The F/Utility of Care: Haitian Literature and the Practice of Mourning

By

Nathan H. Dize

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

French

Nashville, Tennessee

Paul B. Miller, Ph.D.

Candice Amich, Ph.D.

Colin Dayan, Ph.D.

Raisa Rexer, Ph.D.

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Ph.D.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Lora J. Bolyard and to the loving memory of Elmer C. Dize & Geraldine S. Dize. You created worlds that allowed all of us to dream.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My educational experience began at home as the middle child of three with my mother homeschooling us by day, and my father teaching us on our evening walks in the park as we splashed through puddles of rainwater. Though divorce cut our homeschooling experiment short, learning with my parents caused me to think of each and every subsequent school I attended as a version of home. At this point in my educational career I have spent thirteen years in the university, more time than I spent formally learning in my parent's house and the public schools of Baltimore City. But as my first moments of education taught me, I never really left home.

Just as a home would be incomplete without the people who help make it one in the first place, an education would not be complete without the teachers, mentors, colleagues, friends, and family that help you grow into and through education. I will never be able to fully account for all the lessons that my teachers have taught me, but I would like to thank Kristina Berdan, Sinclair Clunas, Matthew Damseaux, Isabelle d'Abadie de Lurbe, Peter Hirsh, Monica Jefferson, Mark Miazga, Sophia Rudisill, and Lena Tashjian for watching over me and creating the space for me to study French and literature before I even knew that was what I wanted to do. The space you provided helped me grow into the person I am today.

Any home also needs a roof over its head. In schools, these are the buildings that house our classrooms, libraries, and offices—the places where learning happens. At the University of Maryland and Vanderbilt University, I spent most of my time in only a handful of buildings, but these were the places where I studied with and learned from caring and passionate professors and colleagues. In College Park, I owe a debt of gratitude to Professors Sarah Benharrech, Merle Collins, Caroline Eades, Andrea Frisch, Valerie Orlando, Ivette Rodriguez-Santana, David Sartorius, and Daryle Williams, whose classes and offices I flocked to with every chance I could. You have taught me so much about being a person and a professional in three different languages. To my colleagues at the University of Maryland, Cybèle Arnaud, Charlee Redman Bezilla, Erica Cefalo, Khady Diene, CJ Gomolka, Cae Joseph-Masséna, Monica Ocasio, and Cécile Ruel, you modeled classrooms that I wanted to create and gracefully handed me the blueprints over time.

At Vanderbilt University, I could not have found my way in my coursework and my teaching without the guidance and mentorship of a host of people. First, I would like to thank

Laura Dossett for always having your door open and for lighting the way through the obscurity of bureaucracy. To Nathalie Debrauwere-Miller, Lynn Ramey, and Virginia Scott, I will always remember the sense of humor that you brought to the hallways of Furman Hall and to our seminars; your wit and laughter kept all of us going. I was fortunate to be part of one of the larger graduate cohorts in the history of the Department of French and Italian, and as someone who is accustomed to being part of a large group of siblings, this suited me perfectly. To Jake Abell, Cara Bailey, and Meghan McGinley, I couldn't have asked for a kinder group of friends to teach and learn with. To all of my students at UMD and Vanderbilt, thank you for your trust and for helping to build the classrooms that we've shared. To the librarians and ILL staff at the University of Maryland, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Florida, especially Yvonne Boyer, Kelsey Corlett-Rivera, Hélène Huet, Paul Losch, and Jim Toplon, thank you for always helping me secure one more article, purchase one more book, and access one more archive.

While some parts of learning how to be an academic can be quite solitary, others are social by nature. I could not have found my way into Haitian and Caribbean literary studies if not for the kindness of so many people who welcomed me into the field and offered me, quite literally, a seat at the table. Many thanks are in order to Marlene Daut, Carolyn Fick, Annette Joseph-Gabriel, Kaiama L. Glover, Mariana Past, Kate Ramsey, Mark Schuller, Alyssa Sepinwall, Gina Athena Ulysse and Vanessa K. Valdés for always being ready to respond to an email, pick up a phone, or offer me your time when I need it most. Mwen dwe remesye Nicolas Andre, Jacques Pierre ak Laura Wagner—you taught me how to walk in Haitian Creole and how to share that love and vision of linguistic equality with so many others. To my advisor, Paul B. Miller, before I was your student you gave me the best advice anyone has ever given me—go to France, teach, and learn, then come back and do the PhD—what I gained there is enough to last a lifetime. To Colin Dayan and Candice Amich, I will never forget the way you opened up your classrooms, offices, and homes to me to discuss and craft my ideas for this project from the very moment I arrived in Nashville. To Tracy Sharpley-Whiting and Raisa Rexer, thank you for your unwavering support.

In my life, I've always made homes outside of my parents' houses with wonderful groups of friends in and outside of the academic world. To my Baltimore family, Celia Neustadt, Adam Stokes, James Tagliaferro, and Zack Weiner, thanks for always reminding me of where my roots lie. In College Park, to Chris Lewis and Kelsey Corlett-Rivera, you've been there with me

through so much, this journey wouldn't have been possible without you. To my Nashville crew, Alex Allison, Anne-Sophie Dubosson, Danielle Dorvil, Daniel Genkins, Romain Gilibert, Bonnie and Gray Griffin, Adam Olson, and Willnide Lindor thanks as always for the game nights, the laughter, rock climbing outings, and all the coffee shop hangs. To my friends and intellectual co-conspirators, Jennifer Boum Make, Jocelyn Franklin, Peter Haffner, Siobhan Marie Meï, Erika Serrato, Corine Stofle, Lucy Swanson, and Charly Verstraet, I couldn't ask for a better group of people with whom to share this life of the mind. To Magali Chatelain, Florent Gonsalès, and Gary Lardaux, who made a year in Lyon unforgettable.

As a student of French, I always thought that French better explained my family structure better than my native language. In French, we speak of divorced and remarried families as *familles recomposées*—recomposed families—meaning that the family has been put back together, reconstituted, recomposed. My dissertation is dedicated to my grandparents—Lora J. Bolyard, Elmer C. and Geraldine Dize—who made their way to Baltimore City to look for life in an industrial age. I'm so thankful for the sacrifices you made to make all of our lives possible. To my parents B Dize, Cranston Dize and Helen Atkinson, thank you for continuing to teach me how to be in this world. To my brothers, Crannie, Marty, Sammy, Mischa, and Paulie, we've shared so much over the years, it only makes sense that we share, too, in these words of thanks. To my nephews and niece, Eamon, Alexei, Cady, and the ones on the way—I have so much love for you. To Bill and Sheridan McKenna, I'm so moved that you have made a space for me in your home and in your lives, thank you.

Finally, one person who has taught me so much about myself and the idea of home is Katie McKenna. We met at Vanderbilt in Nashville, and our home has traveled with us on our respective research trips and fellowships throughout Europe and North America. You taught me that home was about homemade pizza and a movie; that home is a cocktail and candles on the back porch or in the breezeway listening to the birds sing their evening chorus; that home is wherever we are. You completed your dissertation two years ago, and here I am done with mine. Through moves, job changes, and a pandemic, you have been the constant, you have kept me grounded so that I could finish this part of my educational journey. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Haitian Literature and the Practice of Mourning

Que valent toutes les littératures du monde face à un innocent qu'on assassine ?

- Frankétienne, *Chaophonie*

Writing has been the primary way I have tried to make sense of my losses, including deaths [...] Now that my father and mother and many people I love have died, I want to better understand death and offload my fear of it, and I believe reading and writing can help.

- Edwidge Danticat, *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story*

The F/Utility of Literature: Writing and Acts of Literary Care

In the face of senseless death, instead of merely pondering the value of literature, we might also ask: how can literature help? Though the quotes above emerge from entirely different contexts, the aftermath of a devastating earthquake on the one hand and the quiet passing of a parent in hospice care on the other, they both demonstrate a desire to reflect on the relationship between literature and death. They also gesture towards literature and its role in the process of grieving. When Frankétienne asks what good is literature at a time when innocent people are dying, he is not trying to be provocative, in an intellectual sense. He is openly acknowledging the limits of literature by reckoning with his own feelings of futility as a writer, and the inability of that writing to bring the innocent dead person back to life. At the same time, Frankétienne also makes a case for the importance of literature, especially the elegy, as a way of reflecting on the lives of the deceased. He presents himself as a person who is alive, someone who is able to fight for the deceased person's memory to mean something by posing such questions in the first place, thereby straddling the line between futility and utility. In this one sentence, the act of writing belies the futility that it posits in the first place.

For Edwidge Danticat, death has been a necessary component of the stories that she has told for decades. Writing about death and the dead has become one of the ways in which she copes with the loss of her loved ones. It is a process that she has cultivated over the course of her career, frequently having "to learn (or relearn) how one writes about deaths, so that [she] can write, or continue to write, about the deaths that have most impacted [her] life" (*The Art of Death* 7). With each passing, Danticat reminds us that her writing helps her to process loss. In this regard, writing about death has become a *useful ritual* for her, a way of caring for herself and her family. Just like writing, reading, too, has helped Danticat refine her craft as an artist and as an individual learning to cope. She explains, "the more specifically a death and its aftermath are described, the more moving they are to me. The more I get to know the dying person on the page, the more likely I am to grieve for that person" (50). Essentially, in order for a writer to move someone to grieve through literature, they must also, as readers, consume art that is capable of eliciting similar emotions.

Though Frankétienne proposes the notion of futility and utility that I take up in this dissertation, it is Danticat who most clearly articulates how this quandary can be repurposed through writing and reading as a way of caring for the dead as well as the living. The African American poet and essayist Hanif Abdurraqib defends the elegy as an important genre for writers of color because the writing "exists as half-memorial, half statement of existence. Something that says *you have taken so much from us, but we are still here*" (emphasis in original, Abdurraqib 283). In this way, writing about death can both be seen as "defending the dead" and as providing the writer with the sense of solace necessary for living in the presence of another's absence (Saunders 63-79). Perhaps expanding on Abdurraqib's understanding of the elegy, Danticat argues that "all art is in some way elegiac," because it is a way "of acknowledging that we are

alive, but [it is] also a way of leaving our imprints because we know that *we will die one day, and we hope that the work will outlive us"* (my emphasis, Handal and Danticat 123). If we take Danticat's assertions about writing death *as a mode of caring for the self* in conjunction with her ideas about the inherently elegiac function of art, we might think of writing about dead artists and writers as a means of preserving their imprints, giving their work yet another life through the writing of another. These "acts of literary care" attend to the needs of the living by providing the opportunity to grieve just as they carry on the life and work of the deceased by reproducing or repurposing their *imprints* for future generations to come.

As a literary maneuver, the sense of care that the elegy performs is recognizable within individual communities (Abdurraqib focuses on writers of color and queer writers) as a type of "currency," meaning that it has cachet and importance for those who belong (Abdurraqib 283). Though I will gesture towards ideas, literary concepts, theories, and ideas emanating from throughout the African diaspora, the body of literature and the types of "mourning stories" that I will examine in this dissertation are drawn from Haiti and its diaspora (Holloway 3-4). Following Danticat's lead, I aim to show how reading and writing as well as other acts of literary care like archiving, editing, publishing, and translating can help Haitians cope with the sense of futility that one might feel in the wake of a someone's passing — be they a loved one, a kindred spirit or a compatriot, or a renowned figure in Haitian history — and enable them to mourn their loss while creating something useful for others who may also be beset with similar feelings of grief.

