / "I would go further. It is my firm belief that not a single native of the island committed a capital offence, as defined in law, against the Spanish while all this time the natives themselves were being savaged and murdered." (23)

[60] The character's name (Yoruba) immediately brings to mind both the Nigerian ethnic group Yoruba as well as the religious beliefs that became part of the Caribbean landscape following the arrival of enslaved peoples. Anacaona's diary entries tell us that her sister-in-law Yoruba is from a relatively far but long-standing and familiar tribe – and not part of an African group (who does not arrive for the duration of the diary). I have not come across texts that refer to Behechio's individual wives, much less the story of one named Yoruba. Danticat's inclusion of the character suggests not only creative license but also,

juices from the yucca roots" (44). Behechio sinks into depression and Anacaona wonders about he might do: "He does not talk, but simply looks at the sea. I am so afraid for him. I fear that he will throw himself in the sea" (47). Guamayto, her powerful uncle's (Matunherí) first wife wishes to adhere by the custom to be buried with her husband and poisons herself during his wake. Anacaona expresses the difficulty in communicating the loss of her countrymen's limbs and life: "How do I begin to describe what I have seen on Marién?" (141). Writing her diary despite the near impossibility conveys the compulsion to impart their stories and attempt at concretizing the intangible loss.

Reminiscent of Édouard Glissant's "Mais cela n'est rien encore" in *Poétique de la relation*, Danticat's Anacaona attempts to grapple with the annihilation and plundering before her (17). Glissant contemplates the unfathomable experience of the Middle Passage. Each step of the way (from kidnapping to disembarkation) presents an unsurmountable feat and an awesome request of our mind's understanding of the events. Anacaona, too, seems to ask herself "Supposez, si vous le pouvez" (17). The gradual massacre pushes her ability to process the events around her:

> Caonabó kept saying the world *tuob* [gold] to the pale men. And as we marched up a trail toward the mountains, I felt as though I was suddenly journeying to an uncertain place. All around us, burial plots had been dug up, bones thrown aside, and golden objects removed from sacred soil. Nearby, a pregnant woman lay dead, her still bulging belly leaning slightly away from her body. Corpses were strewn all along our path, heads

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and more importantly, a nod to the Yoruba people who will indeed arrive at a later date and whose desperation may very well have led them to end their lives in bondage.

> separated from bodies. The body of one dead child was leaning against a post, as if he had been carefully hooked there. (150)

Anacaona relays seeing bodies dangling from trees as her group heads toward the epicenter of the massacre that catalyzes the Amerindian attack on fort La Navidad. The images of hanging bodies prepares the young reader for the nearing and increased violence but proves to be potent on their own. Danticat's text provides yet another instance of premonitory history. The image conjures "strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees" for the American audience.[61] Danticat fuses the history of hangings and lynchings on American soil with the violence perpetrated to native peoples of the Caribbean. The image becomes memory and takes root on two soils, blending the descendant of the African slave with the native person of the Americas.

While the reader makes multiple historical connections, Anacaona soon finds herself disassociating from the event before her, as if she were "suddenly journeying to an uncertain place." Danticat presents the violent dismemberment displayed in Las Casas' account as a first-person traumatic event. The arrival of the Spaniards and their search for gold brings with it a very palpable tear in the order of things: plots are dug up, bones out of place, golden objects out of sacred soil, ripped womb, dismembered head – the world is inverted. Anacaona's straightforward account describes the horrid scene without Las Casas' affective fragmentation. The brunt of the event produces a reaction in the reader akin to Anacaona's: another place from which to experience veiled witnessing. Danticat writes from the position of she who sees, processes, remembers, and can speak

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[61] "Strange fruit." Lyrics written by Abel Meeropol under the pseudonym Lewis Allan. Performed by Billy Holiday.

to a would-be posterior reader. This technique not only humanizes but also imbues Anacaona's tale with a sense of concrete loss. In this sense, Danticat's vocal (or, rather, transcribed) appropriation of Anacaona becomes a loss from within seeking to correct Las Casas' chronicle from without. Danticat herself reports having a personal stake in writing Anacaona's story: "'My mother was born in Léogâne,' she [Danticat] says, referring to a Haitian town that is generally thought to have been at the center of Xaraguá, where Anacaona ruled. 'Thus in some very primal way, Anacaona has always been in my blood and I remain, in the deepest part of my soul, one of her most faithful subjects.'" (*Anacaona, Golden Flower*, 180-1) Danticat communicates an elemental attachment to Anacaona, one that surpasses an acknowledgement of the Amerindian cacica's role in history: bloodline and lineage via the inheritance of land.[62]

Danticat's "prophetic vision of the past" wedges contemporary Haitians into Anacaona's life. Her death, however, remains a distant fact, as the reader does not witness her demise. In addition to a textual impossibility (for Anacaona could not write about her own death in her diary), I suggest that Danticat purposefully ends her tale in an encouraging sense. Following their attack on La Navidad – an attack that is never mentioned by that name by the Haitian author – , Anacaona and her fellow group leaders retell the story and rejoice in their victory. Anacaona, already known for her areitos (dance and oral performances), takes particular delight in telling an extended story. She explains:

[62] I examine the land's role in how Francophone writers in the Caribbean come to define themselves and their communities as native in Chapter 2.

> I told such a lengthy tale because I did not want our battle with the pale men to become the only story our people would ever recite from now on. For we had other stories, too, happy as well as sad ones. Our encounter with the pale men was only a small piece of that story. Surely an important piece, but not the most important. (155)

Anacaona justifies her insistence on including details both big and small (starting with the first time she met Caonabó, her eventual husband) to those listening because they should have access to the events that took place. In particular, her telling "such a lengthy tale" forces the listener – and reader – to take in a longer narrative that includes the characters' daily existence and formative experiences beyond the attack they have perpetrated against the cruel Spaniards. She makes this explicit later on, when remarking on the magnitude of this particular achievement:

> Yes, I want our victory over the pale men to be a tale that will inspire us when we have other battles to fight, one that reminds us that, like the Kalinas, we are a strong and powerful people. I do want it to be a story whose veracity the young ones will ask me to confirm when I am an old woman, a story that my Higuemota [her daughter] will tell and retell to her own children. But I do not want it to become the only story we ever have to share with one another. It cannot be. It must not be. (155-6)

Anacaona wishes their triumph over the pale men to be a source of inspiration for future generations. Her wanting to remind her people about their would-be ancestors' winning qualities ("we are a strong and powerful people") carry the marks of history. The contemporary reader – particularly one of Haitian descent like the author herself – would

hear the thunderous echo of such a statement, for it evokes Haiti's eventual fight for independence from the French in 1803 (a magnificent feat for a nation of slaves) and the United States invasion in 1915.[63]

Anacaona's words are both uplifting and tragic in their ultimate resonance. "It cannot be. It must not be," writes Danticat about the possibility of this tale being "the only story we ever have to share with one another." Anacaona's minute recording of this protracted areito – a performance that necessarily required both voice and body – compounds the magnitude of this message. The character gesticulates and vocalizes the story of her people and their fateful encounter with the foreigners. Anacaona's words and body join a series of events that will indeed come to pass and become inscribed in history. The veracity of her statement proves to be a double-edged sword that cuts across history and arrives to the reader. It is assuredly thanks to this tale that knowledge of her existence survives. The attack on fort La Navidad and the ensuing acts of resistance undertaken by Anacaona and the other leaders become determinant for the history of the island and the succeeding generations. Though Danticat's text takes part of the resistance of forgetting ("It cannot be. It must not be."), the Amerindian character correctly foreshadows the foundational and rallying role of this tale.

The intricacies of juvenile literature and its influence on its readership are beyond the scope of this project. I would be remiss, however, to ignore this book's compelling paratext and its didactic role vis-à-vis its young readers. *Anacaona, Golden Flower* is, after all, a book intended for young readers. Narratives intended for younger audiences

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[63] For more information regarding Haiti's history, see Laurent Dubois' *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*.

impart stories and histories – both fictional and creative – that initiate the young individual into the larger collective identity. In speaking about the history of African American children and young adult literatures, specialist Giselle Liza Anatol writes:

> Biographies allow writers of children's books to imaginatively recreate the past, to teach valuable lessons about bravery, determination, or overcoming fear or anger; to show that brown skin is not solely about the stereotypical media images of rural poverty or urban plight but rather about succeeding against all odds. Biographies can help African American youth to "develop a sense of kinship with their black forebears, letting them know that they do not stand alone," just as they can give the reader a chance "to become deeply involved in the lives of other black people in ways not possible in face-to-face contact. (624)

I draw a parallel between Francophone Caribbean and African American literatures due to historical similarities including but not limited to shared loss of ancestral land and history, slavery, a history of cultural and economic subjugation, and general marginalization vis-à-vis an institutional power. Danticat provides a textbook example of Anatol's statement regarding biographic narratives. The readers have the opportunity to identify with the characters' fears and be inspired by their bravery.

Danticat sets up the reader's kinship and attachment, not with "their black forebears" as with Anatol's examples, but rather with those who inhabited the island long ago. Anacaona's diary entries are followed by "Life in Haiti in 1490," a section that includes "Historical Note," "Anacaona's Family Tree," "Other Notable Taíno Leaders," five pages of ancient and contemporary renderings of Taíno life, and a "Sample of Taíno

Words." The reader's knowledge of Anacaona's life is not only "verified" by official historical information but also supplemented by cultural snippets. Access to extradiegetic information allows the reader to connect a character already carrying her personal investment to historical veracity of Amerindian life. Danticat renders Anacaona a historical figure whose experiences arrive at the reader via her own physicality. Her inscriptions speak to her reader and bear the weight of their legacy.

1.4 Aa: a legacy of cry and silence

"A" is the first letter of the Latin-script alphabet. Both the written letter and its accompanying sound announce the organization of the linguistic system that operates French, Spanish, and English (the original languages of the texts we have seen). I argued for the new, European grammar's demolition of the old Amerindian order in the section regarding Edwidge Danticat's *Anacaona, Golden Flower*. Though due to historical happenstance, Anacaona's name repeats the vowel four times. The eponymous character of the children's book mentioned in the Introduction, Anacri, carries the same first letter. If Anacaona's name is a historical coincidence with the hallmark letter of the colonizer's alphabet, Anacri seems to purposefully enlist in Anacaona's tradition. Anacri attempts to save his way of life only to be overpowered eventually. In this sense, Métellus, Danticat, and Glissant's insistence on the generational mark of memory begins with the Amerindian name. "A" signals "Amerindian" and marks resistance.

This coda reflects on the legacy of Anacaona as an Amerindian paradigm. As with Anacaona, I focus on a single character in order to highlight the qualities that Amerindian characters in Francophone Caribbean literature seem to have inherited from the incipient,

historical figure. As such, I would now like to turn my attention to what is often read as a parenthetical episode in Édouard Glissant's novel *La Case du commandeur* (1981). The novel centers around one of Glissant's recurrent characters, Marie Celat or Mycéa, and her descent into madness. Her illness appears to be what Glissant calls "délire verbal" in *Le Discours antillais*: a veritable condition intimately connected to the socio-historical context and political status of Martinique (623-79). Mycéa's "délire verbal," however, carries the weight of colonial memory. She "sees" the past and carries the concentrated, unfiltered history of her island within her mind. Unable to process, digest, or make sense of the overwhelming history in both official and unofficial form, Mycéa's speech runs as a wild river. Her speech flows without end and nonsensically. The reader can recognize this chaotic free flow thanks to the lack of grammatical conventions such as complete sentences, commas, or even periods. Glissant's novel is grounded on major historical events and their intangibility. The reader witnesses the ancestral betrayal that facilitated bondage, the sexual violence inflicted upon the enslaved, and a life of marronage. The novel's narrative course parallels Mycéa's linguistic flow and sudden stops and detours. One such detour is Aa's story – a maroon or runaway slave who appears in a seemingly unrelated subchapter of five pages. Aa's story, I argue, reveals Glissant's own ruminations on Amerindians and their place in the cultural imaginary in the Francophone Caribbean. I propose that Glissant endows Aa with qualities derived from writings including Amerindian characters such as the texts we have already analyzed, namely Bartolomé de las Casas, Jean Métellus, and Edwidge Danticat. Much like the aforementioned authors, Glissant's Aa manifests an ever-dueling negotiation between the body and language.

Let us begin with the letter. In an act of subversion, Aa refuses to speak but nonetheless names himself by using the first letter of the colonizer's alphabet. Métellus' *Anacaona* shows us how the new order of man and language is imposed on the island and ultimately chokes its queen. Aa, however, does not die crushed by his inability to understand this new grammar. Glissant's Aa understands the new language and chooses to stage a silent, suicidal revolt. His appropriation of the first letter of the new grammar signals a recognition of its oppressive power but also Aa's refusal to further engage with it. The first letter is repeated and then stops: Aa. His refusal to produce the new grammar functions as an abortive gesture of the colonizer's alphabet. Aa's repudiation of the alphabetic composition of language neutralizes the colonial project and its attempt at planting and reaping a robust and blooming slave population. Glissant creates a character who echoes Amerindian revolt and foresees the struggles of those who, like him, came after.

Though Aa appears only briefly, his presence is exceptional. The episode containing Aa's story reveals itself to be a network that binds the disfiguration of the body, the impalpability of language, the refusal of an imposed reality, myth, and memory. Aa is a runaway slave who is caught and tortured following the betrayal of one of his would-be allies from the enslaved group. The European torturers want to contain his body physically in order let his tongue loose, figuratively: "Ce four à charbon éventré où ils l'engouffrèrent par les pieds, debout dans l'incroyable des profondeurs, il convient de le refermer sur son corps" (138). Aa's torturers put him feet first in a charcoal kiln. This can be read as direct punishment for having ran away. More importantly, it leaves the upper body free for Aa's speech, for the torturers seek information. The violence is such that

torture for information becomes futile: Aa becomes numb to the pain. His torturers want to know things "dont il ne pouvait plus concevoir l'importance," be it to submit or to divulge a secret (138). They are specifically interested in rumors that he is building a fleet "(une flotte!) pour dévaler d'île en île" (138). Glissant does not specify where Aa's story takes place. The reader can assume, however, that it takes place in Martinique, where the main story of La *Case du commandeur* occurs. Contemplating a fleet that would travel from island to island requires the reader to shift his focus from the specificity of Martinique to the greater region. Aa's individual revolt leads us to believe that a fleet commandeered by him could only imply his leading an insurrection throughout the Caribbean. It is after learning of the "vieux chiefs indiens"'s command to "prendre le chemin de la falaise" that Aa realizes the futility of escape from an execrable situation. Aa's physical revolt implicates the transcending and spectral nature of language.

Glissant's concentration on language does not permit lapses in the verisimilitude of communication between Amerindian, African, and European populations. Unlike Métellus' implausible and unexplained dialogue between Anacaona and the representatives of the Spanish Crown, Glissant's characters concede a non-linguistic understanding between them: "Échange inouï, sans communication ni partage, sans aveu, parce que ce qu'il avait à crier s'étendait loin au-delà des domaines que régentaient ces chasseurs, ne concernait pas ceux-ci, n'entrait en rien dans leurs visées" (139). Aa's torturers could never hear what they want from him for, even if they succeeded in making him speak, they could never grasp what he has to say. His cry extends beyond the region over which they now reign and they could never dominate it. Remembering the distant fact of an Amerindian tribe's willingness to self-immolate sets Aa on a plan to stage a

silent revolt. Unable to make Aa speak and seeing his disregard for his physical well-being, the torturers threaten to take away all traces of him, including the non-material to which he is still attached: his memory and abstract existence:

> Les tourmenteurs criaient, avec de gros rires: « Aha! Aha! » Ils l'avaient traîné au petit jour, entouré des chiens étrangement silencieux, jusqu'à l'emplacement de ce four, et ils se vantaient que jamais âme qui vive ne saurait ce qu'il était advenu de lui, qu'on l'oublierait bientôt partout aux alentours; qu'il n'avait qu'à parler pour abréger ses souffrances. Il saisissait un peu de ces invectives: que c'était vrai qu'il resterait seul dans son four et que sa mémoire s'envolerait dans la fumée des bois-campêches (quelle infinie désolation, ho! de partir ainsi sans rien laisser de son corps ni de son âme à qui que ce soit qui pût en ramasser la poussière); et comme il répondait (si c'est répondre) dans sa langue maternelle, les autres hurlèrent que qu'est-ce que c'était que ce charabia de moricaud, est-ce qu'il ne pouvait pas parler une langue de chrétien, avait-il reçu le saint baptême, que sinon voilà, aha, aha – ils le baptisaient sur le front et la poitrine avec un tison arraché du four. (139)

The torturers yell at Aa that he will be forgotten as soon as he is gone. They wish to destroy his body and consequently his memory. In fact, the insults and mockery Aa experiences promotes an inseparable link between the body and memory. Referring to his "charabia de moricaud," for example, marks the beginning of his loss of identity. The word "moricaud" indicates a dark-skinned person ("Qui a le teint très brun, basané."

"Personne au teint très brun." "Homme, femme de couleur.").[64] Its pejorative intention and origin in the word "Moor" (Maure) reflects the loss of Aa's Sub-Saharan African roots. The torturers relegate him to a vague category of dark-skinned people. Furthermore, "charabia" reinforces the torturers' careless misidentification. The French definition of the word ("Langage, style incompréhensible et incorrect" or, better yet, gibberish) itself nullifies the Arabic origin, which likely points to "*al'arabiya* 'langue de l'ouest': berbère."[65] The torturers' speech initiates the destruction of his person. If one destroys Aa's body, the memory of his existence will go up "dans la fumée des bois-campêche" (139). They wish to disintegrate his body and render his presence invisible, unseen.

Aa is physically tortured, but it is not physical pain that unleashes the cry of rage he lets out. He responds to the intended extinction of a people who, facing the coercion of colonizers, respond by committing collective suicide. The respect that Aa appears to experience takes him to imitate the people's silence, as he refuses to speak the language of his tormentors. He lets out a cry of rage (first out loud, then in his head) and then quiets down. The transformation from silence to cry, then muteness followed by another cry reveals a mechanism that succeeds in communicating revolt in spite of subjugation. Aa's cycle of cry and silence, much like his chosen name, breaks the linearity of language. Both cries and silences are unexpected and out of order. The outcome of his torture deviates from the expectations of the practice. In this sense, Aa's reaction compromises the teleology of conquest. In response to Nebrija's declaration that

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[64] *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*, "moricaud."
[65] *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*, "charabia."

language is the partner of empire, Aa's rejects language and opposes the empire. I would like to point out that the tormenters' laughter ("Aha! Aha!") resembles Aa's own phonetic name. Aa appropriates not only the order marker of the colonizers but also derides the power contained by their sounds. Cry and silence constitute acts of war against the foreign agents in the Caribbean. The Amerindian group affirms its autonomy via its muted jump into the abyss. The stubbornness in remaining free and to keep their traditions leads to self-immolation as they head to their deaths.

The collective suicide of the Amerindian people Aa sees with his mind's eye highlights the impact of silent revolt in the tradition of Amerindian depiction in the Caribbean. In Glissant's text, their story is filled with silence. There is noise, certainly, but no one speaks. Women and children continue walking as they fall, warriors throw their arrows into the air, some sound off their blowpipes, elders refuse to see their last dusk, chiefs deliver a "suprême malédiction" via their eyes ("la face au contraire levée pour une suprême malédiction" [140]). The curse the chiefs put on the colonizers is particularly pertinent, for it is a "malediction" without "diction." The reader witnesses a silent anathema. As such, it is related to but diametrically opposed to Métellus' Anacaona, who blesses the arriving slave population from Africa as she dies. Whereas the chief sends the conquerors a silent curse, Métellus' Anacaona exhausts her last words on the new populations who are also victims of the colonizers. The Amerindian elder covers the people with his body as he falls. Anacaona hangs fixed while her hair flows in all directions. Their deaths evince an irresoluble link between speech and silence in the imaginary of the Francophone Caribbean. The destruction of the body, whether willed or victimized, does not obliterate the word and its message of resistance.

Aa joins the various versions of Anacaona whose corporeal annihilation transforms into the fragmentation and dispersion of their words. The final moments of Glissant's character bespeak this conversion. The perpetrators give Aa a literal baptism of fire in order to make him speak a Christian language. The torturers burn his forehead and chest with a "tison arraché du four" (139). Instead of speaking "une langue de chrétien," he screams "(dans sa tête) que le vent de la falaise résonnerait dans chaque coin de cette terre et reviendrait toutes les dix générations hanter les arbres et les gens" (140). The cliff's wind, which also "witnessed" the Amerindians' suicide, will come back every ten generations and disturb both humans and the natural world. Aa expresses an alliance between Amerindians, nature, and memory. Aa seems to be delirious as he screams and divulges information, albeit not what the torturers expected :

> Disant que ce qu'il confiait là, il l'avouait aux seigneurs des bois qui du haut de leurs feuillages roux et mauves se penchaient sur sa mort ; aux ombres et à la nuit qui l'avaient tant protégé naguère et qui aujourd'hui préparaient son passage ; aux ancêtres restés dans le pays là-bas mais dont le souffle avait traversé l'océan pour le rafraîchir sur son front ; et non pas à ces singes hurleurs dévalés dans la récolte d'autrui. (141)

Aa refuses to speak the torturers' language and confesses instead to the "seigneurs des bois" that hover over him. The "lords of the forest" could be read as the memory the Amerindian group inscribed in the forest or as the would-be essence of nature as another instance of its involvement in resistance. The elements clear his passage and the memory of the ancestors back home feed his spirit. Like Métellus' Anacaona, he becomes the impulse to remember that will haunt generations to come. Unlike Anacaona, Aa's own

memories – both lived and imagined – are derived from nature. Aa gleans memories or messages transcribed onto the island's natural landscape (e.g. the trees, the wind, the cliff). Glissant seems to pick up the message left by Anacaona and other, imagined Amerindian figures. The Martinican writer demonstrates that to inhabit the Caribbean is to contend with memory.

Aa picks up where Anacaona left off: the dissemination of her memory via the natural elements. After all, it is not so much the physical pain that hurts Aa but rather "witnessing" the decimation of an entire people: "Aa poussa un hurlement. Ne supportant pas, qui s'était à peu près le seul de son espèce battu jusqu'au bout, qui allait mourir dans ce tourment, qui avait été transbordé de si loin, de concevoir l'extinction de cette population de la forêt" (140). Aa tabulates the series of events that have shaped his story. The people of the forest – a fusion of the peoples and elements that inhabit the island – announce the likelihood of death involved in revolt. A "mutité absolue" follows Aa's yells and screams (140). The narrator reminds the reader that Aa "n'avait qu'à parler pour abréger ses souffrances" (139). He chooses not to speak the language that would save his life and, in that refusal, becomes a martyr. Wanting to mute Aa's "discours enflammés," the torturers put a "brandon dans la bouche" (142). The act of fatal torture brings an unexpected result: his tongue becomes a firebrand that sparks fragments of memory throughout the island. Aa's cycles of cry and silence constitute a revolt comparable to that of the Anacaona avatars I have examined. On the one hand, Aa reads the silent blue print of memory and resistance disseminated upon the death of Métellus' Anacaona. On the other hand, the insistence of Danticat's Anacaona that the victory over the Spaniards must be remembered – but not solely – echoes in Aa's last thoughts.

Whereas Mycéa (the novel character of *La Case du commandeur*) embodies language ("Mais Mycéa ne régentait pas les choses avec des mots, elle sentait dans son corps que ce directeur d'école n'avait pas cessé de tenir son discours" [190]), Aa, a fleeting character, manifests the opposite phenomenon. He sets off a cry that retains his capacity to inscribe himself in the people's memory long after his demise. Aa scatters the *parole* of his memory and that of his legend. Joan (Colin) Dayan examines the historical figure of Défilée-la-folle and the way in which this would-be madwoman inadvertently extricates herself from her nickname (la folle). Défilée-la-folle carries the remains of mutilated revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines. With this act, Défilée erases her past and inscribes her place in the history of Haiti's revolution. (40-6). In the case of Aa, no one will be able to amass his dust but he responds in his native tongue that "son cri couler[a] dans leur poitrine comme un beau flambeau" (140). As we have seen, Glissant displays the disintegration of corporeal presence and its transmission. The written component of language does not hold the same weight as its spoken counterpart. I would like to come back to Aa's introduction into the charcoal kiln so as to assess his so-called baptism and its implications for physical marks and remains. As previously cited, the torturers "le baptisaient sur le front et la poitrine avec un tison arraché du four" (139). Aa receives an ember baptism. This ember baptism is reminiscent of the auto-de-fé handed down during the Spanish Inquisition. Instead of a cleansing fire, however, Aa experiences a fire baptism meant to finalize the utter destruction of his person. The narrator does not describe the baptism in detail but we can surmise that a baptism "avec un tison arraché du four" could involve passing said embers over Aa's body. The charcoal's traces would render an Aa covered in signs empty of referent. The charcoal would leave a trace in the

form of streaks but likely not any one readable mark such as letter or symbols – except perhaps for the Christian cross. The charcoal's association with the torturers and their nod to the religious institution would nonetheless carry the mark of subjugation.

The marks on Aa's body invokes *Anacaona, Golden Flower* and Danticat's aspiration that we might one day be able to read Amerindian petroglyphs and other symbols and gain insight into their daily lives. Anacaona's telling of the feat at Fort La Navidad and her journal writing constitute a voicing of a lived existence. In the case of Glissant's text, the ember markings function as a writ on Aa's body: writing and actions meant to subdue him. His cry and his story ultimately live on for generations to come. The burning wood in his mouth delivers the final corporeal blow and his drive becomes transubstantiated into memory. Aa's body is transformed but not into another, sacred substance. His physical remains burn and scatter nearly dematerialized. The tormentors wish to obliterate Aa into ashes and yet he knows this is how he will arrive at people's minds: the abstraction of a memory. Aa is indicative of the literary tradition of representing Amerindians and, in particular, Anacaona as both a silent yet mothering figure and an outspoken fighter. The ebb and flow of cry and silence as well as corporeal maiming and the emphasis on physical survival fashioned Aa into the genesis of this project's focus on Amerindian representation, memory, and influence on contemporary Francophone Caribbean literature.

1.5 Conclusion

Anacaona embodies the ravages of colonialism. The fact that she has continued to be represented since her death to our day informs us about her place in history. For some,

she represents the human lives and culture effaced by the arrival of the Europeans. For others, she announces the struggles of the island's future African inhabitants. For all – Las Casas, Métellus, Danticat, and even Glissant – Anacaona's expression, be it spoken, danced, or written – depicts the battlefield of history.

Both Danticat and Métellus write about Anacaona while removed from Haiti. Their uprooting compels them to arrive at the most primordial of origins. The paradigm that is Anacaona puts her in a synecdoche-like position where Anacaona means a history of violence and resistance. Métellus' Anacaona is defined by her use of and faith in language. She lords over people and nature thanks to the ways in which she wields the word. Her inability or refusal to learn the new grammar of profit operating on the island mark the loss of Amerindian cultures. Métellus hints at the inevitability of their demise. In *Anacaona, Golden Flower*, Danticat attempts to unearth Amerindian life via Anacaona's writing. The author hopes that we may know more details about Hispaniola's native inhabitants. Until then, she colors in the silhouette of individuals' lives with thoughts and emotions that succeed in humanizing history for the text's young readers. The scriptural voice Danticat lends to Anacaona is particularly edifying. The author notes the unique experience of the female ruler – a fact either underexplored or ignored by most male authors. Danticat fashions a curious, fearful, yet brave Anacaona. The character cares about her child and her people's future but is not defined by neither qualities reminiscent of mother nature nor her attractiveness and fertility, as is the case with Métellus' version.

I have examined texts from categories that serve particular roles for both individual readers and members of the community. Juvenile literature – especially that

concerning traditionally repressed groups – allows authors to have a hand in forming their young readers' minds. In the case of Edwidge Danticat (and, by extension Thierry Petit le Brun), writing Amerindian stories for children and young adults allows them to initiate young readers into an exploration of pre-Columbian and unofficial history. Métellus' play allow us to analyze both the way in which theater both channels collective beliefs and projects its perceived history. In all, the texts I investigate both render visible and lend a voice to the cultural remains of Amerindian peoples in the Caribbean.

History necessarily leads to the present. Métellus, Danticat, and Glissant muddle and bind the Caribbean's Amerindian past with that of African descendants. It is also interesting to note that these texts present nature as a constitutive issue for their native status to their respective islands. Danticat, for example, declares feeling connected to Anacaona thanks to her being born in the place the leader once ruled. I explore this impulse fully in the next chapter. As I will show, Jacques Roumain's ethnobotanical texts demonstrate a compulsion to tie the Caribbeans' new population into its natural and cultural history.

Chapter 2 Becoming Native

In this chapter, I pick up where the purported annihilation of the Amerindian takes place: the islands of the Francophone Caribbean and its new inhabitants. I examine the series of reconfigurations that culminate in the creation and continued reaffirmation of what I deem the "new native." With this term, I mean to point out the process by which peoples not autochthonous to the New World become so over the course of a few generations and the affirmation of a regenerated indigenous, homegrown population of the Caribbean. This new definition draws from notions of origin, the endemic, and the autochthonous, where one's self (autos) would ostensibly be derived or spring from the earth or soil (khton). This concept of the "new native" thus necessitates a close analysis of humans in the natural environments that accommodate us as well as self-definitions and representations of their communities. As such, I analyze the modalities that give way to the indigenizing process of what will become "new natives."[66]

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[66] Nota bene: I discovered the publication of *Small Axe*'s special issue (Volume 20, Number 1 49, March 2016) in recognition of Sylvia Winter's unpublished *Black Metamorphosis: New Natives in a New World* once this chapter was on its second draft. Winter's work examined the indigenizing process and Black nationalism in the Caribbean. I have refrained from reading her work (or any other article dedicated to her work) out of ethical concerns up until this point (I write this as I complete the final draft). I did, however, read Aaron Kamugisha's Guest Editor Discussion of the special issue. Though apparently similar – to the point of using the term "new native" – she focuses on the black experience and, through a Marxist lens, the role of the economy in their becoming natives of the New World. Her work seems not to take into account (as is the case with my own work) taking on Amerindian legacies as models for the indigenizing process, the role of nature (which I argue is essential), examining ethnobotanical texts, questions posed by creolized (as opposed to Black) societies, or the many theories that have come since her passing including but not limited to Monique Allewaert and Shona Jackson's work. Furthermore, whereas her work seems to have extended to include connections with Black America, I focus on the questions of indigeneity that defined much of Latin America.

African slaves, the first wave of eventual "new natives," are forced to populate the islands with the purpose of replacing the European perception of feeble, considerably weaker Amerindians. As seen in the previous chapter, Spanish Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas describes the extreme physical weakness that renders Amerindians inadequate for work in *La Destruición*.[67] Indians, he emphasizes, cannot suffer work. The precariousness of their health is such that even the classes designed to undertake heavy labor are weaker than delicate and closely guarded European nobility. Given that the European masters deem the native populations unfit to work the land, they take it upon themselves to abduct and enslave what they consider to be a more effective, fitting work force that will replace Amerindian fragility. Jean Baptiste du Tertre reiterates Las Casas' perception a century later in the *Histoire générale des Antilles par François*: "Regarder un sauvage de travers, c'est le battre; le battre, c'est le tuer; battre un nègre, c'est le nourrir" (Vol II, 490). Du Tertre's statement communicates the perception of Amerindian meekness and frailty and African endurance in that, whereas a hardened look suffices to normalize the Amerindian subject, physical violence is not only tolerated but also beneficial to an African subject's overall wellbeing. An enforced, intimate relationship with the land arises from the deterritorialization from Africa and transplantation into Caribbean territories. I frame this analysis in terms of Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*, as his neologism "transculturation" attempts to encompass the ontological shift brought about by both conquest and slavery. Though Ortiz refers

[67] "Son así mesmo las gentes más delicadas, flacas y tiernas en complisión y que menos pueden sufrir trabajos, y que más facilmente mueren de cualquiera enfermedad, que ni hijos de príncipes y señores entre nosotros, criados en regalos y delicada vida, no son más delicados que ellos, aunque sean de los que entre ellos son de linaje de trabajadores." (76)

specifically to Cuba, I suggest that the greater part of the Caribbean archipelago suffered the same series of events:

> I have chosen the word *transculturation* to express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here, and without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the evolution of the Cuban folk, either in the economic or in the institutional, legal, ethical, religious, artistic, linguistic, psychological, sexual, or other aspects of its life. (98, Ortiz emphasizes)

In addition to the acknowledgment of the Caribbean inhabitant having been "torn from his native moorings, faced with the problem of disadjustment and readjustment, of deculturation and acculturation – in a word of transculturation" (98), I contend that Ortiz's conceptual and linguistic attention to botany and agriculture further allows me to display the role of nature, landscapes, land, and its economic exploitation in the Caribbean's indigenizing process for the aforementioned "new natives."

The texts I have chosen to analyze in this chapter display questions of individual or communal origins, defining oneself vis-à-vis other members of the community, and what a community entails for the individual. Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (1944), Patrick Chamoiseau's *Solibo magnifique* (1988), and Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989) constitute my primary works of fiction. The issues explored in each text manifest an iteration of individuals' affirmation or negotiation of belonging to a specific place or community. Literary critic Celia Britton notes the "urgent" state of the question of community in the Caribbean: "In these violently dislocated populations, there

could be no 'natural' sense of community evolving peacefully over the years, rather, the problem of community, conceived both in terms of collective practices and institutions and on the subjective level of collective identity, generates a deep-seated anxiety in the French Caribbean" (2008, 1). The question of what it is to be a community leads to further questions: who makes up the community, the common thread that unites it, if disparate, whether there is a difference between a community's components and how it chooses to define or represent itself. Britton discusses the many shapes of these concerns in *The Sense of Community in French Caribbean Fiction*. My own work in this chapter involves analyzing already existing and reported communities whose identity as community and the legitimacy of an individual's belonging or native status is contested from within as it is reaffirmed. Specifically, I am interested in the role that the natural world (land, soil, flora, etc.) becomes enmeshed in the conversation that affirms or rejects one's endemic status to the land and consequently to the community that inhabits it. I then move from the rural community of 1930's Haiti to the urban busy life of Fort-de-France, to the composite culture of descendants of Europeans, Africans, and Indians in a Guadeloupian village. Who "we" are, where "we" are, and why "we" are function as the thread that links seemingly disparate theories such as *Indigénisme* and *Créolité*, for example, which I argue are inherent elements of the continued indigenizing process of Caribbean literature. My task is to trace and bring out the images, concepts, and language used related to the natural world in presence or absence as well as their implications for the community. I argue that reading Roumain, Chamoiseau, Condé, and other Caribbean authors through this lens reveals a telling narrative, effectively acting as indigenizing techniques. To write the community is to create, affirm, and promote it. My language,

too, reflects the conceptual weaving that effectuates the process of indigenization at work. Attaining the abstract notion of what it is to be (let alone become) native via dramatizations of concrete, lived experiences requires specific tools: "autochthon" applies to that which originates in (or is indigenous to) a geographical area; "indigenous" refers to that which is born or produced naturally in a land or region; "endemic" signals that which is constantly or regularly found within a specified country or people; "native" relates to what is born in a specified place, region, or country. Additionally, "native" points to a member of an indigenous ethnic group.[68] These terms refer back to each other and are all associated with being born of the earth, humans, plants, and, in the case with "endemic," the human body. These words tell the story of humanity and its origins. As with Cuban painter Wifredo Lam's celebrated "The Jungle," these concepts intersect, explain, impede, and form part of the other – that is how I use them. Before delving into the text, I would like to offer an anecdote: the Oxford English Dictionary's earliest example for the word "indigenous" comes from an excerpt from Sir T. Browne's 1646 *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* wherein he discusses the physical characteristics (i.e. complexion) of those who lived in the Americas or under colonial powers at the time :

> But this defect is more remarkable in America, which although subjected unto both the Tropicks, yet are not the Inhabitants black betweene, or neere, or under either, neither to the Southward in Brasilia, Chili, or Peru, nor yet to the Northward in Hispaniola, Castilia del Oro, or Nicaragua; and although in many parts thereof there bee at present swarmes of Negroes serving under the Spaniard, yet were they all transported from Africa,

[68] Oxford English Dictionary: "autochthonous," "indigenous," "endemic," "native."