Death and Mourning in the Haitian Literary Archive

After witnessing countless enslaved people and family members suffer and die under the yoke of slavery in Saint-Domingue, Evelyne Trouillot's female protagonist, Lisette, coldly acknowledges: "Pour un esclave, la mort fait partie du quotidien." In researching her novel *Rosalie l'Infâme* in the archives of colonial Haiti, Évelyne Trouillot was struck by her own desire, through the use of fiction, to avenge her characters, to speak on their behalf, and to affirm their humanity in the face of their subjection. To write with history and the archive can be a difficult and delicate affair, especially when the people whose lives are documented are recorded in a way that strips away their humanity. Arlette Farge reminds us that history, like the archive, "is first and foremost an encounter with death... [l'histoire est certainement d'abord une rencontre avec la mort]" and the intensity of this encounter is amplified when working with histories of slavery, forced labor, and incarceration (Farge 15). Not only must the writer decide how to reckon with the uneven distribution of power within these documents and histories, but they must also manage their own feelings so that they may productively dwell on the importance of what remains of the past for future generations. In many respects, this resembles Benjamin's notion of "historical materialism," which is "a creative process, animating history for future significations as well as alternate empathies" (Eng and Kazanjian 1). For Haitian writers, as for many writers in the African diaspora, these alternative empathies are forward-looking acts of mourning.

For stories based on the colonial archive, the encounter with death may feel like looking into a mass grave, an immense site of loss, where the remnants that constitute individual people are obscured and muddled together over time.[1] If, as Achille Mbembe claims, "the ultimate

[1] M. Nourbese Philip refers to the archive of slave captors and colonial law makers as a gravestone; it is through writing against this archive that the writer frees the dispossessed voices trapped therein. See, Saunders, Patricia.

expression of sovereignty resides […] in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die," then the process of retelling the stories of the dead, choosing when and how death occurs in fiction, must be seen as a political act akin to the assertion of sovereignty.[2] Reflecting upon her collection of poetry *Zong!* M. Nourbese Philip reframes the assertion of autonomy in terms of reclamation and mourning, where the writing about the dead is a way to honor the lives claimed by slavery. Philip claims that "by focusing on ourselves and what the experience of slavery has meant and can't mean, even just embracing all that, somehow helps to contain the experience so that we can benefit from the memory rather than being crushed by it" (Saunders 70). By embracing the potential or the lack thereof of the experience of slavery, Philip mobilizes a Derridian interpretation of mourning where the post-slavery writer "ontologizes remains, to make them present, in the first place by *identifying* the bodily remains and by localizing the dead" (Emphasis in original, Derrida 9). Freud initially suggested that successful mourning entails the exchange of one object for another, ostensibly replacing the subject of one's mourning with a new presence in their lives, albeit not without having undergone a period of melancholia.[3] However, as Judith Butler insists, the Freudian interpretation of mourning is admittedly shortsighted because it assumes that the "interchangeability of objects," the ability for one to supplant the other, leads to a feeling of hopelessness (*Precarious Lives* 21-22). Butler, Derrida, and Philip all agree that when it comes to the matter of mourning, hopefulness is not,

---

"Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M. NourbeSe Philip." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 12, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 63–79, doi:10.1215/-12-2-63. See also Hartman "Venus in Two Acts" where she describes the archive as "a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise on gonorrhea, a few lines about a whore's life, an asterisk in the grand narrative of history" ("Venus in Two Acts 2).

[2] For Mbembe, "necropolitics" is a re-formulation of the Foucauldian notion of biopower where, instead of relying on the equation of life and power as a political force, the voluntary control of one's ability to defy nature, defying death, becomes a politics in the Hegelian sense. Humans become subjects, riffing on Hegel's notion of the "becoming subject" through the "struggle and the work through which he or she confronts death" (Mbembe 14).

[3] See: Freud, Sigmund. *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*. Translated by Shaun Whiteside, Penguin UK, 2005.

and cannot be, the only outcome of mourning because forgetting is not the end goal. Derrida's understanding of mourning in *The Specter of Marx* reinforces Philip's assertion that it is best "to benefit from the memory [of the dead] rather than being crushed by it" since this work requires knowledge of where the dead are buried as well as an assurance that they will not be moved or defiled.

Studies of Haiti have long contemplated the effects of death on the processes of history particularly as chronicled in the colonial archive. Colin Dayan in *Haiti, History, and the Gods* articulates the notion of the "rituals of history" as a means of reckoning with the world created by death and the relation between the living and the dead. In order to map out the cultural imaginary of Haiti, Dayan argues that we must "summon many characters, bodied and disembodied" to retrieve representations of history and culture that challenge the outside world's idea of Haiti (*Haiti, History, and the Gods* xvi). That is to say, by analyzing the generative possibility of both the living as well as the dead, we are able to recover cultural and historical perspectives that run counter to fetishistic notions of Haitians. In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Michel-Rolph Trouillot illustrates the utility of the frame of death as a means of revealing the "unevenness of historical power" (*Silencing the Past* 56). Essentially, as Trouillot attempts to recover the story of the Haitian colonel Sans Souci by interrogating sources that share his name: the palace in Milot (Haiti), Potsdam (Germany), and through the life of his murderer, Henry Christophe. For Trouillot, the process of writing a new history of Sans Souci "required extra labor not so much in the production of new facts but in their transformation into a new narrative" (58). In constructing the "new narratives of Haitian history," Dayan and Trouillot

reveal that the endeavor requires extra labor, but also careful readings of sources produced under the auspices of colonialism.[4]

Writing about death is both a project concerned with recovering the traces of the dead as well as carrying out the "work of mourning" which ensures, or at least has for its ambition, to distinguish a permanent site for the memories of the dead. Michel Foucault demonstrates in *The Archeology of Knowledge* that to recover and mediate sources in an archive, the remnants of the dead, is a process best understood as archeological. However, unlike traditional archeology, as Vèvè A. Clark explains, archeologists of black memory must demonstrate a level of care for the recovered traces that seeks to go beyond simply collecting, describing, and cataloguing.[5] A Black archeology must acknowledge the contradictions inherent in any given object, provide voice to the voiceless an speak the unspeakable, to favor process and transformation over periodization and product, and to resurrect the past rather than to solely reconstruct it (Clark 16).[6] I argue that Haitian writers and artists are deeply invested in the process of archeology as an act of mourning. The ability to reframe the past is a step towards transforming "*institutions of memory*" from relics colonialism and imperialism into attempts to access cultural knowledge thought to be subsumed by "imperial debris" (Scott vii).[7] The idea of archeology as an act of mourning extends

[4] Trouillot is one of the main theorists with whom Gina Athena Ulysse engages establish her concept of "new narratives for Haiti" in her work *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post-Quake Chronicle* (2015).
[5] The notion of care here comes from a branch of African American and Black Studies scholarship focused on the process of mourning as well as the care for the dead in intimate and industrial contexts. See, Holloway, Karla F. C. *Passed on: African American Mourning Stories*: A Memorial. Duke University Press, 2003. Also, extremely relevant in the context of care work, particularly in relation to the function of the academic and critic dealing with the dead and mourning is Christina Sharpe's idea of "wake work," see, Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press Books, 2016.
[6] Following the example set forth by Michel Foucault during the recent "archival turn" in historical and cultural studies, scholars have demonstrated how the archive needs not only to be acquainted with the knowledge of the past, but also to actively participate in its mobilization as an "institution of memory" or an "idiom of memory" (Scott vii).
[7] Laura Ann Stoler helps to situate the idea of archives as a form of ruins, building off of Walter Benjamin's Arcades project, where the physical manifestations of imperialism, its ruins, actively participate in the ongoing process of ruination in postcolonial societies. See, Stoler, Ann Laura, editor. *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*. Duke University Press, 2013.

from the colonial period to the present, not only because Haitian writers continue to work with the past to better comprehend the present, but also because authoritarian regimes, dictatorships, and neo-imperial orders rely on a "forgetful memory" to shape narrative (Chivallon 67).[8]

Literature provides a means to externalize individuals' private grief in a way that can both challenge national and state-sponsored processes of forgetting at the same time as it enables the individual to mourn the dead. In her essay for the *New York Times* "The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning," the poet and playwright Claudia Rankine explains how Mamie Till Mobley's "refusal to keep private grief private" allowed the body of her son, Emmett Till, "to stand as evidence" of an unjust social order that tolerates and encourages the practice of lynching (Rankine 147-148). For Rankine, Mobley's "desire to make mourning enter [the] day-to-day-world was a new kind of logic" that "helped energize the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s" (148). Though it was first published in *The New York Times*, Rankine's piece became one of the grounding essays of *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race* (2016), which brought together Black writers of non-fiction, fiction, and poetry to revive the sense of urgency for justice that James Baldwin first harnessed in *The Fire Next Time* fifty-three years prior.

Edwidge Danticat also contributed the closing essay to Ward's volume, entitled "Message to My Daughters." Her essay weaves together stories of state abuses in Haiti with narratives of African and Haitian immigrants in the United States. She cites the story of Abner Louima who was beaten and "sexually assaulted with the wooden handle of a toilet plunger or a broom," Amadou Diallo who was struck by a hail of 41 bullets while he was reaching for his wallet, and Patrick Dorismond who died "trying to convince undercover cops that he was not a drug dealer"

[8] "Forgetful memory" also recalls the title of the late Palestinian resistance poet Mahmoud Darwish whose memoir is titled, *Memory for Forgetfulness* (*In the Wake* 11).

("Message to My Daughters" 208-209). The reason why Danticat recounts these stories to her daughters is for the same reason that she narrativizes the memory of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin Jr., discussed in chapter four of this dissertation, or of Evelyne Sincère, a 22-year-old Haitian woman who was kidnapped, raped, and murdered in November 2020. Their lives have meaning beyond the fact of their death.

When the news of Sincère's murder reached Danticat, she witnessed the life of the young Haitian woman in three photos, before, during, and after her kidnapping. Starting with the first, she sees more than just Evelyne Sincère in the photo, writing "She looks like she could be any of us, when we were young, looking playfully at a camera, and eager to see what we look like on the other side of the screen" ("Evelyne Sincère is Haiti; She is Also All of Us" n.p.). In the interview that Evelyne's sister gave to reporters, Danticat provides a space for her pain to become public outside of Haiti and in English (the essay was simultaneously published in Haitian Creole as "Evelyne Sincère se nou, se Ayiti"):

> Enette Sincère alternated between speaking to her sister's corpse, and to the rest of us. She called her sister her princess, her darling, (cheri mwen), her beauty (ma beauté), all while answering reporters' questions. With a groundswell of grief that reminded me of birth pains, she was at times miraculously composed, then the wave would hit her, and she would want to photograph, then touch her beloved Evelyne, her doudou. ("Evelyne Sincère is Haiti; She is Also All of Us" n.p.)

Rather than remaining silent, like some Haitian artists and social media influencers, Danticat's essay speaks into the void of forgetting, it provides a platform for Enette Sincère's grief-stricken critique of Haitian society and politicians that refuse to effectively combat violence against

women and girls by systematically working to end endemic kidnapping.[9] In reproducing Enette's lament — "Se paske l ap viv Ayiti. Se paske l ap viv Ayiti. Si l pa ta p viv Ayiti mezanmi, èske l ta p sou yon pil fatra?" — Danticat introduces the logic of public mourning that Rankine refers to above in order to call Haitian society and the President, Jovenel Moïse, to justice for their inaction ("Evelyne Sincère is Haiti; She is Also All of Us" n.p.).[10] By remembering these individuals on the page as people who lived, granting textual space to their painful experiences, Danticat speaks out against the unjust status quo that would either continue to hide or perpetuate police brutality, the arbitrary terror of a dictatorship, or the gross negligence of a Haitian president incapable of protecting the citizens of the country over which he presides ("Evelyne Sincère is Haiti; She is Also All of Us" n.p.).

Literary Burials: The Mourning Spirit of Haitian Literature

In Haitian Vodou the *lwa* that oversee the passage from this world to the next are known as Gede, or the *"lwa pèp la"* (the people's spirit) because everyone living eventually dies (Genealogies of Gede 85). According to Claudine Michel and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, "the Gede spirits are said to be an African tribe, the Gedevi, who were grave-diggers, who became divine themselves in Saint-Domingue" (Michel and Bellegarde-Smith 15). Though not every Haitian is *Vodouizan*, or a practitioner of Vodou, Vodou culture permeates the Haitian cultural landscape through Gede — events like *Fèt Gede/Fèt de mò* (Day of the Dead) bear his name —

[9] For a literary representation of the cycle of kidnapping in Haiti, see Roxane Gay's novel *An Untamed State* (2014). See also: Charles, Jaqueline. "Haiti Artists, Influencers Criticized after Student Killing." *Miami Herald*, 9 Nov. 2020, https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article247036137.html.