> since the discovery of Columbus, and are not indigenous or proper natives of America.[69]

A 17th century scientific writer corrects the beliefs of his time: Blacks, though *also* of dark hue, "are not indigenous or proper natives of America." This chapter will thus come back full circle to Sir T. Browne's efforts, arguing for the native status and community work of those descendants.

2.1 Indigénisme haïtien: Creating a new native

Gouverneurs de la rosée has long been called an indigenous novel.[70] The particular elements that render the text an indigenous novel, however, are seldom explained. It has become customary to accept it as such. In *Literature and Ideology in Haiti*, literary and cultural critic J. Michael Dash writes "Manuel in Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée* epitomises the ideals of Indigenism" (95). Dash evokes the novel's epitome of *Indigénisme* yet does not elaborate on the way in which the novel, its characters, or context come to illustrate the movement's guiding principles. Greater, international movements of Indigenism comprise literary, political, and philosophical areas of study. Indigenism can be traced back to Latin American countries, where indigenous figures served the purpose of uniting the nation under that which was endemic

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[69] Oxford English Dictionary: "indigenous." Sir T. Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* vi. x. 325

[70] See J. Michael Dash's *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915-1961* and Philippe Bernard's *Rêve et littérature romanesque en Haïti*.

to the land.[71] Though not usually Amerindian (or completely so), the intelligentsia forged the nation's identity by externalizing all other racial and ethnic groups and focusing on the nation's base. This base – an intimation of origins – evoked the indigenous past of the country: the figure of the Amerindian native working the landscape around him. Countries like Mexico illustrate this undertaking. The 1920's *muralistas* painted the denigrated, peripheral, and provincial *paisano* on the walls of some of the most iconic buildings of the country. The murals found in the Palacio Nacional, for example, acknowledge the country's heterogeneous racial make-up yet present the native person of both the past and present as constitutive of the country's identity. Diego Rivera, one of the foremost mural painters, presents Mexico as a country of pre-Columbian gods (i.e. Quetzalcoatl, Tlaloc), of the Spanish *criollos*[72] who established themselves in New Spain, of the *criollos* born in the colonies, and of Indians who worked the fields before leaving

[71] "Aunque el indigenismo es definido y aplicado con la destacada colaboración de antropólogos, no se trata propiamente de una teoría antropológica, sino más bien de una *política de estado*. Como fue reconocido por sus ideólogos, el indigenismo es la política que se formula unilateralmente desde el estado (por los *no indios*) para ser aplicada a los considerados *otros*.

Las diversas políticas indigenistas que han operado en América Latina son el reflejo, y en varios sentido la *causa*, de la heterogeneidad étnica no resuelta. Los indigenismos no suponen una consideración del punto de vista y los intereses de los otros, sino una negociación rotunda de que éstos tengan algo que opinar sobre sus propios asuntos. Los indigenismos reúnen así la doble cualidad de ser *inorgánicos* (respecto a los grupos étnicos) y extremadamente *homogeneizadores*. Por lo demás, los indigenismos han sido la carta estratégica de proyectos antidemocráticos y conservadores. Los indigenismos puedes destruir – vía el genocidio, el etnocidio o la etnofagia, o una combinación de ellos – a los grupos étnicos o pueden modificar y aun complicar el cuadro de la diversidad étnica, pero nunca resuelven las tensiones y conflictos que implica la diversidad." (647, Díaz-Polanco emphasizes)

[72] By *criollo*, I mean either the racially white Spaniards who made the New World regions their new home or the subsequent generation who was born on the colony.

to fight in the 1810 revolution that would attempt to reclaim land ownership.[73] Rivera makes the *mestizo*[74] viewer confront the varied yet undeniable Amerindian base of national identity.

Haitian *Indigénisme* is a beast of another nature. Rather than *emanating* from or focusing on an indigenous population, the movement seeks to forge and affirm the indigenous. Literary critic Glodel Mezilas elucidates on the lack of *indigènes* in *Indigénisme* in "¿Qué es el indigenismo haitiano?," where he explains that whereas in Latin America Indigenism served to refocus and include the indigenous population into the greater national culture, the nonexistent space of the Amerindian indigenous in the Caribbean became a space filled with a new native.[75] Specifically, *Indigénisme* came to

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[73] For more information, see Coffey's *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official* Culture and Anreus, Greeley, and Folgarait's *Mexican Muralism*.

[74] *Mestizo* is a term derived from the Spanish Castas system that placed racial groupings and all possible combinations in a hierarchy. A mestizo is born from an autochthonous person of the New World (indio) and a (white, European) Spaniard. For further information, see María Elena Martinez' *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* and Angel Rosenblat's *La Población indígena y el mestizaje en América*.

[75] "*A diferencia del latinoamericano, el haitiano es un indigenismo sin indígenas o que connota un concepto metafórico de indígenas (los haitianos), en el sentido de que son los dueños del país frente a toda intervención imperialista.* No remite a una "cuestión indígena", una política oficial a favor de los indígenas. No es una corriente literaria que idealiza románticamente al indígena. No es tampoco la resignificación o la apropiación del concepto *indigenismo* desde el contexto geocultural haitiano o una política conservadora para aglutinar la identidad cultural de los indígenas y lograr la homogeneidad cultural y étnica de la sociedad bajo las pautas de la civilización occidental. El de Haití, se trata de un *movimiento de liberación de la cultura popular*: de ahí su expresión y su manifestación en los diferentes ámbitos de la expresión literaria. *Es un movimiento que da preeminencia a la voz popular como depositaria de los valores nacionales.* Es también la afanosa búsqueda de la identidad cultural nacional haitiana desde la revaloración de las herencias etnoculturales africanas que sobreviven en Haití tras la colonización, cuyo fin coincidió con la creación del Estado haitiano en 1804. El indigenismo haitiano supone la búsqueda de esta identidad al tiempo que coincide con el surgimiento del nacionalismo haitiano antiimperialista frente a la ocupación

be following the United Sates occupation of Haiti on July 28, 1915 (Dash, 44). As such, the movement constitutes a response to external forces. Focusing on the internal elements of what makes Haiti a singular nation, however, proved to be the way to affirm the people's autochthonous status. In this way, Haitian indigenism creates the native with one, double motion. In the first place, it rejects the outsider. In taking up the place of an indigenous, the new natives differentiate from the outside, American invader. This distinction reinforces an "us" versus "them" that both unites and separates. In creating an "us" group, the invading "them" is further separated. The second, implied motion is thus this delineation of the indigenous: a group coalesced from heterogeneous elements into a collective.

Critics have traditionally pointed to Haitian ethnographer and politician Jean Price-Mars' *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (1928) as an edifying text for what came to be an indigenization of the Haitian imaginary. The text's "Avant-propos" sets the pace for an edification of Haiti's national identity. Price-Mars writes:

> par une logique implacable, au fur et à mesure que nous nous efforcions de nous croire des Français « colorés », *nous désapprenions à être des Haïtiens* tout court, c'est-à-dire des hommes nés en des conditions historiques déterminées, ayant ramassé dans leurs âmes, comme tous les autres groupements humains, un *complexe psychologique* qui donne à la communauté haïtienne sa physionomie spécifique. (8, my emphases)

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estadounidense de 1915. Así que el nacionalismo haitiano y el indigenismo son dos fenómenos concomitantes y complementarios." (30, my emphasis)

Price-Mars points to the hold of French influence and the identification with that tradition. The refusal to be or accept being Haitian goes so far, he explains, so as to believe to be a darker kind of Frenchman. Rejecting history, its socioeconomic effects, and the current valorization of cultural phenomena correlated with the willing unlearning of simply being Haitian. Price-Mars' declaration that "nous désapprenions à être Haïtiens" alludes to an original state. Wanting to be a darker brand of French citizen seems to equate being French with the systematic effacement and disregard of Haiti's fight for independence and the struggle to become a sovereign state. His allusion to the "physionomie spécifique" of the "communauté haïtienne" points to the singularity that results from the historical events the nation has experienced: Haiti has features like no other. That is to say that he signals the particular mindset of a particular people in a particular place and time. Price-Mars intimates Haitians' autochthony and the inception of indigenism as movement. From a position of "Français 'colorés,'" "tout ce qui est *authentiquement indigène* – langage, mœurs, sentiments, croyances – devient-il suspect, entaché de mauvais goût aux yeux des élites éprises de la nostalgie de la patrie perdue" (8, my emphasis). I would like to focus on two key concepts. First, Price-Mars' immediate, almost instinctual use of the word "indigène" – a term that can normally mean "native." Second, the qualifier "authentiquement." Price-Mars, as a trained ethnographer, makes use of a lexical field that sets up the conceptual availability and linguistic tools to promote the recognition of Haitian makers as legitimate cultural hallmarks. In this way, his "authentically native" has repercussion of the botanical and zoological kind, as "indigène" also denotes flora and fauna endemic to any one specific

region. As I will show, nature does, indeed, play a paramount role in both relating to and identifying as part of the Caribbean landscape.

Jean Price-Mars assembles the Haitian elements of language (in the form of stories and fables), voodoo, and other religious practices, Africa, African remnants, African animism, its influence, the possibility of Haitian literature and, finally, typical families in Haiti and elsewhere. His is a methodical approach to bring to light the merit in acknowledging, keeping, and guarding the aforementioned elements as cultural elements. To focus on one specific example, Price-Mars shows that religion accounts for many points of contention within Haitian culture, namely in what can be regarded as religious practice. Voodoo had traditionally been belittled and generally considered a superstition of a small, misguided portion of the population. Price-Mars brings to the fore the legitimacy and deep importance of the religion by systematically defining the very concept of a religion and subsequently showing how the beliefs of the masses encompass complex arrangements (41-2). The anaphoric "Le vaudou est une religion, parce que.." he utilizes in the first of at least two chapters dealing with the subject exemplify his consistent tackling and dismantling of folklore as non-culture. Price-Mars shows that voodoo is not a matter of disjointed superstitions but rather a valid, connected, syncretic religion that comes to bear on Haiti's cultural landscapes.

Price-Mars' attention to the lived realities in the Haitian countryside puts a finger on the country's pulse. His work catalyzed a movement that made it a point to look within – not to the external, affective influence of France's former colonial hold. Though Price-Mars's *Ainsi parla l'oncle* impelled writers of his time to pursue working on projects that zeroed in on or addressed the mostly rural, daily struggles and syncretic

religious practices of the populace, the effects of the American Occupation began earlier. *La Revue Indigène*, a journal that "dedicated itself to the systematic use of the hitherto neglected folkloric, national, and popular themes" was founded in July 1927 (Efron, 20). Haitian poet Normil G. Sylvain's "Chronique – Programme," which serves as the *Revue*'s manifesto, details the founders' inspiration and ultimate goals. I would like to take a take a closer look at this text and examine two of its most salient components. First, the intended goals (future) and inspiration (model, past), which are to take an unfiltered look at Haitian culture and literature and to support local – native – artists. This cultivation of Haiti's own and *haitiannité* constitutes a mediation on what it means to be a collective indigenous to Haiti. Second, I would like to assess Sylvain's focus on Latin America. I am interested in the model Sylvain (and by extension, *La Revue Indigène* and the *indigéniste* movement) sets and the techniques he proposes to adopt, namely race and the adherence to land (who works it, its aesthetic possibilities, etc.).

Sylvain opens the journal's first issue with an anecdote of fellow Haitian poet and diplomat Georges Sylvain's series of conferences around the island's southern points. He intimates that G. Sylvain writes to his colleagues with impressions of the places he visits and inevitably ended the missives by sharing his vision of an ideal Haitian journal that served as a meeting place ("lieu de rencontre") for kindred spirits ("âmes fraternelles") with similar thoughts and dreams on art and beauty. Georges Sylvain wishes to render Haiti's "forces intellectuelles" more self-aware, to facilitate a greater understanding of Haitian society, and to ready the future. He seeks to overcome the "manque de cohésion" he perceives in Haiti (1). Both Georges Sylvain's cited letters and Normil Sylvain's "Chronique – Programme" convey the intersection of the written (poetry, prose, essays)

and spoken word ("notre dialecte créole") and Haiti's villages and the nature that surrounds them. Observing, meditating, and writing about Haitian peoples' daily, domestic activities becomes a re-discovery – one that diametrically opposes the so-called discovery of the American continent. Normil Sylvain seeks not to claim, convert, or eradicate but rather to become a much more faithful witness to his fellow countrymen:

> La chanson n'est pas seulement un air joli qui dit vos joies, orchestre vos souffrances: elle nous aide à découvrir le paysage contemplé d'un regard distrait, glissant à la surface des choses, sans essayer, une minute, de les posséder, elle nous permet de mieux voir en nous, de jouir du paysage intérieur, de pénétrer dans le domaine mystérieux des âmes... Tout le problème n'est-il pas là. La poésie est un instrument de connaissance. (2)

Sylvain bets on poetry's capacity to reflect a person or a people's true self. The "paysage contemplé" mirrors the beholder's "paysage intérieur." Le paysage, an image Sylvain employs as both allegory and simile throughout the founding text, elicits the growth of all that is endemic and the cultivation of that left to range and grow wild. Haiti's local cultural value must be sown, cultivated, and reaped. *La Revue Indigène* endeavors to nourish and gather Haiti's scattered voices:

> Nous voulons que de tout le pays d'autres voix répondent. Les chanteurs sont du Nord et ils sont du midi ils chantent le pays haitien. Ils aident à le connaître, à l'aimer en le connaissant, nous révèlent à nous-même, nous donnent des motifs de fierté nationale. (3)

The arrangement, tone, and texture of the country's regional voices will show themselves, the local reader, the region – the world – and authentic, native, *indigène*

vision of Haiti. Sylvain's conviction that "[l]a littérature donne l'expression infaillible de l'âme d'une peuple" crystallizes the *indigéniste* movement's drive to distill Haiti's national identity (3).

Sylvain points to the as-of-then indeterminate identity of Haiti and notes the isolated status of the Caribbean's only francophone sovereign nation. The Dominican Republic shares the island and yet is connected to certain historical and cultural traditions as well as part of a network (not to mention readership) of 18 Hispanic Latin American republics (5). Sylvain envisions inching Haiti closer to Latin America in honor or shared geography, historical origin, and political struggles:

> Nous devons connaître la littérature et l'âme de l'Amérique Latine.
> Les peuples ont vécu d'une vie aussi difficile que la nôtre, ont connu les mêmes tâtonnements, des vicissitudes semblables, l'ère des caudillos et des pronunciamientos, la période où s'affrontent les forces d'anarchie et les forces de cohésion et d'ordre, les temps pénibles de la puberté des jeunes nationalités. (5)

Sylvain alludes to moments of national origin, creation, and identity: from encounters with hegemonic European powers to revolutions that reshape or steer the nation in another direction. He focuses on a shifting yet constant variable in the history of the American continent: race.

> Les historiens des causes de leurs malheurs essaient, comme nous d'expliquer la race, ce simple phénomène de physique sociale, ce jeu de forces antagonistes qui se heurtent avant de s'équilibrer en une statique parfaite. Ils disent nous "avons agi ainsi parce qu'indiens."

Nous disons volontiers nous autres « parce que nègres ». (5)

Whether "indien" ou "nègre," racial difference has been cited as the reason (read: curse) that plagues Latin America and other countries in the American continents. Sylvain advocates for the recognition of all that binds indigenous, Blacks, and their descendants. He emphasizes having "connu les mêmes angoisses placés sous de ciels presque identiques" but ultimately argues the humanity behind race: "Tous les hommes, quel qu'ils soient, placés sous le même climat, aux prises avec les mêmes difficultés, auraient sans doute agi ou réagi de même...en hommes" (6). Sylvain accuses himself and his colleagues of having ignored Latin America "parce que les origines sont semblables et qu'un grand danger commun nous menace" (6). He points out the impact Haiti's fight for independence had on the leadership of national struggles, namely Haiti's unstoppable push to liberate an entire race and claim humanity proved to be a lesson to those who followed similar paths in the union and humanization in the Americas.[76] Though Sylvain does not specify to whom he refers, he writes that Latin American writers mention "[l]es frères de l'autre race" (6). Sylvain tries to surmount the isolating realm of linguistic difference ("La différence de langue nous isole plus qu'un Océan" [6]) in order to also enjoin the racial divide that muddles the geographic, historical, and cultural commonalities between the various populations of Latin America. Sylvain lauds the literature produced throughout Latin America for their voice, candor, and strength. He wishes "le champ que nous cultivons" – Haitian literature in general and *La Revue Indigène* in particular – to grow into a prolific display of the literary fruits of the land

[76] "Sa signification pour l'Amérique latine fut d'une leçon de chose, ce que devenait en passant à l'acte les rêveries des philosophes...Les rapports de Miranda et de Pétion puis du grand Bolivar attestent par des faits ce que j'avance" (6).

akin to the *Revue de l'Amérique latine* (7-9). Sylvain sees Latin American literature as a model after which to voice the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, and one's environment interact, giving an untouched look into the daily, lived experience in Haiti: "'Motivos de Proteo' 'El Micador de Prospero' développements successifs d'une même doctrine littéraire et sociale exaltant les qualités de la race, et soulignant l'importance d'une littérature autochtone" (8). Sylvain lauds, among others, José Enrique Rodó's efforts in disseminating a Latin America who can teach and learn without external pressures. The examples set by Latin American literary tradition in negotiating internal and external variables guide Sylvain's vision of a politically engaged, culturally honest literary journal:

> *Ce que nous tâcherons de faire de notre revue*. Un tableau fidèle et vivant des diverses manifestations de la vie et de la pensée haïtienne contemporaine.
>
> Vie intellectuelle et artistique, vie économique et commerciale. Le point de vue haïtien des questions, la façon dont envisageons les choses et comme on fait une manière d'insulte du mot indigène nous le revendiquons comme un titre, le point de vue de l'indigène. Un retour à la sincérité et au naturel, au modèle vivant, à la description directe, un parfum plus accentué, d'haïtienneté voilà qui semble caractériser notre jeune poésie. (9-10, emphasis in the original)

Sylvain aspires to make Haiti known to Haitians throughout the country and be immersed in Haitian points of view. The journal constituted an ongoing process the discover, appreciate, and disseminate what it means to be Haitian, it's identifying elements, and

what's most treasured from within. By claiming indigeneity, Sylvain and the other founding members of the *Revue* (Emile Roumer, Jacques Roumain, Antonio Vieux, Philippe-Thoby-Marcelin, Daniel Heurtelou, and Carl Brouard) reappropriate the pejorative charge of the *indigène*. Taking the term accepts the association with the country. As the works included in the *Revue* make clear, any and all affiliations with the etymological concepts comprised by the word "indigène" (*in* "dans", *-gena* "né de", *genere* "engendrer" [Le Grand Robert]) becomes a source of identitarian import, revealing a natural state and an inherent symbiosis.

2.1.1 *Gouverneurs de la rosée* and the natif-natal

Haitian writer Jacques Roumain studies agronomy in Spain before coming back to Haiti and begin contributing to *La Revue Indigène*. Roumain's thesis, entitled *Contribution à l'étude de l'ethnobotanique précolombienne des Grandes Antilles*, is later published by the Bulletin du Bureau d'ethnologie de la République d'Haïti in 1942. I suggest that Roumain's interest and training in the soil management and crop production allow his work to not only tap into the landscape's historical yield but also into concepts of the endemic (e.g. where and when yuca grew or who had access to corn, etc.). Roumain's *Contribution* has been ignored in studies regarding his political, poetic, and novelistic works. As such, this analysis constitutes the first consideration in literary and cultural studies. The text's "Avertissement" makes clear Roumain's desire to think in terms of belonging and placement. Both the content and the genre attest to his attention to organic progressions. He announces that he has left the original writings of the "vieux chroniqueurs," namely Las Casas, Oviedo, and Gomara (1013). Procuring the

untranslated writings of those he cites, Roumain explains, will allow both author and reader to focus on the discussion at hand: the intersection of human and natural histories, mythology, and the real. Equally necessary to understanding the Amerindian in his environment is the ensemble and contextualization of all the elements that specialized researchers would normally pull apart:

> J'ai également renoncé, dans l'exposé de l'ethnobotanique des Taïno, à la division classique: Agriculture, Horticulture, pour pouvoir mieux présenter, à travers une analyse du monde végétal de ces Indiens, une idée générale de leurs mythes, de leurs croyances religieuses, de leur culture matérielle et de leur organisation sociale (1013)

Indeed, though the text's genre is slanted to the scientific, Roumain conscientiously blurs the "division classique" of scientific classification and the humanities (1013). Loosening the restraints of traditional classification allows us to understand not only the natural world that nourished Amerindian civilizations but also the individual role of flora within religious and social systems. I suggest that Roumain's agronomic training and his thinking through the writing of the *Contribution* proved to be a model for what the native tends to and should aspire to be.

Roumain's *Contribution* to the study of ethnobotany – a science that studies the relationship between human social groups and plants – advances the understanding, conceptualization, and applications of a people endemic to any given environment, in this case that of the Caribbean archipelago. Indeed, Roumain begins the study with the

"Hobo, Jobo"'s role within the Taino origin story.[77] Roumain relays how the race of men came forth from the untended caves of Caci-baxagua and Amaiauba. The sun, which had turned the cave-keeper Maorocael into stone, turns the early beings from human-like into trees: jobos. Whether mythical, of religious importance, nourishment, decoration, homestead building, or the arts (weaving, spinning, twisting, basketwork), Roumain indicates the existence of plants or trees and their use within heterogeneous indigenous groups throughout the Americas. He conveys the unique position of those who turn to the scientific study of plants in order to give insight into human societies.

> il existe en Haïti dans la famille des *Menthaceae*, l'*Ocimum L*, vulgairement appelé basilic qui comprend une espèce médicinale, l'*ocimum gratissimum L*. dont le nom en Haïti est **atiayo**. Dans le langage fon du groupe eburnéo-dahoméen qui a eu un rôle déterminant dans la formation du créole haïtien, ati signifie plante. Nous nous méfions toutefois extrêmement, de ces rapprochements linguistiques séduisants. Nous nous garderons donc de traduire atiayo par: la plante ayo, et de l'identifier au gueyo qui ne serait plus dans ce cas la coca, mais une *Menthacea*, qui aurait reçu le nom de hayo pour la ressemblance de ces feuilles avec celles de la coca. Nous préférons laisser ouvert à la

[77] "Le mythe d'origine des Taïno mentionne le nom de cet arbre: sur la montagne Canta, deux cavernes, Caci-baxagua et Amaiauba, étaient gardées par un nommé Maorocael. Celui-ci ayant un jour abandonné sa surveillance, le soleil s'échappa et transforma Maorocael en pierre. De Caci-baxagua et d'Amaiauba sortirent les hommes. Le lendemain, le soleil surprenant à la pêche ces premières créatures, les changea en arbres: jobo ou hobo." (1014)

> discussion des botanistes et des ethnologues un problème fort intéressant (1020)

An ethnobotanist, in addition to being able to provide Order, Family, and Species of any given plant, has an acute understanding of the physical environment's multifarious role in the formation of a community's identity and self-definition. The above quote also manifests an awareness of natural elements (e.g. plants, trees, fruit, soil, etc.) and various semantic layers that carry different context and thereby meaning. That is to say that Roumain's *Contribution*, in addition to cataloguing plants, trees, and fruits, translating them into cultural markers, and closing the gap between insular and continental indigeneity, undertakes the chronology and narrative of those who engaged with nature. The above quote cites the appearance of linguistic elements from the Eburnean regions of Dahomey in Haitian creole parlance for plants. Roumain doubts the veracity of this possible link and yet his attempt to untangle the linguistic hold on Haiti's flora in undeniable. Roumain, in reading nature, reads the history of peoples who inhabit or have inhabited the Caribbean. He duly notes when a plant is pre-Columbian, suggesting an interest in the interrelatedness of the groups:

> Oviedo décrit le jobo comme originaire de la terre ferme. D'après Vavilov, il est spontané dans le sud du Mexique. Quoiqu'il en soit, sa place dans le mythe d'origine des Taïno, indique avec certitude qu'en Haïti, il est pré-colombien. (1014)

Though language and societies may differ, the groups' use of the item reveals a mirrored likeness:

> Bija est le **roucou** des Carib; au Mexique, il est appelé **achiote**; au Pérou le nom original quechua, **mantur**, est tombé en désuétude et a été remplacé par le vocable mexicain. (1024)

Roumain pays attention to the minutia that could elucidate or obfuscate the island's history, along with its past and current make up:

> Le bihao, mentionné par Oviedo est l'*Heliconia bihai L*, appelé bananier marron en Haïti et Platano cimarron à Santo-Domingo.
>
> Il diffère de la *Musa paradisiaca L*. – introduit des Iles Canaries en Haïti, en 1516 par Tomas Berlanga – par ses tiges grêles formées de gaines allongées et son fruit: une capsule divisée en fruits baccaires, alors que la *Musa* possède un troc robuste formé d'immenses gaines, et un fruit long et charnu. (1027)

The above quotation exemplifies Roumain's care in pointing out botanical similarities (le bihao), linguistic differences ("bananier marron" vs. "platano cimarron"), and cultural and historical interventions ("introduit des Iles Canaries en Haïti, en 1516"). The arrival of other flora – and their human carriers – would soon join the earth (in this case the very similar *Musa paradisiaca L*.) and grow alongside its endemic counterparts. Roumain does not state an explicit or conscientious link or influence between the Contribution or any other text related to his training in agronomy or his interest in zootechnics.[78] My reading of Roumain's most celebrated work of fiction will demonstrate the attention and extent to which he enmeshes the individual Haitian *paysan* and the communal *coumbite*

[78] Roumain brings up his enthusiasm for zootechnics (bulls in particular) in a *Revue Indigène* interview conducted by Antonio Vieux (105).

with a terrain as fraught and complex as any other character and the national identity it undergirds. As I will show, Roumain's collective work effectively cross-pollinates the scientific with national narratives and nature with man.

Roumain's novel *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (1944) was published posthumously. As previously mentioned, he was founding member of the group of writers and political activists who undertook efforts to define and develop Haitian literature (Bernard, 19). He was one of the contributors to *La Revue Indigène*, journal that, as I have shown, focused on issues, themes, and images directly related to Haiti. *Gouverneurs de la rosée* tells the story of Manuel, a son to Haitian peasants who leaves his family's land and goes to work the Cuban fields in order to make a more profitable living. He returns only to find enmity and division among the peasants and a brutal drought in the once fertile valley. *Gouverneurs de la rosée* displays people whose precarious situation is only rivaled by that of the land. Roumain emphasizes an intimately familiar relationship with the land. This is a link that goes beyond appreciation and acknowledgement of human need for nature's continued provision. Roumain's characters convey a symbiotic or even a mimetic connection:

> Pourtant, on s'était à peine arrêté, le temps d'avaler une gorgée de tafia, de se détendre les reins – dans les corps, c'est ce qu'il y a de plus récalcitrant, les reins. Mais ces habitants des mornes et des plaines, les bourgeois de la ville ont beau les appeler par dérision *nègres pieds-à-terre, nègres va-nu-pieds, nègres-orteils* (trop pauvres qu'ils étaient pour s'acheter des souliers) tant pis et la merde pour eux, parce que, question de courage au travail nous sommes sans reproche ; et soyez comptés *nos grands pieds de*

> *travailleurs de la terre*, on vous les foutra un jour dans le cul, salauds. (27, my emphasis)

> Moreover, they had scarcely stopped long enough to swallow a mouthful of white rum, or to rest their backs.
>
> The high-class people in the city derisively call these peasants "barefoot Negroes, barefooted vagabonds, big-toed Negroes." (They are too poor to buy shoes.) But never mind and to hell with them ! Some day we will take our big flat feet out of the soil and plant them on their behinds. (7-8)

Roumain's focus and emphasis on the land and man's physicality, namely his feet, suggest, if not a symbiotic relationship, then certainly cause and effect. Even though the sobriquets "nègres pieds-à-terre, nègres va-nu-pieds, nègres-orteils" are intended to denigrate he whose feet are such and such, the narrator's commentary willingly vindicates and even appropriates (owns up to) the terms by including himself in the mix ("*nous* sommes sans reproche," "*nos* grands pieds de travailleurs de la terre," my emphasis). The disparaging names are the result of tending the land.[79] The townspeople associate both land and worker to the point of conflating the two. It must be noted, however, that it is a negative connotation. Roumain expresses the resistance of the reigning, urbanite classes to accept farmhands and smallholders as integral part of the social fabric of the country.

[79] One might also remember the epithet *pied-noir* that indicated North African nativeness – even when one's "roots" could be traced back to the French Hexagon.

Those outside the sphere of nature's influence perceive said influence as demeaning, lesser, almost primitive. Roumain's novel dramatizes the willing acceptance of any and all referents associated with the land. This is precisely Roumain's indigenizing undertaking: the refusal of all that is forced, exterior, or foreign for the sake of taking in that had been heretofore undesirable: the *paysan* (smallfarmer). As *Gouverneurs de la rosée* demonstrates, both mankind and the landscape have weathered extreme natural (i.e. drought, hurricanes) and man-made (i.e. slavery, deforestation) conditions. Délira, Manuel's mother, articulates the parallel of their experiences:

> « Eh bien, *la terre est dans la douleur, la terre est dans la misère,* alors, le Seigneur c'est le créateur de la douleur, c'est le créateur de la misère. »
> Il tire de courtes bouffées triomphantes et lance un long jet sifflant de salive.
> Délira lui jette un regard plein de colère :
> - Ne me tourmente pas, maudit. Est-ce que j'ai pas assez de tracas comme ça ? *La misère, je la connais, moi-même. Tout mon corps me fait mal, tout mon corps accouche la misère, moi-même.* J'ai pas besoin qu'on me baille la malédiction du ciel et de l'enfer. (18-9, my emphasis)

> "Well, the earth's bad off, suffering. So the Lord created suffering." Short triumphant puffs and a long whistling jet of saliva.
> Délira looked at him angrily. "Don't bother me, man ! Don't I have enough trouble on my hands ? I know what suffering is. My whole body

> aches, my whole body's full of suffering. I don't need anybody piling damnation on top of that." (2)

Délira effectively becomes nature's avatar. In reaction to her husband Bienaimé's comment that the earth is pain and misery, Délira's two-fold response is revealing. Part of her response comes from her not wanting to be punished by a higher being. Her first reaction, however, is one that would put her experience en par with nature's. She knows misery. She points to physical pain. She has experienced enough misery that she could ostensibly birth it. That is to say, she would be able to conceive, incubate, and deliver it. Her experience would put her in a position of progenitor, akin to that of creator.

Roumain suggests the primacy and magnitude of nature. Humanity lives and experiences alongside nature. Manuel, prodigal son and messianic-life character, reveals further closeness between man and the landscape:

> Si l'on est d'un pays, si l'on y est né, comme qui dirait : natif-natal, eh bien, on l'a dans les yeux, la peau, les mains, avec la chevelure de ses arbres, la chair de sa terre, les os de ses pierres, le sang de ses rivières, son ciel, sa saveur, ses hommes et ses femmes : c'est une présence, dans le cœur, ineffaçable, comme une fille qu'on aime : on connaît la source de son regard, le fruit de sa bouche, les collines de ses seins, ses mains qui se défendent et se rendent, ses genoux sans mystères, sa force et sa faiblesse, sa voix et son silence. (36)[80]

[80] Langston Hughes and Mercer Cook's 1947 translation omits this section completely. They write that many French and English speakers aided in the translation of the manuscript, wanting to make it "as faithful as possible" (ix). Roumain's own widow "compared the first draft of the translation line for line with the Haitian version" (x). I

Manuel describes his standing vis-à-vis Haiti's landscape as "natif-natal." The expression "natif-natal" places Roumain's character within Haiti's political and cultural movements, namely *Indigénisme*. Jean Targète and Raphael G. Urciolo's *Haitian Creole-English Dictionary* indeed gives "Native*, native* born, indigenous" as the definition of "natif-natal" (135). The entry for "native" in the dictionary's "English Appendix" reiterates the expression "natif-natal."

Ethnomusicologist Averill Gage translates the term and all things deemed "natif-natal" (in his case, musical subgenres) as "native born and truly Haitian" (203). Though Gage's work focuses on the reflection of Haiti's socio-political climate on musical genre formation and popularity (and not specifically – as is the case with my own work – on how such movements operate in envisaging and creating a legitimate, natural, and eventually autochthonous native), I nonetheless find that the musical realm, as part of a society's constitutive imaginary, can indeed elucidate the articulation of that network. In "Haitian Dance Bands, 1915-1970: Class, Race, and Authenticity," Gage analyzes songs that exemplify musical changes and the political shifts that brought them about. He provides the translated lyrics to a song entitled "Natif Natal" by Haitian jazz songwriter Antalcidas O. Murat.[81] Close-reading Murat's song reveals the dissonance and rebuking between Haitians who deem themselves "natif-natal" and those who, as Price-Mars put it,

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surmise that perhaps the translators (or editors) excluded the sensual content that could prove contentious for the time.

[81] Murat does not provide the lyrics in the original Haitian creole. I am thus commenting the translation he has provided. I have not been able to locate either a musical sample, video recording, or transcription of the lyrics. It does appear, however, that the term "natif-natal" is or has become a popular, would-be *cri de guerre* that extolls national identity and history. This is especially evident in songs that differentiate between "ayisyen natif natal" and members of the Haitian diaspora. See, for example, Les frères Parent's 1983 "Ayisyen natif natal" and Koudjay's 2015 "Nèg natif natal."

believe themselves to be “des Français ‘colorés’”: (“spouting nonsense,” “They believe they’re foreigners” [220]). The song reiterates Haiti’s belonging to the people (“Haiti is ours”) and the need to care for it. In particular, Murat’s song exalts “Sun on the rivers, beautiful sky, fruit sweet as honey. Music, beautiful women, spring waters, this is real” (220). The song presents snippets of the natural landscape and everyday life. Murat points to Haiti’s musical singularity and displays it along other nations with their own, distinct musical genres and the myriad styles that compose each genre: “Cuba has the bolero, guaracha, chachacha; Mexico has the huapango, mambo, and ranchera; Argentina has the tango; Jamaica the calypso” (ibid). Murat nods to each country’s distinct genres and, in so doing, brings out Haiti’s own musical predilections: “But one does nothing in another far-away country. Beautiful Haiti folklore always carries first prize.” Haiti’s winning authenticity and musical singularity become the focal point in the second chorus:

> People who are native born, truly national
>
> Yanvalou, kongo, petro, djouba, ibo,
>
> Well-balanced mereng. They’re for dancing.
>
> It’s music without equal, it’s an ideal music (220)

Murat’s song equates those “who are born, truly national” (that is, “natif-natal”) with rhythms rites from voudou (“yanvalou, kongo, petro, djouba, ibo”) which, as explained by Price-Mars, derive from African remnants and have become part of the national fabric.