[10] Though the translator is not credited, the translation comes from the English version of the Woy Magazine post. [It's because she lives in Haiti. It's because she lives in Haiti. If she didn't live in Haiti, would she be on a pile of trash?] This has become a rallying point for Haitian feminist organizers, insisting that women and girls in Haiti are in the same predicament, as Nadine Mondestin puts it, "It's not just Evelyne who they dumped on a pile of trash. It's all of us who are on top of that trash" ("Haiti Artists, Influencers Criticized after Student Killing")

thus shaping the relationship that all Haitians have with death and the dead. As Michel and Bellegarde-Smith exclaim, "How fortunate one is when one knows Gede. It is the paroxysm of a life well-lived. It is the intimate, ultimate connection between the ancestors, the linkage between the dead, the deities, and the living" (14). As a spirit, Gede provides a popular idiom, a language for the visceral link between the living and the dead, offering a window onto Haitian mortuary practices, rituals, and expressions of mourning.

While I do not mean to suggest that the works of literature studied in this dissertation were composed with Gede in mind, I wish to show how the bodies of scholarship relating to Haitian art, art history, anthropology, and history speak to the centrality of burial rites and rituals in the creative vision of many Haitian artists, especially as a way of providing a proper burial for lost ancestors. Maarit Forde explains that in "historical and anthropological origin stories as well as nationalist mythologies, lost ancestors are at the core of the 'inaugural events' [...] fundamental to the making of plantation societies" (Forde 1-2). Quoting from Vincent Brown's text, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery,* Forde reminds us that "'death structured society and shaped its most consequential struggles,' and societies were reproduced in the continued presence of the dead" (2). Despite and because of the ubiquity of death, enslaved and formerly enslaved peoples in plantation societies fashioned sacred rites and rituals to care for the dead and to provide solace for the living. Kyrah Malika Daniels describes the cathartic power of Vodou rituals and the sacred arts as “acts of mourning,” which “whether through the private shedding of tears, the piercing wailing of lamentation, the public funerary dance, or the inauguration of an ancestral shrine—function dynamically as acts of healing, renewal, and ritual expression” (961). If, as Colin Dayan writes in *The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons* "the dead do not die [...] [they] haunt the living," then

perhaps literature as mourning, as a burial practice, is one way that Haitian writers "think more deeply about the dying and the dead" (*The Law is a White Dog* 33). Vodou rituals can therefore help us to delineate a grammar of mourning, a practice that becomes legible across time and artistic genres as literary burial practice that attends to the needs of the living and the dead.[11]

In Haitian art — visual art, performance, and literature — there is an impulse to gather and to make with material remains (of people, of the environment, of literature, etc.) in a way that provides healing for the living. The scholar-artist-poet Gina Athena Ulysse refers to this as "rasanblaj," or an "assembly, compilation, enlisting, regrouping (of ideas, things, people, spirits [...] fè yon rasanblaj, do a gathering, a ceremony, a protest)" where the act of gathering is as important as its product (Introduction: Caribbean Rasanblaj" n.p.). As such, *rasanblaj* informs our understanding of how art can work as a funerary ritual. Some Haitian artists employ the Grand Cimetière of Port-au-Prince as their proverbial canvas (Figure 1), while others approach their artistic practice as a mortuary process. For example, the *Atis Rezistans* of Grand Rue in Port-au-Prince place great significance in the act of collecting trash, debris, and even mortal remains that litter the streets. One of the artists, André Eugène, often compiles bones with discarded car parts to form his sculptures of Gede, including the mortal remains of people he once knew and who perished in the January 12, 2010 earthquake.[12] When I visited his atelier, in

[11] Valérie Loichot articulates another form of ritual operating in the Greater Caribbean (the Gulf of Mexico region, the US South, the Caribbean, and the coastline of Latin America) called the *unritual*. The unritual is "the privation of ritual," or "the obstruction of the sacred" rites that are meant to help the living and the dead "transition to an afterward or a hereafter" (Loichot 1-7). Loichot's focus on the unritual is situated around the notion of "water graves," which provide ceremony for the unidentified and unidentifiable dead who perished by drowning from the era of the Middle Passage to the present. As such, her book *Water Graves: The Art of the Unritual in the Greater Caribbean* focuses on the "creative paradoxes of the aquatic" as a site of (dis)connection in the Caribbean archipelago (3).

[12] For more on the *Atis Rezistans* and notions of the human within their work, see: Fischer, Sibylle. "Atlantic Ontologies: On Violence and Being Human." *Emisférica*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2016, https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-121-caribbean-rasanblaj/12-1-essays/e-121-essay-fischer-atlantic-ontologies.html.; Gordon, Leah. "Gede: The Poster Boy for Vodou." *In Extremis: Between Life and Death in 21st-Century Haitian Art*, Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2012, pp. 101–14.

2018, Eugène showed me a number of sculptures that adorned his *lakou* and, with precision, he pointed out which ones carried the bones of his deceased neighbors. To Eugène, by combining skeletal remains with recycled material, his sculptures gesture toward ideas of renewal, resuscitation, and vitality. If his sculpture is a form of burial practice or ritual, we might then think of Eugène's *lakou* as a sort of ossuary, where the bones of those he once knew reside even after their spirits have gone on.

Figure 1: Bas-Relief of Gede in the Grand Cimetière in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, November 2018. (Photo by Nathan H. Dize)

In keeping with similar aesthetic concerns of Haitian art, this dissertation will explore the meanings behind various literary acts that relate to, or enact a funerary rite meant to engender reflection and mourning. Though there is not one unifying term for the acts and expressions of

mourning explored in this dissertation, every chapter focuses on specific literary acts and strategies Haitian writers use to grieve for those who are lost. While it may be appealing to group these creative gestures together under one notion or concept, to do so may undermine the integrity of the socio-historical context under which the authors, archivists, editors, and translators highlighted in this dissertation produced their elegiac works. As we will see, these literary forms gesture toward ceremonial pilgrimages (Nemours), the placing of textual markers for (literary) ancestors (Chauvet/Coicou and Orcel/Pierre-Dahomey/Noël), embedding intimate memories in the rituals of the publishing industry (Gérard Pierre-Charles, Suzy Castor, Florence Alexis), intimate viewings of executions and the preservation of memory, and self-writing as a space for reflection and a private corrective to public funeral ceremonies. In all, the works examined in this dissertation offer ways of processing death and working with the memories of the dead to make something anew for the benefit of the living and the dead.

Chapter Breakdown

The first chapter focuses on the way that Alfred Nemours employs archival practice as an ethics of care to challenge contemporary French historiography about the fate of Toussaint Louverture while he was imprisoned in the Fort de Joux. By assembling an archive of Louverture's imprisonment, I argue that Nemours gathers what remains of the Haitian revolutionary hero in order to give him a proper burial in an era when French anthropological societies saw him as nothing more than a pile of bones ready for study.

The second chapter focuses on the poetry of Massillon Coicou and its place in *Folie,* the third novella in Marie Chauvet's celebrated triptych as a marker, or "proof of memory" that bears witness to the writer's commitment to a practice of memory work that was uncorrupted by the

political order of the day. Writing *Amour, colère et folie* under François Duvalier's dictatorship, Chauvet attempted to veil her critique of the regime in allusions to Coicou's own repudiation of Nord Alexis's (1902-1908) militaristic Haitian state. Although neither Coicou, nor Chauvet managed to effectively hide their animus toward the respective dictators, they did create a cycle of memory that forever links the two, creating evidentiary proof of their aesthetic kinship.

The third chapter employs a similar hermeneutic approach as the first chapter in that it is concerned with the act of collecting. Unlike the chapter on Alfred Nemours, which is focused on one text, this chapter draws on numerous works of fiction and non-fiction to gather the "literary debris" left in the wake of Jacques Stephen Alexis's final novel *L'Espace d'un cillement.* Since the novel was the first volume of a planned quartet, various Haitian writers (Alexis's friends and admirers alike) have participated in a decades-long process of acknowledging the missing traces of Alexis and the future novels that were either partially written or that were never fully realized. Though the mentions of the fallout of *La Quadrature du cœur* are often repetitive, the spaces and texts in which they are reproduced help to extend Alexis's legacy and continue to shape Haitian literary output well into the twenty first century. I also show how the strategies that Haitian writers use to call attention to Alexis's contributions to Haitian literary and cultural life also manage to account for the lives lived by his family, friends, and admirers in exile and beyond the grave.

In my fourth chapter, I focus my attention on both the ruins of the various digital attempts to preserve the tradition of anti-Duvalierist resistance in the early years of François Duvalier's dictatorship as well as Edwidge Danticat's more permanent textual commemorations of the Jeune Haïti militia. At the heart of this chapter is the public execution of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin Jr. on 12 November 1964, which was comprehensively archived by the state as a means

of spreading terror within the capital of Port-au-Prince, but also throughout the countryside. I rely on Edwidge Danticat's subjective and intimate viewing of this footage some forty-odd years later as a means of turning the archive onto itself, producing a counter-archive of resistance. In the final portions of this chapter, I evoke Danticat's own notion of "coffin texts" as a literary act of mourning and remembrance that, when practiced by an author of her stature, is capable of preserving the legacies of people like Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin Jr, and others, who were victims of a regime that fed on the paranoia and superstition of being forgotten or disappeared.

In the final chapter of the dissertation, I interpret three intimate forms of self-writing by Edwidge Danticat, Jan J. Dominique, and Emmelie Prophète that seek to reckon with and grieve the passing of Jean Léopold Dominique who was murdered outside of his radio station on 3 April 2000. The three texts examined in this chapter are all grounded in a first-person perspective (essay, memoir, autofiction), yet they employ different approaches to the "work of mourning" as they draw on recollections of Dominique, fictionalize portions of their narrative, or redirect the attention away from Dominique to show that he is one of many Haitians who perished due to the conditions of a fragile and precarious state. As Danticat, Dominique, and Prophète "travay avèk" the memories they have of Jean Dominique, they reflect on how Jean's perspective helped them cope with their own set of vulnerable experiences like life in exile or the diaspora, the first steps into a writing career, or the loss of a friendly presence in ones' life. Taken together, these three texts produce an intimate memorial for Jean Dominique in the wake of a flawed memorial service that left his family wondering whether he belonged to them or an entire nation.

CHAPTER 1

Funeralizing Toussaint: Archival Practice as an Ethics of Care in Alfred Nemours's *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture*

If you walk out of the Église St. Bruno in Bordeaux, France you will enter the Cimetière de la Chartreuse. You are now on the Allée that shares the same name as the church. Then, you will make the first left onto the Allée Ravez. From there, you will pass the Allée de la Grande Croix to the right, entering the 29th series of plots. You will make the second right, at number 60, and walk toward the end of the row of gravesites. You look to the left. No matter how careful you are, you will miss it. You will need to retrace your steps, get down on your knees, and locate the weathered number "68 bis" in order to find the grave marker that honors Toussaint Louverture and marks his son Isaac's gravesite (Figures 2-4). A more noticeable bust of Louverture sits on the rive droite of the Garonne, where joggers pass throughout the day. The inscription on the bust's pedestal specifies that Louverture was born in the French colony of Saint-Domingue on 20 May 1743 and that he died on 7 April 1803 at the Fort de Joux (Figure 5). These details are critical because they specify the location where Toussaint perished, high in the Jura Mountains of the Franche-Comté region in the department of Doubs—a site that is visited every year on April 7 by Haitians wishing to mourn a fallen hero.

Figure 2: Louverture Family grave plot in the Cimetière de la Chartreuse in Bordeaux, France in May 2017. (Photo by Nathan H. Dize)

Figure 3: Close-up of the plaque to Toussaint Louverture in the Louverture Family grave plot in Bordeaux, France in May 2017. (Photo by Nathan H. Dize)

Despite his death and burial at the Fort de Joux, Toussaint Louverture's gravesite is unknown. In the last two decades, the French and Haitian governments have inaugurated memorial spaces throughout the country to recognize the fact that Louverture died there and that his life impacted the course of history for the two nations. Though grassroots organizations and Black French community associations fought for years to honor leaders in the struggle against colonialism and slavery, it was not until the sesquicentennial of the 1848 abolition of slavery in France that this cause received national attention.[13] 1848 was the second time that France officially abolished slavery, the first was in 1794.[14] This is a distinction that Isaac Louverture's grave marker highlights by referring to his father as a "hero of the first abolition of slavery [héros de la première aboilition" and one that reveals the French state's inclination towards a "forgetful memory [mémoire oublieuse]" of the history of slavery, but also of Toussaint Louverture's death in France (Chivallon 67). Perhaps the most meaningful memorial diversion regarding Toussaint Louverture's legacy came in 1998 when the French government placed an empty plinth in the Pantheon in Paris to honor his life: "A LA MEMOIRE DE TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE. COMBATTANT DE LA LIBERTE, ARTISAN DE L'ABOLITION DE L'ESCLAVAGE, HEROS HAITIEN MORT DEPORTE AU FORT-DE-JOUX EN 1803. [TO THE MEMORY OF TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE. FIGHTER FOR LIBERTY, ARCHITECT OF **THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY**, **HAITIAN HERO** WHO DIED **AS A DEPORTEE** AT THE

[13] In Metropolitan France, Nantes was part of the vanguard for such movements when a 1985 conference was held on the history of the slave trade 300 years after the issuing of the Code Noir (Saugéra). In the following years, Nantes would also serve as the site for a "Marche des esclaves" protesting the non-recognition of France's colonial past, which spurred a larger national movement, culminating in the 2001 "Loi Taubira" recognizing slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity (Fleming 48-49). See also: Hourcade, Renaud. “Commorating a Guilty Past: The Politics of Memory in the French Former Slave Trade Cities.” *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, edited by Ana Lucia Araujo, Routledge, 2013, pp. 124–40.

[14] For more on the tension between the 1794 abolition of slavery and its later 1848 enunciation, see: Joseph-Gabriel, Annette K. “Creolizing Freedom: French–Creole Translations of Liberty and Equality in the Haitian Revolution.” *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 36, no. 1, Jan. 2015, pp. 111–23. doi:10.1080/0144039X.2014.888869.

FORT-DE-JOUX IN 1803" (my emphasis, Forsdick 285; Figure 6).[15] The inscription avoids the nuance of Isaac Louverture's plaque, suggesting there was one abolition of slavery in France and its colonies. Second, by not mentioning Saint-Domingue it obscures France's colonial legacy. And finally, even though the inscription acknowledges where Louverture died, the description fails to clarify how exactly he was arrested, deported, and imprisoned by Napoléon Bonaparte in the Fort de Joux, or, for that matter, where exactly his mortal remains reside.[16]

Figure 4: Close-up of the location "68 Bis" of the Louverture Family grave plot in Bordeaux, France in May 2017. (Photo by Nathan H. Dize)

The debates and questions surrounding Louverture's death are at the heart of an often-overlooked text, Alfred Nemours's 1929 *L'Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture*, which seeks to locate and provide a literary space for Louverture's bones to lay in repose. Primarily a work of history, Nemours consults and references archives from the Atlantic coast of France to the Franco-Swiss border where the Fort de Joux is located to tell the story of Louverture's eight-month captivity, which culminated in his death on April 7, 1803. Though

[15] For an overview of the memorial discourses surrounding France's 150th anniversary of abolition, the impact of the 2001 "Taubira Law," and their impact on France overseas departments, see: Curtius, Anny Dominique. “À Fort-de-France les statues ne meurent pas.” *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 and 2, 2008, pp. 87–106.

[16] For more on Napoléon Bonaparte's legacy vis-à-vis colonialism and slavery, see: Ribbe, Claude. *Le crime de Napoléon*. Privé, 2005.

Nemours's methods are those of a trained historian, his goals are also deeply affective. In the opening pages, he explains how the archives spoke to him beyond the realm of empirical evidence, that the documents about Louverture's death, and the language therein, bore witness to a full spectrum of human emotions:

> All the "frozen words ": words of suffering, of faith, of the victim's pride; words of consolation, the faithful servant's words of kindness — suffocated too quickly; words of hatred, the insulting words of the jailors; the saccharine, deceptive words of Caffarelli the Tempter; words of reproach, perhaps, by the doctor who once visited; the solemn words to the priest, reading the last rites; the drunken and cheeky words of the watchmen; the silent words of the dirt falling on the coffin. Conserved for the last century, all of these "frozen words" spoke to me. (Nemours vi)[17]

The documents themselves provide Nemours with a sense of lamentation, a mode of reflecting on Toussaint Louverture's final moments and his death. For this reason, *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort* offers a 169-page historical account of Louverture's death as well as an appendix of 143 pages of primary sources so that readers can visit with the documentary remains of the Haitian revolutionary by reading. In this way, Nemours's text corresponds to Karla F.C. Holloway's notion of narrative essay *as a memorial* or a "mourning story," where writers and readers can grasp the "texture of feeling and memory that lay in burial grounds," making the process of reading a visceral experience (Holloway 3-4).

[17] "Toutes les "paroles gelées" : paroles de souffrance, de foi, de fierté de la victime; paroles de consolation, de douceur — trop vite étouffées — du serviteur fidèle ; paroles de haine, d'insulte des geôliers ; paroles mielleuses, trompeuses du Tentateur Caffarelli ; paroles de reproche, peut–être, du médecin, venu une seule fois ; paroles graves du prêtre, lisant les dernières prières ; paroles avinées et gouailleuses des soldats de garde ; paroles sourdes de la terre qui tombe sur le cercueil. Toutes ces "paroles gelées" depuis un siècle conservées, vibraient pour moi." The reference to "frozen words" comes from François Rabelais's *Le Quart livre.*

Figure 5: Bust of Toussaint Louverture by Ludovic Booz (Haiti) along the Right Bank of the Garonne River in Bordeaux, France in May 2017. (Photo by Nathan H. Dize)

Figure 6: The commemorative plinth to Toussaint Louverture's memory in the Musée du Panthéon in Paris, France in May 2018. (Photo by Nathan H. Dize)

As opposed to the public *lieux de mémoire/lieux d'oubli* dedicated to Louverture throughout France, Nemours's "grief-stricken story" attends to the individual, familial, and collective sense of loss that still surrounds the missing remains of one of Haiti's national heroes

(7).[18] By focusing solely on the archival traces that led to Louverture's death, I argue that we might think of Nemours's archival practice as a mode of literary care that tends to the memories of the dead and provides the living with the means to grieve one of Haiti's most famous ancestors. The goal of this chapter is to elevate the status of Nemours's *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture* to the level of other texts concerning the life of Toussaint Louverture, namely within the biographical tradition, by focusing on his archival method *as burial practice* in which "death, and thinking, and expression, and sense, must be seen to weave one into the other" (Beachy-Quick 17). For Louverture's myriad biographers, *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture* is often only a footnote in the section dealing with his death. Some biographers rely on his *Histoire militaire de la guerre d'indépendance de Saint-Domingue*, while others boldly consult his archive at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras (the Colección Alfred Nemours de Historia Haitiana) without reflecting on how his rigorous archival practice in *Histoire de la captivité* led to the creation of that very collection in the first place (Muñiz et al. 181-242). In *Making of The Black Jacobins: CLR James and the Drama of History,* Rachel Douglas recounts how Alfred Nemours met CLR James in Paris while he was serving as a foreign minister. At the time, James was researching in the archives for what would become both his play *Toussaint Louverture* and *The Black Jacobins*. Douglas writes, "Apart from the many references to Nemours and the Haitian Revolution military strategy [...]

[18] *Lieux de mémoire* refers to the process of statecraft by which "sites of memory" are constituted to formulate a narrative of the nation's past, see: Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire.” *Representations*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1989, pp. 7–24. *Lieux d'oubli* is Christine Chivallon's term for the way that France has constructed a forgetful collective memory around the history of slavery and the slave trade, see: Chivallon, Christine. “Representing the Slave Past: The Limits of Museographical and Patrimonial Discourses.” *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World*, edited by Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, Liverpool University Press, 2015, pp. 25–48.; Chivallon, Christine. “L’émergence Récente de La Mémoire de l’esclavage Dans l’espace Publique: Enjeux et Significations.” *Revue d’histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, vol. 52, no. 4, 2005, pp. 64–81.

James also singles out the importance of Nemours's *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture*, although the book is not cited in the bibliography" (Douglas 18). As James writes in footnote 78 of *The Black Jacobins,* Nemours's *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture* was not just "the definitive account of Toussaint's captivity," but Douglas also suggests that "it transpires that all the information on Toussaint's death in *The Black Jacobins* history, but particularly in the play *Toussaint Louverture* where it is a climactic scene, has come via Nemours (James 363fn78; Douglas 18).[19]

To emphasize the impact of Nemours's study and archival practice, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines the rich biographical history concerning Toussaint Louverture, his life, and his legacy. In this section, I show how Toussaint Louverture how biographies from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries attempt to counter colonial conceptions of Louverture's life through affective readings of his prison memoirs. Although these attempts are well-intentioned, the unique focus on Louverture's memoirs has led conservative historians to diminish the historical significance of Louverture's internment. In the second section, I examine how Alfred Nemours's harnesses an affective narration of the torture and indecencies Louverture was subjected to in prison in order to combat contemporary French revisionism about his death. And in the final section, I explore the ways in which Nemours's archival work might be considered as a means of providing Toussaint Louverture with a proper burial as his body and remains are subjected to the caprices of pseudoscience at the height of nineteenth-century racial anthropology.

[19] Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg are emphatic on the importance of Nemours's *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture* in the historiography as well, see: Forsdick, Charles, and Christian Høgsbjerg. *Toussaint Louverture: A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions*. Pluto Press, 2017.

Of Biographies and Histories: Toussaint Louverture's Historical Environment

During his lifetime, Louverture was the subject, as well as the object, of many imperial French biographies. These biographies either produced defamatory accounts of his life or that sought to deride the cause for Haitian liberty through racist portrayals of Louverture and his freedom-fighting compatriots.[20] In 1802, Jean François Dubroca penned a three page "portrait" of Louverture in in his *La Vie de Toussaint Louverture*, which propagated rumors about the Haitian revolutionary's temperament from the seemingly innocuous "il parle très peu, et très mal, la langue française [he speaks very little of the French language and does so very poorly]" to more severe and harmful protestations such as "toutes ses actions sont couvertes d'un voile d'hypocrisie si profond, quoique sa vie entière soit une suite continuelle de trahisons et de perfidies [all his actions are shrouded in a veil of profound hypocrisy, as though his life were a continual succession of treachery and lies]" (Dubroca 50). Dubroca, the colonialist printer-turned imperial publicist, even went as far as to say that Louverture's life could be summarized as "un exemple frappant des crimes où peut conduire l'ambition, quand la probité, l'éducation et l'honneur n'en répriment pas les excès [a striking example of the crimes that ambition can lead to when integrity, education, and honor cannot mask the excesses]" (52).

While the nineteenth-century French literary tradition follows these tropes of Black illiteracy and conspiracy to the letter, especially under Napoleon Bonaparte's reign, Haitian, African American, and abolitionist writers of the same period sought to reclaim the image of

[20] For example, see: Dubroca, Jean François. La vie de Toussaint-Louverture, chef des noirs insurgés de Saint-Domingue; : contenant son origine, les particularités les plus remarquables de sa jeunesse. Paris: Chez Dubroca, 1802. http://archive.org/details/laviedetoussaint00dubr.