Another example of the use of “natif-natal” comes from Haitian poet Félix Morisseau-Leroy, who communicates rebuilding and strengthening the ties to the countryside in *Natif-natal: conte en vers* (1948). Morisseau-Leroy, attributed to have

written the first verses and plays in the people's language (Haitian creole), emphasizes togetherness, working the land, and building the nation:

> *my friends what is happening?*
> *the country has changed*
> shoulder against shoulder
> *together we bend*
> *together we rise*
> *for the earth is ours*
> *i see such a great garden*
> *i see such a beautiful country*
> *i say when harvest comes*
> *there will be enough for all*
> so all may eat
> so all may dance
>
> i am *remaking* my road
> [...
> i am *replanting* my garden
> may the weeds grow
> no more
> may the sun burn it no more
>
> i am *remaking* my house
> o my father or my mother
> *rebuilding my house*
> that the fire may no longer destroy it
> that the wind may no longer overthrow it...
>
> i am *retracing* my paths
> [...]
> i am *rewriting* my songs
> i am *remaking* my village
>
> *i am remaking my country*
> *with the help of my brothers*
> *i am rewriting the songs*
> (30-1, my emphases)

Morisseau-Leroy's poem gestures the rallying effect of the American Occupation in Haiti and the indigenizing task of Haitian writers of the time. The poet marks a change in the flow of daily life. The natural environment has been abused. He moves to unite, work the

land, and rebuild together. The prefix re- emphasizes the imperative to begin anew. Jacques Roumain, whose *Gouverneurs de la rosée* is published in 1944, produces a number of what Edith Efron categorizes as "roman paysan": novels that focus on the rural microcosm.[82] In addition to being of the earliest instances of use in cultural productions, Jacques Roumain's meditation on what it is to be "natif-natal" in *Gouverneurs de la rosée* points to a much more intimate relationship with nature. Now that I have presented further cultural renditions of the "natif-natal" (i.e. Murat's song, Morisseau-Leroy's poem) and its insistently Haitian native semantic charge, let us go back to Manuel and his declaration to being "natif-natal":

> Si l'on est d'un pays, si l'on y est né, comme qui dirait : natif-natal, eh bien, on l'a dans les yeux, la peau, les mains, avec la chevelure de ses arbres, la chair de sa terre, les os de ses pierres, le sang de ses rivières, son ciel, sa saveur, ses hommes et ses femmes : c'est une présence, dans le cœur, ineffaçable, comme une fille qu'on aime : on connaît la source de son regard, le fruit de sa bouche, les collines de ses seins, ses mains qui se défendent et se rendent, ses genoux sans mystères, sa force et sa faiblesse, sa voix et son silence. (36)

Manuel describes a metamorphosis. Nature becomes part of one's physicality. One would "have" nature in one's "eyes, skins, hands." Manuel's description then switches. He then focuses on the mass of hair ("chevelure") of *her* trees, and the "skin of *her* earth." That is, his definition of "natif-natal" transposes human being's carrying of nature to a personification of nature. Nature becomes the object of one's affection, "the apple of

[82] *Les Fantoches* (1931) and *La Montagne ensorcelée* (1931).

one's eyes," as it were. Roumain represents nature, "la fille qu'on aime," as living, interactive, desirable being capable of defending *and* giving herself. He insinuates the possibility of inserting oneself into the other's materiality, suggesting copulation.

Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée* presents a complicit interconnection in addition to that akin to familial relations and to sexual intercourse. The reader perceives a camaraderie between equals, of sorts. The omniscient narrator informs the reader of Manuel's behavior vis-à-vis the world around him:

> Il avait envie de chanter un salut aux arbres : Plantes, à mes plantes, je vous dis : honneur ; vous me répondrez : respect, pour que je puisse entrer. Vous êtes ma maison, vous êtes mon pays. Plantes, je dis : lianes de mes bois, je suis planté dans cette terre, je suis lié à cette terre. Plantes, à mes plantes, je vous dis : honneur ; répondez-moi : respect, pour que je puisse passer. (66)

> He wanted to sing a greeting to the trees : "Growing things, my growing things ! To say, 'Honor !' You must answer 'Respect,' so that I may enter. You're my house, you're my country. Growing things, I say, vines of my woods, I am planted on this soil. I am rooted in this earth. To all that grows, I say 'Honor.' Answer 'Respect,' so that I may enter." (35)

Manuel is tempted to "chanter un salut aux arbres." A "salut," constituted by the call and response "honneur" and "respect," is a greeting used for countrymen in Haiti. Manuel would seem to want to engage in linguistic discourse with the countryside's visible features. He motions for an answer in search for acknowledgment to his presence, as he

acknowledges the natural world around him. Yet the conviviality between man and nature also turns to mutual support and fraternity:

> -- *Je suis ça : cette terre-là, et je l'ai dans le sang. Regarde ma couleur : on dirait que la terre a déteint sur moi et sur toi aussi.* Ce pays est le partage des hommes noirs et toutes les fois qu'on a essayé de nous l'enlever, nous avons sarclé l'injustice à coup de machette. (91, my emphasis)

> "That's what I am, this very earth ! I've got it in my blood. Look at my color. Folks could say the soil has faded on me, and on you, too. This land is the black man's. Each time they've tried to take it from us, we have cleaned out injustice with the blades of our machetes." (55)

Manuel points to his skin color as sign of his close-knit relationship with the land. He says that the dark red earth appears to have rubbed off or bled into his skin. He perceives himself as physically marked by the land. Manuel insinuates familial parentage, where traits can be passed down from parent to child or shared between siblings. What's more, Manuel points out that they ("hommes noirs") have weeded out or pulled injustice every time that someone has attempted to take away the land. The fidelity displayed by Manuel towards the land bespeaks both the recognition of what it provides (and/or the power to make its fruits precarious) as well as his indefatigable efforts in order to make it thrive. Five years before the publication of *Gouverneurs*, Martinican poet Aimé Césaire's

Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939) would kindle the Caribbean, the African diaspora, and other victims of colonialism throughout the world. Césaire writes about self-alienation ("Je force la membrane vitelline qui me sépare de moi-même" [34]) and the groups of people affected by a colonial context that has left them unsure about its community ("Cette foule qui ne sait pas faire foule, cette foule, on s'en rend pas compte, si parfaitement seule sous ce soleil" [9]). Césaire alludes to places that carry traces of literally and figuratively removed relatives ("pas un bout de ce monde qui ne porte mon empreinte digitale" [25]), the remnants of which find themselves ever apart, ever linked: "Terres rouges, terres sanguines, terres consanguines" (25). As Roumain's Manuel and the "hommes noirs" who carry the soil's color on their person, so do the lands Césaire evokes have incorporated the "empreinte digitale" of the diaspora. The ground is red; the soil provides red colors, minerals, and dyes; the earth holds blood ties and filiation throughout, with humankind. Césaire hints at the vital role of the landscape, nature, its features, and its fruits Roumain would later belabor in *Gouverneurs*. Césaire recognizes the immediate need to survive in a new environment (e.g. the enslaved and maroons), but also in the later phases of colonialism (i.e. the advent of French *départmentalisation* for some, fending off the economic and political interests of larger, more powerful nations for others), and the impact on the groups affected and their approaches to defining their own community.

Literary and cultural critic Monique Allewaert argues that colonialism and slavery created a "hierarchy of species" that facilitated the exploitation of black African bodies, which were relegated to a space she terms "para-human" (85-6). The "interstitial form of life" of the enslaved other than human rendered their labor force more palatable and

easier to digest, as white European slave owners could excuse the exploitation of a species not quite human and place themselves at a safe distance: *para*, beside yet clearly distinct from human (86). Allewaert explains that "[t]he parahuman is not a closed body but an opened and dispersed series of parts" 98). The malleability of the para-human's opened, fragmented body presents an interesting situation to my greater argument of indigenization via cultural pollination with the landscape. Allewaert writes that her intent is to "challenge the hierarchal organization of life forms that was common to colonial anthropologies and natural histories," specifically "animals, parahumans, and humans" (86). I reiterate my proposition of the landscape's role in the indigenizing process of Caribbean peoples and contend that botanical life forms are equally critical in discussions of racial, ethnic, communal, regional, and national identities. Nature and the landscape's significance will reach their apex when analyzing Maryse Condé's character Xantippe in *Traversée de la mangrove*, at which point I will come back to Allewaert's para-human. Until then, the malleability of the para-human's body may thus give birth to misery (as both Délira and the earth do), breed with the countryside, and become an accomplice to the trees.

2.2 Créolité as Identitarian Politics

Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée*, through various interconnections with the land, cultivates the national imaginary in order to produce a Haitian native of the Caribbean. Francophone Caribbean islands Martinique and Guadeloupe, however, have had slightly different confrontations with questions of indigeneity and its repercussions

on identity and self-identification. Attaining the status of French *départements* in 1946 attests to the fact that both Martinique and Guadeloupe have entertained political, cultural, and economic ties to France for far longer than Haiti. Martinican writer, poet, and philosopher Édouard Glissant, in expounding on the tensions of the collective, writes about place and the continued difficulties in the groups' cohesion:

> Ce n'est pas l'espace ancestral ; le traumatisme de l'arrachement à la matrice originelle (l'Afrique) joue encore sourdement. Le rêve du retour à l'Afrique, qui a marqué les deux premières générations importées, a certes disparu de la conscience collective, mais il a été remplacé dans l'histoire subie par le mythe de la citoyenneté française : ce mythe contrarie l'enracinement harmonieux ou non de l'homme martiniquais dans sa terre. (1997, 148-9)

The loss of ancestral place of origin and the ensuing historical trauma have been replaced by the myth of French citizenship. Glissant suggests the Martinican subject's native status ("dans *sa* terre") but points out that becoming rooted in the land, be it harmoniously or not, is an unconfirmed and ultimately false belief: a myth. The relation Haiti nourished with the land throughout history (e.g. fight for independence, sovereignty from external powers, natural disasters) has not been a real possibility for Martinique. Having possession and control over one's land (certainly the country's economic interests) potentially holds more than a correlation with national production: it would produce the Martinican nation in a unifying project (1997, 22-3). The literature produced in the French Antilles reflects the alienation and dispossession from one's environment. As Glissant explains, French citizens of the Antilles are officially recognized as people –

a sanctioned fact that camouflages the communities' conception of itself, historical lacunae, and daily struggles:

> Aussi bien, si cet espace n'est pas l'espace ancestral, ce n'est pas non plus un espace possédé. La collectivité martiniquaise s'équilibrerait de savoir qu'entre l'idéal perdu du retour à l'Afrique et l'idéal de la promotion à la citoyenneté française, une réelle et dense dimension a été mise entre parenthèses au fil de l'histoire subie, et qui est la possession soufferte de la terre nouvelle. (149)

Martinicans have not yet translated their "unnatural" autochthony (not of the earth, not ancestral) imposed by colonial powers into an owned and appropriated space. The community has put aside ("entre parenthèses") the very real contention of dealing with the new land to which they are native, choosing instead to focus on two unrealistic extremes: a return to Africa and being French. Glissant points the three cultural, philosophical, and political positionings that explore the communities' identities: ancestral Africa, what "we' are here and now, and French citizenship bestowed by the metropolis. In this section, I examine the theories that aim at specifying the communities' defining factors, and points of origin. I refer to these movements and theories (i.e. *Négritude* and *Antillanité*) using the manifesto of the fathers of *Créolité*. This is due to *Créolité*'s express interest in acknowledging historical and cultural phenomena in the islands' lived experiences. On a practical level, using one text as a starting point allows me to accentuate meaningful differences between them. As such, this section relies heavily on critical essays such as the *Éloge de la créolité* (1989) as well as Glissant's *Le Discours antillais* (1981) and *Poétique de la relation* (1990).

Éloge de la créolité stands as a testament to the plural voices of the heterogeneous Caribbean experience. Martinique and Guadeloupe have both received waves of immigration from the Indian sub-continent and the Levant. The arrival of newer peoples have enriched the racial, cultural, and linguistic composition of the already disparate islands. As the generations have continued to engage in the society that surrounds them, their contributions have alternated and enhanced said society. Martinique and Guadeloupe have thus had to negotiate the inclusion of newer peoples into the countries' identity as a nation. Martinican writers Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant proclaim "Ni Européens, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques, nous nous proclamons Créoles" (13). *Éloge de la créolité* stands as a text that condemns the hold of mainland France and its writers on Caribbean readership and its effects on the community's perception of itself such as represented by literary production.[83] Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant seek to declare a heretofore restrained Caribbean subject, but not before tracing the history of literary production in the francophone islands, their contexts, the origin of each literary impetus, and their ultimate lack of success.

> Entre ciel bleu et cocotiers, fleurit une écriture paradisiaque, *d'abord bon enfant puis critique à la manière des indigénistes du pays d'Haïti.* On chanta la *coloration culturelle de l'ici* dans une scription qui désertait *la totalité, les vérités alors dévalorisées de ce que nous étions*. Ce fut,

[83] The text was not well-received universally. Maryse Condé, for example, disagrees that one can define what it is to be Caribbean: " Que sont les Antilles d'aujourd'hui ? Un lieu sans contours définis, poreux à tous les bruits lointains, traversé par toutes les influences contradictoires. " (309) "Chercher nos vérités." *Penser la créolité*. Eds. Maryse Condé and Madeleine Cottenet-Hage. Paris: Karthala, 1995.

> désespérément, aux yeux des appréciations militantes postérieures, une *écriture régionale*, dite doudouiste, donc pelliculaire: *autre manière d'être extérieur*. (15-6, my emphasis)

> Between the blue sky and the coconut trees blossomed a heavenly writing, first naive and then critical, after the fashion of the indigenists of Haiti. The local cultural coloration was sung in a scription which deserted totality, the truths then depreciated of what we were. It was desperately perceived in subsequent militant criticism as a regional writing, so-called doudouist, and therefore thin : another way of being exterior. (77-8)

The Creolists nod to the validation and promotion of rural images carried out by Haitian *Indigénisme*. They voice the flourishing and progression of the literature created by indigenist writers such as Roumain. They suggest that the "coloration culturelle" tainted everything with a truth that, while representative of the lived experience in Haiti, was ultimately nullified by the limits of regional boundaries. Though it is a convincing thought that, for theories inclusive of the Caribbean (beyond specific countries), the limits of the regional restrained the possibility of examining beyond description, they seem to conflate the nationalistic enterprise the *indigénistes* took upon themselves. This simplification of *Indigénisme* would put it on par with exoticizing *Doudouisme*, which, rather than sowing and reaping an image of the Caribbean subject as one who cares for the land and appreciates the environment that surrounds him, is portrayed in distracting, sensual sketches as a content, fulfilled being. Guadeloupian writer and poet Ernest Pépin explains that

> *Doudouisme* inscribes the Caribbean in a sort of ideological vacuum, deporting it to an Eden located 'elsewhere' and defaced by all the clichés that the colonial gaze has come to expect. At the heart of *doudouisme* is the required divergence from a tacitly agreed norm, set by the Western canon. Blue seas, golden sands, humming birds, luxuriant vegetation, and the physical grace of the Creole *doudou* are the stock elements of this anaesthetic divergence, guaranteed to inspire a cheap wonder based on the illusion of an innocent paradise. (2)

The "ideological vacuum" in which *doudouist* literature is created gives a false, satisfying misrepresentation of Caribbean spaces as ideal spaces. The Creolists' equation of *doudouiste* "luxuriant vegetation" with *indigéniste* agricultural and natural hardships (i.e. the drought in Roumain's Fonds-Rouge) is thus unjustified and misses the point of self-definition – an important element absent from the ruling "colonial gaze" of *Doudouisme*. If *Indigénisme* arises from a need to look within and nourish what it is to be Haiti's native, it can be said that *Créolité* seeks to articulate the overlapping junctions of linguistic, cultural, and historical phenomena. That is to say that *Créolité* is meant to reflect the living and breathing inhabitants who, as fully realized natives, might identify with a much more complex network of languages and histories out of sync with what official, French bureaucracy or even national recognition might sanction.

Indigénisme's efforts to advocate for Haiti's disenfranchised peoples and disregarded cultures were followed by the Pan-African movement of *Négritude* led by Martinican Aimé Césaire, Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor, and French Guianese Léon-Gontran Damas. Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant confess themselves "à jamais

fils d'Aimé Césaire" but kill the omnipotent father in an oedipal gesture of rejection (18). They admit that Césairian *Négritude* allowed "la société créole" to arrive at a more just consciousness of itself and yet it could not adequately handle the particular historical context and cultural specificities that comprise the Francophone Caribbean subject (17):

> Originellement saisie du vœu de nous domicilier dans l'ici de notre être, elle [la *Négritude*] fut, aux premières vagues de son déploiement, marquée d'une manière d'extériorité: *extériorité d'aspirations* (l'Afrique mère, Afrique mythique, Afrique impossible), *extériorité de l'expression de la révolte* (le Nègre avec majuscule, tous les opprimés de la terre), *extériorité d'affirmation de soi* (nous sommes des Africains). Incontournable moment dialectique. Indispensable cheminement. Terrible défi que celui d'en sortir pour enfin bâtir une nouvelle synthèse, elle-même provisoire, sur le parcours ouvert de l'Histoire, notre histoire. (20, emphasis in the original)

> Initially motivated by the wish of embedding us into the actuality of our being, Negritude soon manifested itself in many kinds of exteriority : *the exteriority of aspirations* (to mother Africa, mythical Africa, impossible Africa) and *the exteriority of self-assertion* (we are Africans). It was a necessary dialectical moment, an indispensable development. But it remains a great challenge to step out of it in order to finally build a new yet temporary synthesis on the open path of history, our history. (82, Taleb-Khyar's emphasis)

Négritude's attention to Africa, the historical and cultural baggage, and the impossibility of a return impeded the attention to the lived present. The movement focused on the ancestral land and the various diasporas it birthed.[84] Négritude necessarily required the Francophone Afro-Caribbean subject to leave behind the land he had slaved over and which previous generations had worked to reclaim, be it historically (as in the Haitian fight for independence from France) or in terms of self-recognition and literary production (as with *Indigénisme*). In addition to the exteriority of the *Négritude* movement, the Creolists objected to the continued thinking and argumentation "à l'occidentale" (e.g. evoking hierarchical institutions as in Léopold Sédar Senghor's works, for example), even if the movement did indeed contest French colonialism (21). I do not mean to trivialize the extent, depth, and variants of *Négritude*'s motivations and intentions. I am simply focusing on the Creolists' main point of contention against the *Négritude* movement, in general, and their countryman Aimé Césaire, in particular. Looking elsewhere (i.e. to Africa) necessarily entails taking one's off what lies before us: the lived reality of Martinicans – Blacks, yes, but also those mixed with European descendants, those few with Amerindian heritage, and the newer racial and ethnic groups who call Martinique home. The Creolists do not reject the unifying element that is the African diaspora imposed by colonial interests, they reject the centrality of Africa and the continued disregard of Caribbean experiences.

Raphaël Confiant explains this dissonance in his polemical *Aimé Césaire, une traversée paradoxale du siècle,* where he puts in words "le cri sincère d'un fils qui estime

[84] Though decidedly not a part of the *Négritude* movement, Jean Price-Mars devotes three chapters of *Ainsi parla l'oncle* to subjects related to Africa ("L'Afrique, ses races et sa civilisation," "L'Afrique et le monde extérieur," and "L'Animisme africain").

avoir été trahi par ses pères et en l'occurrence par le premier d'entre eux, Aimé Césaire" (2006, 13). This let down (or indeed betrayal) comes not only from Césaire's failure to see Martinique's real face ("les Martiniquais sont un peuple résultant de l'amalgame forcé (et forcéné) d'une multitude de peuples" [2006, 1])[85] in favor of a sole, African source of origin ("certes la plus bafouée, la plus dénigrée" [2006, 3]). Confiant's most poignant grievance against Césaire is the paradox of his literary and political life ("Certains parlent du génie littéraire et du nain politique. Pourquoi pas de dédoublement de la personnalité!" [2006, 12]). Confiant blames Césaire for the assimilation of the French Antilles: " Les Antilles françaises d'aujourd'hui souffrent d'un péché originel : celui de l'assimilation. Celui qui a, non pas commis mais légitimé ce péché, en présentant la loi dite d'assimilation de 1946, est Aimé Césaire, le père de l'idée de négritude" (2006, 10). Césaire presents the 1946 *départementalisation* law that would ensure inhabitants of the overseas territories French mainland rights. Confiant expresses that this attempt at equality backfired, taking away Martinique's possibilities of national identity, personality, and ability to reason.[86] Confiant impresses upon the reader the mistake in

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[85] "Autochtones caraïbes vivant là depuis quatre mille ans et dénommés Amérindiens par les 'découvreurs' européens. Métissés puis décimés par ces derniers qui s'installèrent définitivement dans l'île en 1635 de l'ère chrétienne. Européens qui importèrent d'innumérables cargaisons de 'bois d'ébène' de la côte ouest de l'Afrique qu'ils mirent en esclavage, deux siècles durant, dans les champs de café, de coton, de tabac et de canne à sucre. Qu'ils métissèrent également. Et pardessus tout cela, l'arrivée d'Hindous, de Chinois et de Levantins, broyés à leur tour dans cet inattendu maelström. Tous victimes de l'éternelle dérive des peuples qui semble presque toujours s'effectuer d'est en ouest, comme si elle s'acharnait à suivre, par quelque étrange aimantation, la trajectoire du soleil. Francis Affergan note : 'Dès l'origine, la Martinique, comme si déjà elle s'estompait dans sa fin, n'est que mélange et confusion.'" (2006, 1)

[86] "Ici là, les analyses les mieux affûtées, les concepts les plus éprouvés deviennent inopérants : 'classe sociale,' 'production,' 'opinion publique' et bien d'autres. Seule la pure description phénoménologique semble adéquate face à un réel sans cesse fuyant et déroutant." (2006, 11)

oversight and looking elsewhere. This very issue – the implied need to turn to Africa instead of the francophone islands of the Caribbean – informed my decision to leave out in-depth analyses of works created under the banner of *Négritude*. My contention that the land and nature played a role in identifying as a native of the Caribbean necessitates, first and foremost, reporting as part of the Caribbean's natural make-up, be it *indigéniste*, *créole*, another iteration of belonging or self-definition, or the assertion that one cannot define it.

Édouard Glissant's conception of *Antillanité* envisaged the focus on and recognition of the Caribbean as a particular historical, linguistic, and cultural phenomenon. The Creolists, however, write that his meditations on the subject turned out to be "plus de la vision que du concept" (21):

> Le projet n'était pas seulement d'abandonner les hypnoses d'Europe et d'Afrique. Il fallait aussi garder en éveil la claire conscience des apports de l'une et de l'autre: en leur spécificités, leurs dosages, leurs équilibres, sans rien oblitérer ni oublier des autres sources, à elles mêlées. Plonger donc le regard dans le chaos de cette humanité nouvelle que nous sommes. *Comprendre ce qu'est l'Antillais*. Percevoir ce que signifie cette civilisation caribéenne encore balbutiante et immobile. (21-2, emphasis in the original)
>
> As a project it was not just aimed at abandoning the hypnoses of Europe and Africa. We had yet to keep a clear consciousness of our relations with

> one and the other : in their specificities, their right proportions, their balances, without obliterating or forgetting anything pertaining to the other sources conjugated with them ; thus, to scrutinize the chaos of this new humanity that we are, *to understand* what the Caribbean is ; to perceive the meaning of this Caribbean civilization which is still stammering and immobile (83, Taleb-Khyar's emphasis)

They claim that a faithful and ethical engagement with the real would have to be more immediate, less abstract. It would have to take the focus off both ancestral land and colonial suppression. Above all, it would have to focus entirely in the Caribbean ensemble that is the agglutination of races, languages, French influence, African remnants, and their intermingling. These fusions, the Creolists, declare, embody Caribbeanness: "cette humanité nouvelle que nous sommes." The Creolists' expectations of Glissant's *Antillanité* is at odds with the philosopher's apprehensions regarding the Caribbean. His theory of Relation as an ethical positioning allows one to understand without encompassing or absorbing into an effacing Totality. Entering into Relation respects a culture, society, or individual's Opacity: the right to be undefined and unencumbered by "vérités absolues" (1990, 206): "La pensée de l'opacité me garde des voies univoques et des choix irréversibles" (ibid). Opacity protects both the object of comprehension and the beholder from unequivocal, totalizing assumptions that will then inform other expectations and assumptions. To this end, Glissant's "vision" must remain so, for further conceptualization of exactly what being Caribbean entails endangers the rights of those defined. If anything, Glissant's Caribbean nature necessarily includes

movement: an unending process of becoming. This nonconformability of being (le jeu), for Glissant, constitutes Caribbean identity.

2.2.1 *Solibo magnifique*: ce que nous sommes

Patrick Chamoiseau publishes his novel *Solibo magnifique* (1988) a year before the co-authored *Éloge de la créolité*. The work of fiction anticipates the practice of what the *Éloge* purports to accurately describe : the creolization of Francophone Caribbean societies and the heterogeneity of their native status. Indeed, Chamoiseau gives a glimpse into a rich slice of Martinican society. In the novel, Solibo, a local storyteller, has suddenly died. The various stories of those who witnessed his sudden death comprise *Solibo magnifique*. As such, the format of the novel itself sets the pace for the plurivocal Caribbean Chamoiseau, along with Bernabé and Confiant, so urgently entreat in *Éloge de la créolité*. The reader is witness to the interaction between the police and each spectator of Solibo's "é krii?" "é kraa!" *parole* before dying.[87] The narrator's back and forth accounts of events that took place either during Solibo's story, with the police, or as flashbacks to the spectators' memories of him prove to be a dizzying experience for the reader. James Tar Tsaaior, in "History, (Re)Memory and Cultural Self-Presencing: The Politics of Postcolonial Becoming in the Caribbean Novel," explains the effective function of Chamoiseau's novel.

> *Solibo the Magnificent ruptures the sense of coherence* which is assumed to be the hallmark of Western epistemologies and hermeneutic systems and *envisions the array of possibilities that exists for the alternative*

[87] The "é krii?" "é kraa!" (or krik? krak!) is a typical call and response, story-telling device where the narrator calls to the audience so as to incorporate their participation into the narrative performance.

> *interpretation of human history and realities* not encoded in the canon of Western knowledge networks. (131, my emphasis)

Solibo magnifique's narrative challenges the characteristic official aspect of Western institutions and Cartesian logic, where the narrative would build on a series of undeniable linearity and chronological premises. The colonial project has left the Caribbean community's individuals a legacy of conflating *corps* and *âme* where black Africans were enslaved because black Africans. There is no separation and confidence in one's autonomy thanks to the realization that "je pense, donc je suis," let alone in the certainty in "cultiver [s]a raison, et [s]'avancer" (Descartes, 66, 59).[88] The novel's narrative reflects the inability to "déracin[er] [...] [son] esprit" of errors when, as Glissant put it, there is an "espace-temps non maîtrisé" (1997, 147). Multiple voices and non-linear storylines confuse any one truth. This, Chamoiseau conveys, encapsulates the creole Caribbean experience.

Though not as central as in *Gouverneurs de la rosée*, nature does have a role in *Solibo magnifique*. Paradoxically, the association with nature gives characters an aura of the supernatural. A few characters describe Solibo as being like or having qualities similar to that of a tree. Sidonise, "marchande de sorbets" and lover of Solibo, characterizes their emotional and physical relationship in terms of flora, describing him as the many-branched, expansive "figuier maudit" (32, 122).[89] Most of the references to nature, however, are associated with unrestrained language, namely unofficial creole

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[88] Let us remember that Aimé Césaire itemizes the *non sequitur* "Que 2 et 2 font 5" as part of the colonial "Trésor" in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (27).

[89] "Solibo m'habitait de partout, on dit le cœur, le cœur, mais je crois bien qu'il habitait mon ventre aussi, qu'il habitait mes rêves, et que dans ma mémoire il avait tout dévasté, à dire un figuier maudit, assassin des alentours." (122-3)

language : “Ça m’aurait étonné qu’il [Solibo] ait vu du monde. Près de son four, *Solibo devenait comme un arbre*. Il pouvait rester etcaetera d’heures sans bouger, à causer pour lui-même, dans sa tête” (187, my emphasis). His resemblance to the stillness of a tree conceals a noisy linguistic stream or, as would-be factory worker Richard Cœurillon says, a “cyclone de paroles” (196).

In addition to narrative and linguistic refraction, Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Solibo magnifique* illustrates the interpersonal dynamics that undergird a creole society. Rather than focusing on a dialectic of black and white racial tensions, Chamoiseau’s texts exemplify the meshing of further factors, namely class. Man Cyanise, “mulâtresse, concubine de deux ou trois békés” (179) for example, prefers pretending that she descends from an “Indienne Caraïbe” rather than admit that her mother was a *négresse* blacker than the bottom of a cauldron (179). She appears to trust characters who are not black. The narrator surmises that she could perhaps trust blacks if they, too, had “grandes maisons blanches, avec balcons et véranda, avec de la viande au canari chaque jour” (180). Man Cyanise has had children by her white lovers. But rather than officially recognize the offspring, they have given her plots of land. Chamoiseau shows that the hierarchy of white superiority still has hold over Martinican society. Man Cyanise’s racial ranking makes obvious the role of access to material possessions. Though Man Cyanise’s mother was undeniably black, she prefers to cover this fact with Amerindian genealogy. On the rare occasion that she diverges from her usual racial predilections, it is noted as exactly that, a departure from the usual: “Donc *Florise était noire, mais* Man Cyanise lui avait *quand même* accordé l’autorisation des fours” (180, my emphasis).

Despite of Man Florise's black skin, Man Cyanise is willing to share her possessions, namely by letting her use her oven.

Solibo magnifique's format mirrors the heterogeneous experience of the various racial, ethnic, economic, and social groups who co-inhabit Martinique. The novel brings to the fore the creolized cultures and identities of those on the island. Though most characters may have official French nationality, the encounters with the inspector and other police officials reveal the aloofness of their investigative methodologies and questions in order to communicate and understand what the other requests. Chamoiseau conveys that neither French nor Caribbean identities are the same across the board. *Solibo magnifique* displays the motley hues that constitute Caribbean societies. The novels manifests a specific type of Caribbean identity not in a uniform, black and white definition but rather in laying out the island's manifold identities.

2.3 Race, Class, and Nature in *Traversée de la mangrove*

Published a year after Patrick Chamoiseau's *Solibo magnifique*, Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989) shows already heterogeneous groups negotiating further interrelations. Declarations such as "Justement, je ne la définis pas ; ce n'est pas une recette de cuisine" indicate that Condé is not interested in providing definitions about what a Guadeloupian or Caribbean community is, looks like, does or does not do (Pfaff, 113). Her novel, however, arises as a text born of the varied, cultural richness of Guadeloupe. Condé's characters are pulled in myriad directions depending on not only race but also gender and class. One's relationship to the land continues to contribute to self-identification but it arises via a mediation of specific social status, namely who

works and who owns the land. Power, prestige, and the ability to attract shifts on a near case by case basis. These variations reflect Kimberle Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality and the assertion that a "single-axis analysis ... distorts these experiences" (139). Minding Guadeloupe's racial, ethnic, and cultural differences – and certainly those presented by Condé in the novel –, I reiterate the need to further widen the possibilities of being and experience in order to more accurately describe the give and take at work. As such, I would add class as well as further gradations of race, ethnicity, and creolization to Valerie Smith's explanation that "[t]he notion of intersectionality points to the recognition that race and gender are not mutually exclusive, but rather are interlocking categories of experience" (43). Though I will focus on the last great wave of newcomers to the Caribbean islands: that of indentured servants from India and their descendants, the tensions posed by their "indianité," and the land's role in an individual's standing within the community, the lens of intersectionality allows to consider the forces at work where Léocadie Timothée, a black woman who embraces and wishes to help her race ("je voulais travailler pour ma race" [141]) and whose status as school instructor – the very same one that allows her to teach others to read – keeps her wedged in another, infinitely more privileged group ("A leurs yeux, j'étais une traîtresse!"[142]). Mira Lemeaulnes, the much-admired *chabine*[90] of Rivière au Sel complains about the "méchanceté des Nègres" (63) and looks down upon the young "Indien" who idolizes her only to fall in love with Francis Sancher, a stranger whose surplus of money and lack of racial determinacy stirs the town ("On ne sait même pas si c'était un Blanc, un Nègre, un

[90] *Chabine* (feminine) or *chabin* (masculine) is a person of black and white ancestry whose white skin might pass for a person of European descent, if not for traits traditionally associated with African heritage.

Zindien. Il avait tous les sangs dans son corps!" [229]). Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* displays the ways in which race, gender, and class can and do become points of both confluence and divergence within Caribbean communities. Her text problematizes claims of belonging (as in *Gouverneurs de la rosée*) and the celebration of difference (as manifested in the *Éloge de la créolité* and *Solibo magnifique*). The community of Rivière au Sel's iterations of origins bespeaks movement, inconsistencies, and confrontations.

Condé's characters make it possible to trace the changes in population make up. The narrator tells us that in 1904 or 1905 there were many regions of the country without "Indiens." The Indians that appear in *Traversée de la mangrove* are not autochthonous Amerindian peoples of the Americas. The Indians in Condé's Guadeloupe refers to the "original" holders of the word, that is, of people from the Indian subcontinent. The *kala pani*, or "black water," the period in which mostly Hindu Indians were hired under false promises and taken to work in the Caribbean islands as indentured servants joined *la Traite*, or Middle Passage, in relegating deterritorialized groups of people in order to work and extract profits from the land (Mehta, 1). This, states *kala pani* narrative specialist Brinda J.Mehta, "perpetuated an inhumane system of contracted labor exploitation despite the 'official' abolition of slavery in 1838 by the British and in 1848 by the French" (1).[91] Condé presents the inclusion of indentured servants from India and the Levant. Reminiscent of the origins of the "Indian" of the Americas, "Indians" in Condé's fictionalized account of Guadeloupe will be equivocated with another unknown,

[91] For further general framing, see Joy Mahabir and Mariam Pirbhai's *Critical Perspectives on Indo-Caribbean Women's Literature.*

unfamiliar other.[92] Let us remember that the autochthonous peoples of the Americas receive the term following a voyage gone awry that never arrived at its intended destination: the Indies. The term "Indian," since the so-called "discovery" of the American continent denotes classification, misrecognition, and creation. As I have shown with the reworking of the concepts nativity and indigeneity in the works of Jean Price-Mars and Jacques Roumain, the "original" Indians negotiate the conflation and full recognition as West Indians.