Toussaint Louverture in their own biographies, orations, poems, and theatrical writings.[21] These were some of the primary concerns of Haitian historians like Joseph Saint-Rémy in his *Vie de Toussaint L'Ouverture* (1850). In his biographical text, Saint-Rémy sought to dispel the myths about Louverture, including the idea that he wished to establish a race-based caste system to favor mulattoes in an independent Saint-Domingue.[22] As Marlene Daut explains in *Tropics of Haiti: Race and the Literary History of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World, 1789-1865*, questions around race and literacy helped situate Toussaint Louverture as one of the main figures of interest in contemporary texts like Dubroca's and Marcus Rainsford's *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti* (1805) to C.L.R. James's 1938 *The Black Jacobins*. Unlike his portraits of Henry Christophe and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, James "promulgated the idea that Toussaint Louverture's ascent to leadership depended in great part on the act of literacy, and specifically, on the act of Louverture's reading and interpretation of the famous 'Black Sparticus' passage contained in works signed by the Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal (*Tropics of Haiti* 49).[23] Another way of putting this, which C. L. R. James reinforced most notably, is through the Enlightenment "division of the world into 'enlightened leaders' and 'ignorant masses'" that casts Louverture as the literate leader and other officers in the insurgent corps (later the Armée Indigène) as visible representatives of the illiterate masses (*Elusive Origins* 59-61).

---

[21] For example, see: Rainsford, Marcus. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. Edited by Paul Youngquist and Grégory Pierrot, Duke University Press, 2013.; Phillips, Wendell. "Toussaint Louverture, Delivered in New York and Boston, December 1861." *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters*, Boston : Lee and Shepard ; New York : C. T. Dillingham, 1884, pp. 468–94. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/speecheslectures7056phil.; Beard, J. R. (John Relly), and James Redpath. *Toussaint L'Ouverture: A Biography and Autobiography*. Boston, J. Redpath, 1863. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/toussaintlouvert00bear.

[22] Dubroca and other Imperial French writers suggested that Toussaint Louverture's 1801 constitution sought to declare Saint-Domingue free of French oversight by appointing himself governor of the western side of the island. Saint-Rémy addresses these rumors directly in his preface, writing "...Dieu n'a voulu que varier ses œuvres, et non établir la hiérarchie et la dépendance [God only wished to vary his life's work, and not to establish hierarchy and dependence]" (*Vie de Toussaint Louverture* viii).

[23] For more on the 'Black Sparticus' trope, see: Pierrot, Grégory. *The Black Avenger in Atlantic Culture*. University of Georgia Press, 2019.

Scholars interested in the literary traces left by Toussaint Louverture have actively sought to counter colonial ideas surrounding Louverture's literacy primarily by engaging in archival studies of his prison *Mémoires*. Daniel Desormeaux argues in his annotated edition of Louverture's *Mémoires* that he wrote in a "français phonétique [phonetic French]," which once read aloud is readily intelligible to speakers and readers of modern French. John Patrick Walsh and Deborah Jenson agree that while Louverture's French is indeed phonetic, he employed "arbitrary syllabification and punctuation" and that the Haitian leader had "in effect learned enough French, and enough writing, to create his own linguistic system for transcribing the complex political and military discourses of his environment" (Walsh 66; Jenson 56). It should be noted, though, that while Jenson produces a carefully worded assessment of Louverture's literacy and linguistic competencies, she does misread Colin Dayan's treatment of French literacy and what this might mean for how scholars talk about Louverture. Before embarking on a reading of an intimate corpus of Louverture's letters, Jenson writes "Colin Dayan frames Toussaint's literacy as *hearsay* ("it is claimed that Toussaint Louverture knew how to read and write") (my emphasis, Jenson 55). Other scholars, John Patrick Walsh and Arthur F. Saint-Aubin in particular, have taken Jenson at her word, rather than returning to Dayan's 1995 *Haiti, History, and the Gods* where Dayan delicately compares Louverture to Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe. The full quotation reads: ""For whom does Dessalines speak? The majority of the revolutionaries did not know French (it is claimed that Toussaint Louverture knew how to read and write, but Dessalines, like Henry Christophe, was illiterate and could barely sign his name)" (*Haiti, History, and the Gods* 4). Yet Haitian and foreign historians almost routinely present the three leaders as able to speak French and acknowledge that each of these leaders made use of secretaries like Louis Félix Boisrond-Tonnerre and Juste Chanlatte. When Boisrond-

Tonnerre declared independence in the name of Dessalines on January 1, 1804, he recognized this linguistic colonialism with lyrical prescience: 'The French name still darkens our plains.' Though French shadowed Haiti, with writers articulating the Haitian revolution retrospectively in French, Creole also shared in the task of coercing difference into governable homogeneity." (*Haiti, History, and the Gods* 4-5).[24] It is clear, when returning to Dayan's original prose, that the comment about Louverture's literacy was to establish a comparison between, Louverture, Dessalines, and Christophe and the historiographical trend which conscripts them to a binary of *Francophone or illiterate*. Dayan's attention to Louverture's use and fluency in French and Haitian Creole modes of speech and literacy would seem to prove that Saint-Aubin's is wrong to argue that Dayan sought "to question whether he wrote his memoir and some of the other documents attributed to him" or that she has been misled by Saint-Rémy's editing and truncation of Louverture's memoirs (Saint-Aubin xxi).

Although key white abolitionist figures in France like Alphonse de Lamartine and Victor Schœlcher defended Louverture's capacity to read and write, Henry Gauthier-Villars directly challenged Louverture's right to authority as a means of commemorating the centenary of his passing. To demonstrate the absurdity of the colonial tropes surrounding Louverture's literacy, Desormeaux argues that the debate leads nowhere except to racism or exceptional ideas about history: "As though the importance of this illustrious man and the historicity of the newly found documents that can be attributed to him are somehow undermined by his ignorance of grammar [Comme si l'importance de l'homme illustre et l'historicité des documents inédits qui lui sont attribuables étaient contrariées par sa méconnaissance de la grammaire" (Desormeaux 19). At the

[24] The original passage is from Louis-Félix Boisrond-Tonnerre's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Hayti* (1804), for more on this text and its role in narrating the Haitian Revolution, see: Daut, Marlene L. "Un-Silencing the Past: Boisrond-Tonnerre, Vastey, and the Re-Writing of the Haitian Revolution." *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2009, pp. 35–64.

same time, in his 2016 biography *Toussaint Louverture, A Revolutionary Life,* Philippe R. Girard deploys a familiar language of racial exception in his characterization of Louverture's intelligence. Girard remarks almost in the same breath that while Louverture's 16,000-word text was "a monumental task for a man who had never been schooled," his "handwriting was barely legible and his grammar was atrocious" (*Toussaint Louverture, A Revolutionary Life* 247). How is it that Toussaint Louverture's writing has come back into question? Furthermore, how have Louverture's prison memoirs come to be the sole means by which we approach his eight-month incarceration?

***

In historical studies of Toussaint Louverture, particularly in biographies, there is a tension between the concept of history "as science" and history "as art." Caribbean anthropologist and postcolonial theorist David Scott refers to this as the "mythopoetic" nature of one of the most well-known texts about Toussaint Louverture, C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Scott 171). Scott argues that James wrote *The Black Jacobins,* a story about the past, "as a means of projecting an alternative future" where the Haitian Revolution could (and should) inspire change in the realization of a range of possible futures (24). James, Scott concludes, "is a storyteller, a mythmaker" (39). James's imaginative and creative reconstruction of the Haitian Revolution, harnessing the tension between history as science and as art, is perhaps one of the reasons why Girard takes aim at other English language biographies of Toussaint Louverture, namely Madison Smartt-Bell's *Toussaint Louverture, A Biography*, when he writes "there have been scholarly biographies of Louverture. In English, the most recent biography based on extensive primary research was C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, first published in 1938" (*Toussaint Louverture, A Revolutionary Life* 2).

While Smartt Bell's biography was published in 2007 and was the most extensive treatment of Louverture's life in English since Ralph Korngold's *Citizen Toussaint* (1944)[25] and the reedition of *The Black Jacobins* in the 1960s, the most remarkable portion of Girard's statement above are the exclusive terms of writing about Toussaint.[26] Biographies, according to Girard, must be "scholarly" and they must be "based on extensive primary research" in order for them to be valid (hi)stories of Toussaint Louverture. If this were the true criteria, not even Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Ti dife boule sou istoua Ayti* would fit within the rubric of "scholarly" since it is told through the Haitian narrative device of *Gran Promennen,* a storyteller/*lodyansè* who serves to guide the reader through years of Haitian history.

However, if "scholarly" entails "extensive archival research," it is curious that Girard fails to acknowledge the importance of Alfred Auguste Nemours's *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture* for the archival and narrative standard it sets for the study of Louverture's eight-month incarceration. How can a three-hundred-page history of Louverture's imprisonment be disregarded as a "a petty battle over receipts," especially when nearly half of Nemours's volume is an appendix of archival documentation? Daniel Desormeaux acknowledges that Haitian scholars in the past, particularly Joseph Saint-Rémy, have edited or translated (condensed) writing by Haitian revolutionaries like Louverture to give them "a heightened literary character [un caractère plus 'littéraire]'" than the originals (Desormeaux 17). This

[25] Korngold's original manuscript for *Citizen Toussaint* resides in the Fisk University Special Collections at the John Hope and Aurelia Franklin Library. According to a letter that he addressed to Arna Bontemps on July 7, 1945, the section on Haiti "before Toussaint" was nearly one third longer than the printed version. Korngold, Ralph. *Ralph Korngold to Bontemps Donating MS Copy of Citizen Toussaint*. 7 July 1945. Fisk University Special Collections, Arna Bontemps Collection. Box 29, Folder 4

[26] In the bibliographic essay that precedes the notes to *Toussaint Louverture, A Revolutionary Life*, Girard argues that *The Black Jacobins* is "factually outdated today" and that it can be boiled down to a "Marxist analysis that introduced Louverture as a tragically flawed leader to an English-speaking audience" (*Toussaint Louverture, A Revolutionary Life* 322). While he recognizes that Smartt Bell's biography is "engagingly written" Girard contends that it is "based on little primary research" (322).

coupled with Scott, we see that there is a need to write with archives to perform the "memory work [travail de mémoire]" necessary to foreground Toussaint Louverture's story in the archive of his abduction and imprisonment. John Patrick Walsh has shown that one of the strengths of analyses of Louverture's own writings, especially his prison writings, has been in scholars ability to balance "archival evidence" with "well-supported imagination" in a way that collapses the space between historical and mythological representations (Walsh 31). Given these theoretical concerns and the historiographical climate of writing on Toussaint Louverture, it is more important than ever to consider the ways in which Nemours calls on his readers "to think with and feel" the impact of Louverture's death as he recounts the physical and emotional toll his incarceration took on him.

Visiting Fort de Joux and the Archival Remains

In the first two chapters of *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort*, Alfred Nemours explains that, unlike his French contemporaries, emotion compelled him to publish the archival documents surrounding Toussaint Louverture's imprisonment and death. He writes, "All this information, [this] painful rosary of beads that my faith has taught me to count—[it is] with emotion that I publish them [Tous ces renseignements—chapelet douloureux que ma piété égrène—avec émotion je les publie]" (*Histoire de la captivité et de la mort* 11). Far from being the first writer to venerate Louverture in this way, Nemours saw the archive of his imprisonment as a means for Haitians to mourn the passing of one of its important historical figures. Twenty-seven years prior, just before the centenary of Louverture's death, numerous articles appeared in the French press addressing Louverture's captivity, including a written report of the only official interrogation of Louveture by Marie-François Caffarelli in September 1802. Of these articles,

Alfred Nemours identifies two: "Toussaint Louverture au Fort de Joux (D'après des documents inédits)" by Henry Gauthier-Villars and "La Captivité et la mort de Toussaint Louverture" by Maurice Pigallet.[27] Even though Nemours takes issue with Gauthier-Villars' methodology (his title suggests his arguments are based on new documents, but he does not indicate their provenance), the Haitian historian largely agrees with his conclusions that Toussaint Louverture was willfully tortured and killed by the physical and psychological environment in the Fort de Joux. However, Maurice Pigallet's article is a much greater concern for Nemours because the author engages in a point-by-point deconstruction of Gauthier-Villars's claims, yet he does so without directly citing any sources. Puzzled, Nemours writes "M. Pigallet consulted archival documents, which he skillfully referenced. But why did he not cite any of them in full? [M. Pigallet a consulté des pièces d'archives, dont il s'est habilement servi. Mais pourquoi n'en a-t-il pas cité, en entier, aucune ?]" (*Histoire de la captivité et de la mort* 15).