> En réalité, les gens se trouvaient principalement là par égard pour les parents de Vilma, les Ramsaran. Ti-Tor Ramsaran, ayant tiré du pied contre son père qui lui refusait des plants de canne à sucre et l'ayant cloué pour trois longs mois sur un lit de l'Hôpital Général de La Pointe, avait mis de la distance entre sa mauvaise action et lui et s'était installé dans cette région qui traditionnellement ne comptait pas d'Indiens la même année que Gabriel, le premier Lameaulnes, un béké de la Martinique, chassé par sa famille parce qu'il s'était marié avec une négresse. Ce devait être en 1904 ou 1905. En tout cas, avant la guerre de 14-18 et bien avant le cyclone de 1928. (20)

> Actually, people had come mainly out of respect for Vilma's parents, the Ramsarans, one of their most esteemed families in Rivière au Sel. After having laid up his father with a vicious kick for three long months in a

[92] Aimé Césaire's rendition of Caliban in *Une Tempête* (1969) embodies an indeterminate being that is at once plant-like, animal, and humanoid.

> hospital bed in La Pointe for refusing to give him sugarcane cuttings, Ti-Tor Ramsaran, Vilma's great-grandfather, had put as much distance as he could between himself and his bad deed and had settled in this region of the island – an unusual spot for an East Indian – the same year as Gabriel, the first of the Lameaulnes, a white Creole from Martinique, who had been hounded out by his family because he married a Negress. This must have been in 1904 or 1905. In any case before the 1914-1918 war and well before the hurricane of 1928. (7)

This passage tells that Indians are rare but it also points to the fact that groups had already begun to circulate in the island. It also revealed to us that they had begun to either own or work the land. Ti-Tor Ramsaran wishes to deal in cane fields. His father refuses to let him get involved in such endeavors. Equally revealing is the time marker of the story. The narrator tells us that the year the young Ramsaran ended up in the hospital was the year that a *béké*[93] from the powerful Lameaulnes family ran away with a black woman. Condé emphasizes the race relations in the island at the time. They attract and repel at the same time. As the example with the black and white couple shows, they come together only to be rejected by the society around them.

The myriad racial, ethnic, and religious groups who arrived with the waves of immigration and indentured servitude experienced a lumping together. Guadeloupian novelist and essayist Ernest Moutoussamy, who has written on the subject of

[93] A "béké" is a term traditionally used for white, plantation-owning inhabitants of Francophone Caribbean islands. The descendants of owners, or former owners also carry this name. That is to say, the term has become a synonym for "white" in the Francophone Caribbean.

Guadeloupe's *indianité* points out the vast geographical and linguistic differences that impeded the organization of those who immigrated from the same country, namely the Indian subcontinent (93). Condé's "Indiens" enter into a categorization that both helps and deters permanent placement into Guadeloupian society. The Ramsarans come to build successful businesses and gain, if not the welcomed acceptance of the community, then certainly its resignation to their material wealth. At the time of the arrival of the Ramsarans, it was not uncommon to hear "Kouli malaba / Isi dan / Pa peyiw" (20).[94] They receive insults and explicit reminders that the Guadeloupian land on which they stand is not their own ("n'est pas le vôtre" – "not your own"). As with Haiti's *Indigénisme*, this expression achieves two things: On the one hand, the "Indians" are externalized and distanced from the country. On the other, the person who utters the phrase reiterates his opposition to the other's strangeness, thereby claiming his endemic status. Moutoussamy, in *La Guadeloupe et son indianité*, writes that the word "malaba," which alludes to the Malabar region of India, has indeed come into the local language of the island (101). He indicates that the word has become synonymous with "indien." The semantic charge, however, is negative ("mot employé souvent au sens péjoratif" [101]). The geographical location and point of origin reverts the person who receives the moniker back to the specificity of that word – regardless of actual place of birth.

Condé illustrates the initial aspersion to "Indians" in Guadeloupe. The Ramsarans are signaled out as foreigners. The disfavor, however, takes many forms. Though the pejorative expression separates the "Indians" from an intimate association from the land, the group's complete disassociation is equally frowned upon. The narrator tells us that, a

[94] "Cooli malabar (injurieux). Ce pays n'est pas le vôtre" (20).

generation later, the envious and the dissatisfied complain: “Quoi! Un Ramsaran médecin! Les gens ne savent pas rester à leur place! La place des Ramsaran était dans la terre, canne ou pas!” (21). Becoming a doctor – a white-collar profession – prompts objection. Those who object to the Ramsaran’s studies claim that they belong to the land. They insinuate that they must work the land and, in so doing, denigrate working the land. Moreover, “canne ou pas!” designates the Ramsaran’s rapport to cane-less land to a calamitous level: dead and buried. The land, then, occupies the space from which one may position oneself in one of two ways. Association with the land both gives rights to calling oneself native inhabitant and places he who works the land low on the scale of Guadeloupian hierarchy. Though apparently paradoxical, the double-edged sword that is one’s positioning to the land reflects the progressive changes of the immigrated groups into Guadeloupian society. Moutoussamy writes that “[e]n l’espace de 40 ans, il [the East Indian] a comblé un siècle de retard” (17). In the space of 40 years, the East Indian begins on one spectrum of the land and ends up on the other:

> L’Indien demeure avant tout un rural attaché à la terre, à l’agriculture et à l’élevage. [...] Bien que tardivement arrivé dans le pays, l’Indien est bien enraciné dans le secteur primaire. Il a investi l’essentiel de ses efforts dans la terre qui devint pour lui à la fois un moyen de production, une aire de résistance et le moteur de sa promotion. Homme de la terre, son objectif primordial fut et reste encore l’acquisition de ce bien indispensable à son ascension sociale. Dans le triangle formé par les communes de Sainte-Anne, Saint-François, Moule, 70% des familles indiennes sont propriétaires de plus de 30% des terres, sous forme de parcelles de 0,5 à 5

> hectares. Chez certains Indiens, le désir de posséder la terre est une obsession qui les pousse à l'avarice et à toutes sortes de privations, afin d'amasser le pécule nécessaire de prendre une part active dans l'agriculture du pays. 60% d'entre eux animent ce secteur économique, dans la culture de la canne à sucre, de la banane, dans le maraîchage et dans l'élevage (17).

The status of the East Indian depends at all times on the positioning vis-à-vis the land. As evidenced by Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove*, the status is at odds with what is accepted as native, belonging, or able to thrive. Writer Edward Kamau Brathwaite, in *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820*, shows his native Jamaica's case concerning creolization, or the plural influence of cultures that gave way to the country's economic and cultural make up. Brathwaite insists that

> [e]ven more important for an understanding of Jamaican development during this period was the process of creolization, which is a way of seeing the society, not in terms of white and black, master and slave, in separate nuclear units, but as contributory parts of a whole. To see Jamaica (or the West Indies generally) as a 'slave' society is as much a falsification of reality, as the seeing of the island as a naval station or an enormous sugar factory. (307)

Despite writing about the complexity of creolization and the refusal of oversimplify this Caribbean society and yet continues to speak of what can only be perceived as binary: "Here in Jamaica, fixed within the dehumanizing institution of slavery, were two cultures of people, having to adapt themselves to a new environment and to each other. The

friction created by this confrontation was cruel, but it was also creative" (307). A bit later, when discussing what he describes as every society's "natural built-in drive or gravitational tendency towards cultural autonomy," Brathwaite explains that "[u]nder slavery there were two 'great' and 'little' traditions within the society, one in Europe, the other in Africa, and so neither was residential" (309). He writes that creolization allowed the possibility of "local residence" which, in turn, created "authentically local institutions" and traditions. He assures the reader that this creolization: the eventual attainment of residency and local customs did not "provide a norm." Brathwaite sets about designating four "orientations": "European, Euro-creole, Afro-creole (or folk), and West Indians." His meticulous classification, however, fails to include any Amerindian remnants *or* even consider the by then sizeable demographic of East Indian population. In fact, the latter is relegated to a parenthetical inclusion that, ironically, negates participation: "(The 'East Indian' problem, since it introduces new complexities, and does not (yet) significantly relate to Jamaica, will not be unrolled here.)" (310). Though the doubly parenthetical "yet" places an indefinite hold on fully acknowledging both presence and contribution of "the 'East Indian' problem" to Jamaican society, it does allow the possibility of an eventual embrace. After all, Brathwaite's creolization takes into account the non-residential (read: non-indigenous, non-autochthonous) aspect of the two only sides that he considers: black and white. Literary works of art such as Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* offer a counter-narrative to histories and theories that, at best, have difficulties recognizing the compound cultures throughout the Caribbean archipelago or, at worst, cannot undo the binary hold instituted by colonial interests.

Martinican writer Raphaël Confiant's autobiographical novel *Ravines du devant-jour* (1993) reflects the racial diversity of the island and the multiple positioning of the individual. Unlike Condé's conflated "Indiens," Indians, Syrians, and their mixed and un-mixed descendants are clearly differentiated. Confiant identifies the imperfect, complex networks of race, gender, and class that rule life in Martinique. In the novel, the young Confiant learns what it means to be chabin[95] and, more importantly, the expectation associated with his skin color: "'Qu'est-ce que je vois devant moi là: un chabin mol? Mais c'est impossible! IMPOSSIBLE! Un chabin, ça crie, ça trépigne, ça frappe, ça injurie, ça menace. Jamais ça ne mollit, mon vieux!' De ce jour naît ta férocité." (42-3). His ferocity, however, is tamed by his interest in Laetitia, a girl of Indian heritage[96] – an appreciation not shared by his maternal grandmother ("qui est la générosité fait femme" [46]) finds Indians reprehensible: "Selon elle, cette race-là, 'est la dernière des races après les crapauds-ladres, pire que les Nègres-Congo, ce qui est tout dire." (47). Man Yise adds her personal prejudices to an already organized ranking of race, gender, and class. The narrator's "demi-Chinoise" paternal grandmother escapes negative classification, which could be explained by the fact that she owns a bustling store in the city – a significant fact, given that young Confiant and his siblings are cleaned from head to toe and dressed well ("Elle [tante Emérante] nous fait elle-même une toilette si complète que nous en pleurons") when taken to visit her (191-2). Though *Ravines* tells an

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[95] "Tu sens confusément que le chabin est un être à part. Nègre et pas nègre, blanc et pas à la fois. Toutefois, tu ne t'es pas encore rendu compte de l'ampleur de la distance que la couleur de ta peau et de tes cheveux crée entre les gens du commun et toi" (42).

[96] L'indienne (or coulie) as object of desire appears in a growing body of work in Francophone Caribbean literature. See Ernest Pépin's section "Je t'ai nommée l'indienne" in *Le bel incendie* (2012). Confiant's own novel attributes "la belleté de ses femmes" as a main reason for the Indian diaspora to have "surmonté le crachat." (256)

individual's coming of age (rather than the community focused works I chose as primary texts), the novel nonetheless provides rich and witty details about the array of skin colors, social tangent circles, and characters who live in Martinique's countryside. The boy wonders about racial classification ("Pourquoi je suis un nègre et pourtant, je ne suis pas noir") and asks his mother about the homogeneity he has only seen in books (245). His mother avoids answering the question about Roman uniformity and the disparateness of his nuclear family, for a while. Eventually she manages to speak about the burden of race ("Elle cherche ses mots, elle si volubile et si charmante dans la langue des Blancs" [246]):

> Ils étaient noirs et... enfin, c'étaient des esclaves... on les obligeait à travailler la terre... on les maltraitait... leurs femmes faisaient des enfants avec les maîtres blancs *pour éclaircir la race... pour sauver la peau,* tu vois. Cela a donné naissance aux mulâtres, aux chabins et aux câpres. (146, my emphasis)

Colonization and plantation culture maintained those enslaved and others at its lowest ranks under duress, coerced and violated in the most intimate of ways. Lightening one's skin could lighten one's work load. In some cases, it was a matter of saving one's skin (read: life). Confiant explores origins, the meaning and encumbrance of heritage, and transmission. The "Petit lexique du pays créole" he includes at the end of the novel attests to the importance of these themes to his work. The glossary identifies terms that highlight and blur the limits of race, class, and the intersection of two or more variables. "Dodine," for example, points to the ability to lounge on a veranda – and the only exterior sign of wealth for a black person (257). The ties to one's forebears may be unfocused and yet

they remain, ready to be further transmitted. The "Nègre-caraïbe," for example, spots the occasional genetic remnants of Carib peoples. Confiant writes that they survive "à travers le nègre" (259). Like Condé, Confiant illustrates the negotiation in identifying who the community identifies as Martinican and which groups continue to weave their way into society's fabric.

Literary and cultural critic Shona Jackson, in her seminal work *Creole Indigeneities*, demonstrates the process by which non-autochthonous groups attain native status via labor. I proffer that the indigenizing process in Guyana with descendants of African slaves and indentured servants from the Asian sub-continent (such as explained by Jackson) aids in thinking about the Caribbean's new natives. Unlike the greater Caribbean's virtually extinct Amerindian population, Guyana's Amerindian peoples continue to enjoy a sizeable demographic. The fact that this population continues to exist, however, does not equate to the group's prosperity in today's economy. Jackson explains that Guyana's racial make-up is divided along racial and geographic lines. The Amerindian groups have moved towards the country's interior. Citizens of African and Southeast Asian origin, however, populate the exterior, in the underbelly of the nation's modern economy. Jackson elucidates on these racial and economy divisions:

> Although blacks were conceived of as inhuman, their identities were always more allied with the state because of its configuration of labor. In other words, their inhumanity was always conceived *within* the state, which sought to recreate the European state in the Americas, while the subhumanity of Indigenous Peoples was always conceived as existing *without* the state or rather as an antithetical element. (92)

According to Jackson, the fact that Africans and Southeast Asians entered Guyana as part of an economic system allowed them to enter into cultural hierarchies – despite the tensions posed by racial difference. Amerindians, as endemic groups to any one geographical point in the Americas, pass to be part of the country's background, effectively becoming backdrop to the economic machine. As slaves, Africans and their descendants become essential part of the colony's production. As indentured servants, Southeast Asians and their descendants arrive with the specific purpose of working. These groups work and production allow them to inscribe themselves into the newer historical chapters of the country. With the abolition of slavery and the lapse of indentured contracts, the newer generations can move within and upward the economic system. Sylvestre, the Ramsaran patriarch reveals that, in today's Guadeloupe, money counts more than both skin color and education.[97] Mira, of both black and white descendants, later assures her lover Francis Sancher that the society that surrounds them no longer frowns upon the union of disparate races.[98] Access to and the ability to produce

[97] "Car dans la Guadeloupe d'aujourd'hui, ce qui comptait, ce n'était plus la couleur de la peau, enfin plus seulement, ni l'instruction. C'étaient nos pères qui s'échinaient pour pouvoir coller sur leurs cloisons des diplômes de papier sur lesquels chiaient les mouches. A présent, les bacheliers, brodeurs de français-français, assis sur le pas de leurs portes, attendaient leurs chèques de l'A.N.P.E. Non, ce qui comptait, c'était l'argent et elle, Vilma, en aurait à revendre. Déjà, Marius avait acheté un terrain à Sainte-Anne et projetait d'y faire construire une Résidence pour touristes, avec studios équipés de salles de bains." (135) / "For what matters in today's Guadeloupe is no longer the color of your skin – well, not entirely – nor an education. It was our fathers who worked themselves to the bone to be able to stick their fly-specked paper diplomas on their wooden walls. Nowadays, the high school graduates, master embroiderers of French French, sit on their doorsteps waiting for their unemployment checks. No, what matters is money, and Vilma would have money to spare. Marius had already bought land at Sainte-Anne and planned to build a studio residence for tourists, with private bathrooms." (108)

[98] "Tu vois, la Guadeloupe a changé! En bien en mal, je ne peux pas te dire. Ce que je sais, c'est qu'à présent, Nègres, mulâtres, Zindiens, c'est du pareil au même! Prends-

material wealth eclipses or at the very least obfuscates racial hierarchies left behind by plantation and colonial cultures. As discussed in the previous section, Glissant writes that the Caribbean subject has suffered a dispossession of the self both individually and as part of the community, making the Caribbean subject susceptible to external dependency. The Francophone Caribbean does not house an Amerindian body politic. In this sense, the racial make-up differs from that of Guyana. Yet the French *départements* of Martinique and Guadeloupe comprise populations of mainly African and Southeast Asian origin. With Jackson's critical appraisal of the labor components within the dynamics of racial difference, we can see *Traversée de la mangrove* as reflection of its author's native environment. The novel illustrates the Ramsaran family's arrival into the island, the struggle to insert themselves into the fabric of the town's social life, the eventual material success, and the continued struggle of the newer generations to become accepted as children of the island.

2.3.1 Transculturation, Growing, and Sterility : L'Homme-plante

Martinican writer and *Tropiques* co-founder Suzanne Césaire's 1942 "Malaise d'une civilisation" emphasizes the significance of the plant as symbol of what it is to be Caribbean. Césaire writes that stories and legends coincide in the inclusion of an "être souffrant" (67). This suffering being comes to represent the "moi collectif" of Caribbean communities. She describes this character as the "mûr fruit" of the sociopolitical climate of the region, where man finds himself living in suspended, patched history and where it has been the historical subject of exploitation and self-alienation. This "inéluctable

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moi !" (183) / "Guadeloupe has changed, you see. For better or for worse, I can't say. What I do know is that blacks, mulattoes and Indians, it's all the same. Take me !" (150)

pression" bloodies this "terre tranquille." Césaire points to the geographical position of the Caribbean, stating that this "parcelle de terre" is of the tropical kind. Césaire follows this factual statement with the expression "d'où," which implies a sort of natural following or explanation of the previous statement. It is natural, she implies, that African peoples were able to adapt. She writes that the peoples brought had to fight back regardless of high mortality, slavery, the most intense "working" conditions, and undernourishment. She summarizes the great physical hardships of slavery. "Martinican soil" produces strong, resistant, supple, mean and elegant and beautiful women (68). She emphasizes the earth and its production of men and women. Her commentary of humanity's rapport with nature differs greatly from that of Jacques Roumain, whose *Gouverneurs de la rosée* is published two years after Césaire's essay. Whereas Roumain's Délira follows the trope of mother as birthing nature, Césaire presents women as product of the land. Their understanding of product versus production follows along political lines for, as I have showed, Martinican intellectuals ranging from Glissant to Confiant have noted Martinique's "mode d'improduction" (Confiant 2006, 11).

Césaire writes of transplantation and the as-of-yet rootlessness of Martinicans as community. After working the image and language of the land, cultivation, and production, she asks what the Martinican person *is* fundamentally, intimately, immutably ("fondamentalement, intimement, inaltérablement" [70). She proffers that the Martinican person is "l'homme-plante" (70). She specifies that Martinicans are not necessarily great "growers" ("médiocre agriculteur"). Césaire states that he "grows" and lives as plant ("je dis qu'il pousse, qu'il vit en plante" [70]). The plant-being Césaire describes as faithful to the Martinican experience appears elsewhere in Caribbean lore. She provides the example

of the folklore story where the grass that grows over a tomb is not grass at all but rather the living mass of hair of the dead person within the tomb. The mass of hair passing for grass protests against the imposition of death.[99] Symbolic as the plant might be, Césaire argues that the Caribbean man has stagnated due to the refusal of his true nature. The collective lie ("mensonge collectif") that is the misapprehension of one's nature in the Caribbean, writes Césaire, results in repression, suffering, and sterility ("refoulement, souffrances, stérilité") (72). She thus urges man to become in sync with nature. She declares that this will result in an "internal truth":

> Il est exaltant d'imaginer sur ces terres tropicales, rendues enfin à leur vérité interne, *l'accord durable et fécond de l'homme et du sol*. *Sous le signe de la plante.* (74, my emphasis)

Césaire's vision of a Martinican population in agreement or harmony with the soil on which it stands (within the island) opposes that of her husband Aimé Césaire's "chimère d'Afrique" (Confiant 2006, 11). Suzanne Césaire's witty commentary on Martinique's unproductivity presages the collective idleness Glissant, the Creolists, and Condé will later criticize. A bit later, she concludes the essay by stating the following: "Cette terre, la nôtre, ne peut être que ce que nous voulons qu'elle soit" (75). There is a small tension between the "fertile and enduring agreement" between man and the earth and what she describes in the second sentence, namely making of the earth what we ("nous") want it to be. Césaire entreats the reader to consider nature, the community, and the island's future.

[99] The New World has been associated with flora since its so-called discovery. Spanish historian Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo's fascination with the pineapple in *Historia natural de las Indias* renders the fruit a permanent symbol of the Americas.

She empowers the reader in the possibilities ("ce que nous voulons") that come with cultivating a consensus within the island and economic production.

2.3.2 Xantippe: Guadeloupian Fruit and Farmer

Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* demonstrates not only the importance of the relationship between man and his natural surroundings, but also illustrates the symbiotic relationship such as explained by Suzanne Césaire. Xantippe used to be a farmer and cultivate his family's small plot. One day, while he was briefly away, he comes home to find that his family, his house, and the land they inhabited have all been set aflame. Xantippe suffers an irrevocable change following the episode. In the aforementioned last episode, he mentions people's suspicions of his then contentment, self-sufficiency, and sustainable lifestyle. He seems to suggest that his fearful detractors caused the all-consuming fire. Xantippe appears throughout the novel as a bad omen: people find his quiet demeanor unsettling. Francis Sancher, for example, fears his life will end at his hands. Xantippe roams the countryside and does not speak until the very last chapter. As such, the character's role appears in much the same way as the landscape that adorns the settings. The unsettling aspect of his presence, however, turns out to indeed hold an unconventional nature and tortured history. Xantippe at once embodies and names nature. He appears as a hyper productive yet isolated avatar of Suzanne Césaire's "homme-plante."

Xantippe's positioning vis-à-vis nature does reveal Condé's interest in that relationship. It is now a super-natural experience. The character offers a Guadeloupian avatar in which man need not work the land in order to *define* himself. Xantippe becomes nature rather than defining himself by his positioning.

> La masure faite de tôles rapiécées était basse de plafond, prenant le jour par une unique ouverture. Comment un vivant pouvait-il y prendre refuge? La présence de Xantippe créait toujours un réel malaise. Immédiatement, les bruits s'éteignirent dans un lac glacé de silence et certains envisagèrent de le pousser aux épaules. (26)

> The hovel was pieced together with sheets of corrugated iron and had a low ceiling, the only light coming in through a single opening. How could a human being take refuge there ? Xantippe's presence always created a real malaise. Immediately, the noise stopped in an icy sea of silence and some thought of shouldering him out. (12)

Xantippe appears to live with little to no protection from the elements. On the contrary, he takes refuge in the open environment of nature. The narrator comments, incredulous, that no living person should be able to live in such conditions. Xantippe becomes more than part of nature. He thrives on it.

Xantippe's racial descriptor is a quick all-encompassing "as dark as mourning." He wears a raggedy make-shift cloth made of hessian. His feet evoke the mangrove with wild yam of the heavy island bush ("ignames grosse caye") (202). Reminiscent of Aimé Césaire's "A force de regarder les arbres je suis devenu un arbre...," Xantippe personifies nature.[100] His ability to incorporate nature into his person and his disquieting other-than-human presence evoke Monique Allewaert's model of the "para-human" mentioned in

[100] "...et mes longs pieds d'arbre ont creusé dans le sol de larges sacs à venin de hautes villes d'ossements." *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, 28.

my discussion of Jacques Roumain's Manuel. In Xantippe's case, his family's burning catalyzed his becoming a "new hybrid body" (99). Isolating himself further into the countryside (the fact that Xantippe and his family already lived separate from the community anticipated the attack) following the fire completes his transition into "an interstitial form of life" (86). Allewaert's "para-human" also helps explain Xantippe's conflicting "dissolution and alienation" and "construction and intimacy" (99). Indeed, he is able to grow many stuffs, among them fruits, vegetables, and even a plot of tobacco. The type of tobacco he summons creates a strong, intoxicating odor. Désinor, a Haitian character, recognizes an odor he had not experienced since his time in the Artibonite region of Haiti. Xantippe's ability to cultivate the land and grow plants that conjure the most primitive of senses (odor) and its inimitable command over memory make him a "compère" to Désinor – for he embodies all that he left behind. The land, the plants grown within it, and the sensorial information Désinor derives from them effectively create a non-verbal language. Indeed, there is no need for words. The narrator tells us that both characters bask in the powerful, immemorial scent "sans faire usage de mots" (202). Xantippe association with limited language appears throughout the novel. On the rare occasion when he speaks, what comes out of his mouth seems to be more of a rumbling. His life consists in roaming the woods. This, his lack of speech and solitary nature, brings him closer to Désinor the Haitian.

Emile Etienne, the local historian of Rivière au Sel understands Xantippe's nature. He recognizes that he is not only alone but that he also keeps to himself,

generally. Xantippe is a silent, wandering being not unlike a zombie.[101] A son of a cultivator, Émile Étienne identifies Xantippe's "vrai jardin creole" (238) that has grown in the plot of land he "squats." Emile Etienne comes to affiliate Xantippe with the archaic, primordial, and the immemorial. He describes Xantippe's creole garden, for example, with "la manière oubliée des vieux" (238). His "borborygmes intraduisibles" are also out of synch with modern speech. The Institut national de la recherche agronomique (INRA) reports that over a dozen of its specialists from different disciplines have been studying the jardin créole, its history, and its fecundity for about thirty years (25). The self-sufficient nature of the jardin créole is now studied as a model of agricultural sustainability but it proved to be vital for the endangered peoples in the history of the Caribbean: "Dans les îles de la Caraïbe, le jardin créole s'est construit à la confluence des civilisations amérindiennes et de l'esclavage et fournit aux populations une petite autonomie alimentaire" (25). The INRA cites the encounter of Amerindian with enslaved peoples as the point of origin that gave way to the jardin créole. The collaboration of autochthonous groups' understanding of natural elements endemic to the region and that of scattered, deterritorialized African peoples coincided with the need to establish connections in a new environment in order to thrive to the degree that it is now considered "un élément incontournable du paysage rural et culturel des Antilles" (25). Caribbean cultures reflect the jardin créole in that a motley collection of species not only

[101] I would like to point to Haiti's rich literary tradition and the prominence of the zombi, which serves as archetype in political commentary and dissent, figure of the enslaved, and persona from the voodoo religion, among others. See Roland Wingfield's *Voyage en Haïti: Sur la piste du zombi*, Colin Dayan's *Haiti, history, and the gods*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Tell my horse: voodoo and life in Haiti and Jamaica*, and experimental filmmaker Maya Deren's *Divine horsemen and living gods of Haiti.*

survive but thrive from that multiplicity ("rendement souvent supérieurs" [ibid]). Jardins créoles rarely exceed 200 meters squared yet host more than a dozen vegetable, herbaceous, shrubs, and tree-like species, all of which serve a variety of purposes: nourishment, remedies, and symbiotic balance that aids in the preservation of other species.[102] I have been hinting at the legibility, erasure, and reinscription of the landscape throughout this chapter and I will fully examine their modalities in the next chapter. At this juncture, however, I would like to proffer that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's rumination on the rhizome's open and map-like qualities ("The rhizome is altogether different, a *map and not a tracing*" [12]) elucidates the fertility and adaptability of the jardin créole and its parallel with the confluence of cultures, peoples, languages and customs in the Caribbean context:

> The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. (12)

Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée*, Chamoiseau's *Solibo magnifique*, and Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove* crystallize merging with elements found in the natural

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[102] "Plus d'une douzaine d'espèces végétales herbacées, arbustives et arborées fourmillent sur ces parcelles dont la surface excède rarement plus de 200 m2" (Poulain, 25).

landscape and the organic flow of their self-definition and reporting as "of the land," and "of the community." Roumain, Chamoiseau, and Condé foster connections and construct the unconscious that lead to what it is to belong, to be native, part of the community – even if in constant modification.

Édouard Glissant's novel *Tout-monde* (1993) reverberates Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux*. Roca, a character knowledgeable about all things ancestral – namely Amerindian cultures – interprets the inconclusiveness and near equivocation of races, languages, and practices:

> C'est parce que vous réfléchissez comme dans le temps-longtemps, dit Rica. Vous croyez encore à la chose isolée, la race, la langue, le terrain, l'idée. Vous croyez à l'unicité. Pourtant regardez dans le jardin créole, vous mettez toutes les espèces sur une si petite languette de terre, les avocats les citrons les ignames les cannes les oranges sûres les mandarines les corossols la menthe les piments le maïs doux l'onion-péyi la cannelle le fruit-à-pain les prunes de cithère et encore trente ou quarante espèces sur ce bout de terrain qui monte le morne sur pas plus de dix-sept mètres, elles se protègent l'une par l'autre. Dans le grand Cercle, tout est mis dans tout. Celui qui prend la force de mélanger, il a la force de trouver. (555)

Glissant elucidates how a jardin créole comes to bring together heterogeneous elements. It is not a matter of becoming homogeneous. On the contrary, Glissant rejects the concept of an isolated event ("la chose isolée") and unicity ("l'unicité") that would absorb, incorporate, and consequently subdue. Glissant explains that all kinds of different vegetables (ranging from avocadoes to cane to cinnamon) protect each other. He lauds

the ability to mix, for it entails the ability to find. I suggest that this adeptness at finding and discerning from and within a place of amalgamation comes to forge the new native. The new native holds the old, includes the new, allows for inclusion, and protects the endangered. Xantippe's creole garden and the aforementioned "borborygmes intraduisibles" signal the guardianship of Amerindian, African, and creole practices and, more importantly, their natural modifications in order to survive.

The chapter Condé consecrates to Xantippe's point of view – the last one of the individual narratives – surprises not so much because the character had been heretofore eerily quiet, appearing as part of the background. The reader finds a character that begins his story by declaring that he has named all of Rivière au Sel. That is, a character who has barely spoken demonstrates Glissant's reflection that to name is to create at the moment of enunciation. Xantippe tells the listener/reader that he had named trees[103], lianas[104], gullies, rocks, and fish: "[e]n un mot, j'ai nommé ce pays" (241-2). Xantippe's exhaustive list of the items he has named on the island and his eventual declaration of naming the countryside perform an origin story. Xantippe's naming recreates if not the biblical moment of creation, then certainly the moment of "discovery" akin to that which

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[103] "Gommier blanc. Acomat-boucan. Bois pilori. Bois rada. Bois trompette. Bois guépois. Bois d'encens. Bois pin. Bois la soie. Bois bandé. Résolu. Kaïmitier. Mahot cochon. Prune café. Mapou lélé. Arbre à lait. Malimbé." (241) / "Candlewood. Mastwood. Bladdernut. Golden spoon. Trumpet wood. Myrtle. Incense tree. Magnolia. Cigarbox cedar. Crabwood. Resolu. Star apple. Saltfish wood. Sweet plum. Manjack. Marmalade tree. Mapou." (201)

[104] "Siguine rouge. Siguine grand bois. Jasmin bois. Liane à chique. Liane à barrique. Liane blanche des hauts. Les lianes aussi sont des amis depuis le temps longtemps. Elles amarrent corps à corps. Igname à igname." (241) / "I too named the vines. Bird's-nest anthurium. Oilcloth flower. Little star jasmine. Goosefoot. Morning glory. Firecracker. The vines too are our friends from long, long ago. They tie body to soul. They lock creeper on creeper." (202)

transformed the island from a nameless state to Karukera ("the island of beautiful waters") to Guadalupe and, finally, to Guadeloupe. Guadalupe, the name imposed on the island by the Spanish, was adopted into Castilian Spanish from the Andalusian Arabic and usually translated as "hidden river" or "river of wolves." This fact reminds us of the palimpsestic nature of words, where they are given signification, lose their semantic charge, and absorb new meanings.[105]

In naming and conjuring an origin story, Xantippe sets up the condition of possibility of novelty, newness, and autochthony. Reminiscent of the Old Testament story of creation, where Eve is created out of Adam's rib, Xantippe goes so far as to say that the land came from his insides ("reins") through sperm. Xantippe suggests that the surrounding natural work (his habitat) originated from within his own materiality (his seminal fluid). Siring and naming bring to life and set apart the singularity of any one element – so that a variety of plants (vegetable items) bud and one is a "siguine rouge" and another a "liane blanche des hauts." The singularity afforded in siring and naming mirrors that of having offspring: their entity and denomination emanate from Xantippe's own entity – and yet Xantippe's relationship to nature is such that the opposite is also true. If the reader catches instances of parentality, there are also moments of being an offspring, by product, or end result. When explaining his childhood, Xantippe reveals a much more fragile and dependent status vis-à-vis nature. Xantippe tells us that trees are our friends, that their foliage protected him from the sun as a child, as a runaway slave

[105] In Mexico, for example, in addition to the Castilian Spanish meaning by way of Andalusian Arabic, there are some who have argued that there exists the possibility of a Nahuatl meaning where Guadalupe (as in the Virgen de Guadalupe) would come from "coatlallope" (one who crushes or defeats snakes: "coatl" snake, "a" preposition, "llope" crush or defeat).

(nèg mawon) saved him.[106] He also dwelled atop "ananas bois," filled his belly with its tree sap and, when tired of the heights, loved the black sand of the coasts – the color, he notes, of his skin and his heart's mourning.[107] The intimacy of Xantippe's relationship with nature comes through as a refuge.[108] He is a child fed and protected by the natural world around him. He is nourished and nursed to such degree that both his internal and external composition mirrors nature.