To the detriment of any logical argument Pigallet may have had, he reprises centuries-old racist tropes about Toussaint Louverture, which emerged a century earlier in Dubroca's biography, among other sources. Maurice Pigallet argues "(Louverture) seems to have had all the flaws that one encounters—at least sometimes—in the men of his race. He was deceitful, secretive, and unfaithful to his word [(Louverture) semble bien avoir eu tous les défauts que l'on rencontre—au moins quelque fois—chez les hommes de sa race. Il était fourbe, dissimulé, infidèle à sa parole]" (Pigallet 513-514). While Pigallet attempts to soften the thrust of his

[27] Henry Gauthier-Villars (1859-1931) was the first husband of French author Colette (1873-1954); he also known as "Willy" and was officially credited as the author of Colette's *Claudine* novels for quite some time. It is possible that this article was also ghost-written, perhaps by Colette herself. Colette's family has its roots in the Caribbean and the history of slavery during the eighteenth century. See: Dize, Nathan H. "Colonial Colette: From Orientalism and Egyptian Pantomime to Polaire's Jamaican 'Slave.'" *Nursing Clio*, 19 Feb. 2019, https://nursingclio.org/2019/02/19/colonial-colette-from-orientalism-and-egyptian-pantomime-to-polaires-jamaican-slave/.

argumentation, suggesting that Black men are only "sometimes" deceitful and treacherous, the message is clear: Toussaint Louverture's death cannot be seen as an attempt to assassinate the Haitian revolutionary leader and that Toussaint's character exonerates his captors and executioners through the fact of his Blackness. Under these conditions, any archival sources or historically grounded claims about Louverture's death could be easily denied through even the clunkiest deployment of nineteenth-century racist ideas about Afro-descended peoples.

By 1802 Napoleon had re-instituted plantation slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe. He sent an expeditionary army to Saint-Domingue led by Toussaint Louverture's captor Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc to quell the revolution and restore slavery. Napoleon also ordered the kidnapping of a number of Haitian children and families who were studying in France to wage a psychological war on the leaders of the Haitian Revolution. Even though the weather in Saint-Domingue took the side of the Haitian fighters, leading to an outbreak of yellow fever that decimated Napoleon's expeditionary force, the French climate and ecology was mobilized to slowly break Toussaint Louverture's spirit and body.[28] This question of time and place, of time and weather, is something to which Gauthier-Villars was attuned in his article on Louverture's death in the Château de Joux: "Under these conditions, Toussaint's death was only a matter of time. Yet, without a robust physique, despite the evil that undermined it, he could not have endured this 'French Siberia' [Dans ces conditions, la mort de Toussaint n'était qu'une question de temps. Sans organisme robuste encore, malgré le mal qui le minait, il n'eût pas supporté

[28] Nemours notes that Leclerc never survived to see Louverture perish because he succumbed to yellow fever in the battlefields of Saint-Domingue, "Leclerc could not congratulate himself for his triumph. The illness [he] contracted in the colonies, struck him down before the illness caught in a glacial region, during a rough winter, could defeat his rival [Leclerc ne put se féliciter de son triomphe. La maladie contractée dans les colonies, l'avait terrassée avant que le mal attrapé dans une région glaciale, pendant un hiver rigoureux, n'eut abattu son rival] " (*Histoire de la captivité et de la mort* 9)

l'hiver de cette 'Sibérie de la France'" (Gauthier-Villars 98; *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort* 14-15).

Although Alfred Nemours takes issue with Gauthier-Villars's process, preferring that he democratically publish the archival documents he consulted, the Haitian historian is drawn to the question of *temps*—meaning simultaneously time and weather in French—with regard to Louverture's captivity and death. On June 7, 1802 Toussaint Louverture was arrested and four days later, in captivity along with his wife and children, was forced on a ship ironically named "The Hero [*Le Heros*]″ and was deported to the French Atlantic port of Brest. Arriving in Brest on July 12, Louverture was initially held captive in the Château de Brest, but as Nemours clarifies, Leclerc advised that this prison was insufficient to contain Louverture, writing: "Leclerc had asked that (Louverture) be imprisoned as far as possible from the coast. He felt that the Atlantic between them was not a sufficient enough border—he needed to add the entire French country, too" (7).[29] Leclerc feared that if Louverture were too close to the Atlantic that he could potentially escape from prison. Brest, with its bustling port and access to Atlantic slave trade routes to and from Saint-Domingue, was an unsuitable climate to imprison Louverture. Carefully citing Leclerc's letter to the Minister of the Marine, Leclerc expresses his fears based about the natural environment of the Atlantic zone as well as the social ecology of revolutionary Saint-Domingue:

> It is crucial, Citizen Minister, he wrote to Decrès on 11 June 1802, that the Government put (Toussaint Louverture) in a secure place situated in the center of France, so that he may no longer have any means of escaping and returning to Saint-Domingue where he would have all the influence of a cult leader. If this man reappeared in Saint-Domingue,

[29] "Leclerc avait demandé que (Louverture) fût le plus possible emprisonné loin de la côte. Il trouvait que l'Atlantique entre eux ce n'était pas encore une barrière souffissante, il était nécessaire d'y ajouter toute la France"

in three years he may have destroyed everything that France would have built there. (*Histoire de la captivité et de la mort* 7)[30]

Insisting on the influence that Louverture had on the social climate in Saint-Domingue, Leclerc likens the revolutionary general and governor-for-life to a leader of a religious cult. The racial overtones of this formulation are thinly veiled, to be sure, since colonial legal codes in Saint-Domingue had been modified since the Code Noir was promulgated in 1685 to prohibit any sort of non-Catholic practice of religion in the colony.[31] Not only does Leclerc incite racialized fears of Louverture regarding his imprisonment, but in his arrest report he describes Louverture in the same racist tropes as other French writers, saying "Along with his whole family, I send you this s profoundly decietful man who, with a great deal of hypocrisy, has caused us so much trouble. The government will know what to do with him [j'envoie en France avec toute sa famille cet homme si profondément perfide, qui, avec tant d'hypocrisie, nous à (sic) fait tant de mal. Le gouvernement verra ce qu'il doit en faire]" ("Arrestation de Toussaint Louverture" 3). In both of these letters, Leclerc indicates that the government is in control of Louverture's fate, ominously insinuating that it would know what to do in order to prevent Louverture from returning to Saint-Domingue and for continuing to topple the colonial order. The way that the government chose to keep Louverture from escaping, as Nemours shows, was to harness the weather in order to weaken him, to render him powerless, and to eventually kill him in private.

---

[30] " Il faut, Citoyen Ministre, écrivait-il à Decrès le 11 juin 1802, que le Gouvernement le fasse mettre (Toussaint Louverture) dans une place forte située dans le milieu de la France, afin que jamais il ne puisse avoir aucun moyen de s'échapper et de revenir à Saint-Domingue où il a toute l'influence d'un chef de secte. Si, dans trois ans, cet homme reparaissait à Saint-Domingue, peut-être détruirait-il tout ce que la France y aurait fait."

[31] Articles 1-14 of the Code Noir stipulate that Roman Catholicism is the only religion that may be practiced in the colonies, see: Niort, Jean François. *Le Code noir*. Cavalier bleu, 2015.
. Laws were later modified to specify that Kalendas and other gatherings and ceremonies were also prohibited, see: https://colonyincrisis.lib.umd.edu/1789/12/02/request-and-petition-from-the-citizens-of-color-of-the-french-isles-and-colonies-december-2-1789/

While these details mattered for Henry Gauthier-Villars and his telling of Louverture's imprisonment, he concluded that Louverture's death simply amounted to "ganacherie bureaucratique," or bureaucratic stupidity, that caused Louverture's poor health to fail under the conditions of the Fort de Joux. In his own archival work performed at seven French archives and institutions, as well as the Château de Joux itself, Nemours finds that Gauthier-Villars has ostensibly ignored the willful abuse and torture of Louverture through the natural environment at the prison nestled in the Jura mountains.[32] In order for Haitian readers who may never have the opportunity to make a similar pilgrimage, Nemours's descriptions and archival work are critical for understanding the circumstances of Louverture's captivity and death.

In order to convey the conditions of Louverture's physical imprisonment, Nemours begins with a description of Louverture's cell and its characteristics. Situated at an altitude of 967 meters, Louverture's 9x4 meter cell was on the second floor of the cell block. It was long and narrow, with one single triple barred window that limited his access to natural light. Nemours explains that under normal conditions, the light could not even reach the interior of the room through the window, that "could not reach the center of the room through the elongated slot [n'y pénétrait pas par toute sa longue fente]" (18). Although the image that Nemours includes in *Histoire de la Captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture* at the Château de Joux with his wife does not show it, when Louverture occupied the cell, the window was fitted with a shutter

[32] Nemours lists the following archives and records at the end of his bibliography:

1. From the Ministère de la Guerre: Expedition of Saint-Domingue. Boxes: 6, 7, 8 ; Registers Copy of the letters of General Leclerc.
2. From the Ministère de la Marine: BB 4 161 to 164; BB 4 180 to 183.
3. From the Ministère des Colonies: General correspondence of Saint-Domingue. Unordered series. Provisional box 71.
4. Archives Nationales: Police general. Political Affairs, B. P. 5363-5417; F 7 6266 number 5410.
5. Archives départementales du Doubs: K 115 16 M 1.
6. Bibliothèque publique de Besançon: number 280-313.
7. Archives municipales de Pontarlier et de La Cluse.

that was closed fifteen minutes before sunset and opened 15 minutes after sunrise (19, Figure 7). While one reading of this measure could be interpreted as an attempt to keep the harsh weather out, it was more out of a motivation to enclose Louverture in the dark, stifling his potential hopes for an evening escape (Figure 8). Citing a letter from Commander Baille to Denis Decrès, Bonaparte's Minister of Marine, on October 18, 1802, Nemours shows that this protocol was adopted uniquely for the imprisonment of Toussaint Louverture. According to Nemours, "the jailor found that, for this poor individual (Toussaint Louverture) who was used to the dazzling sun of the Tropics, this was already too much sunlight [le geôlier trouvait que, pour ce malheureux (Toussaint Louverture), habitué au soleil éblouissant des Tropiques, c'était encore trop de lumière]," and so the external shutter brought with it the added psychological effects of seasonal disaffection and temporal disorientation (19). Although the shutter was not affixed to the window on the day that Alfred Nemours visited the prison with his wife, Madame Nemours, he relies on his archival research to reveal the conditions Louverture was subjected to by his jailors.