Xantippe is at once master, lover, friend, and witness to nature. Condé endows Xantippe with a nearness to nature that brings to mind Price-Mars' *Ainsi parla l'oncle* and Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée*. I suggest that it is not mere coincidence that Condé writes characters that evoke such similitude to these Haitian thinkers' works. Indeed, Condé makes Haitians a frequent background character. Condé's perceived

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[106] "Les arbres sont nos seuls amis. Depuis l'Afrique, ils soignent nos corps et nos âmes. Leur odeur est magie, vertu du grand temps reconquis. Quand j'étais petit, ma maman me couchait sous l'ombrage de leurs feuilles et le soleil jouait à cache-cache au-dessus de ma figure. Quand je suis devenu nèg mawon, leurs troncs me barraient." (241) / "The trees are our only friends. They have taken care of our bodies and souls since we lived in Africa. Their fragrance is magic, a power recaptured from times long gone by. When I was little, Maman used to set me down under the shade of their leaves, and the sun would play hide-and-seek above my face. When I became a Maroon, their trunks barricaded me in." (201-2)

[107] "Longtemps, j'ai vécu ma vie, au creux des ananas bois, remplissant mon ventre de la sève des arbres. Parfois, j'étais fatigué de planer sur ces perchoirs et je descendais dans les savanes parmi les cannes en fleur. Je donnais mon dos aux hauteurs et je poussais vers la mer, recherchant les côtes basses, vaseuses que ronge l'eau braque des culs-de-sac marins. Je n'aimais que le sable noir, noir comme ma peau et le deuil de mon cœur." (242). / "For a long time I lived in the hollow of the wild pineapples, filling my belly with the sap from the trees. Sometimes I was tired of roosting in the treetops and flew down to the savannas among the sugarcane in flower. I turned my back on the hills and headed for the sea, seeking the muddy lowlands eaten away by the brackish water of the marine culs-de-sac. I loved the black sand, black as my skin and the mourning in my heart." (202)

[108] "La journée, je plantais comme avant moi mon père et mon grand-père et la terre me donnait tous les trésors de son ventre (242). / "By day I planted the land like my father and grandfather before me, and the land gave me all the treasures from its belly." (203)

conversation or, rather, response to Haitians Price-Mars and Roumain and their conceptualization of a man in sync with nature and the acceptance of an organic progression of cultural phenomena becomes evident in examining the varying, reoccurring manifestations of Haitian characters. In a similar fashion as Xantippe, Haitians are endowed with either an understanding of the natural world and its creatures or they are endowed with nature-like characteristics or descriptors. In explaining why the local bar is less and less frequented, postman Moïse tells us about the strange occurrences that have taken place:

> Enfants et adultes qui s'y aventurèrent prirent leurs jambes à leur cou, grelottant, bredouillant, incapables d'expliquer clairement ce qu'ils avaient ressenti. *Ils avaient eu l'impression que l'œil malfaisant d'une bête invisible ou d'un esprit s'était vrillé en eux*. Qu'une force les avait poussés aux épaules et envoyés valdinguer jusque sur le goudron de la route. Qu'une voix avait hurlé en silence des injures et des menaces à leurs oreilles. On commença à éviter l'endroit. C'est alors qu'ignorant sans doute toutes ces rumeurs et ces frayeurs qui commençaient de s'amasser en nuages noirs, *trois ouvriers agricoles haïtiens* qui avaient trouvé du travail à la Pépinière avaient défoncé la porte d'entrée de la maison et étalé leur cabane sur le plancher de la salle à manger. Quand, après trois jours, ils ne s'étaient toujours pas présentés au travail, Loulou avait dépêché un contre-maître pour leur sonner les cloches. Celui-ci les avait trouvés *raides morts dans leurs haillons, une langue noire pointant entre les dents*. (32-3, my emphasis)

> Children and adults who ventured in took to their heels, shaking and stammering, unable to explain clearly what they had felt. They had had the feeling the evil eye of an invisible beast or spirit had bored into them. That an unknown force had shouldered them out and sent them flying onto the tarmac road. That a voice had silently screamed insults and threats in their ears. They started to avoid the place. It was then that three Haitian field-workers, who had found jobs at the nurseries but were probably unaware of all the rumors and scares that were starting to pile up in ominous clouds, broke down the front door of the house and spread out their bedding of rags on the dining room floor. When three days had gone by and they still hadn't shown up for work, Loulou sent an overseer to box their ears. He found them still in their rags, their black tongues hanging out between their teeth. (16-7)

Local inhabitants cannot put into words the general impression having "une bête invisible" coil around them. The ambiguous ambiance of fear finds translation into the natural and supernatural realm. It is at once an otherworldly presence and the image of a twisting snake. When the three Haitian farmhands are found dead, they, too, take on serpent-like characteristics, as black, pointy tongues peak from between their teeth. It is "ouvriers agricoles haïtiens" who, as other racial and/or class groups concern themselves with finding a place within a modern economy, continue to work the land throughout the novel. Though the Haitian community's role in Guadeloupe's economic expansion and infrastructure might be limited, it nonetheless appears to sustain the nation's lifeline.

Traditionnellement, les gens de Rivière au Sel étaient des travailleurs du bois. Dans le temps, certains partaient à l'assaut des géants de la forêt dense. Ils vous couchaient et vous débitaient des acomat-boucan, des bois-rada ou des gommiers blancs en un tournemain. D'autres excellaient à la construction et vous mettaient debout une charpente de bois rouge carapate. *D'autres enfin qui se murmuraient leurs secrets de bouches de père à oreilles de fils, les maîtres ébénistes, vous sculptaient des commodes d'acajou ou de bois de rose, des lits de courbaril et des guéridons de laurier-rose délicatement incrustés de magnolia*. *Ces jours-là ne sont plus, hélas, depuis que la Guadeloupe marâtre ne nourrit plus ses enfants et que tant d'entre eux se gèlent les pieds en région parisienne*. Pourtant là où ils sont, les fils de Rivière au Sel gardent *la religion du travail*. Dans les tristes officines ou les chaînes de montage automobile où ils peinent, ils se rappellent qui ils sont. (37-8, my emphases)

Traditionally, the inhabitants of Rivière au Sel worked with wood. In the past, some would set off to attack the giants of the dense forest. They could cut you down and saw you up a candlewood, ironwood or a golden spoon tree in next to no time. Others were excellent builders and could set you up with a timberwork of red cedar. The rest were cabinetmakers, who whispered their secrets by word of mouth from father to son and could fashion you mahogany or rosewood chests of drawers, beds made of locust wood and pedestal tables of podocarp delicately encrusted with magnolia.

> Those days are long gone, alas, since Guadeloupe, that cruel stepmother, no longer nurtures her children, and so many of them are forced to freeze to death in the Paris suburbs. And yet, wherever they are, the sons of Rivière au Sel are religious about work. In the dreary workshops or automobile assembly lines where they labor, they remember where they came from and the respect their parents commanded. (21)

The narrator tells us that the townspeople had once been woodworkers. Some went after the giant trees who inhabited the dense forest. The master cabinetmakers, however, made sculpting wood an art. Long are the days of artisanal work, the narrator informs us. Reminiscent of Roumain's Manuel and his ability to tap into the natural world in order to sustain the community, Haitians work the land in a way that native Guadeloupians no longer do. Condé, via the narrative voice, bemoans Guadeloupe's dependency on mainland France. Guadeloupe, as "marâtre" – *mère dénaturée* –, no longer nourishes or comforts her children. The move away from natural and organic and into more mechanical or technical trades transforms the relation one holds to the land. The image of Guadeloupe as an "unnatural mother" encapsulates the essential role that dictates self-identification ("qui ils sont"). The narrator tells us that, wherever they may find themselves, the "fils de Rivière au Sel" continue practicing "la religion du travail." Those who travel to the magnetic center that is Paris take up less than fulfilling lines of work ("Dans les tristes officines ou les chaînes de montage automobile où ils peinent"). Backrooms, dispensaries, and assembly lines are a source of constant struggle. It is only in these drab places that identity creeps back up, reminding them who they are by contradistinction. The Guadeloupian mother they thought "marâtre" upon leaving for

France and, by extension, the intimation of origins come back to he who has left. Following a lament for the now-lost "travailleurs du bois" trade of the Rivière au Sel's inhabitants with a reflection on remembering one's identity and/or origins associates crafts and the environment with memory and self-identification.

I would like to underline, however, the fact that Condé's characters iterate both work and clandestinity when mentioning Haitian presence in the French *département* of Guadeloupe.[109] The clandestinity that would otherwise be tainted finds balance with laudatory comments. The following conversation takes place when Joby finds Francis Sancher along the way:

> Ça m'a énervé qu'il me parle comme à un béké. J'ai fait sèchement :
>
> – Oh non, ça ne va pas du tout. Mon père me dit que je finirai par charroyer du fumier comme les Haïtiens.
>
> Il a haussé les épaules :
>
> – Ton père a tort de dire des choses pareilles. Les Haïtiens sont un grand peuple. J'en ai connu en Amérique, en Angola, au Zaïre surtout ! (96)

[109] "il n'avait trouvé personne, pas même *un clandestin haïtien*, pour l'aider à remettre son bien en état" (36), "A peine ébranlé, il lui avait tourné le dos et s'en était allé engueuler *les ouvriers haïtiens* qui croyaient qu'ils pouvaient gagner leur argent à ne rien faire" (67), "Depuis qu'il n'était plus à toute heure du jour et de la nuit sur leur dos, *les ouvriers haïtiens* passaient le temps l'oreille à deux centimètres du poste à transistor, tentant de comprendre quelque chose aux péripéties du retour à la démocratie dans leur pays" (75), "Il avait entendu dire que la Pépinière employait *des clandestins haïtiens* et avait averti Loulou qu'il risquait de lourdes peines" (125), "Au début, Désinor avait travaillé dans la canne, qui n'était pas morte pour tout le monde, du côté de Baie Mahault. *La majorité des coupeurs étaient des Haïtiens* comme lui et les exclamations s'entrecroisaient : - Ou sé moun Jacmel tou ? / Ah, l'esclavage du Nègre d'Haïti n'est pas fini" (199). My emphases.

It irritated me the way he talked to me like a baby.

"No, I'm not," I said dryly. "My father says I shall end up carting manure like the Haitians."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Your father shouldn't say such things. The Haitians are a great people. I've met them in America, Angola and a lot in Zaire" (73)

Francis Sancher counters a comment made by Joby's father. Though they do appear to do all types of menial jobs throughout the novel, Haitians are also commended as a people. It is also interesting to note that Sancher mentions meeting Haitians in the United States and Africa. Their appearance abroad would then correspond to the migrant nature portrayed in works treating or written by the Haitian diaspora.

Zindiens, Xantippe, Haitians: other bodies become part of the natural Guadeloupian setting. Condé's intersected, multilayered characters illustrate a conglomeration of natives in the process of recognition and becoming. The novel manifests the complexity of being an individual and part of a community. Instead of categorizing a myriad compositions of Guadeloupian (or Greater Caribbean) locals, dwellers, and the various levels of becoming: racial mixture, ethnicities, nationalities, gender, sexual difference, classes, and one's rapport to the natural world, Condé husks the inadequacies of defining in the Caribbean context.

2.4 Conclusion

I have examined the Francophone Caribbean subject's various iterations in creating, defending, affirming, and renegotiating an identity as a subject of his natural and socio-political environment. As I have shown, it is precisely man's positioning vis-à-

vis nature that allows him to forge a geopolitical and socioeconomic identity. Starting with the African uprooting that forced peoples to forge a new relationship to their natural surroundings, they have had to replant their standing with the natural environment, even when the transplantation is ancestral. As was the case with Haiti's *Indigénisme*, recommitting to one's land becomes an imperative when clear, foreign invaders touch ground. Manuel becomes both master, lover, child, brother, and companion to the land. Roumain's agricultural training and his ethnobotanical writings both inform and divulge the concepts and real-life techniques that facilitated an ideological indigeneity to the country. Maryse Condé shows us that, in some cases (i.e. Xantippe), the complicity between man and nature blurs the line between what is human and the possibility of a harmonious community with nature. She also brings to the forefront the minority groups who have become integral part of Guadeloupe's landscape – even when acceptance into society finds itself under negotiation. Roumain and Condé seem to have fostered the seeds sowed by Jean Price-Mars, who by example led the way in harvesting the consciousness of rural and denigrated cultures as the essence of communal and national identity. Chamoiseau illustrates the ever-shifting voices, skin, and faces of the creole peoples of the Caribbean. Whereas Price-Mars writes that most Haitians in 1927 would desire "quelque ressemblance avec un Esquimau, un Samoyède ou un Toungouze plutôt que de lui rappeler son ascendance guinéenne ou soudanaise" (9), the Créolistes proudly identify as native, creole peoples of the multifaceted Caribbean. Others, such as Aimé Césaire and those who adhere to *Négritude* sought a community along race lines throughout the colonized world. Roumain, Chamoiseau, Confiant, Condé and others equally preoccupied with the question of Caribbean-specific communities and belonging

look to the land, its flora, and fauna. The landscape has witnessed the changing faces of the Tierra Firme; the authors we have looked at in this chapter have learned to read its records and, in contributing to the creation of a native community, added to its palimpsest.

Chapter 3 Engraved Memory

Figure 1. Canvas painting in Guadeloupe's Parc archéologique des Roches gravées. Photograph by the author. June 12, 2015.

A young, dark-skinned girl with her face adorned with dark paint stands with most of her chest covered by a couple of leaves. Her ears appear to carry yellow feathers or some other hay-like material. Her nose is pierced by a yellowish stick or rod crossing her septum. Her straight dark hair is cut in a bowl style. She wears a white and red necklace. The viewer sees her face up close but she looks fleetingly away from the viewer's gaze. The cartoon-like thought bubble hovering over her head divulges the only certainty this image gives the viewer: she thinks about or in symbols. In this chapter, I examine spaces of memory. By spaces of memory, I mean the places we, as societies, choose to commemorate the people who preceded us in death. My first chapter laid out Jean Métellus' rewriting of history so as to fuse the descendants of transplanted and enslaved Africans into the history of Amerindians in the Caribbean. Edwidge Danticat articulates this impulse to create one continued but doubly-rooted history by identifying as part of Anacaona's legacy via her place of origin (Léôgane, in the region once part of

Anacaona's cacicazgo of Xaragua). The previous chapter concluded that one's identification as native necessitates the cultivation of a relationship with the land, such that nature brings the indigenous subject into being. I focus here on the places created by the inhabitants of the Francophone islands with the purpose of recording, memorializing, or commemorating. These places range from archeological museums, petroglyphs found both in nature and in park form, slave cemeteries, research centers, and memorials. I juxtapose them here so as to accentuate the way in which individuals and communities visit in order to gain deeper insight or to sustain a memory.

In *Espaces amérindiens: Archéologie en Grande-Terre de la Guadeloupe* presented by archeologists Corinne L. Hofman, André Delpuech, and Menno L.P. Hoogland in honor of the 2014 exhibition of the same title, the specialists communicate the need for a careful, alchemy-like combination of first-person chronicles and specialized scientific research:

> « Dès que j'arrivai auprès de cette île, je la nommai Santa-Maria de Guadalupe. » Par ce baptême en hommage à la Vierge protectrice des navigateurs, Christophe Colomb faisait entrer l'île de Caloucaéra dans l'histoire européenne le 4 novembre 1493. Avec l'arrivée des Espagnols, les Petites Antilles comme leurs habitants autochtones font l'objet de descriptions écrites qui, pour certaines d'entre elles, sont parvenues jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Ces textes deviennent ainsi une autre source d'information pour connaître la vie des Amérindiens de la Caraïbe dont l'histoire antérieure n'est accessible que par le biais de l'archéologie. Rares dans le premier siècle de la conquête espagnole, les sources écrites

> consacrées à la Guadeloupe et aux îles avoisinantes se développent au XVIIe siècle, particulièrement après la colonisation française de l'archipel en 1635. (45)

> "When I arrived near this island, I named it Santa Maria de Guadalupe." Through this baptism as a tribute to the Virgin Mary who protected sailors, Christopher Columbus introduced the island of Caloucaéra into European history on November 4, 1493. With the arrival of the Spanish, the Lesser Antilles, as well as its indigenous inhabitants, were the subject of written descriptions, some of which have survived to today. Thus, these texts became another source of information about the lives of Amerindians in the Caribbean, whose previous history was only accessible through archeology. While written sources devoted to Guadeloupe and nearby islands were rare in the first century of the Spanish conquest, these increased in the 17th century, especially following the French colonization of the archipelago after 1635. (46)

The team of archeologists value Columbus' and other chroniclers' original writings as "une autre source d'information." If early chronicles give us a glimpse into the events that took place following Conquest, archeology provides an idea of Amerindian life prior to the arrival of Europeans. Nevertheless, texts such as Père Raymond Breton's *Relation de l'île de la Guadeloupe* (1647) and his *Dictionnaires caraïbe-français et français-caraïbe* (1665) – "la source fondamentale de toutes les chroniques ultérieures" in

Guadeloupe – must be read carefully and within their historical context (45).[110] My methodology, much like that required to better understand archeological excavations, is interdisciplinary.[111] My limitations lie at the technical intricacies of archeology, anthropology, and the other specialized scientific disciplines vested in the study of historical remains and artifacts. As a trained literary and cultural critic, my commentary focuses on the discourses employed by scientific specialists, government officials, museum leaders, journalists, and citizen organizers. I examine their historical, political, and aesthetic stances and analyze their differences. My inclusion of numerous photographs attests to the influence of visual experience in understanding the context of space. Additionally, the affective resonance of witnessing echoes the need for first-person accounts and scientific research stated by Hofman, Delpuech, and Hoogland. Concepts in memory studies supplement my close reading analysis. The discipline's focus on individual and collective memory allows me to engage the Caribbean's obfuscated past. My critical readings focus on the ways in which memory resurfaces, is suppressed, sought, rendered official, and contested.

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[110] "Pour documentées et détaillées qu'elles soient, ces sources écrites doivent être lues avec recul et remplacées dans le contexte de leur époque." (45) / "For the documents and details they contain, these written sources must be placed in the context of their time." (46)

[111] Archeologist Patrice Courtaud, on the disciplines needed in order to better understand archeological findings: "Ces interrogations peuvent trouver des éléments de réponses par des approches croisées associant l'archéologie, l'anthropologie et l'histoire." (2013 1)

Figure 2. Grounds of Fort Delgrès. Photograph by the author. June 12, 2015.

The number of known petroglyphs and museums consecrated to the study and memory of Amerindians led me to conduct research in Guadeloupe in June of 2015. The purview of my examination of spatial memory expanded to include the memory of the first generation of enslaved Africans after I found a surprising number of places and spaces dedicated to either scientific investigation or commemoration of one or more historical episodes of the island. On the one hand, Guadeloupe holds the largest tally of known petroglyphs in the French-speaking Caribbean[112] and certainly in the Lesser Antilles.[113] On the other hand, the existence and construction of further centers of historical research and memory such as the Mémorial ACTe point to a discernible cultural movement where memory and processing the past are manifested in concrete

[112] Rachel Beauvoir-Dominique's article "The Rock Images of Haiti: A Living Heritage" makes a case for Haiti's "sleeping giant" status concerning archeological patrimony, which remains largely unstudied due to political entanglements (88).
[113] "1,200 petroglyphs from 27 sites distributed within seven communes" (Richard, 137)

ways.[114] I visited a variety of sites and assessed the areas and periods commemorative spaces take up throughout Guadeloupe's main, split but connected islands of Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre, be it for the Amerindian past, slavery, marronage, or the fight for independence. For example, I explored the grounds of Fort Delgrès as well as the exhibition housed therein titled "Louis Delgrès et la guerre de Guadeloupe de 1802." Fort Delgrès, named after Colonel Louis Delgrès and in memory of his refusal to be a part of the reinstatement of slavery.[115] (Figure 2) The Colonel who had been an officer in Napoleon's army follows in the footsteps of Amerindians and *Nèg mawons* and takes to the hills of the Matouba.[116] Delgrès and his men meet their end by blowing up their hiding space in the mountains (*La route de l'esclave,* 10). I happened upon a monument to "L'Homme libre." (Figure 3) The statue shows a *mawon* ready to fight.[117] The commemorative plaque, much like many other symbols, objects, and remains, both appear and disappear from the public eye. (Figure 4) The panel (especially the right side) has been burned off by the sun. Some of the words and all of the image have become

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[114] The Mémorial ACTe was inaugurated in 2015. It was conceived by the President of the Regional Council Victorin Lurel, Région Guadeloupe, and it is associated with the island's Comité International des Peuples Noirs (CIPN). It is the world's largest site consecrated to the memory of slavery. It is also a research center for subjects related to the themes of memory and the enslaved. I take a closer look at the Mémorial ACTe in this chapter's second section.

[115] For a discussion of Delgrès' place in the Guadeloupian imaginary, see Nick Nesbitt's "The Vicissitudes of Memory: Representations of Louis Delgrès" in *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature*.

[116] *Nèg mawons*, or maroons, were runaway slaves who fled to the mountains. I discuss fleeing to the mountains in both chapters 1 (vis-à-vis Jean Métellus' rewriting of history via a rearrangement of Amerindian-African timelines) and 2 (in the context of learning the lay of the land and the process of indigenization).

[117] The statue echoes that of "Le marron inconnu," or the unknown maroon, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Both figures hold a conch shell, used to call or sound an alarm.

illegible. The exact meaning may have rubbed off due the elements over time – and yet the silhouettes remain, leaving the viewer in uncertainty and making him wonder.

Figure 3. Monument to "L'Homme libre."
Photograph by the author. June 12, 2015.

In this chapter I examine the way the ebb and flow of memorial legibility plays out in the cultural imaginary by analyzing the layers of memory in the Francophone Caribbean. This chapter is divided into three main sections. In "Museums and the Legibility of Petroglyphs," I take a close look at Amerindian memory by examining the Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne Edgar Clerc, namely their exhibition "Espaces amérindiens" and its catalogue. I am interested in the exhibition's presentation, the putative role of different groups associated (from the archeologists to government officials), and the involvement of the community. The Parc archéologique des Roches gravées encloses petroglyphs, the nature of which I appraise in equal measure. The second section, "Unearthing History, Building Memory," exposes the second layer of Guadeloupe's history in the chronology of colonialism: that of slavery and its literal and

figurative remains. My commentary addresses the findings from an excavation at the Cimetière d'esclaves in Sainte-Marguerite and, more importantly, the community's tense relationship with sanctioned, institutional memory. "Commemoration and the Immemorial," the third and final section of this chapter, tackles the traps of memory in the absence of physical remains. I take up two instances of what I consider mnemonic practices. On the one hand, the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" memorial in Le Diamant, Martinique and the historical misdirection occasioned by the site's conception and its actual use. On the other hand, Trinidadian writer M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!* (2008) and the way in which the text becomes an abstract space in which to mourn and commemorate the lives of those lost in transit to slavery in the Caribbean.

Figure 4. Commemorative plaque for monument "L'Homme libre." Photograph by the author. June 12, 2015.

Seminal texts like Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de mémoire* remain a hallmark in not only memory studies but also in the larger field of literary and cultural criticism. Nora's writings give spaces a legibility and another entry into the study of history. James E.

Young's work on memorials and meaning informs my theoretical framework regarding the community's relationship to a site of memory. The engagement of visual and other arts in both individual and collective memory make both art historians Lisa Saltzman and Joan Gibbons' theories invaluable to my analysis. My work in this chapter contributes not only to memory studies and memorial practices but it also offers a more palpable way of studying both natural and human-made spaces in the Caribbean. Reading both the individual stratum that is each historical period and the sedimented history of the aggregate speaks to the descendants and to those who seek to remember.

3.1 Museums and the Legibility of Petroglyphs

Figure 5. Musée départemental Edgar Clerc with petroglyph outside, on the left. Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

In "Mal d'archive," Jacques Derrida writes that the system of an archive itself necessitates curating in order to arrange what is to be remembered and forgotten. Archiving is a continuous process that can alter narratives. Museums, be they

archeological, art, or natural history, complete or modify our understanding of the world, its history, and human artifacts. Art historian and curator Joan Gibbons writes that "there is a difference between scholarly reconstructions of history and the uncovering of history through its artefacts" (126). Though she writes about artistic objects and their relationship to memory, I suggest that reading recovered Amerindian artifacts in this light (that is, artifacts as memory objects) adds a material dimension to our understanding of how we process the past. Archeological artifacts, too, play a role in "recalling, retracing and giving a renewed presence to the past" (118).

Archeologist Colin Renfrew, appraises whether artist Mark Dion's *Tate Thames Dig* (1999), a mixed media installation that follows yet parodies "archeological practices" and curation could be considered archeological work (125-6). The archeologist imparts his reservations but does note the similar "immediacy of contact with its material remains" (126). Gibbons adds that "the fact that the artwork is almost identical with a scholarly based archaeological dig also reveals something about archeology as a way of connecting with the past" (126). The gesture of digging requires the literal removal of the ground's layers. Digging is an active search in that it is an action and an uncertain crossing of time in that it is compact and unlabeled. Artifacts found by archeologists may divulge indisputable facts but not quite a narrative of major events or even of daily life. Objects evoke history and memory. Though these concepts are not the same, objects can and do belong to both realms. In this section, I analyze how Amerindian artifacts are studied, preserved, and presented to the public. In particular, I examine the discourse used on the side of officials in charge of or involved in the Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne in Le Moule, Guadeloupe. Equally important are the

archeologists' reported intentions vis-à-vis the community that receives recently uncovered and investigated documents. Finally, I examine petroglyphs, rock inscriptions left behind by the Amerindian groups that inhabited the Caribbean pre-conquest. I focus on their ambivalent nature, namely their appearance and disappearance and what this phenomenon communicates to those who visit or live around them. My commentary stems mainly (though not exclusively) from those found at the Parc archéologique des Roches gravées in Trois-Rivières, Guadeloupe.

The Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne, also known as the Musée Edgar Clerc after Guadeloupe's pioneer archeologist,[118] contains both a permanent exhibit (artifacts from Clerc's excavations at the site Morel) as well as temporary additions and more recent finds. Archeologists Corinne L. Hofman, André Delpuech, and Menno L.P. Hoogland pen and present an accompanying publication to the exhibition "Espaces Amérindiens: Archéologie en Grande-Terre de Guadeloupe" that was inaugurated on May 2nd, 2014. The accompanying exhibition catalogue includes two Préfaces and two Avant-propos by people who are in charge of the regulation of either the government or the museum (as opposed to the foreign archeologists): a senator and president of Guadeloupe's General Council, a prefect for the Région, as well as the former and current curators of the museum. I would like to analyze the way in which their presentations emphasize memory and remembrance. Indeed, all four individuals draw attention to the work of memory mediated by archeology. Susana Guimaraes, current curator of both the Musée Edgar Clerc and the Parc Archéologique des Roches

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[118] "Le Musée Edgar Clerc," *Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne*. Le Moule: Conseil départemental de la Guadeloupe. See also "Edgar Clerc: de Morel au musée" in Espaces Amérindiens: Archéologie en Grande-Terre de Guadeloupe."

Gravées, comments on founder Clerc's mission to find, itemize, and present archeological findings artifacts and information: "Edgar Clerc n'est pas seulement un archéologue, c'est également un passeur de mémoire, un homme pour qui transmettre la connaissance au grand public est tout aussi important que la recherche elle-même" (6). Research and arriving at conclusions about Guadeloupe's pre-conquest populations are important but Clerc's interest and ultimate resonance, communicates Guimaraes, resided in the transmission of knowledge to the general public. His goal to make such information available facilitated the remembrance of those who occupied the island and left traces to be found via archeological research. Guimaraes' statement regarding the "grand public" is expected for a regional museum. Less expected are her references to Clerc's role as "passeur de mémoire." Gibbons comments on the parallel between research and memory:

> In academic historical research, the ideas and events of the past are usually of collective interest, seen as verifiable and situated within a logical framework of time and space. This does not apply so readily to memory, which is not necessarily bound to collective interests, logic or the precise chronology or location of ideas and events, although it is often bound to genre or convention, as it traditionally the case with the production of commemorative monuments. (54)

The Musée Edgar Clerc, as an institution that stores and protects historical artifacts, plays a facilitating role in the collective interest of the region. Memory, however, a role Guimaraes praises in equal mesure in Clerc's museological undertakings, "is not necessarily bound to collective interests, logic or the precise chronology or location of

ideas and events." The current curator's inclusion of the concept, then, divulges an additional dimension to the archeologist's investigation: the archeologist's and curator's involvement in the narrativization of history that would tie those who are studied with those who come to study.

The transmission of knowledge and memories forges a temporal bridge between the past and present. Progress made in archeological research methods and the conclusions it will advance implicate the future in the temporal link. Senator and president of Guadeloupe's Conseil général Jacques Gillot writes:

> Que cette passionnante exposition soit le garant de notre passé autant qu'elle ouvre les portes à l'avenir car aucun passé n'est figé sur lui-même. Au contraire il se veut connaissance donc renouveau. C'est à ce renouvellement que je vous invite, fort des trente ans du musée Edgar Clerc, en vous souhaitant non pas seulement une admiration mais une véritable communion. (3)

Gillot conveys as aspiration that the exhibit be a sort of proof of the community's past ("notre passé"). He is equally keen on the future possibilities occasioned by the exhibit. He states that the past is not isolated and speaks of the presentation of the past as knowledge or understanding. For Gillot, knowledge or understanding signifies "renouveau," a revival or resurgence. He welcomes the renewal of the past and, more importantly, invites the public to "une véritable communion." The veritable communion to which he alludes points to two concepts that come to bear on my discussion of Amerindian memory: the role of archeological museums in the community and the transcendence of said community.

The community Senator Gillot alludes to displays elasticity. As per curator Guimaraes' comments, the museum serves and is kept up primarily by people who are part of the immediate community (be it local or regional). Gillot, in addition to the community of which Musée Edgar Clerc is an institution, references the national and international collaborations that gave way to the interest in and expansion of the museum as well as other patrimonial organizations. Archeologist and former curator of the Musée Edgar Clerc (1984-2007) Henri Petitjean Roget recounts that the discovery of unprotected, Amerindian archeological patrimony led to the 1969 expansion of the legislation that regulated archeological research into the Départements d'Outre-mer (5). The wealth of information generated by regional archeological conservations during the span of several decades and its disposition to the scientific community, notes Petitjean Roget, "explique l'intérêt que l'Etat associé à l'Université de Leiden ont porté au passé précolombien de la Guadeloupe" (5). Official recognition of Guadeloupe's archeological significance on the part of the French government allowed specialists to focus their efforts on the islands' sites. Leiden University, though a public research university, is nonetheless associated to Holland and not to the French government. Whether Dutch interest in Amerindians in the Caribbean connects to a larger mission of post-colonialism is beyond the scope of this project. For now, the fact that the exhibition is the result of the excavation and research efforts of professors in Leiden University's Archeology Department and that the project is partly funded by the researchers' home university *and* by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research speaks to the concentric circles

of archeological patrimony and political adaptability.[119] The museum thus appears to be associated with the micro-community that surrounds it while its investigative support at the macro-level comes from without the national boundaries.

The section "Une coopération internationale" of the accompanying book to the exhibition "Espaces Amerindiens" stresses the researchers' interest in maintaining communication with the community:

> Tout au long de ces investigations, une attention particulière a été portée à la diffusion et à la promotion des résultats obtenus. Chaque année, des journées portes ouvertes, l'accueil de public, notamment de scolaires, la participation de jeunes Guadeloupéens aux fouilles archéologiques, comme une large diffusion dans la presse ont fait connaître au plus grand nombre l'histoire des premiers Guadeloupéens. (9)

Diffusion and promotion of the findings were a particular issue for those leading the excavations. These considerations took the form of "journées portes ouvertes" so that the public – and the youth in particular – may come to learn about "l'histoire des premiers Guadeloupéens." The exhibit itself showcases the creative and amateur scientific work of young Guadeloupians. It is not clearly stated whether exercises such as drawings posted as part of the exhibition were done as the investigative research was taking place (as suggested by the above quotation) or as part of the museum's ongoing activities offered.

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[119] "Le financement de l'exposition est assure par l'Université de Leiden, l'Organisation Néerlandaise de la Recherche Scientifique (NWO), le Conseil Général de la Guadeloupe et la Direction des Affaires culturelles de la Guadeloupe" (*Espaces amérindiens*, 9). / "Funding for this exhibit is provided by Leiden University, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Conseil Géneral de la Guadeloupe, and the Direction des Affaires Culturelles de la Guadeloupe" (*Espaces amérindiens*, 12).

What is clear and interesting are the representations produced by the young public. A collection of drawings entitled “Portraits Caraïbes” is particularly striking. The nuanced skin colors, accessories, and background reflect a variety of perspectives. (See Figure 6) Some portrayals of “femmes caraïbes” have dark eyes, others lighter. All have dark hair, albeit textured in varying degrees. The skin color ranges from paper white to pinkish, copper-like, and dark. Most depictions are nude and wear jewelry (one of them wears a crucifix).

Figure 6. Activity “Portraits caraïbes.”
Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

The drawings display their young creator's perception of the world around them. The ensemble and individual characteristics encapsulate the ideals set forth by Raphaël Confiant, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Jean Bernabé's Créolité manifesto discussed in the previous chapter. Physical traits and esthetics intermingle, creating a rich tapestry that reflects the region's history: "Nous sommes tout à la fois, l'Europe, l'Afrique, nourris d'apports asiatiques, levantins, indiens, et nous relevons aussi des survivances de l'Amérique précolombienne" (*Éloge de la créolité*, 27). The way in which these children's creations portray their community *and* then project it to Amerindian culture is very telling: Guadeloupe's Amerindian past is materialized into the creole culture in which they live. The Amerindian native becomes creolized in the children's imaginary. The museum and its involvement with the community enables the externalization of these correspondences in the community's historical imaginary. While most renditions have expressionless faces, two are particularly captivating in their contradiction: one shows a smiling, happy face (top middle) while another appears to be sad and crying (bottom right). The museum and these drawings may be found in Guadeloupe, not in Haiti, but a reader of Francophone authors may remember Edwidge Danticat's Anacaona, who hopes people will also remember other, happy aspects of their life. One may be equally reminded of Jean Métellus' Anacaona and her stained face that conveys a message of wistfulness and resistance.

The museum's young patrons, perhaps much like young Danticat must have, learn about their island's first inhabitants and conjure an image of them and their lives. Their memory is symbolically exhumed via the museum's various activities. One such activity illustrates an even better symbolical exhumation of memory: young Guadeloupians as

archeologists. Figure 7 shows the instructions so as to conduct a dig. “Atelier petit archéologue” teaches young children step by step how to correctly excavate, dust off, photograph, and annotate an object. Written in red, as if the most important step (or most often forgotten step – or both): “Je retire délicatement l’objet.” Young Guadeloupians who visit the museum’s workshop learn about the very real fragility of objects from the past. Archeological work becomes a meticulous and almost revering task. Precision joins gentleness in the required steps to follow. Scientific notation, as illustrated by Jacques Roumain’s ethnobotanical training example (examined in the previous chapter) as well as Guadeloupian Thierry Petit Lebrun (who I presented in the Introduction), yields Caribbean subjects who learn to read their surroundings in scientific ways in order to excavate Amerindian memories. The latter actually cites an encounter with the museum’s founder as key to his interest in Guadeloupe’s Amerindian past and the legacy buried underneath:

> À la source, il y a une rencontre à l’anse à la Gourde avec des gens qui creusaient le sol de l’arrière-plage. L’un deux [sic] était Edgard Clerc [sic]. J’avais 11 ou 12 ans et l’imagination en ébullition. Quarante ans et des poussières plus tard, en 2006, la Samidag m’a demandé de concevoir une table d’interprétation historique sur l’anse à la Gourde et le projet de Grand Site concernant la Pointe des Châteaux.
>
> Pour alimenter mon alambic à rêve, j’ai reçu toute la documentation technique, géologique, faunistique, botanique, historique, etc., réunie par les porteurs du projet. (Vidal, 1)

The author of *Anacri* demonstrates the museum and its leader's long-lasting effects on the community.[120] Forty years later, young Petit Lebrun himself grows up to not only explore the Amerindian world via fiction, but also continues to feed his enthusiasm for the disciplines used to refine and preserve Amerindian patrimonies. This time, however, it is he who promotes and generates both creative and research-based creations for the newer generations.

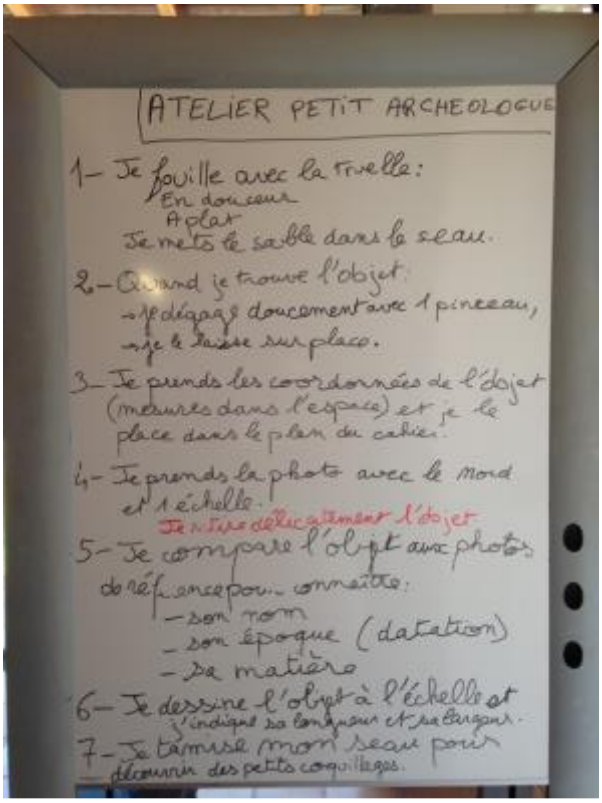

Figure 7. Instructions for activity "Atelier petit archéologue." Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

A compelling artifact that may continue to inspire future promoters of Amerindian memory is a piece of coral sculpted into a human face. Figure 8 shows the "Tête sculptée en corail" found in Anse à la Gourde. This sculpted coral is used as the

[120] Petit Lebrun also cites Henri Petitjean Roget and Susana Guimaraes (the former and current curators of Musée Edgar Clerc I cited earlier) as having facilitated his research.

main artifact showcased in the exhibition poster as well as the accompanying book. The sculptured head is unsettling for, rather than appearing to be a clearly sculpted piece of coral formed into a face, as one could see in Figure 9 (but marked on stone), the sculpture appears to be a man's face that has been overtaken by coral (the opposite of how it came to be). This phenomenon brings to mind concepts from two different but complementary disciplines. On the one hand, the sculpted head is reminiscent of sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor's underwater parks. His sculptures "are constructed using pH neutral materials to instigate natural growth."[121] What results are works of art that coalesce into a symbiotic artifact: man-made *and* natural. On the other hand, literary critic Monique Allawaert's concept of the *para-human* (explained in the previous chapter) where the colonial hierarchy of slavery fragments human bodies in order to set up and process said system. I argued that nature and mankind coalesced in Jacques Roumain's and Maryse Condé's texts as a vital component of their definition of native status. The "tête sculptée en corail," however, is a natural occurrence forged by a human individual. The artifact and its place in a museum render it an unsettling object that mesmerizes. Moreover, the coral's natural color (once dry) and the worn features of the sculpture further blur the physical traits into a non-specific human in which many or all members of Guadeloupe's current population could see themselves reflected. Its indeterminacy epitomizes the ambivalence of humans and nature I have presented throughout this project. This tangible but nearly indistinguishable object materializes in a way that parallels petroglyphs, also showcased at Musée Edgar Clerc.

[121] http://www.underwatersculpture.com/about/biography/


Figure 8, "tête sculptée en corail" and Figure 9, "tête sculptée."
Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

Curating techniques such as positioning and lighting ensure a successful archeological museum experience where all artifacts can be appreciated. Petroglyphs in their natural habitat are an object of memory of their own order. Those in open air, namely at the Parc archéologique des Roches gravées, exemplify their transient and fragile nature in their role as cultural artifacts and memory objects. The park is an open space both literally and figuratively. There is a wooden canopy with informational panels at the center. The seats facing them on one side of the canopy suggest that visitors are either welcome or expected to read for themselves before following the guide through the petroglyph tour. These panels offer information ranging from "Comprendre l'art rupestre des Antilles" to "L'Habitat précolombien en Guadeloupe" to "L'Outillage" and "Parures et esthétique du corps." I arrive at the Parc archéologique in Trois-Rivières only to find that, though the park is open, not all inscriptions are available. It is not a cloudy day but it is past noon. Nicolas, our tour guide, informs the visitors that the petroglyphs are much better appreciated in the morning, when the sun offers diagonal light. He follows his procedure as usual but takes out his phone and shows us previously-taken pictures when

the main, most well-known petroglyph is but a stone slab before our eyes. (Figure 10) The stone transforms into a fully engraved rock.[122] Beyond the particularities of a single experience, this phenomenon encapsulates the role of memory petroglyphs and other Amerindian artifacts play in the Caribbean. The natural elements control when the petroglyphs are available. As previously mentioned, the force of hurricanes have laid bare the existence of many petroglyphs in Guadeloupe. In spite of being located and studied, however, many petroglyphs continue to evade human eyes. They exist *bel et bien* – literally set in stone – and yet our senses often fail to grasp their existence. Memory – especially historical memory and the legacies of cultures that have all but disappeared – escapes our understanding. Petroglyphs remind us in a very concrete way of both the Amerindian cultures that once lived (and inscribed) there and of the susceptibility of that reminder. In this sense, petroglyphs operate as a *mise en abyme* where the memory of Amerindian legacies they evoke mirrors the oscillation of their visibility: hurricanes, a cloudy day, and even the time of day can shroud their presence.

The concept of index memory throws light on petroglyphs' spectral nature. Indexical memory is a concept borrowed by memory studies critics and originates in philosopher C.S. Peirce's concept of index signs or representation (Gibbons, 29). The index captures the slightest trace of a more complete object or complex thought and forges a metonymic relation with its referent.[123] The index finds its epitome in the medium of photography (ibid). I nonetheless advance that the concept explains what

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[122] For a picture of the engraved stone, see http://villetroisrivieres.fr/le-parc-archeologique-des-roches-gravees-celebre-ses-40-ans/

[123] See *Commens Digital Companion to C.S. Peirce* for further information on indexical representation: http://www.commens.org/home# Gibbons point out that the Dictionary offers multiple texts where C.S. Peirce treats the subject (Gibbons, 154, Note 2).

petroglyphs already embody. Petroglyphs, as engravings set to stone long ago, inherently manifest the "themes of death, loss and absence" with which indexical memory is often associated (Gibbons, 29). A photograph or object carrying indexical memory carries but a trace – but it is a nearly indelible trace that has a "way of anchoring memory" (ibid). The petroglyphs, to the observer, presents a literal trace of a person who inscribed a message long before his or her death. Art historian Lisa Saltzman's study of conceptual artist Glenn Ligon's silhouetted paintings follows the transformation "from meaning to materiality, from word to image." She writes that "[Ligon's] formal insistence upon the opacity of the words and the painterly medium with which they are rendered does not fully undo their claims to semantic transparency, that is, their claims to reference and meaning" (48). Caribbean petroglyphs, being concrete traces of absent people, renders these rock engravings not only "recognizable and invisible" but also visible and unrecognizable.

Figure 10. Petroglyph rendered invisible by the sun's angle.
Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

Service to its community and official policy meet in the treatment and presentation of the petroglyphs. I relayed my surprise to our tour guide at not being able to see some petroglyphs and told him that they were also difficult to see in Puerto Rico's Centro ceremonial indígena Tibes in Ponce, where I had visited a week earlier. The tour's guide in Puerto Rico was carrying a bottle of water and proceeded to pour some on petroglyphs so that the visitors could see them better. (See Figure 11) This, Nicolas tells us, is forbidden in Guadeloupe, for the water would contribute to the petroglyphs' even faster deterioration. Suddenly pouring water over a hot stone would damage the stone's quality over time. Preservation is tied to the possibility of indiscernibility. Whether pouring water on petroglyphs and potentially setting off their slow but certain chemical damage is officially sanctioned in Puerto Rico, remains another matter. The tour procedures and information provided during both tours communicate a way to see and understand an artifact or site's historical context, as well as its future availability based on the present. The future preservation of Guadeloupe's petroglyphs necessarily rests on its invisibility to today's public and, more importantly, their resignation to forego seeing concrete traces of Amerindian legacies.

Figure 11. Wet petroglyph in Centro ceremonial indígena Tibes in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Photograph by the author. June 7, 2015.

A petroglyph's location in a natural and relatively unguarded setting renders the material both visible to the public *and* susceptible to the elements. Puerto Rico's Piedra escrita (the Written Stone) in Jayuya illustrates this phenomenon. The petroglyphs rest on a large stone sitting on river Coabey. The site is open to the public just as any other body of water. During my visit, I witness children and adults play on top, under, and around the rock. (See Figures 12 and 13) Interestingly enough, the entrance to the river shows contemporary symbols in the style of the petroglyphs at the site. (See Figure 14) This uninhibited contact with Amerindian petroglyphs and their reproduction points to diverging methods but similar phenomena vis-à-vis Amerindian memory in Guadeloupe: they are evoked consciously and elicited by the very environment.


Figures 12 and 13. La Piedra escrita in Jayuya, Puerto Rico.
Photographs by the author. June 8, 2015.

Figure 14. Contemporary images near La Piedra escrita.
Photograph by the author. June 8, 2015.

Be it in an indoor museum or an outdoor park, artifacts and other traces Amerindians have left continue to be read, commented, and presented by Caribbean populations. From official statements to museum workshops and the plurality of petroglyphs, the memory of Amerindians peoples compels further mnemonic practices.

3.2 Unearthing History, Building Memory

Figure 15. Road leading to the Cimetière d'esclaves de l'Anse Sainte-Marguerite. Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

My unexpected "discovery" of the Cimetière d'esclaves de l'Anse Sainte-Marguerite in Le Moule illustrates the intangibility of memory. On my way back from the Amerindian museum Édgar Clerc and heading to Point-à-Pitre via a tour of the northeast corner of Guadeloupe, I notice a sign on the road. The sign points to a slave cemetery. The graveyard sits on an isolated corner of the region. The road is long and does not promise hosting any one building beyond more trees and the coast. (Figure 15) The road does not point to any characteristics that would mark the upcoming space as a place of remembrance – and yet a solemn ambiance inhabits its isolation. The only people who are there the day of my visit are a man and his child. Their car is parked on the sand and through their open door one can see them napping. Turning the corner of coastal trees reveals a large panel announcing the cemetery along with a message from a local group. (Figure 16) Three posts painted, from the bottom up, in black, yellow and blue head the space. (Figure 17) A large stone or coral stands in the middle of the circular

space. Conches surround this stone with the openings facing outward toward all directions.[124]

Figure 16. Panel at site Cimetière d'esclaves de Sainte-Marguerite. Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

Political scientist and cultural critic Françoise Vergès, in an article entitled "Archéologie de l'esclavage, archéologie de l'absence," inculpates France for the lack of archeological digs focused on the country's slavery episode (105). She joins historian Myriam Cottias in condemning "le silence de la Nation," and argues that the French republic chooses to forget its "grande puissance esclavagiste" in favor of reminding its citizens the liberties it has granted them (106). The article calls for formal excavation

[124] Conch shells are often found on slave cemeteries in diaspora regions and African burials. They are associated with burial practices in Central Africa's Kongo region, namely its cosmogram "(a symbol or pictograph of the cosmos) and to indicate the point of spiritual return" (Rucker, 136-6). For more information on burial practices used by the African diaspora in the United States, see Kara Ann Morrow's "Signs, Symbols, and Shells: African American Cemeteries in Florida."

programs and, more importantly, emphasizes the need to take into account the delay in addressing this period in history and acknowledge the nation's silence (106). I devote this section to the Cimetière d'esclaves in l'Anse Sainte-Marguerite in Le Moule, Guadeloupe. Keeping in mind Vergès' parallel between time, silence, and politicized, official status of history, I examine the ways in which the site is regarded from various viewpoints. In particular, I analyze the way archeological findings of the site are incorporated into official documents and consequently disseminated. In so doing, I bring out the tensions between government sponsored structures and grassroots organizations reveal the tensions between the community's perspective and the official events.

Figure 17. Frontal view of the site Cimetière d'esclaves de Sainte-Marguerite. Photograph by the author. June 15, 2015.

The Cimetière d'esclaves de l'Anse Sainte-Marguerite is the best kept slave cemetery from the colonial period throughout the Caribbean and even the Americas. Archeologist and Sainte-Marguerite specialist Patrice Courtaud writes: "Le site d'Anse Sainte-Marguerite est un site majeur pour la connaissance des conditions de vie et de mort des esclaves. Il constitue actuellement l'ensemble funéraire le mieux documenté de tout le continent américain" (17). The site that boasted this title was the African Burials

that dwelled underneath Wall Street. These remains, however, have been studied and consequently reburied.[125] Like the Cimetière d'esclaves, the New York African Burial Ground began with the expectation of finding *some* remains but ended up excavating hundreds of graves (Hansen and McGowan, 12). The two burial grounds tell different stories regarding the responsibility of a site's plans for intended use and the community's expectation as well as its relation to the site.

As we have seen with petroglyphs in the previous section, the passing of time and the indiscriminate elements compound the already spectral nature of rescuing remains and discovering details about one's predecessors. The slave cemetery at Sainte-Marguerite typifies the ways in which nature both helps and impedes the concrete recuperation of artifacts from the past. The same force of nature that unearthed Amerindian petroglyphs uncovered these remains. The cyclones that hit Guadeloupe in 1995 revealed the funerary structure that is the Cimetière d'esclaves (Courtaud 2013, 1). The remains and the articles found with them arise as a unique and unifying temporal experience. Their emergence is at once fragmented and agglutinated. It is fragmented in that the remains are often disjointed parts of what were once bodies – bodies whose humanity was denied, if contested at all. Their fragmentation render their finding a lumped agglutination that mirrors the very layers of the earth in which they were found. The relationship between humans and the environment as constitutive of self and communal definition as well as native status guides many of my arguments throughout

[125] "The African Burial Ground is located in the heart of lower Manhattan along Broadway off Duane and Chamber Streets just north of City Hall Park … It is the largest and earliest known cemetery of African descendants in North America. Used approximately from 1712 to 1795, this communal burial space reaches 6.7 acres in size, and it is estimated that more than 15, 000 people were interred here." (Frohne,1)

this project. Physical remains from pre-conquest Amerindian and colonial slavery periods substantiate nature's role in bringing history (and with it, latent memory) to the surface. Courtaud writes that "[l]'existence, sur l'actuelle plage, d'os humains roulés et fragmentés par la mer constituait le seul témoignage matériel d'anciennes tombes détruites" (5). Damaged and fragmented human bones near the beach amounted to the only material evidence of old tombs. The coast and the liminal space it occupies between land and sea reproduces the tenuous nature of recovering material artifacts. Indeed, just as the remains were naturally uncovered they could be (and in fact, are) vulnerable to the elements.[126] Nature gives and takes away – and yet sometimes holds off. Courtaud notes the unexpected state of the remains at the Cimetière d'esclaves in Sainte-Marguerite : "La conservation de la matière osseuse est excellente, ce qui est particulièrement exceptionnel en contexte tropical. Des squelettes complets et en parfait état ont été exhumés" (Courtaud, 9). Though normally tropical weather poses a threat to the preservation of remains, it did not corrupt the remains. The exemplary state of the remains at sites like Sainte-Marguerite and New York is fortuitous. "I want the bones" writes Trinidadian poet M. NourbeSe Philip in *Zong !* (201). As previously stated, this section focuses on the official and unofficial ways in which the community processes, recognizes and plays tribute to (or, in a word, remembers) physical remains from the country's historical

[126] Bones from a previously researched but unkempt slave cemetery in Saint-François' Raisins clairs beach protrude progressively due to the receding coast *and* to human desecration. Guadeloupian artist and pro-independence activist Joël Nankin, citing the lack of government protection of "une partie du patrimoine de l'île," called the community to action and make their presence and interest known at the site. (Lefevre et al, 1)

slavery. In the chapter section following this one, I dissect the traps of memory in the absence of physical remains, including Philip's text.

Discovered remains and objects from Guadeloupe's period of slavery, much like Amerindian remains, artifacts, and petroglyphs, add to the cultural and imaginary heritage of its society. Let us establish what has been recovered in the archeological excavation in Sainte-Marguerite so as to ascertain the new information with which the community must now contend. A team of anthropological archeologists dug and studied the remains from 1997 to 2002 (*La Route de l'esclave*, 30). The racial and ethnic composition was originally obfuscated due to the underlying Amerindian remains found at the site.[127] The likelihood of the site being a cemetery prompted specialists to focus their questions around funerary practices and their research techniques into both specific tombs and the greater cemetery. Article 14 of the 1685 *Code noir* dictates that enslaved people who had been baptized be buried "en terre sainte."[128] Courtaud notes that the space where the enslaved were buried – even if baptized and in a cemetery – would be separated from free persons and thereby excluded from the main consecrated area (2). This appears to be the case in the Sainte-Marguerite cemetery. Those who died before receiving baptism would be buried in some nearby field, and specifically enough, under the cover of night.

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[127] "Elles [anciennes tombes détruites] avaient été auparavant considérées comme étant d'époque précolombienne en raison d'un site amérindien sous-jacent, perturbé par l'installation des tombes coloniales et ensuite par la destruction partielle de la dune." (Courtaud 2013, 5)

[128] "Les maîtres seront tenus de faire enterrer en terre sainte, dans les cimetières destinés à cet effet, leurs esclaves baptisés. Et, à l'égard de ceux qui mourront sans avoir reçu le baptême, ils seront enterrés la nuit dans quelque champ voisin du lieu où ils seront décédés." *Le Code noir: Recueil d'édits, déclarations et arrêts concernant les esclaves nègres de l'Amérique.* http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/amsudant/guyanefr1685.htm

The site is located in an isolated, rural spot far from any place of worship (Courtaud, 4). This information, compared with the legal procedure dictated by the *Code noir* conveys the uncertainty of unearthing the past. The remote location of the slave cemetery in Sainte-Marguerite could easily be mistaken for "quelque champ voisin du lieu." The fact that there are no churches or even other cemeteries nearby could, ostensibly have been a place to inter non baptized peoples – and yet archeological findings tell a different story. The specialists found the remains to be not only from the colonial period but also that they indicated they had belonged to African individuals. In addition to the records that had indicated that the region was not colonized until the end of the 18th century points to the fact that the cemetery was only used for less than a hundred years (6). Courtaud surmises that the cemetery was likely used for the deceased of various plantations or even a municipality (ibid). The northern section of the bay on which Courtaud and his colleagues focused yielded 200 graves and the remains of 215 individuals.[129] Some remains had nails nearby, suggesting that they bodies were buried in wooden coffins (9). Other remains were found on top of bones from other bodies. Courtaud writes that this reutilization of space can be traced back to the Middle Ages and could simply indicate use of restricted space. He adds, however, that the fact that there is free space in between tombs points to a purposeful grouping of bodies, as if to unite them in the afterlife ("Ici l'existence d'espaces non utilisés à proximité de sépultures plurielles semble témoigner d'une volonté de regrouper des défunts dans l'au-delà" [10]). In particular, he identifies the positioning of an adult cranium near the tomb of a child. This

[129] "L'effectif des sujets exhumés s'élève à 215, 126 adultes pour 89 enfants et adolescents, ces derniers étant sous-représentés, tout comme les nouveau-nés." (Courtaud 2013, 15)

being a practice "inhabituelle" leads him to suppose that it could have symbolic value (10). He includes the disclaimer that purposeful grouping could be a sign of parentality or ethnic affiliation, as it was a "population de personnes déportées" (9-10, 3). Courtaud demonstrates the imperfect nature of piecing together history, even when inspecting relics and materials using the latest technologies.

Courtaud's research methodologies and analysis illustrate the resonance of conjecture vis-à-vis relics. The organization and artifacts found at the Sainte-Marguerite cemetery render the site a Christian funereal one. In fact, Courtaud writes with certainty that there are no discernible African practices at the site ("Aucune pratique africaine ne peut être soupçonnée" [11]). In addition to the previously mentioned nails near the remains, Courtaud and his archeological team have found bone and mother-of-pearl buttons, prayer beads ("chapelet"), and, more interestingly, a medallion of Sainte-Marie that dates 1852.[130] The articles found at the cemetery, namely the dated medallion, signals its unequivocal use long after the official abolition of slavery in Guadeloupe on May 27, 1848. The reasons for the cemetery's continued use remains uncertain:

> Il semblerait qu'à Sainte-Marguerite, les nouveaux libres aient continué à utiliser, du moins pour certains d'entre eux et pendant un certain temps, l'ancien cimetière d'esclaves. Est-ce en raison d'une volonté délibérée de se rapprocher du lieu de sépultures de leur ascendance ou bien d'une

[130] Mother-of-pearl buttons bring to my mind Chilean film director Patricio Guzmán's 2015 film *El botón de nácar* (*The Pearl Button*). Guzmán explores Chile's history of both indigenous and political oppression by focusing on one such button found frozen on the coast. The fact that the sea borders Chile geographically from top to bottom allows the film director to meditate on the memory of water and its ability to both dilute and recover artifacts, much like the case with the slave cemetery in Sainte-Marguerite.

> interdiction de l'accès à l'espace consacré ? (2013, 11)

The possible reasons for the continued use of the cemetery could be the wish to be buried or bury a loved one with one's forebears. Conversely, burying one's family could be evidence of forbidden access to a church-sanctioned cemetery years after the abolition of slavery. The existence of two (of originally three) brick layered, limestone graves further points to the use of the slave cemetery following abolition. Courtaud remains convinced that the cemetery holds African or descendants of Africans due to the cranial morphology and serrated teeth of the individuals found inside. The practice of serrated teeth presents a convincing marker of the origin and suggests that the persons were brought over, as opposed to born in bondage.

Physical traits, the various objects found in the vicinity of remains, and the bodies' positioning aid in telling a story of unknown individuals. As victims of slavery – void of will or individuality – these remains tell a muted story. The facts ascertained by archeologists and anthropologists give but a glimpse of their personhood and the contemporary Guadeloupian's relationship to them. Joyce Hansen and Gary McGowan, authors of *Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence: The Story of New York's African Burial Ground* express the resonance of the discovery of remains of African peoples:

> In 1992, when news of the excavation of an eighteenth-century burial ground for people of African descent in New York City spread to the general public, people realized that this was a monumental discovery that would offer us the chance to reclaim a lost history. It makes the past real to us, as we gaze at the remains of a mother and child, or a woman in ceremonial beads, or observe an earbob worn by a little girl. We are made

to think and to feel. (107)

Hansen and McGowan translate the "monumental discovery" of the African Burial Ground into an opportunity to "reclaim a lost history." The remains allow the past the materialize as *someone*'s reality.

France-Antilles Guadeloupe journalist Boris Courret, in his coverage of the remains 20 years after their discovery, highlights the delay that may also appear between the return of the past via the discovery of archeological sites and their entrance into the community's imaginary. His interactions with those he interviews reveals the desire to forge intimate, familiar connections with the remains and the people they once were:

> Nous avons constaté une méconnaissance totale de cette période chez les Guadeloupéens. Les gens nous disaient qu'ils en avaient déjà entendu assez à ce propos. Trop de choses abstraites. Notre réflexion s'est donc portée sur une nouvelle approche. Comment proposer autre chose que ce qui était fait, et qui ne passionnait personne. Nous avons décidé d'honorer la mémoire de nos aïeux de façon plus concrète. (6)

Archeologist and founder of the group *Lanmou ba yo* ("Amour pour eux" or "Love for them") – the very group whose inscription appears on the site's panel – Jean-Luc Romana states an ambivalence where his fellow citizens are both misinformed about the colonial period *and* deem to have heard enough about the subject. Misinformation and disinterest seem to meet in the abstract way in which we discuss the past in official functions: "Trop de choses abstraites." Romana's concrete way to honor the memory of the "aïeux" consists precisely in regarding the remains as direct ancestors. To this end, the organization celebrates "Mai des aïeux" in response to the anniversary of the abolition of

slavery in 1848. Romana and the group *Lanmou ba yo* organize talks that focus on the lives of those enslaved. He states that "[c]ette journée a pour but d'expliquer que les restes retrouvés ne sont pas que des ossement, mais de véritables reliques familiales" (6-7). Romana echoes Glissant's Aa and his body's transubstantiation into memory such as analyzed in our first chapter. The Guadeloupian anthropologist, too, wishes to transform bones into family relics – along with the memory (or, rather, vision of the past) and personal attachments. Indeed, Romana explains that these efforts constitute "une façon de rendre plus personnel le travail de mémoire" (6). The work of obfuscated memory, when made personal, becomes concrete for Guadeloupians like Romana. The desire to forge a more meaningful relationship with sites of memory may lead to the dismissal of archeological findings and a site's official status. Indeed, groups like Romana's take it upon themselves to organize and adorn the excavation site's current space. As evident in the pictures I included earlier as well as in figures 18 and 19, the aesthetic of the cemetery adheres to African diasporic elements I mentioned at the beginning (i.eg. conch shells) – and not to any Christian symbols, which could been the religion of the individual who wore the Sainte-Marie medallion found at the site. Though the choice to ignore the archeological fact was likely in favor of the larger issue of violent transplantation and a life in bondage, it is nonetheless indicative of the types of tension negotiated between those who seek a much more intimate connection with "veritable family relics" ("de véritables reliques familiales") and official structures.


Figures 18 and 19, fresh fruit left at the back of the Cimetière d'esclaves on the left, conch shell arrangement on the right. Photographs by the author. June 15, 2015.

The work of concrete memory advocated by Romana stands opposed to actual concrete structures, even if it intends to "créer un lieu dédié à la mémoire collective de l'esclavage et de la traite, ouvert sur le monde contemporain."[131] This is the purpose of the Mémorial ACTe I mentioned earlier, an organization mentioned by name by Jean-Luc Romana: "Nous tentons d'honorer l'histoire de nos aïeux de façon concrète. Nous ne sommes pas dans une démarche grandiloquente comme celle du Mémorial Acte qui, en plus d'avoir coûté 70 millions d'euros, n'a réfléchi sur rien" (7). Romana stands against the Mémorial Acte's "démarche grandiloquente" while at the same time accusing the project of thoughtlessness. The Mémorial ACTe (or MACTe) is a museum-like space in Point-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe inaugurated by then President of the French republic François Hollande in May 2015.[132] This space holds a permanent exhibit, ranging from historical

[131] http://memorial-acte.fr/le-memorial-acte/la-genese/
[132] "Mémorial ACTe en Guadeloupe: une inauguration en grande pompe." Antoine Flandrin. *Le Monde*. May 10, 2015.

artifacts and documents from the period of slavery to modern art that explores subjects pertaining to slavery and its aftermath. Romana's charges against the MACTe's grandiloquent approach is surprising. Though the MACTe's cost has indeed been controversial, its objectives do signal an interest in avoiding the isolated and stagnant qualities of a museum.[133] By isolated and stagnant, I mean the traditional interest of both natural history museums and art museums in solely displaying and not at all in offering interactive and productive activity. Victorin Lurel, Guadeloupe's président du conseil régional, categorically denies the MACTe's sharing the static quality of a museum: "Nous ne sommes pas dans un musée des beaux-arts ou de société, mais bien dans un projet de lieu aux multiples activités, aux multiples approches, aux multiples ambitions, dont la vocation première est bien de 'mieux vivre ensemble'."[134] The multiple activities, approaches, and ambitions expressed by Lurel include the visitor's ability to conduct genealogical research in their media library. Romana's desire to make the work of memory more personal via the consideration of the Sainte-Marguerite remains as ancestors coincides with the MACTe's 2006 second phase definition and philosophy:

> Le Mémorial ACTe devait décrire non seulement les terribles réalités subies par les victimes de l'esclavage mais également s'ouvrir sur l'avenir : faire de l'acte du souvenir, la fabrication d'une société nouvelle.

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http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/05/10/memorial-acte-en-guadeloupe-une-inauguration-en-grande-pompe_4630783_3224.html

[133] Mélina Seymour, founder of the political party *Ambition Guadeloupe*, has criticized the use of funds thus: "Cette somme aurait dû être investie pour créer des emplois, notamment pour les jeunes Guadeloupéens, dont plus de la moitié sont frappés par le chômage." She has also warned against relying on the MACTe's attraction of tourists, a hope of those involved in the MACTe's creation. (Flandrin, "Cinq choses" 4)

[134] http://memorial-acte.fr/le-memorial-acte/la-genese/

> Le nom de Mémorial ACTe est né de cette volonté, à l'instar de beaucoup de courants anglo-saxons associant la résistance à l'acte. Une mémoire en action, comme l'a été la résistance des Africains durant la période esclavagiste, comme l'est la construction d'une culture créole toujours en mouvement. Il s'agissait bien de réaliser non seulement un "monument" qui marquerait l'histoire architecturale de la Guadeloupe et de la Caraïbe, mais aussi de proposer une multitude d'offres culturelles parmi lesquelles, une grande exposition permanente associant pédagogie et nouvelles technologies, des expositions temporaires des événements et spectacles, une animation spécifique à destination des publics scolaires et des jeunes.[135]

The MACTe's philosophy to make the act of remembrance a productive act of resistance confounds Romana's accusation of grand claims and simple results ("démarche grandiloquente"). The stated philosophy punctuates the markers of slavery in the Caribbean: resistance and ever-changing créole cultures such as examined in the previous chapter. Romana's main objective to make history a familiar affair is arguably met by the MACTe. The Centre caribéen d'expressions et de mémoire de la traite et de l'esclavage, as the MACTe is also known, encompasses and consolidates instances of memory-work into a concretized act of memory. These iterations of memory work include but are not limited to visiting the exposition, participating in conferences, undertaking genealogical research, and contemplating Morne Mémoire, a 12 feet high footbridge that seeks to elicit contemplation.

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[135] http://memorial-acte.fr/le-memorial-acte/la-genese/

The MACTe's philosophy of memory as resistance joins Romana's echoes of Glissant's ephemeral character Aa and his "Actes de guerre," though for a different, nuanced reason. Aa, like Anacaona before him, offers a literary blue print of remembrance to be read by preceding generations. Though their memory (be it oral, textual, or physical remains) may be hanged, dismembered, or burned to specks, the community welcomes and gathers the fragments. Organizations like the MACTe seem to respond to their the respective authors' impetus to conjure a concrete link between the past and the present. In this sense, Aa and Anacaona's remains, like those in Sainte-Marguerite indeed become ancestors. The stories are transformed from traces and fragments into a narrativized story that tells how we arrived to this day.

3.3 Commemoration and the Immemorial

What does it mean to commemorate the absence of remains in the Caribbean? What does remembering look like? What exactly would ethical remembering require? Acknowledging the historical gaps brought about by the violence of slavery? Or attempting to put together a series of events that might constitute what the Caribbean came to be? Questions of efficacy in retrieving or eliciting memories prove to be difficult to answer. Memory, remembrance, and commemoration constitute the most relevant topical reservoirs for Caribbean writers such as Glissant and Danticat and the ensuing diasporas (e.g. Haiti) that then took them out of the archipelago. As we have seen, Glissant argues that the Caribbean condition presents an obligatory drive to both look back into the abyss of history and look into the hazy future in order to understand the present. One must face off history within one's self – every time, many times. Individual

struggle and historical confrontation could hardly be concretized.

The memorialization of the immemorial, whether remembrance in and of itself can constitute a form of commemoration, and the forms that remembrance can take all guide my understanding and apprehension in considering ways to think and speak of what it means to remember, memorialize, and commemorate in the Caribbean. I suggest taking a closer look at two very different instances of cultural artifacts that seek to elicit remembrance: the memorial installation "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité"(1998) by Laurent Valère and M. NourbeSe Philip's book of poetry *Zong!* (2008). Laurent Valère, a Martinican visual artist, works in and out of the Caribbean. Poet M. NourbeSe Philip was born in Tobago and now resides in Canada. The two contemporary artists' respective mediums differ and yet they have both produced works in memory of similar and relatively contemporary events. Both of these cultural items are also put to the test by added tensions to the general problem of commemorating in the Caribbean: that of legality and its power to both sanction and nullify. Whereas the Cap 110 commemorates the 1830 wreckage of an illegal slave ship following the abolition of the slave trade, the *Zong!* explores the 1781 massacre of slaves aboard a ship and its eventual day in court, where the issue was debated only insofar as two parties disputed the underwriter that guaranteed the security and marketability of the human cargo aboard the ship.

3.3.1 Mémoire et Fraternité

Facing the coast of the Martinican town Le Diamant, large stone figures stand rooted to the spot. The bigger-than-life white torsos stand somber, overlooking the sea. This ensemble of statues commemorates the shipwreck of the clandestine slave ship that

capsized near the coast on a tempestuous night. I tease out the ways in which the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" monument negotiates historical reference to the shipwreck and the function of a memorial in this first part of the section. The circumstances surrounding the shipwreck render the incident difficult to commemorate. The nebulosity of the event permits neither clear vision of the past nor its memorialization. A revaluation of the "Cap 110" memorial's commemoration of those who perished that tumultuous night in April 1830 will shed light on the multiple, varied iterations of memory and remembering in and surrounding the Caribbean. To recap the historical context, France abolished the slave trade in 1818.[136] The shipwreck of 9 April 1830 marks the last *known* clandestine slave ship in Martinique. The surreptitious nature of the slave ship is further compounded by natural phenomena. The signboard for the memorial at the site of the "Cap 110" briefs visitors on what little is known of the event:

> À 23 heures, des cris et des craquements sinistres déchirent la nuit.
> Dizac et un groupe d'esclaves de l'Habitation, se rendent immédiatement sur les lieux pour découvrir une vision d'horreur: Le bateau disloqué sur les rochers, avec ses passagers, pris dans la terrible furie de la mer déchaînée. Les sauveteurs virent alors le mât de misaine, surchargé d'individus affolés se briser et entraîner définitivement dans l'écume et les rochers un grand nombre de personnes.[137]

Turbulent weather caused the ship to crash against the rocky coast of the Anse Caffard (Caffard Cove). The signpost notes that 86 individuals of African origin survived the

[136] The abolition of slavery does not arrive to the French West Indies until 1848.
[137] For an image of the signpost, see http://www.martiniqueactive.com/poi/cap-110/

destruction of the ship. The slave ship's clandestine status, the catastrophe, the cover of night, and the passing of time all account for the lack of records. It is impossible to know the exact number of people it was carrying or the place of departure. Forty six bodies were recovered. The number of lives lost along the way could never be known, either. Front and center of the signboard, next to this information about the accident, visitors find an illustration.[138] The image shows a half-clothed couple, a man and a woman nearly embracing with their hands up in the air. The male figure holds open shackles in the air, the woman holds on to the man with one hand. They both look to the sky. On the bottom right of the image, the inscription reads: "Extrait du tableau de François Biard: Proclamation de la liberté des noirs aux colonies (1849)."[139] The artwork celebrates the abolition of slavery in what are now the French overseas departments. Herein lies the illustrated crux of the tension of the "Cap 110" memorial. From the very signboard that introduces or reminds visitors of the circumstances surrounding the shipwreck, the memorial misdirects historical remembrance. The event intended to be memorialized, the 1830 shipwreck, becomes a distant image - divorced (or at least separated) from the commemoration. The few specifics of the event that are known (or thought to be known) such as the number of people who survived and the number of bodies that were found lying on the coast are not represented. The image front and center commemorates the abolition of slavery. Though historically linked and of great importance, the memory of the abolition of slavery has consumed the memory of the 1830 shipwreck.

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[138] See http://www.martiniqueactive.com/poi/cap-110/

[139] "Excerpt from François Biard's painting: Proclamation of the freedom of blacks in the colonies (1849)"

Figure 20. "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" memorial.