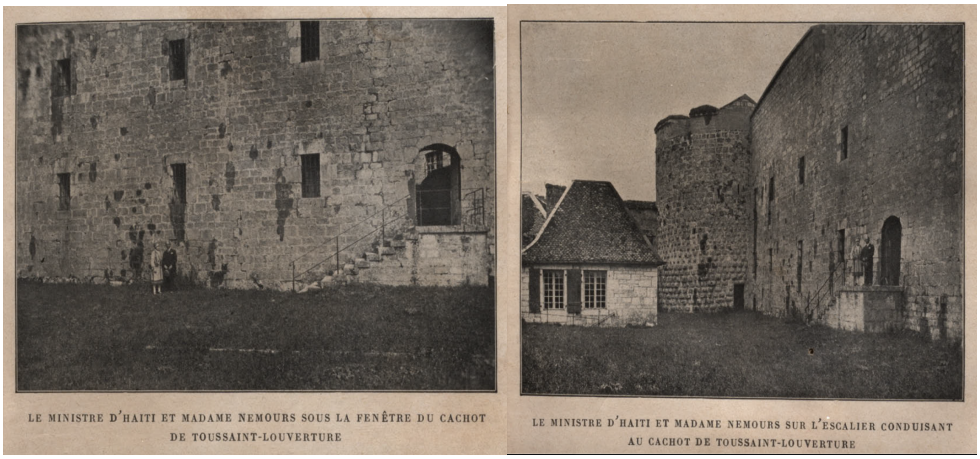


Figure 7: The photos of Alfred and Madame Nemours outside of the window leading to Toussaint Louverture's cell at the Fort de Joux in La Cluse, France. (Credit: Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture)

Located in the Archives du ministère des Colonies, this letter details the level of surveillance Toussaint Louverture was subjected to as well as the special protocols Commander Baille enacted to reassure the government that Louverture would not escape. In a footnote, Nemours explains that Gauthier-Villars and Pigallet, conveniently ignore this damning letter, commenting "this letter, which I have published in its entirety, differs from the partially published one in the *Revue hebdomadaire* from 6 July 1901 and to which no reference is made [cette lettre, que je publie en entier, diffère de celle publiée en partie dans la *Revue hebdomadaire* [sic] du 6 juillet 1901 et dont aucune référence n'est donnée]." Taking up more than three full typed pages, the letter from Baille to Decrès is one of many letters the two would exchange regarding the way Louverture should be treated while in prison. In Baille's letter on October 18, he specifies that, along with the protocols for the shutters, Louverture is locked away behind many layers of chained doors that numerous guards surveil throughout the day. Once the day is over, all of the keys are returned to Baille, who explains that "a half an hour after dark, the keys were taken to my quarters and I would not give them to the guardsman until a half an hour after daybreak [une demie heure avant la nuit toutes les clefs sont apportées à mon logement, et je ne les rends à l'officier qu'une demie heure après le jour]" (199). After about three weeks at the Fort de Joux, Louverture was relieved of his personal valet, Mars Plaisir, who was arrested with him, so these long cold nights were spent in solitary confinement from mid-September 1802 until his death on 7 April.[33]

[33] Mars Plaisir was sent to Nantes, according to Baille, after about three weeks in Louverture's company at the Château de Joux. Mars's departure is dramatized in the play by Vendenesse Éstapha Ducasse, *Fort de Joux, ou, les derniers moments de Toussaint Louverture* (1896; 1957).

Figure 8: The interior of Toussaint Louverture's cell at the Fort de Joux in La Cluse, France in May 2017. On the left, with the lights off. On the right, with the lights on. During tours of the prison, the tour guide turns off the lights to demonstrate the conditions Louverture was subjected to when he ran out of firewood or candles.

While at night Louverture was alone, his day was marked by daily visits from Baille, and later Amiot, who were tasked with providing details about his physical and mental condition. Baille writes to Decrès on October 18 that Louverture's health has already deteriorated quite substantially since entering the prison on August 23. Louverture had, for about twenty-six days, "many feverish episodes, he had five teeth extracted, he took herbal remedies under the advisement of a doctor and a surgeon who are both honorable Frenchmen [plusieurs accès de fièvre, il s'est fait arracher cinq dents, il a pris des tisannes [sic] et d'autres remèdes indiqué par le médecin et le chirurgien qui sont deux hommes probes du pays]" (199).[34] Due to the cold, damp environment of his cell Louverture experienced a prolongated fever and lost five teeth due to malnutrition in just over a month and a half in prison. Baille's initial inclination was to allow a doctor who served in the army during French Revolution and an army surgeon to visit Louverture and treat his illnesses, but the commander indicates in this same letter that "having received orders a few days ago not to allow the prisoner any visitors, (and) when he is sick I was

[34] Baille's letter is dated in the French Revolutionary calendar on the 26 of Vendémiaire. To avoid confusion concerning the months in the Gregorian calendar and the French Revolutionary calendar, I will use numbers of days or make the necessary conversions without further footnotes about tracking the difference in the two systems.

not to procure him a doctor or a surgeon, except if an affirmative order authorized me to do so [ayant reçu depuis quelques jours l'ordre de ne laisser voir le prisonnier à qui que ce soit, (et) lorsqu'il sera malade je ne lui procurerez n'y médecin n'y chirurgien à moins qu'un ordre positif m'y autorise]" (199-200). In a subsequent letter from Decrès to Baille on October 27 1802, the Minister of Marine writes that if Louverture is sick "your most trusted officer himself may provide him with care when warranted, but only in your presence and with the greatest precautions, so that these visits need not be reported to anyone beyond those who are absolutely necessary [l'officier le plus connu de vous, doit seul lui donner des soins, et le voir, mais seulement quand il est nécessaire, et en votre présence, et avec les précautions les plus grandes, pour que ces visites ne sortent sous aucun rapport, du cercle de ce qui est indispensable]" (202). From this exchange it is clear that the government, that is, Napoleon himself wished to torture Louverture, physically and mentally, through the environment of his prison cell. When Baille writes to Decrès on October 18, he mentions that Louverture only possesses a watch and a few coins his wife gave him to ensure that he was treated well by his captors both of which Decrès instructs him to confiscate from him because he believes they are part of Louverture's ploy to curry favor with Baille to negotiate his release. Decrès adds:

> The conduct that he has demonstrated since his detention is meant to fix the opinion you hold of him. You saw yourself that he is trying to deceive you, and you have, by your own admission, been in close proximity to him, disguised as a doctor. You do not have to continue to act in the way you have in order to assure that he has neither money nor riches. You must search everywhere on his person and in his cell to make sure that he hasn't hidden or buried anything in his cell. Take away his watch and if his use for time is honorable, we can accommodate him by setting up in his room one of those cheap wooden sundials, which are adequate enough for telling the time. (200)[35]

[35] "La conduite qu'il a tenu depuis sa détention, est faite pour fixer votre opinion sur ce qu'on doit attendre de lui. Vous vous êtes aperçu vous-même qu'il cherchait à vous tromper, et vous l'avez été effectivement par l'admission près de lui, déguisé en médecin. Vous ne devez pas vous en tenir à la démarche que vous avez faite, pour vous assurer s'il n'a ni argent ni bijoux. Vous devez faire fouiller partout pour vous en assurer, et examiner s'il n'en aura ni caché ni enterré dans sa prison. Retirez-lui sa montre et si son usage lui est agréable, on peut y suppléer [sic] en établissant dans sa chambre une de ces horloges de bois, du plus vil prix, qui servent assez pour indiquer le cours du temps."

These initial letters between Baille and Decrès confirm many things about the Napoleonic government's imprisonment of Toussaint Louverture. They attest to the precipitous decline in Louverture's health and hygiene, which General Caffarrelli first mentioned on October 7 when he wrote "il paraît dans sa prison calme, tranquille et résigné ; il souffre beaucoup du froid" (Caffarelli 1; Artières 112). His jailors and their superiors were constantly paranoid that Louverture had spies who were capable of infiltrating the prison, either disguised as doctors or as couriers of letters or money so that he might be able to bribe the guards for his freedom. For this reason, Decrès had Baille perform numerous body searches, like the one mentioned above, to ensure that Louverture possessed nothing of value that he may use to purportedly dupe Baille into complacency. Taking his watch from him not only left him incapable of trading it for care or services, it made it impossible for Louverture to time the routines checks and patterns of the guards, but worst of all, it left him without a human connection to time.

In these first months in the prison at the Château de Joux, it was simply a matter of *temps*, a combination of time and weather, that weakened Toussaint Louverture at first, but it was outright neglect and torture that would soon lead to his death. In order to fully understand the way that climate and time were manipulated, Nemours had to return to the archival documents that Maurice Pigallet and Henry Gauthier-Villars ignored or willfully misread to exonerate the Napoleonic chain of command. Although the first two months of Louverture's captivity reveal misinterpretations of sources, in the subsequent six months the climate of antiblackness becomes readily apparent, not only in the historiography, but also in the archival traces of Louverture's mortal remains.

What Have Become of the Glorious Relics? Between Anthropometry and Archival Care

In the final chapter of *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture*, Alfred Nemours expresses his frustration with the archive of Louverture's time in prison, his frustration with the historical work and the writing around Louverture's death, his frustration with "the proof that ends up lacking [les preuves qui finissent par manquer]" (140). Throughout his text, Nemours shows that he is exasperated by the loss of Louverture's personal effects—his epaulettes, madras scarves, and his writings that were confiscated from him—the material traces that previous chroniclers of his eight-month imprisonment overlooked, failing to comprehend the importance of these items for the preservation of Haitian patrimony and history. Part of Nemours's frustration is motivated by his critical stance vis-à-vis contemporary writers of Toussaint Louverture's final months, Henry Gauthier-Villars and Maurice Pigallet. The former's insistence on a romanticized narration of the dénouement of Louverture's life, and the latter's reticence to acknowledge the deleterious effects of Louverture's imprisonment. However, the more vexing part of these stories for Nemours is in the telling of Louverture's death and the locus of his mortal remains.[36] While Gauthier-Villars acknowledges the malevolent actions of the Napoleonic government which led to his death, he strays from the archival record, embellishing his story with Judeo-Christian scenes of the last rites "the unfortunate man, whose hair had whitened, awaited death by reading the Gospel. We had kindly hoped to leave him this book [l'infortuné, dont les cheveux avaient blanchi, attendait la mort en lisant l'Évangile. On avait bien voulu lui laisser ce livre]" (Gauthier-Villars 99). For Pigallet's part, he correctly teases out the sensational aspects of Gauthier-Villars's narrative, but he himself takes it to a new extreme,

[36] For a chronology of Louverture's death as told via Nemours' archive, see: Gutarra Cordero, Dannelle. *El Cautiverio de Toussaint L'Ouverture En Fort de Joux: Raza, Colonialismo y Modernidad En La Coyuntura Histórica de La Revolución Haitiana*. Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, 2012.

suggesting that the Napoleonic government had nothing to do in provoking Louverture's death. Unlike his French compatriot, Pigallet cites little to no archival evidence in refuting Gauthier-Villars, and he insists that Louverture's belongings were sold to compensate his jailors for their "extraordinary service" (519).[37]

Lastly, Gauthier-Villars and Pigallet both draw attention to the circumstances surrounding Toussaint Louverture's burial, potential exhumation, and the disappearance of his mortal remains. The two offer various claims about the fate of Louverture's remains. One possibility is that Louverture's body was exhumed and his decapitated skull was sawed in two, to be analyzed by the Société d'Anthropologie de Pontarlier and later reassembled to adorn the chimney in Louverture's cell. The other is that the skull found in Louverture's former cell was that of a white soldier (according to its anthropometric dimensions), causing Louverture's skull to become a folkloric object "like Voltaire's fountain pen or Rousseau's cane" (Gauthier-Villars 100; Pigallet 519-520). Although these French writers offer citations to secondary literature, neither provide an archivally sound justification for their claims, which, for Nemours, represents the most pernicious aspect of their narrations of Louverture's captivity. As a result of these renderings of the death and the anthropometric treatment of Louverture's mortal remains, the precursor to Haitian independence and his legacy in France was yoked to centuries-old racist French anthropological ideas, which Nemours sets out to counter in the final chapter of *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort*, entitled "Que sont devenues les glorieuses reliques ?"

***

[37] Maurice Pigallet's lack of archival evidence is particularly ironic considering he was appointed the chief archivist of the Department of Doubs where the Château de Joux's records are located by a prefectorial decree on December 31, 1903. His duties as archivist included assembling directories for the Department of Doubs and overseeing the cataloguing of its records. For the decree, see: Bournon, Fernand, and F. Mazerolle. *La Correspondance Historique et Archéologique : Organe d'informations Mutuelles Entre Archéologues et Historiens*. Librairie A. Fontemoing, 1903, pp. 321.