Laurent Valère, the artist commissioned by the city of Le Diamant to create the memorial, imbues the sculptures with detailed symbolic meaning.[140] The artist's official website gives specific information regarding the meaning of the work.[141] It mentions that the compactness of the statues evokes the immense number of slave trade victims. The statues are positioned close together, seeking to suggest a common destiny. The figures are bent over, seemingly carrying the weight of the events. The importance of the size of the busts is emphasized. The 8 feet 20 inches length of each bust, the website specifies, contributes to the solemnity of the ensemble. The statues are arranged in a triangular way, conjuring up the so-called "triangular trade" that dealt in slaves, sugar, tobacco, textiles, and rum between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Following the Antillean and West

[140] "À l'initiative de la ville du Diamant, cette sculture [sic] de Laurent Valère, a été fabriquée à la Martinique, à Trinité (Ateliers Prefakit), sous la Direction Technique de Eddie Vigon, la coordination Générale de Jean-Claude de Lafargue a Régie de Danielle Martin et l'Assistance Opérationnelle des Agents de la Ville du Diamant." Image of signpost found at site, http://www.martiniqueactive.com/poi/cap-110/).
[141] See http://www.laurentvalereartstudio.com/cap-110-1

African mourning custom, the statues bear the color white (the material has since darkened).[142] Shackles have been left out purposefully, intended to remind the audience that the departed never reached Martinican land as slaves. The ghostly figures appear to rise from the ground. They are indeed arresting. The figures overwhelm the viewer despite their passivity. One must be suspect, however, of aesthetic gratification. I suggest that the detailed, structured, and codified arrangement of the "Cap 110" monument poses a challenge to the remembrance or recognition of the shipwreck. If all the elements that comprise the memorial have a symbolic value already attached to it, there is little or no stimulation for the viewer to try to interpret or create his or her own link to the monument (and even less so to the actual event). Excessive use of symbolic imagery stops short of true evocation. As Pierre Nora claims, "[m]emory has been wholly absorbed by its meticulous reconstitution" (290). Though the reconstitution here is entirely symbolical, the events are certainly absorbed by fastidious codification.

An element of the problematic of representation involves the aforementioned unity. Uniformity presents the danger of excluding certain components. In the case of our memorial, it shows replicated statues of what appear to be lugubrious men overlooking the sea. The "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" monument seems to truly adhere to a male-dominated vision of "fraternité," as women are conspicuously absent from the memorial. Glissant's meditation on the memorial and on the importance of the events it evokes serves as an example of part of the very problematic I suggest. He writes:

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[142] It is interesting to note that the white sand used to create the statues was brought from Trinidad and Tobago, the country of origin of M. NourbeSe Philip who, as I will show, contends with the same subject matter as Valère.

> Pourquoi, de la masse des captifs, une si forte proportion de femmes, généralement très minoritaires dans ce genre de cargaison a-t-elle pu être sauvée ? Les survivants se sont-ils obstinés à ne rien dire aux enquêteurs, et pourquoi ? La vérité de l'imaginaire, qui est peut-être celle de l'histoire, nous suggère cette seule réponse à tant de question : Les Ibos, protégeant leurs femmes, ont suicidé ce bateau négrier clandestin, et l'ont rendu invisible jusqu'à nos jours. Les quinze statues sortent de terre avec une retenue et une dignité qui émeuvent.

Glissant mentions not only the unusual number of women who were part of the human cargo but also, and more importantly, the number of female captives who survived the shipwreck (at least 60 survived, according to the site's official information). The Martinican writer finds the proportion of women worthy of mentioning yet fails to see the fact that they are not immediately represented or alluded to in Valère's memorial. If the statues are to represent and indeed be perceived as a genderless collective, would Glissant have commented on the presence of women and the specific, rebellious task men took upon themselves that fateful night? It is surprising that a writer so attentive to the cultural and historical wants of the Martinican people was blind to the gaping absence of women in the "Cap 110" memorial. Which begs the question: were women not included due to the fact that, if indeed Glissant is correct, women survived in greater numbers? Are survivors not to be remembered? Who remembers the survivors? Who does what remembering? The unity put forth by the artist leaves out essential details of the events (namely the presence of women) yet seems to attempt to communicate completeness. As a counterexample, M. NourbeSe Philip (whose text I will examine in closer detail

shortly) cannot but stop and acknowledge gender and its dynamics within the context of slavery. She focuses on women's presence in her reading on the Zong (noting the "raw" elements in instances where "menstruation and childbirth and rape" are mentioned [201]). In addition, she includes male and female would-be names of slaves as footnotes to the early individual poems of the ensemble ("Aba Chimanga Naeema Oba Eshe" [4]). Before moving on, it is worth stressing that Glissant proposes an imagined situation as reason for the wreckage and survival in the above quotation. I will come back to Glissant's suppositions regarding wreckage and survival below.

The Cap 110 demonstrates the slippage of memory. Even if or when the Cap 110 succeeds in reminding or evoking the loss of human lives, the fact remains that the memorial is determined and constructed by governing bodies. The legality of the institutional choice to remember in such a way necessarily keeps the memory of the wreckage and illicit use of human bodies as goods bound and gagged. If the viewer escapes or bypasses the codification into neat clusters of memory (the short legend "Quelques explications" is not particularly prominent), the visitor must still visit and experience the monument in the sanctioned conditions that would equivocate this particular event with the greater, unfathomable voiding machine that is slavery. The official intentions of the "Cap 110" memorial have been undermined, or rather, they were misdirected from the very beginning. Though the "Cap 110" sculpture is a memorial that commemorates the shipwreck[143], the memorial is nowadays used to celebrate the anniversary of the abolition of slavery. Indeed, in 1998, 150 years after the abolition of

[143] I stress Valère's declaration that the lack of shackles specifically reminds us that the transported never set foot on Martinique as slaves, effectively providing an unambiguous reference to the wreckage.

slavery, the town of Le Diamant commissioned Valère with the construction of a memorial. This ensemble would, ostensibly, commemorate those who perished during the shipwreck on the shore of the town. It is important to underline, however, that the decision to erect a memorial came at the anniversary of the abolition of slavery and not that of the coastal derelict. This phenomenon calls forth James E. Young's remarks in *The Texture of Memory* concerning generational changes in collective memory. He writes: "New generations visit memorials under new circumstances and invest them with new meanings. The result is an evolution in the memorial's significance, generated in the new times and company in which it finds itself" (3). But what happens when the state is behind the generation of memorials complicit in misremembering? In the case of the "Cap 110," it is not the case of an "evolution in the memorial's significance." It is at the onset of the memorial's conception that the remembrance is corrupted. As the "Cap 110" memorial suggests, the governing generations who have inherited the baggage of the past of slavery seem to have supplanted the memory of the shipwreck with that of a more general idea of slavery and its eventual revocation.

"Mémoire" specifically designates "memory." Semantically speaking, in the case of computer science and data processing language, "mémoire" indicates a sort of "storage memory." This interesting fact brings to mind Nora's argument that the codification of memory leads to its isolation and eventual forgetting. This concept, in turn, echoes Derrida's discussion in "Archive Fever," where he, as referenced earlier in this chapter, contends that storing and locating memories is always at the cost of forgetting something else: "Now, because of that, because of this very fullness, the hypothetical fullness, of this archive, what will have been granted is not memory, is not actual memory. It will be

forgetting" (54). This is certainly the case for the "Cap 110" memorial. As we have seen, the memory of the shipwreck has been ingested by that of slavery. Valère's "Mémoire et Fraternité," then, can fall prey to the latent corruptibility of both concepts comprising the monument's title.

I would now like to focus on two facts regarding the "Cap 110"'s location. First, it is physically relegated to the coast where it is not easily accessible to the general population (much less tourists who may not be able to go off the beaten track). Second, and more importantly, it has been constructed on the grounds where the bodies were found that April morning in 1830 and close to the makeshift cemetery where they were subsequently buried. In this sense, one could suggest that the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" is a stately tomb in the amplified sense of the word. It is an elegant offering to the memory of those who perished. But the figures are also a gesture on the side of the state to commemorate a somewhat official version of hazy but very real clandestine events. It is certainly the case that governments are inherently linked to monuments depicting various episodes of the country, be it directly or indirectly. In this case, the leadership of the city of Le Diamant commissioned the work and wished to erect Valère's effigies. Mausoleums honor the memory of someone or something but do not necessarily recall or seek to keep in mind. Guadeloupe's Cimetière d'esclaves in Anse Sainte-Marguerite teaches us that the community responds in a much more intimate manner to an unmarked and unofficial place, despite (or perhaps thanks to) its isolation. As we have seen, the organizers of grass-roots *Lanmou ba yo* ("Amour pour eux" or "Love for them") have articulated a preference for a recondite site rather than an all-encompassing one, as

was the case with the Centre caribéen d'expressions et de mémoire de la traite et de l'esclavage (or Mémorial ACTe).

Recalling, or "keeping in mind," is precisely the biggest problem in commemorating in the Caribbean. Commemoration would require active participation and a tapping into a collective imaginary. In *Le Discours antillais*, Glissant insists that there is no collective imaginary in Martinique or the other French overseas departments in the Caribbean, at least not a clear and well-defined historical and cultural reservoir. What remains is the impulse to follow an always elusive trace. In *Making Memory Matter*, Lisa Saltzman argues that, from a position of posteriority and distance, images are supplementary to history. Through images, we can explore that which is removed and hidden: an obscure past. American artist Kara Walker's work on slave narrative motifs is a good example of a rumination of a past that haunts U.S. culture. In the earlier citation by Glissant, he advances a hypothesis for the 1830 shipwreck. Ignoring the alleged tempest, Glissant envisions a scenario where the Igbo, a people purportedly known for their rebelliousness and tenacity, would commit mass suicide. He speculates that the number of women the clandestine ship was carrying would perhaps have prompted a revolt within the transported that might have culminated in the capsizing of the ship. Again, he writes:

> La vérité de l'imaginaire, qui est peut-être celle de l'histoire, nous suggère cette seule réponse à tant de question : Les Ibos, protégeant leurs femmes, ont suicidé ce bateau négrier clandestin, et l'ont rendu invisible jusqu'à nos jours. Les quinze statues sortent de terre avec une retenue et une dignité qui émeuvent.

I suggest that Walker, Glissant, and their conceptions of a shared imaginary illustrate instances of working-though historical struggles as inheritors of the postmemory of slavery. That is, “secondary memory that has been constructed by the next generation rather than by primary witnesses” (Gibbons, 73). These and other artists and philosophers make up a generation who has inherited the memories and historical baggage of the generations before them. Walker’s work exists in and is fed by the African-American collective imaginary in the American South. Glissant clearly envisions possible scenarios all the while insisting on only ever attaining a trace of history.

3.3.2 Caribbean PostMemory

James E. Young reminds us that the first memorials of Jewish tradition came in the form of books - memorial books. The Yizkor Bikher acted as "symbolic tombstones" for those without graves or remains (7). In light of this religious, historical, and cultural phenomenon, I wish to analyze the poetic mechanics that undergird M. NourbeSe Philip's poem *Zong!* in direct relation to remembrance and memorialization, for Philip’s text lays bare the oscillation of memory, remembrance, and forgetting. The poems arise as the mourning process of a poet coming to terms with the 1781 massacre aboard the slave ship Zong. In order to secure profit, the ship’s captain had nearly 150 people either killed or thrown overboard while still alive. The slave merchants argued in court for the entitled loss of what had been, in their legal estimation, insured goods (189).

Philip makes corpse-laden waters her lexical reservoir. Or, rather, she fashions from the only remains ever to be exterred : the legal report. “The case is the tombstone,” writes Philip. Indeed, Philip utilizes “the one public marker” of the massacre. The words

that make up the poem come directly from the legal court case. She breaks up the document and scatters around verbs and nouns, displaying the splintered memory of the execution. In so doing, Philip creates "a public monument" (194). Like Valère's monumental art, Philip's language is "pre-selected and limited" (198). Interestingly enough, Philip states that she uses language as a "painter uses paint or a sculptor stone" (198). But whereas Valère seems to attempt to assemble and codify, Philip seeks to "disassemble the ordered" (199). The series of poems' section titles, particularly those of "Os" and "Sal," appear to reflect the fractured form of the poem. Os - bones - is presented in a fractured manner. Philip gives fragments of sentences, phrases, and thoughts. It also important to note that the French pronunciation of "os" brings to mind the homophone "eaux": the very waters that can and do obliterate. Sal - as in salt - , conjures up sand and its paroxistic particles. That is to say, there are individual linguistic fragments that, though soft, are capable of irritating. These fragments do not uniformly belong to any one category [e.g. phonemes, etc.]. From the very introduction to the *Zong!*'s arrangement, the reader confronts the naming that is not naming but, rather, doing. The reader goes adrift, following the choppy water movement of the poems.

write to

you of

mortality s

lien on l

ife

on the

ro

se

on

bo ne
on

ne groes

such drab necessity

murder

here we re negroes

like ants (69)

The reader finds abrupt syntactic, semantic, and morphological changes. Philip fractures language in such a way that the meaning that arises appears *and* becomes always, irrevocably fragmented. The reader finds meaning following one way, then another by going another direction. The fragments can mean one thing, or maybe another. Perhaps the fragments mean both things, perhaps neither concept is meant to mean a thing.

pe men ro me shin

es so do es troy in the nig ht of my mi

nd cast th em o ver a cas

e of port win e for y

ou my ma n it was a c ase of m

urder i te ll you in th (164)

The reader grasps for meaning amid the linguistic sea before her. One cannot but hesitate, then feel around the text. Syllables appear as one thing, then turn out to be another word. An initial reading gives a certain meaning, but then one forges ahead only to find another

meaning. In this way, "shin" becomes "shines," "do" becomes "does" which, in turn, becomes "destroy," "win" becomes "wine." "Night" materializes, but only after the not so ambiguous hesitation of "nig." Philip's language evades, outwits, and even thwarts the reader. Her text puts the reader in a position where one must necessarily experience disorientation and discomfort. The reader catches a glimpse of a forced, uncertain voyage across unruly waters. At the same time, in attempting and, at times, succeeding in understanding the language that both guides and disorients, we are complicit in understanding, naming, and calling.

The *Zong!* demonstrates that order and the legality often associated with it are not to be trusted. That which suppressed and validated only insofar as itemizing (i.e. language) lets out subdued murmurs. The words give readers a hint: the beginning of a thought. But the intermittence proves to be the tidal movement that leaves a lasting impression, much like a petroglyph. The scattered letters appear to have meaning and yet they resist our reading. The text's ebb and flow is not just that of memory, but also that of story-telling and enunciation. Philip's articulation of what *should* but *cannot* be said enact what she describes as a "haunting" or a "wake" (200). Indeed, though the text works "against meaning," an image of the incomprehensible event appears (203). Philip declares, affirms, and recasts the only certainty of the case: the details of the events are forever lost. Repeating this methodology, thread, and mantra quickly becomes its own haunting incantation, as Philip gives various iterations of the impossibility of telling.[144]

[144]"there is no story it cannot be told" (135), "story must be told by not telling" (190), "story that must tell itself" (191), "untold story that tells itself by not telling" (194), "In their very disorder and illogic is the not-telling of the story that must be told" (197), "*Zong!* is the song of the untold story; it cannot be told yet must be told, but only though its un-telling" (207).

All that remains of the actual events is a legal document that negates humanity. The undeniable fact of such an absence becomes a place from which "anti-meaning" provides spaces for reification. I agree with critic Alessandro Corio in that the reader faces the "apocalypse of language" (3). I propose that this reification is not a rebuilding of any sort of familiar linguistic landscape. Philip's linguistic constellation succeeds in communicating (adequately, faithfully, ethically?) the uncommunicable. However, it is no longer a matter of telling, describing, or even of circumlocution. Known or traditional literary and linguistic devices are nullified in the face of slavery, its legality, the force of nature, and man's attempt to not only remain in control but also profit in any and all circumstances. The new *-scape* is one that communicates through the experiential.

> The not-telling of this particular story is in the fragmentation and mutilation of the text, forcing the eye to track across the page in an attempt to wrest meaning from words gone astray. I teeter between accepting the irrationality of the event and the fundamental human impulse to make meaning from phenomena around us. The resulting abbreviated, disjunctive, almost non-sensical style of the poems demands a corresponding effort on the part of the reader to "make sense" of an event that eludes understanding, perhaps permanently (*Zong!,* 198).

Philip is aware of the pitfalls of "piecing together the story" (198). She writes of contamination (198). Narrativizing the layered, incomprehensible events (human trade, shipwreck, profiting from deaths) entails creating a story line, a beginning, and end, and, most of all, the systematic thinking from which rationale is deduced. "Piecing together" this story, in forcing a narrative, would "contaminate" the events with order, rationality,

and, ultimately, acceptance. It is for this reason that Philip intends to create a space of "anti-meaning." In so doing, however, another space materializes.

Philip's lack of narrative and the "anti-meaning" space she provides allows *something* to transpire within the reader. Joan Gibbons' presentation of Colombian artist Doris Salcedo in *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance* illustrates the productive effect of aesthetics and the work of the viewer.

> Rather than move between discrete but related objects of art, visitors are asked to inhabit the space and relate to the works almost as if inside a theater set, becoming a part of the tensions set up between themselves, the objects in the installation and the installation space. The physical engagement of the body is symptomatic of Salcedo's overall approach, which is to involve viewers affectively, positioning them at a sensory or intuitive level. However, as Jill Bennett notes, the experience of the work does not remain at the level of affectivity. Rather, the affective nature of the work lays the ground for more distanced critical reflection, and an active recognition (re-cognition) of its content (60).

The discomfort and apprehension of the viewer succeeds in agitating and rousing scrutiny. I propose that the discomfort and stimulation at work in Salcedo's work is also present in Philip's *Zong!*. The type of reading and sensory experience imposed by the structure of (or lack thereof) the *Zong!* culminates in the disorientation of the reader. The

false starts and abrupt changes necessarily make her complicit in anticipating and trying to understand the word remains.[145]

Reading Philip's text through Freud's reflection on mourning and melancholia – where one must come to terms with indeterminate loss – adds a dimension to a better understanding of the poetics and historical trauma at work in the *Zong!*. Freud explains the belated nature of trauma. The event repeats itself, hitting the individual who remembers time and time again. Cathy Caruth, in *Unclaimed Experience*, articulates the haunting nature of traumatic experiences. Trauma, etymologically indicating an injury inflicted on a body, takes on a much more persistent and difficult ailment to address: a wound "upon the mind" (3). A culture that has only existed "officially," Glissant explains, is bound to rummage through the annals of lost time or, better yet, non time. One can only try to grasp at the minutiae of what must have happened yet remains forever out of reach:

> Supposez, si vous le pouvez, l'ivresse rouge des montées sur le pont, la rampe à gravir, le soleil noir sur l'horizon, le vertige, cet éblouissement du ciel plaqué sur les vagues. Vingt, trente millions, déportés pendant deux

[145] Philip's attention to the experiential is further evidenced by a few facts. She consecrates the section "Notanda" to elucidating on her working-through both her reading the legal case and her own writing of the poem. She facilitates the readers with further aural ambiance by detailing the music that accompanied her reading and writing ("Van Morrison's *Endless Days of Summer*," "Ali Farka Toure's *Hawa Dolo*," and "Kenyan Luo musician Ayub Ogada" [209]). Finally, when speaking of memory and the importance of repetition, she provides titles of literary, critical, and visual works that took the Zong ship as subject, among them "J.M.W. Turner's 1840 painting, *Slavers throwing overboard the dead and the dying, Typhon* [sic] *Coming On*" (208).

> siècles et plus. L'usure, plus sempiternelle qu'une apocalypse. Mais cela n'est rien encore. (*Poétique de la relation*, 17-8)[146]

Caribbean subjects – descendants of slavery and inheritors of Amerindian legacies – must grapple with unknowable facts. They must contend with this inheritance. The new generations must still work through past events, becoming carriers of a heavy, nebulous postmemory. Philip's text aids not so much in *remembering* what "was never conscious" but rather in creating the conditions of possibility that might give us a glimpse into a disorientation (*Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through*, 148). In other words, the reader arrives at experiencing the text rather than in pretending to grasp the unknowable.

Continuing along Pierre Nora's argument that memory becomes localized and deposited in a specific site, James E. Young writes: "By creating common spaces for memory, monuments propagate the illusion of common memory" (6). Young's theory of the illusion of common memory is confirmed (and perhaps further problematized) in the context of the Caribbean. As the "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" memorial indicates, rather than common memory there is a common misrecognition or amalgamation of events. In the case of the Cap 110 memorial, the more global and recognizable memory of slavery and its subsequent abolition have supplanted that of the 1830 shipwreck. Perhaps the ever-shifting nature of memory is not only inevitable but also memory in and of itself. Perhaps, as Philip's *Zong!* shows, one must further shake and undo memory to the point of fragmentation. Her undoing the uniform, sentential voice of the legal case of

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[146] "Imagine, if you can, the swirling red of mounting to the deck, the ramp they climbed, the black sun on the horizon, vertigo, this dizzying sky plastered to the waves. Over the course of more than two centuries, twenty, thirty million people deported. Worn down, in a debasement more eternal than apocalypse. But that is nothing yet" (*Poetics of Relation*, 5-6).

the Zong ship give way to the multiple, muted voices submerged within it. It is thanks to Philip's splintering of the document that we are forced to pay close attention and become submerged ourselves. The "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" and the *Zong!* display the tenuous flux of memory, the question of responsibility, communal response, and individual work.

3.4 Conclusion

Memory in the Caribbean is a practice of resistance. The episodic layers of the region's nebulous past I examined in this chapter remind us of the spectral nature of memory. Petroglyphs oscillate in the public's perception. They emerge thanks to the force of nature only to disappear and appear intermittently again. This movement mimics that of memory in postcolonial societies suppressed by the weight of official history and the version of those who won. Spaces such as the Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne Edgar Clerc illustrate the essential role museums play in the construction of the community's imaginary. The work produced by young visitors exhibit their incorporation of new information concluded by archeologists, anthropologists, and ethnobotanists. Discovering slave cemeteries also opens up the opportunity to connect with and learn from the past. And yet, as I have shown, community organizers may reject the institutionalization of memory such as the Mémorial ACTe, despite having parallel goals. The personal investment of caring for one's ancestors via keeping the grounds of slave cemeteries, as is the case with *Lanmou ba yo*, illustrates the aspiration to foster memories of the past. Soil samples and human remains begin to tell the untold story of murdered Amerindians and enslaved Africans. The "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" and

M. NourbeSe Philip illustrate the individual work of collective memory when there is no adequate space to commemorate. The compulsion to remember and the inability to do so catalyze a conscious will to manifest the absence of those lost onto the palimpsest that is the Caribbean landscape.

Conclusion:

Relating Caribbean indigeneity

Amerindian traces haunt the Caribbean. The memory itself of Amerindian life and death serves as model that guides and inspires Francophone Caribbean writers to this day. The figure of Anacaona, for example, continues to reign supreme in the cultural legacy of her heirs. The cacica is revered as one of their own in the world's only successful slave revolt nation. Haiti's name itself points to the resonance of Amerindian legacies, including the role nature plays in cultural associations, history, and memory. My reading of Las Casas' depiction of Anacaona foregrounds the way in which language comes to define the Amerindian figure. Jean Métellus' *Anacaona* pinpoints her inability to recognize the shift in linguistic value as the beginning of her downfall. She recognizes that her time has passed and wishes she could have lived to be the Queen of Amerindians and of the transplanted Africans who took to the mountains. Though unable to lead them in life, Anacaona leaves a dying message relayed by the force of the winds. The leaders of the fight for independence would hear the message to resist and continue the fight (*Aya bombé!*) and repeated as "*Libète ou lanmò !"*

Edwidge Danticat's Anacaona wants her people to remember their own greatness, including their triumphs at Fort Navidad. The tale cannot, she repeats, be the only one told. The diary form of Danticat's text conjures the cacica's own voice. Danticat's imagined writing format – symbols akin to petroglyphs – presents the question of legibility and posteriority. The author expresses her hope that we may continue to find ways to read their symbols and be privy to their lived experience. Anacaona embodies resistance and strength via memory. As I have shown in Chapter 1, her memory has been

inscribed into the imaginary of Francophone Caribbean writers via the natural world. Thierry Petit le Brun's Anacri and Édouard Glissant's Aa interpret, remember, resist, and fight for their life and those in the same position.

The populations over which Anacaona never ruled – enslaved Africans, indentured servants from India and the Levant, as well as their descendants – understand that one's positioning and relationship to the natural world shapes the standing of the community and the individual's place within. Marooning to the mountains necessarily requires an intimate understanding of the world that can potentially shield and protect from the ordered and regulated violence of colonial society. Hiding in the mountains, as Guadeloupe's Colonel Delgrès shows, was instrumental in flights for independence. Defining one's self and the community post-slavery for the ensuing generations, as exemplified by Haiti's *indigéniste* movement, becomes an act of resistance itself. The movement draws from Jean Price-Mars' anthropological defense of the countryside's folklore. Looking within signals the advocacy of the country's own cultural practices. Furthermore, as I argue in my discussion of Jacques Roumain in Chapter 2, his training and research in ethnobotany (namely how Amerindians used plants and grains for nourishment, medicinal purposes, and as part of their belief system) inform the creation of the landmark novel that is *Gouverneurs de la rosée*. Roumain's text displays the multiform influence of nature in the Haitian experience: partner, mother, self-same. The myriad positionings vis-à-vis nature forge an intimate and symbiotic relationship of belonging and nativity.

Martinique and Guadeloupe, as French Départements d'Outre-Mer, rather than focus on the land's agricultural and economic productivity cannot but look around and

describe the plurality of ethnicities, cultures and languages that define their cultural landscape, first in terms of the Caribbean experience that binds them (i.e. Glissant's *Antillanité*) and later the *créolistes*' *Éloge* and their self-affirmation as the product of a unique historical crossroads. Although some writers may choose not to adhere to any one defining movement, as is the case with Maryse Condé, their work manifests both the cultural realities of the region via the islands' topography. *Traversée de la mangrove*'s Xantippe, for example, characterizes nature and with it both Amerindian and *marron* practices of survival and the ambivalence of language ranging from effacing silence to the generative power of enunciation.

The ambivalence of concrete remains of the past, as examined in Chapter 3, mirrors the vacillating and spectral nature of memory. Authors such as Petit le Brun articulate the influence of archeological finds and their access via museums. Guadeloupe's Musée départemental d'archéologie amérindienne Edgar Clerc, in addition to curating and fostering scientific research, features the work of the young patrons it serves. My analysis focused on and highlighted the way in which the activities hosted by the museum promote and facilitate an awareness of Amerindian past and the tenuous quality of their attainability. Petroglyphs and the indexical memory they carry as traces of cultures now absent remind viewers of the role of the elements in their discovery and continued appreciation. Physical remains from the colonial period and the slave cemeteries where they were found such as the one in Sainte-Marguerite undergo similar fickleness in the community's imaginary. *Lanmou ba yo*, the organization whose members keep the grounds of the cemetery, ignores some of the details of the

archeological findings in favor of a more intimate setting by positioning themselves as the remains' descendants.

I examined the move away from official observations. My examination of the palpability of memory was further problematized by the question of commemorating or paying homage to events whose occurrence evades us. Martinique's "Cap 110 Mémoire et Fraternité" memorial and poet M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!* present contrasting methods in dealing with clandestine slave ships that never reached their destination, leaving a trail of bodies across the Atlantic and no real trace on land. Whereas Laurent Valère chooses to codify an ensemble of solemn statues, Philip creates a vertiginous text that places the reader in a state of turmoil and distress. The paradigm of Anacaona and the Amerindian legacies she represents, the role of nature in resistance, revolt, and self-definition, as well as the spaces that carry traces of history in the Caribbean denote the questions surrounding Caribbean indigeneity.

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Caribbean indigeneity opens a myriad possibilities of research. As a case study, Glissant's works alone lend themselves to further study. Aa's furtive appearance in *La Case du commandeur* beholds the compulsion to tie one's history to those who proceed us. Glissant's philosophical writings have shed light on the intricacies of what it means to remember or rummage for Amerindian traces, African remains, and to pick up techniques of communal resistance throughout this project. As bastion and north of issues pertinent to Caribbean history, politics, and cultures, his various writings, be they fiction, poetry, essay, or anthology, manifest a charged presence. As a way to conclude this project, I devote this space to Glissant's theoretical works and demonstrate the fertile ground of

indigenous study and its links to other concepts. I analyze his meditations on indigeneity and, in so doing, open the Caribbean context and connect to the larger question of what it means to be indigenous around the world and through time.

La trace, what one must follow in order to discover lost history also helps search for the indigenous within his oeuvre. Following the indigenous trace takes us through *Le Discours antillais*, his writings in *Le Courrier de l'UNESCO,* and his travel narrative *La terre magnétique*. I show how and the extent to which the indigenous resides at the threshold of history and the other in both historical (e.g. conquest and slavery) and contemporary senses. My critical reading of Chilean painter Roberto Matta's writings has not been done before, let alone in the context of Glissant and indigeneity. I thus connect the manifestations of indigeneity throughout his oeuvre. This meditative and conclusive chapter shows that Glissant does not produce random, isolated instances of questions related to indigeneity. Rather than adorning his works with a panoply of indigenous characters in specifically Caribbean, other insular, or mainland settings, the indigenous within his works constitute a ruined but nonetheless existing architecture of thought.

Historical links and Fragmentation

Glissant, a writer devoted to analyzing lived realities in the Caribbean, historical baggage, and the possibility of the community, allocates a brief yet telling section to Chile in his methodical collection of essays *Le Discours antillais* (1981). The section "Chili" begins with Glissant's commentary on French-born Chilean painter Enrique Zañartu's paintings and their depiction of a rugged, violent landscape. Glissant closes it with a cursory mention of also Chilean Roberto Matta's paintings. Glissant's references to Chilean landscapes, mediated by Zañartu and Matta's works of art, I suggest, uncover

and further construct a conceptual bridge to Latin America that effectively unites the Caribbean archipelago to the American continent. Indeed, Glissant explores the Latin American connection Normil G. Sylvain, the editor of *La Revue Indigène*, longed for in the inaugurating issue's "Chronique – Programme." In particular, I show that Zañartu and Matta each facilitate or illustrate a part of Glissant's thinking that appears elsewhere in his works, namely in the previously mentioned 1981 novel *La Case du commandeur* (where Aa appears) and in the ensemble of philosophical essays that is 1990's *Poétique de la relation*. The Caribbean theorist's inclusion and meditation on the commonalities and points of divergence between his native Martinique and Chile are unexpected and had – until today – remained unnoticed.

I propose that the section of the *Discours* awarded to Enrique Zañartu provides information that deepens our understanding of Amerindian presence and their silent revolt in Glissant's works. Indeed, he writes that the extinction of indigenous peoples constitutes the divergence between regions of the New World, namely the multiform Caribbean and mainland Latin American countries.[147] Despite the lack of Amerindian heritage in the Caribbean, writes Glissant, there is a continuity from the archipelago to countries in the American continent. Glissant itemizes the points of socio-political intersection for countries forged in the Americas. He names foodstuffs and plants that evoke the plantation system, syncretic religions, and failed governments (390-1). Finally, he links Caribbean cultures with those in Latin America via language. There are certainly different languages (French, Spanish, English, creole languages, etc.) but he brings out

[147] "L'extermination des Caraïbes fait la différence entre les Antilles et l'Amérique du Sud." (390)

the multilingual aspect of these places. This linguistic diversity, rather than impeding communication, becomes a plurality that translates and respects each other. In particular, Glissant perceives a shared threat. The devastation of the autochthonous peoples' cultural and historical heritage announces the ruin of the newly arrived African peoples. Indeed, victims of the slave trade will only have historical, cultural, and linguistic traces. Groups indigenous to the Caribbean will face near total extinction. I proffer that this Amerindian absence in the Caribbean becomes an obsession that arises subtlety but steadily in Glissant's writings. The disappearance of Amerindian groups in Martinique causes Glissant to explore their omnipresent absence and the reverberation of the muteness with which he endows their spectral presence.

The section on Chile on *Caribbean Discourse* demonstrates Glissant's conceptualization of the subject indigenous to the American continent (389-93). In the descriptions of Amerindian peoples – even those of the American continents – they manifest as "peuple silencieux" (a silent people) (390). Glissant anthropomorphizes the Andean landscape portrayed by Zañartu, for it appears to have volition. The Andean mountains enjoy a multiple presence. The presence "se multiplie" and "se divise" by itself (389). One wonders what comprises this absence, as his references remain poetic and not fully developed. Is it the absence of those who were part of the fraternity of native communities that disintegrated into the culture of the colonizers? Glissant writes that Zañartu treats the "entre-coupure de mondes" (inter or intra-cuts) (389). It is from this space, conveys Glissant, that Chile "nous crie." He describes a liminal cry. One finds "un autre sens" here – referring to the charge of Zañartu's lines. The Caribbean thinker gives us a glimpse of his interest in the space that separates two worlds:

> (L'Autre Amérique nous prend. Nous voici tenus de connaître ce dont nous avons été si longtemps coupés: l'énorme échevèlement de morts où s'achemine l'espoir têtu des peuples d'alentour.) (389)

In the above citation, Glissant states the shutoff of Martinicans (and, by extension Caribbeans, in general) from Latin America. He points to distance and detachment between the insular and continental regions but ultimately recognizes the attraction of "l'Autre Amérique." He is captivated by the need to "connaître ce dont nous avons été si longtemps coupés." This language of cuts and interruptions continues throughout the part regarding Chile in the *Discours*: "Je me rappelle (d'ici, de ce pays d'île envolcanné de mer) les ombres tranchées à flanc de nuit, les esquisses décharnées d'humanité, les floraisons fêlées qui trament depuis toujours les toiles de Zañartu" (389). The reader finds herself in the linguistic domain of interruption. The "ombres" (shadows) – already a reflection and not the entire shape – are further "tranchées" (sheared, cut). Furthermore, the "ombres tranchées" are cut "à flanc de nuit," meaning in a limited space under the anonymity of night (a *lack* of sunlight). The descriptions of humans are also telling. Instead of giving a humanoid description, Glissant describes what appear to be human beings as "esquisses," meaning incomplete drawings. These incomplete figures lack flesh and humanity reminiscent of Las Casas and du Tertre's writings where Amerindian textual presence materializes only to be described mid-dismemberment. Even "les floraisons," the only incidence of growth and expansion, are lacking. They lack fullness or reason. Glissant returns to Zañartu's paintings then links his memories, images that evoke South America's landscapes, and Zañartu's images. He goes from the region's reality to the representation of the poetic and ultimately to the visually artistic.

But the image Glissant describes becomes vague, for it overlaps with the Martinican context. What is the memory of a "pays d'île envolcanné de mer" he claims to remember? The reader perceives ambiguity within the text. The image evokes both the volcanoes that compose the Caribbean archipelago and Andean cordillera. The referent, too, becomes fragmented. The presence/absence of Amerindian peoples, Zañartu's paintings, and the referent have the same consistency: all is cut, nothing appears whole, all one finds is suspended: "Peut-être *un devenir sans cesse* remis; mais un désespoir sans cesse contesté. Ce que, de cette Amérique, l'actualité maintenant nous jette au cœur, et ravive" (389, my emphasis). Even becoming and desperation are part of a continued and quasi cyclical movement. The semantic value of the verb "devenir" (becoming) denotes "l'étant" (being) that Glissant exposes in *Poétique de la relation*: the hazy and mobile state that does not arrive at the fixed, immutable, and complete "l'être." (being). The "désespoir" (despair) goes on as continual contest. If this is desperation – or crisis – on the part of the fragment, one can wonder how it matches up with the anti-totality of Glissantian theories, for it appears to rue fragmentation. This phenomenon echoes Glissant's movement theory concerning the rhizome. Is this because fragmentation is equivalent to "comprendre" (understanding) in the sense of "prendre avec" (take in)? Is it due to a lack of completeness? There appears to be a tension in his theory of Relation, especially concerning the right to Opacity and fragmentation (concepts to which I'll return when discussing Matta). Other concepts in Glissantian thought harmonize well with the manifestations of dismemberment. The rhizome, for example, parallels with the omnipresent absence that overruns imaginary space in taking a thousand different

directions. In the same manner, in the Caribbean, Amerindian presence is everywhere and nowhere.

Glissant, much like Danticat, Métellus, Roumain, and Petit le Brun, associates Amerindians with the landscape, namely the imposing, very present Chilean mountain range. According to Françoise Simasotchi-Bronès, the volcano – an image Glissant associates with autochthonous peoples – joins "l'essentiel de la poétique de l'air et du feu" (151). The volcano constitutes the union of "éléments actifs et mâles" that "relèvent de la même violence aveugle" (ibid.). Following the synecdoche where the volcano represents a group of people, one discerns a latent threat. Moreover, Simasotchi-Bronès writes that "Les figures spatiales sont chargées d'un contenu symbolique qui concentre un certain nombre de caractéristiques qui entreront, valablement, dans une possible définition de l'identité antillaise" (176). According to this argument, "figures spatiales" such as the volcano would produce one or different possible definitions. I would like to emphasize that Glissant never gives a fixed definition for Amerindian, be it in *La Case*, *Le Discours*, or elsewhere. Rather, there is a silent back and forth only transmitted in presence and absence, cry and silence. If one groups the volcano with the Quechua and the cliff with the vanished indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, violent unpredictability becomes lack of definition. There are neither references to the past nor allusions to the future. There appears to be only spasmodic vitality. Simasotchi-Bronès explains that characters from Caribbean writers "surgissent du paysage, et s'y dissolvent" (176). While I agree with this declaration, I would like to add the role of language. Glissant's works of fiction reveal the gravity of both the verbose and the taciturn. The negotiation of abilities

and inabilities to communicate – linguistically and otherwise – accentuates the multiple rapports at work in the colonial context.

Matta and the Philosophy of Being and Creation

An article in *Le Courrier de l'UNESCO* (of which Glissant served as rédacteur en chef from 1981 to 1988) hints at Glissant's understanding of Matta as a painter: "Matta peint à jamais un tremblement" (22). Glissant envisages Matta as a painter whose art encapsulates "les contractions de la pensée moderne" (ibid). That is, the shifts and movements that result in the destruction and reorganization of established systems and institutions. Glissant writes of Matta's "désintégration des vieux systèmes logiques" and yet he describes a technique that effectively serves as meta system : "Comment 'peindre', non des états d'âme mais bien le fonctionnement même de l'esprit et, plus avant, cet enjeu que serait un 'homme total', réconcilié avec toutes les formes d'humanité, se retrouvant en elles et s'y accomplissant ?" (22). Glissant's leading question exposes his perception of Matta as an artist who paints the mind's functioning. Glissant writes of an "homme total" in harmony with all shapes, forms, or figures of humanity. In this text, Glissant points to Matta's "mouvement" that both animates individual flights and consolidates our most shared roots.[148] Matta's technique encompasses the intimate and the shared via movement. Glissant's emphasis on Matta's movement is reminiscent of the concept of Glissant's own concept of "le jeu" where continual movement indicates a life force that ultimately connects one to another.

[148] "Ce que nous y reconnaissons, c'est le mouvement d'abord, qui anime nos envols les plus personnels et consolide nos enracinements les plus partagés" (22)

Glissant writes that "Matta ne peint pas de 'choses', il illumine des trajectoires" (22). Matta's "spectacle qu'on n'arrête pas" presents questions such as "mesurer ou même approcher l'immense bouillonnement de tant de cultures aujourd'hui réagissant les unes sur les autres ?" (22). I would like to focus on the origin and manner of Matta's would-be system. Glissant writes that, though Matta's painting is quite modern and explores humanity, it nonetheless comes from a place of ancient knowledge: "nous voyons certes qu'elle provient du vieux savoir andin" (22). Glissant grants primacy to a nebulous world cosmogony he describes only as "andin" – that is, localized or emanating from the Andean region – Matta's birthplace. This identification is unexpected because, though Matta was indeed born and raised in Santiago de Chile, his creations have been formed by and tied to European avant-gardes. He was a "junior member of André Breton's circle" (Spring 6) and remained associated to the Surrealists for the rest of his life (Spring 6). He spent much of his early adult and adult years in Paris, moved to New York at the behest of Marcel Duchamp and then moved back to Europe, living out his last days in Italy. As part of the intellectual scene in Paris, Matta did interact with members of the Latin American intelligentsia who also spent séjours in the French capital. It was not until a trip to Mexico in 1941 with American painter Robert Motherwell – once he was already living in New York – that Matta began to reconnect with his Latin American roots. In particular, he begins to paint large canvases after become acquainted with the *muralistas* (Spring 10). Matta also adopts a much brighter color palette. A second trip to Mexico in 1947 results in the production of "motifs totémiques" (Bergmen 15). It is surprising, then, that Glissant appears to acquaint the origins of Matta's artistic savoir-

faire and drive to Latin American roots ("nous voyons certes qu'elle [sa peinture] provident du vieux savoir andin" [22]).

Matta's work does not privilege Latin American themes, elements, or influences. Moreover, if Glissant associated Matta's work with the art he created post the Mexico trips that resulted in a rekindling of his Latin American identity, it is not evident that Mexico provides the same or similar context than that of the Andes. Yes, it can be said that Mexican and Chilean cultures both draw from imposing mountain ranges, the precariousness evoked by volcanoes, and the extreme opposition of deserts, but these parallels would still not arrive at Glissant's word choice of "andin" and especially his adamancy ("certes"). Glissant seems to equate Latin American countries based on an underlying component. The generalization implied by this equation presents a tension to any just understanding. Granted, Glissant opposes having a complete understanding of people on ethical grounds. As mentioned in the Introduction, understanding (comprendre) requires the gesture to take something within us (*com + prendre, prendre en soi*). This conflation of indigenous groups and their influence on contemporary, mixed societies, however, remains problematic. "Le Courrier du mois," Glissant's introduction to each *Le courier de l'Unesco* issue allays the brunt of the generalization. Glissant acknowledges the challenge ("un défi que nous avons risqué" [3]) in "[c]ontenir dans les limites de notre revue" the abundance of art in Latin America. He names, however, an "unité souterraine" as a phenomenon that structures artistic production in the region ("Nous l'avons fait, conscients de l'unité souterraine qui structure la créativité dans cette partie du monde" [3]). Glissant highlights the "racine amérindienne," notes "l'influence africaine" but identifies another dimension as "fondamentale" : "le mélange des cultures

et leur dynamisme renouvelé à partir d'un tel métissage" (3). He identifies not only a mélange of cultures but also their renewed dynamism. This "dynamisme renouvelé" communicates movement and continued entanglement. I maintain that the framing elements of Latin American art: : "l'unité souterraine" and their "dynamisme renouvelé à partir d'un tel métissage" are not the generalizations they appear but rather stem from a greater or, rather, more particular and nuanced conceptual understanding. Further, Glissant's philosophical theories of Relation and the Tout-Monde, I argue, find common ground with Matta's aesthetic explorations and intellectual repercussions. I'd like to go back to Glissant's "Pastels pour quatre artistes." In addition to Glissant's description of Matta's art as "andin" (a generalization we've explored) he describes the praxis of his artistic execution "à la manière d'un architecte réfléchissant à son œuvre" (22). Artists and art critics often note Matta's training as an architect and apprenticeship in Le Courbousier's Paris studio as an indelible influence on the creation and perception of his work. It is thus not surprising to find Glissant's reference. I put forward that reading some of Matta's texts divulges a similarity in thought. The content and language of his poem "L'Architêtre" reveal the similarity of the poem's content and terms to Glissant's own.

Matta's oft-noted linguistic flexibility, playfulness, and inventiveness appear throughout the poem. His verses push vectored, multiple meanings all at once. Matta gives the reader visual cues about man projecting a mythical version of himself ("Il s'y mythe") and is reinforced in the homophone : il s'imite. Matta's linguistic pirouettes extends across languages. A French speaker could hear (though not see) a garbled "je sais" but he might see "ojo ser" in Spanish: an eye being – a being who sees in

"L'OJOSER." Matta can also do the opposite and present the reader phonetically different elements that nonetheless come to form new meaning: " I am age" is followed by "I'mage." After all, Matta does declare that "Ouvrir les tiroir des mots / Les mots sont des explosant fixes le mot Moi / explosion en chaîne" (sic). Matta advocates opening the full semantic content of words. He conveys interconnections and thinking across the conceptual realm of any one language. In this sense, Matta applies the concepts that appear throughout the poem. The reader falls into a space where he or she can make any one connection. The poem transmits beginnings and endings that signal the birth of yet another phenomenon. "L'entrée est à la sortie," Matta writes. Matta seeks to unsettle language and the perimeters it imposes on the speaker/reader: "Éviter la vision absolu qu'isole qu'Isle – / Quand on isle on est seulement entouré du tout / J'isole, le Je entouré d'Eau – " (17). Matta recommends leaving behind absolutist and totalizing thinking that isolates us. Matta emphasizes the "pertinence d'une vision du monde qu'échappe à la / vision fatique du "tout être" vue en music-hall" (17 sic). I suggest that the "vision fatique" could enclose both adjectives "phatique" and "fatidique". The word "phatique" evokes J.L. Auster's "phatic acts" in which something is uttered in order to establish communication but which carries no real information for an interlocutor. The other possible variant to "fatique," "fatidique," indicates a telling of the inevitable that is yet to come. The painter-philosopher communicates the inexorable futility of language if limited and isolated. Ties, links, and new connections, however, do offer further life:

> Dans la vie sociale tout es passage :
>
> se représenter ce qui lie l'avant et l'après –

> Le temps dans la péridoe « PASSAGE » est tout autre
> que le temps solaire –
>
> La morphologie du « passage » est analogue au langage
> intérieur de la pensée –

A passage : movement, trajectory, or link tied to "l'avant ou l'après." Are we to interpret "l'avant ou l'après" as temporal or geographic markers, horizontally or vertically? The answer is perhaps "both" "and." Past and future are dissolved both/and become a unified thread. The time beheld by the "péridoe" – what I propose to be an amalgamation of the phonetic "péridot" and the visual "période" – encapsulate a quantification of time in the former and the product of prolonged (timed) physical pressure on natural elements in the latter. This conflation of time and space, in addition to having analogous organization to "[l']intérieur de la pensée," turns out to be like "le temps solaire." The sun, as supreme element by which we mark time (i.e. days and years) and distance (i.e. lightyears), sets the rhythm and example for human though. Matta's "L'architêtre" traces universal yet non-totalizing thought processes.

In bestowing Matta with the descriptor of architect, Glissant points to Matta's measured rationale for non-rigid, organic, and potentially rhizomatic thinking. Let us revisit Glissant's section on Matta in "Pastels pour quatre artistes":

> C'est que l'artiste veut toujours savoir et montrer "comment ça marche.
> Non pas seulement, à la manière d'un architecte réfléchissant à son œuvre,
> comment c'est construit, mais bien comment ça fonctionne. Savons-nous
> par exemple mesurer ou même approcher l'immense bouillonnement de

> tant de cultures aujourd'hui réagissant les unes sur les autres ? Nous ne disposons en la matière ni d'un abécédaire ni d'un lexique. Faudra-t-il renoncer à lire dans le livre de nos devenirs ? La peinture de Matta pose de telles questions, et c'est là un spectacle *qu'on n'arrête pas*. (Glissant emphasizes, 22)

As I have shown with my reading of Matta's "L'architêtre," the painter-poet-philosopher describes his theories and how they would work all while exemplifying the process. In this sense, in his paintings "pose[nt] de telles questions," he attempts to provide answers in the few texts he left behind.

Glissant's interest in Matta's philosophy is further evidenced by his inclusion of Matta's "Homme de terre" – a blurb from 1992 exhibition catalogue titled *Comme elle est vierge ma forêt* in his "anthologie de la poésie tu Tout-Monde" *La terre le feu l'eau et les vents* (2010). The title of Matta's text – "Homme de terre" – displays his playful linguistic ingenuity: homme de terre evokes "pomme de terre" - a product of the earth (and another emblematic staple from the American continent). It also recalls origins, growing, and production. The text, however, develops (albeit poetically) the concepts laid forth in "L'architêtre." Matta explains "[l']e fruit du cerveau" that is the unidentified mental energy that animates us (105). He describes this energy as "des courants qui se bombardent avec des images à des vitesses non graphiques." He reports non tangible currents that meet and cross, creating "un bouillonnement invraisemblable d'énergies." The "temps solaire" he mentions in " L'architêtre" appears against as an apt example of the currents of energy or thought: "On appelle colère, volonté, mais je vois une image qui ressemble plus à l'énergie du soleil. Le soleil, c'est une pelote d'énergie qui se

reconstitue en explosant, qui se retourne sur elle-même, se 'réorganime' constamment" (105). The sun, like the energy currents that make up our thoughts, run, collide, and are born renewed. His neologism "réorganimation" – also present in the poem – communicates what is renewed organic animation. This cluster of information remains cluster, for language is restrictive. In addition to the limits of language, the language being pushed itself takes us to a new frontier:

> Ce noyau, on ne peut l'appeler que soleil, faute d'autre mot, mais on pourrait le baptiser seuil. C'est le principe de *L'entrée est à la sortie*, un foyer énergétique comparable au système solaire, parce que nous avons en nous d'autres noyaux qui tentent de se détacher, mais sont retenus par les lois de la gravitation autour du Moi, du Je. L'unique de chacun, l'énergie humaine est un système en expansion dans un univers, comme un cosmos. (105)

Noyau, seuil, foyer –these words hint at fostering and the beginning of something else. "L'entrée est à la sortie" Matta writes again. Is the end of a person the beginning of understanding another? After all, he tells us that "l'énergie humaine est une système en expansion de l'univers, comme un cosmos."

Glissant's words, who passed away in early February 2011, appear as part of an exhibition on Chilean painters Matta, Zañartu, as well as Eugénio Téllez later that year at the Maison de l'Amérique latine in Paris. Glissant's presentation piece on Matta, entitled "Matta de loin" (from afar, de lejos) and taken from *La Cohée du Lamentin* (2005), reinforces his meditation on Matta's works in the *Discours*. In the exhibition piece, Glissant writes of roots, origins, and the need to uproot the humanities, for they cannot

contain what the cordillera encompasses, accompanies, guards, and represents ("incessant acharnement de racines" [11]). Glissant perceives a multiplicity that evokes and parallels his own aforementioned theories of Relation and Opacity. Relation (la Relation) is an ethical positioning that allows us to conceive an idea of someone or something without englobing and consequently absorbing it, be it accidentally or purposefully. Entering la Relation respects the right to Opacity, that is, the right to *not* be transparent and neatly defined with clear labels and limitations. Glissant suggests that Matta's paintings illustrate a phenomenon he perceives as exemplarily Caribbean: a confluence of Amerindian, European, African and later Eastern origins, historical amnesia, questions of personal and collective ontologies, and national identity. Matta's figures come together rather than collide. The Caribbean's foremost illustrative painting, Cuban Wifredo Lam's "The Jungle" (1943) is also referenced in the Chilean section of the *Discours* and yet Zañartu and the famously philosophical and linguistically-playful Matta constitute Glissant's approximation of the Caribbean to the continent.

Insularity and *La Terre magnétique*

The inclusion of a section that evokes a South American country ("Chili") and, by extension, Latin America in a text devoted to the Caribbean is unexpected and seemingly disparate (it is, after all, *Le Discours antillais*). I propose that Glissant's 2007 text *La Terre magnétique: Les errances de Rapa Nui, l'île de Pâques* gives insight into the writer's conceptual links between the Caribbean and the Southern Cone. *La Terre magnétique* is a travel narrative that presents its own petroglyph-like issues of authorship and witnessing but not unlike other modalities we have seen throughout this project. Glissant's wife Sylvie traveled to Easter Island or Rapa Nui. He writes that she made

careful notes, recorded oral impressions, and drew many sites (9). Her first-person account supplied the material for Glissant's narrative. *La Terre magnétique* gives clues so as to the reason he connects mainland Latin America to the Caribbean. The text also opens up a new possibility of study by linking islands throughout the world, in the case of Rapa Nui the Pacific Ocean.

Glissant writes that the concept of an island is a privileged place where its isolation allows it to become a point of confluence for peoples and elements. For him, Rapa Nui is not only "l'aboutissement de toutes ces allures" but also "les reposoirs de la fin du chemin" (17, 11). The island, in its open format, appears as the realization of cultural crossroads. This confluence, in turn, finds a resting place that allows it to become its own culture. The island transpires as the actualization of diverse peoples. Rather than alluding to a diversity that would come to be from a history of conquests, colonization, slavery, and migrations, the diversity of the island is one that appears organic. Rapa Nui rests in the middle point between the South American continent and Asia. In fact, the island's extreme geographic isolation ("3,200 km west of the Chilean coast and 2,000 km east of its nearest inhabited Polynesian neighbour lies Easter Island, or Rapanui, the world's most isolated inhabited island" [Fischer, v]) parallels and expands to human isolation. The island's linguistic profile reveals a long period of insulation or incubation.[149] It is surprising, then, to read Glissant's description of Rapa Nui as both "aboutissement" and "reposoirs." Glissant, who had formation at the Musée de l'homme

[149] "Rapanui's subsequent period of isolation (until 1722) evidences in its linguistic profile neither a "non-Polynesian substrate" nor a "second Polynesian wave of settlers." Easter Island may actually represent the greatest example of isolation, both geographically and temporally, known to humankind." (Fischer, 359)

– an institution that houses several artifacts pertaining to the Rongorongo (a series of engraved artifacts of the Rapanui) – may have had knowledge of this marked isolation.

Glissant voices links between geography, navigation, and corporality in at least two ways. First, he describes the island itself as an "île-corps" whose fragile skin is made up of the earth and rocks that cover it ("Ils blessent la terre et la roche, fine et fragile, qui est la peau de l'île" [26]). The island also holds the center of the earth. In keeping tradition with Rapa Nui folklore, Glissant calls the island at times a definitive navel of the world ("le nombril du monde" [17]) and yet others one of various in the world ("un des nombrils du monde" [71]). His use of "ombilic" (umbilicus), however, fuses origin, central points, nourishing, as well as open surfaces on both mineral materials and certain fruits. The navel of the world, a physical object and space on the island materialized as a rock, beholds magnetism:

> Les planètes tournent autour de l'astre primordial, emportées dans son champ d'attraction. Napo dit que tant de gens viennent de partout poser les mains sur la pierre, l'ombilic du monde, sorte de contact et de liaison avec tous les lieux connus et inconnus. La pierre devient souffle et, pour certains, elle entre en eux à jamais. (81)

The navel's reunion of peoples and marine and telluric materials coalesce and pull. The rock's magnetism attracts tourists, explorers, and academics. It beholds all places – those we know, those we do not. Touching the rock kindles a nourishing connection.

Glissant draws a parallel between the island and its first inhabitants' bodies. The figures drawn on the island's rocks – on it skin, as would be tattoos – appear as "des corps marqués de routes" (17). The bodies inscribed on the island's skin are themselves

marked, as an engraved *mise en abyme*. This reflecting mirror reinforces the concept of an in sync humanity and island. These sketches of humans carry marks of navigation on their bodies at the same time as the bodies themselves "ressemblent à des bateaux" (17). Humanity and the natural world share the vulnerability of travel, as they both carry marks of the physical and cultural crossroads that is ancestral travel.

The ambiguity of the "signes mystérieux" appear to evoke the impossibility of knowing or even grasping the history of the Caribbean. He writes that these signs "ressemblent nos quêtes et nos entassements" (19).[150] The Rongo rongo "ou écriture ou panthéon" lingers as inaccessible Rapa Nui knowledge (104). Rongo rongo is the name used to describe "Oceania's only indigenous script predating the twentieth century" (Fischer, vi). Joseph-Eugène Eyrand, the first known non-Rapanui resident of Easter Island is also the first to have mentioned on record the existence of the Rongo rongo (Fischer 11). The script has been found on wooden tablets. The first of these to be "discovered" and retained is the "Echancrée" (RR3) tablet presented to Bishop Tepano Jaussen of Tahiti in 1869 (Fischer, 14). The script has been mired in controversy since its

[150] In discussing the importance of historical records, Petit le Brun tells the reader that "[c]es textes sont très importants car les Amérindiens *n'ont pas laissé de trace écrite de leur histoire*" (my emphasis). He writes Amerindians left no written trace but does warn about the "reporters" notes, who experienced the native Caribbean world through "le filtre de leur religion chrétienne" and thus left "des interpretations très approximatives, voire fausses" (6). Petit le Brun warns careful reading and doubting historical records all while asserting their importance. The author mentions a form of writing in the sub-section "L'habillement et les parures." He writes that indigenous groups wrote on their bodies ("dessiner sur leur corps") in order to mark special occasions: "Le corps s'ornait de parures par choix esthétiques et par codification : le temps des initiations, des fêtes, du deuil, de la guerre rendait *le corps lisible au regard de l'autre*" (10, my emphasis). The synthesis of writing and the culture's aesthetic allowed the community to read the other. I propose that Petit le Brun's association of corporeal writing and the question of cultural remains reflects not only the author's didactic project but also a larger project of visibilization and understanding, both individually and a community.

discovery. Over the years, researchers have argued for the influence of early settlers, conquerors, a relationship between the script and Andean scripts. The refusal on the part of a demographic of Rongo rongo specialists to acknowledge or consider the script as the production of the islands' inhabitants' cultural and geographic isolation notwithstanding, parallels the lack of voice conceded to indigenous populations in the Caribbean. Glissant's description of the Rongo rongo admits incertitude: "ou écriture ou panthéon." His openness admits the indeterminate status of the script as a means of communication or the possibility of beholding a metaphysical component to its creators.

The engraved information on the island's skin – petroglyphs – are enigmatic and nevertheless prevails and commands "une adhésion secrète" that envelops not only its descendants but also those who are magnetized from afar (68). This is an aspect of the "écriture perdue"'s ambiguity that reaches Glissant's philosophical theories. He heads toward his theory of Relation:

> Une de ces figures des Rongo Rongo, ces pales de bois gravées dont on ne sait si elles résument une écriture ou si elles recueillent un exemplaire d'esthétique, se retrouve sous des allures plus humanoïdes dans les pétroglyphes de Toro Muerto, aux environs d'Arequipa, au Pérou, la même forme qui se profile dans les créations emblématiques des pays dogon, et s'est stylisée sur les couvertures des éditions *Présence africaine*, la même qui s'éparpille et se rassemble dans les figurations de la diaspora africaine, en Haïti par exemple, dans les vèvès tracés à la farine devant les temples et les autels vodous, la même encore qui paraît de temps en temps dans le scripturaire maya ou aztèque. Que veut cette forme ? Est-ce là un

> de ces universaux dont les catégories ont été inventées pour nous faire accepter *les dissemblances dans le même*, les différences dans le semblable ? Une femme qui prie, un homme qui lamente, un enfant qui s'étonne, les bras levés. ... (68-9)

Glissant points out the resemblance between the figures that appear in writings in various points of the world. He moves from the specificity of the Rongo Rongo to their repetition within the island in nearby Toro Muerto. He writes that these figures are not only found in relatively nearby Peru but signals the images used by publishing house *Présence africaine* and their focus on African productions. He implicates the diaspora and gives Haiti as an example of current use. Finally, he suggests a resemblance between these figures and those of Mayan or Aztec origin. Specialists have refuted the encounter or influence of any culture beyond Polynesia. Though some have entertained the idea of a Rapa Nui in contact with Latin America (namely the region that is now Peru), those whose research involves natural elements such as rock and plants within societies have concluded against any substantial ties between the Pacific island and the American mainland. Reminiscent of Jacques Roumain's ethnobotanical text and its role in effectively tying "natif-natal" Haitians into the thread of Hispaniola's natural history, Rapa Nui specialists have been able to untie any knots definitely landing Rapa Nui culture to that of Amerindian groups. Maize, "that American staple" is absent from the island as is the production of pottery and, as archeologist William Mulloy once conveyed: "Real American Indians would have done a far better job of working obsidian. The [Rapanui] mata'a were obviously made by people who had no tradition of flaked took manufacture" (E. Mulloy, 1993: ix)" (Fischer 640).

Though usually wary of universals, Glissant wonders about the possibility of a self-same base that manifests itself in a paroxistic manner. This idea appears later in the text, when Glissant casually refers to "rhizomes des pétroglyphes," alluding to independent, isolated burgeoning (81). The universals Glissant concedes permit pillar concepts across cultures: "Une femme qui prie, un homme qui lamente, un enfant qui s'étonne, les bras levés [...]" (69). These conceptual universals would agree with cultural particulars and do not pose the threat of absorption or reduction. Categorical limitations, rather than bringing together a uniform phenomenon, work towards finding "*les dissemblances dans le même*" (69, Glissant's emphasis).

Literary and cultural critic Ottmar Ette, in "Worldwide: Living in Transarchipelagic Worlds," includes Glissant and his meditation on Easter Island's navel-of-the-world status into his theory of "TransArea." With this theory, Ette purports to offer the ability to bypass all traditionally fixed categories and find alternative groupings that accurately describe historical and cultural phenomena. Ette suggests that Glissant's attention to Easter Island stems from his philosophical archipelagic thought. Though it is true that Glissant's *pensée de l'archipel* seeks to emancipate peoples from restricting categories, I propose that his interest in the Rapa Nui forms part of a much more complex network of concepts that surround his philosophical concepts and ethical ideals including but not limited to Relation and Opacity: "Le monde était déjà là, dans Rapa Nui, par la grâce et le sacré de *ces formes*. Aujourd'hui, les mondes connus roulent avec la plus tranquillité, par la Relation et par le mélange, à travers la terre magnétique" (69, my emphasis). So-called world, foreign cultures seem to originate from or pass through the inscriptions found on the island. Relation can allow one to reach out and connect but

there appears to be a much more charged and distinct relationship that can be tied back to the writing and to particular peoples: those whose writing system evoke something in Glissant. Though this quality may seem overly vague, his references to opacity (though not necessarily the Opacity that forms part of his philosophical repertoire) do point to a much more distinct reference and to a series of connections.

First, the land and the connection to a specific place: "Leurs paroles *se confondirent dans la masse* autour d'eux, *dans les épais de feuilles et de branches* où pas une épine ne poussait, *elles se fondirent dans le noir et l'opacité*, de sorte *qu'il n'en resta aucun souvenir* dans les chroniques des tribus" (32, my emphasis). When discussing the disappearing Rapanui language, Glissant writes that it has left the people's mouths only to become part of the landscape. Words have merged with the physical world. The island, in its bare and dreary state, has become embellished via linguistic incorporation. Glissant links language and memory and shows us an inverse phenomenon where words adorn the arid landscape and the community loses memory for lack of language. Memory has become localized and locked away. Pierre Nora's "lieux de mémoire" conjecture becomes entangled in the people's tongue. Second, the concentrated force of the island – la terre magnétique – pulls and yet does not overpower:

> Il avait fallu atteindre la quasi-perfection de la désintégration la plus poussée pour assister enfin à modification appréciable, et celle-ci imprévisible, et donc imprédictible : la transformation de cet absolu très opaque des profondeurs en une résolution tranquille et banale des accordailles les plus imaginables, des métissages les plus communs, de tous les mélanges à portée, mais il n'est pas vrai que ces mélanges aient

> dénaturé la force première, celle-ci visait à partage et sens commun, la force magnétique de la terre est pour protéger ceux qui viennent et mettent ensemble, sans que l'absolu soit absolument perdu, sans qu'aussi l'eau d'en dessous soit tarie ni souillée, sans que les perdus et les défaits soient marqués par leur défaite, ils étaient au contraire désignés pour une nouvelle errance et une soudaine union avec les diversités du monde, vous reprenez là votre souffle, ils s'étaient mariés partout, d'au près et d'au loin. (60-1)

The force that attracts towards Rapa Nui is powerful and supple and open to alterations. Its "force première" is a non-absolutist absolute that incorporates and allows to be infiltrated without losing its quality. Moreover, the island's magnetism protects that which now partakes of its force, as if the island's essence acted as an intensifier that adds and protects without diluting or changing the other's substance. As with Aa's suicidal Amerindians in the Caribbean, Glissant associates rapanui culture and language with a series of antitheses: people and pictures are interchangeable (35), the island is both "visible et invisible" (61), there is both "l'absence et l'éternité" (96), and "les moaï dessinent le clair obscur de l'île" (97).

Rapa Nui's gardens emerge when least expected. Their sudden but latent appearance evokes the spectral nature of petroglyphs. Glissant describes the garden that hides in plain sight at the edge of Rapa Nui's caves, in the form of open pits:

> Des jardins. Visibles dans les parties des cavernes qui sont à plein ciel, comme dans un puits ouvert. Peut-être obéissent-ils au même principe qui a permis la survie des jardins créoles : le mélange des espèces qui se

> protègent mutuellement, ici les avocatiers se mêlent aux maïs aux patates douces aux bananiers. Ils communiquent aussi entre eux par les fissures de la roche où circule l'eau de pluie. Les lieux de l'île sont reliés par un réseau souterrain de canaux creusés par la lave, où passe l'énergie qui emporte avec elle les rêves des hommes et des femmes. C'est leur espace réel, ils vivent et revivent dans la roche. Parfois on sent les vapeurs transparentes soulever cette roche et lui rendre sa respiration. (*La terre,* 41)

He surmises that the same principles of admixture and symbiosis that reigns over "jardins creoles" (discussed in Chapter 2) in the Caribbean appear on the tiny Pacific island. Individual elements of flora communicate across and through minerals (i.e. in rocks, via water, and on canals forged by the passing of lava). As we saw in Chapter 2, a "jardin créole" reunites motley elements into a symbiotic microcosm. Some plants facilitate propitious conditions to others' thriving. Ten years earlier, Glissant's *Traité du Tout-Monde* (1997) affirms that islands, too, complement and protect each other: "Il entre en archipel. On ne cultive pas ce jardin-là, l'écart n'est pas retirement. Le jardin créole est une acharnée qui prend soin d'elle-même et où les espèces se protègent l'une l'autre, comme des îles qui vont par bandes" (234). The jardin créole's directive to not only survive but also thrive and its *modus operandi* of interspecies collaboration and mutual protection is projected towards insular interrelationships. Though the continental Americas separate the Caribbean and Pacific oceans, Glissant already alludes to a bond beyond the geographic or historical. Indeed, "il entre en archipel." Ette writes about insular bonds thus :

> … L'océan Pacifique, la Caraïbe sont des mers depuis toujours archipéliques. Les continents, ces masses d'intolérance raidement tournées vers une Vérité, à mesure qu'ils se regroupent en entités ou qu'ils confédèrent en marchés communs, s'archipélisent aussi en régions. Les régions du monde deviennent des îles, des isthmes, des presqu'îles, des avancées, terres de mélange et de passage, et qui pourtant demeurent. (181)

Glissant binds the Pacific and Caribbean seas in that they have always been archipelagic. Continents and other tracts of land, too, become archipelagic regions that find themselves attached by means other than physical attachment. In so doing, these detached yet connected regions become conceptual islands, isthmus, peninsulas, and overhangs. In pointing out that these regions become "terres de mélange et de passage, et qui pourtant demeurent," Glissant designates places that can blend in but not be absorbed as well as pass through and leave a trace. An image Glissant imparts when discussing Martinique provides an illustration for the concept of archipelization he undertakes throughout the writings that make up *Traité du Tout-monde*. Glissant writes that the advantage of an island is the ability to go around the area of land and an even more precious advantage are the conditions of possibility for unending repetition ("L'avantage d'une île est qu'on peut en faire le tour, mais un avantage encore plus précieux est que ce tour est infinissable" [231]). The aversion to a permanently fixed/static state comes across in this declaration and consequently affirmed. Glissant writes that "Toute pensée archipélique est pensée du tremblement, de la non-présomption, mais aussi de l'ouverture et du partage" (231). Glissant's key word or concepts for explaining the quality of malleability

inherent to the "pensée archipélagique" all underline the anti-static as point of origin: tremors, no *a priori* assumptions, openings, and sharing. Vulnerability, attainability, breaking things open, and non-monopolization interrelate and stress adaptability and openness. Isolation is one of the commonalities between Easter Island and Caribbean islands. In fact, Glissant mentions the destiny of archipelagic lands ("destinée des terres archipéliques" [49]). Glissant suggests both fragility and ruggedness. The fragility comes in its idleness, in the violent changes these lands undergo insofar as they are "sur les crêtes et les rencontres des plaques tectoniques" (103). The precarious geographical positions of shifting tectonic plaques overtake the existing topography and forge new spaces.

Chilean painters Zañartu and Matta communicate compulsions that the Martinican Glissant perceives as unifying of the diverse but similar countries of the Caribbean. *Le Discours antillais* reveals the continuation of his thought regarding autochthonous peoples of the Americas. Aa's acting muteness in *La Case du commandeur*, for example, showed us the magnitude of the silent gesture. His complicity with the Amerindian people and his respect towards them reveals a place in Glissant's imaginary. Their mythical and near mystical role signals urgency. Like the bodies of those tortured and Aa's disseminated *parole*, the presence of the Andes multiplies as it does in the painters' works. Images of fire and cuts present in *La Case du commandeur* propagate in *Le Discours.* For Glissant, the difference between the Caribbean and mainland Latin America consists in the gaping absence of Amerindian groups. This absence, though

subtle and airy, is introduced in his theoretical and novelistic writings. As I have shown, the language he utilizes in *Le Discours* gives away an antithetical conceptualization of the omnipresent absence of Amerindian communities. This phenomenon appears in two forms: multiplicity and fragmentation. These manifestations appear to unite in the fragmentation of the landscape, both insular and continental. As such, Glissant privileges Chile within the layered, obfuscated history of the Caribbean.

His writings on aesthetics and history reveal the resonance of Amerindian presence and absence in his philosophical works. As we have seen, discussing Matta's work entails a discussion of the philosophy of creation and creolization, where an iteration of space and creation begets another. Texts like *La Terre magnétique* introduce the question of insularity into an examination of what it means to be the first and only peoples in such an isolated space. Indigeneity in a vacuum, writing, corporeality, and jardins créoles become new concepts through Glissant's perspective. Caribbean indigeneity, much like the history of the region, is a refracted concept that merits our continued study.

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