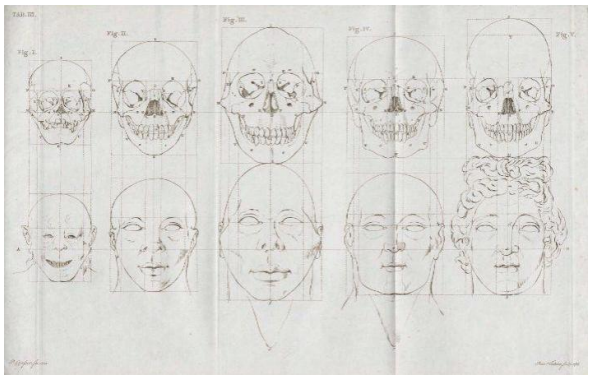


Figure 9: Petrus Camper's Chart of Contrasted Faces (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

Indeed, as shown before with regard to Jean François Dubroca's depictions of Toussaint Louverture, European taxonomies of race and intellect had caught up to the leadership of the Haitian Revolution by the end of the eighteenth century so much so that Louverture, Christophe, and especially Jean Jacques Dessalines were identified by pseudo-scientific and racial epithets. In his journal, published contemporaneously to Gauthier-Villars and Pigallet's articles, Marie-François Caffarelli recounts his interrogation of Toussaint Louverture, beginning with a racially prejudiced physiognomic description of his interlocutor:

> Toussaint-Louverture [sic] is a Negro five feet and one inch in height, thin, with slender legs and thighs, very black, big eyes, quite prominent cheek bones, a long and wide nose, a large mouth missing the teeth on his upper jaw, his lower jaw juts out and features long, swollen teeth, his cheeks are pitted, his face elongated, his physiognomy is quite active, he listens to himself a lot, his temperament is docile when he wishes to persuade you, but when you speak with him and he understands that you want to know, what he's thinking, he looks askance, full of falseness and concealment. (Artières 112)[38]

In the French anthropological and scientific tradition, these types of descriptions of non-European peoples dominated the natural sciences since the 1770s when the Dutch illustrator and anthropologist Petrus Camper published charts of contrasted facial angles that juxtaposed a

[38] "Toussaint-Louverture [sic] est un nègre de la taille de cinq pieds et un pouce, mince, les jambes et les cuisses déliées, fort noir, les yeux grands, les pommettes très proéminentes, le nes épaté, mais assez long, la bouche grande, sans dents à la mâchoire supérieure, l'inférieure très avancée et garnie de dents longs et saillantes, les joues creuses, la face allongée, la physionomie très mobile, s'écoutant beaucoup, l'air doux lorsqu'il veut persuader, mais lorsqu'on lui parle et il pense qu'on veut le deviner, il a un regard de côté, plein de fausseté et de dissimulation."

chimpanzee, a "Negro," a Kalmuck, a European, and the bust of *Apollo Belvedere* (Figure 9). Although Camper supposedly believed this chart "[demonstrated] the near parity of the human races," his chart offered a visual and rhetorical demonstration of racial difference that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries racial scientists and anthropologists would use to install and maintain a racial hierarchy in medical and scientific research (Painter 65). According to historian Nell Ervin Painter, Camper's chart was originally composed in the 1770. It was later published posthumously in 1792. Over the next few decades into the nineteenth century, Camper's ideas were translated and transposed throughout the world, leading to Charles White's phrenological charts in *An Account of the Regular Gradations of Man* (1799) and later Samuel George Morton and Arthur de Gobineau's studies of racial inequality on the basis of cranial capacity (65-66). While Morton and Gobineau's ideas emerged decades after Toussaint Louverture's captivity and death, it is clear in reading Caffarelli's grotesque physiognomy of the Haitian leader that anthropometric and racial pseudo-science impacted his imprisonment.

By 1802 when Caffarelli writes of Louverture's "a large mouth missing the teeth on his upper jaw, his lower jaw juts out and features long, swollen teeth, his cheeks are pitted, his face elongated [bouche grande, sans dents à la mâchoire supérieure, l'inférieure très avancée et garnie de dents longs et saillantes, les joues creuses, la face allongée]" the connection between Napoleonic carceral texts and prevailing Atlantic world ideas of anthropometry comes into plain view. In fact, well before the start of the Haitian Revolution, Thomas Jefferson's notions about Africans and their bodies circulated in metropolitan and colonial French contexts before it was rendered in English and published as *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1787.[39] Comparing the

[39] Compiled, translated, and published in 1785 and 1786 in Paris, first privately then for a larger audience with the publisher Barrois, Jefferson's *Observations sur la Virginie* was commissioned by the French Intendent to Saint-Domingue, François Barbé-Marbois, during his term as a secretary to the French Legation to the United States. In *Observations sur la Virginie*, Jefferson expresses his beliefs in polygenesis, and he compares enslaved Africans to

discursive treatment of Louverture's physique to the plates included in Charles White's *An Account of the Regular Gradations of Man* shown below (Figure 10), it is clear that racial difference was understood through the construction of a monstrous form of (in)humanity where blackness is portrayed the grotesque modification of mankind. In Figure 10, White's illustrations depict various orangutans superimposed above sketches of fantastical renderings of "Wild People," alongside craniological drawings of pygmies and European skulls modified to illustrate the supposed difference between African and European jaw and facial angles.[40]

Engravings of Louverture included in nearly every biography or historical treatment of Louverture also illustrate the bond between mainstream European anthropometric and aesthetic prejudices surrounding blackness and intellect ("Todos los hombres son el hombre" 64-65). Contemporaneous to Toussaint Louverture and his captors, these depictions and ideas engendered a hostile cultural climate that ultimately affected the treatment of Louverture's body and mortal remains from months before he perished until well after his death. Figure 11, below, demonstrates the extent to which American and French anthropological schools were dependent on the collection and medicalization of enslaved and formerly enslaved black bodies. The collection of anthropometric data continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the

orangutans. These ideas as well as the Franco-American exchange of racist ideas about Black intellect continued throughout the nineteenth century and were used as a rallying cry for the Confederacy as well as US notions of white peril.

[40] The legend to "PLATE III" reads: "This Plate exhibits copies of the best authenticated engravings that have yet been published of four different kinds of Apes, which approach nearest to Man: likewise the skull of Dr. Tyson's Pigmy—the skull of a Monkey from Lavater—the profiles of a native of Botany Bay and an [sic] European—and the profiles of an African and an [sic] European." The legend for PLATE IV reads: "*a, a, a, a,* Square Portion of the Skin of a Negro. *b,* The *Cutis vera*, or True Skin, which is White.
c, The darkest *Reta Mucosum*, which is the under Layer. *d,* The Bluish or Greyish *Rete Mucosum*, which is the upper Layer. *e,* The Cuticle itself, a Mixture of Blue and White, or Greyish."

twentieth century; this is the story of Toussaint Louverture that Nemours tells through his archival practice.[41]

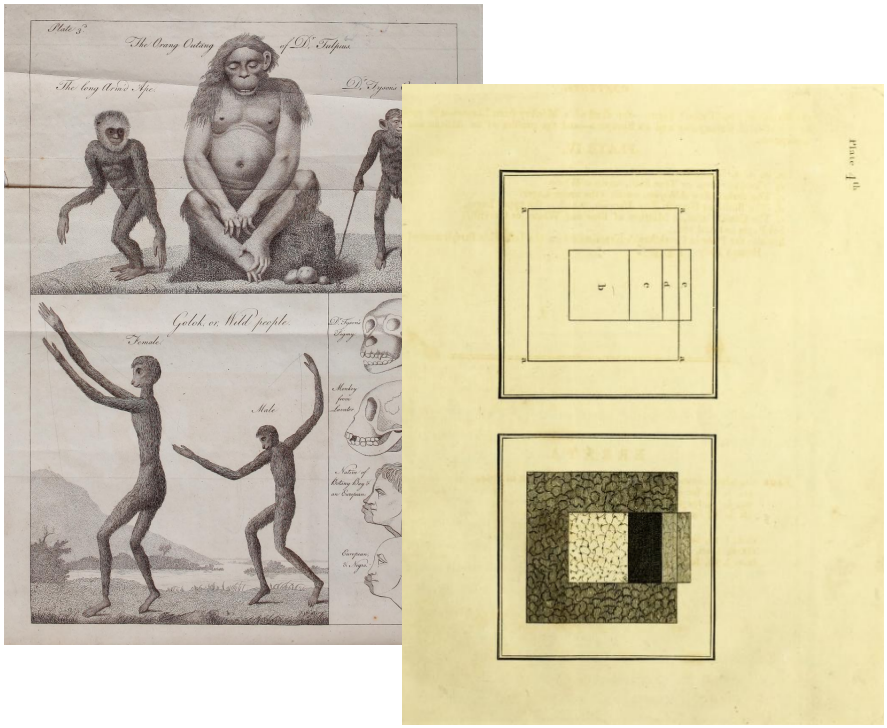


Figure 10: Plate III (left) and IV (right) from Charles White's *An Account of the Regular Gradations of Man* (1799) held by the University of Glasgow Library Special Collections. (Source: Archive.org)

After Commandant Baille was replaced with Citoyen Amiot as the commander of the Château de Joux, tasked with overseeing Toussaint Louverture's imprisonment, Louverture's health continued to degrade as the months of January, February, and March wore on.[42] As historian

[41] It is also important to note that the anthropological and medical practices that Toussaint Louverture's body was subjected to would lead later be enacted upon Sarah Baartmann and many other Black women and men throughout the nineteenth century to speculate on Black sexuality and gender as well as develop theories related to human anatomy still in practice today. Regarding Sarah Baartman and Napoleon's surgeon general Georges Léopold Cuvier, see: Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting's *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French* (1999) and Robin Mitchell's *Vénus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth Century France* (2020). For more on the impact of slavery on the history of medicine, see: Deirdre Cooper Owens's *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* (2018) and Daina Ramey Berry's *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh* (2017).

[42] Amiot took over for Baille in January 1803, according to the "Lettre du ministre de la Guerre au ministre de la Justice, du 25 frimaire an XI (16 décembre, 1802)" Nemours cites from the Archives Nationales de France (Nemours 104) .

Dannelle Gutarra carefully argues, Louverture's health deteriorated in direct correlation to the amount of firewood he received to heat his cell.[43] Part of this was caused, too, by the internment of two other Haitian revolutionary figures, Jean and Zamor Kina, in the Château de Joux that resulted in the direct cutting of Louveture's provisions.[44] It was not only the lack of provisions, though, that exacerbated Toussaint Louverture's decline in health and death, Amiot maintained Baille's system while instituting a new procedure of nocturnal searches of Louverture's cell and person (Nemours 104). As mentioned before, the doctor Tavernier that Amiot engaged to inspect Louverture on his deathbed stated that he could not faithfully diagnose the French prisoner because, "the bodily composition of Negroes does not ressemble Europeans in the least [la composition des neigres (sic) ne ressemblant en rien à celle des Européens]" (107). Since medicine was deemed useless to Louverture, he continued to show signs of a fever, losing more teeth, and exhibiting pain until the morning of 7 April 1803 when he finally succumbed to the harsh environment of his prison cell.

One of the most important primary documents available to historians in recounting Toussaint Louverture's death is his medical autopsy, which Nemours and his wife found among the archives in the Hôtel de Ville of La Cluse in 1927.[45] The autopsy was performed by Doctor Tavernier, who refused to see him months earlier due to his polygenetic beliefs, and a surgeon named Gresset both confirmed Louverture's cause of death as a combination of a series of

[43] Gutarra, Dannelle. "Toussaint Louverture's Captivity at Fort de Joux." *Journal of Caribbean History*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2015, pp. 145–59.
[44] Geggus, David Patrick. "Slave, Soldier, Rebel: The Strange Career of Jean Kina." *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 137–51.; Dize, Nathan H. "The Persistence of Félicité Kina in the World of the Haitian Revolution: Kinship, Gender, and Everyday Resistance." *The Routledge Companion to Black Women's Cultural Histories*, edited by Janell Hobson, Routledge, 2021, pp. 137–45.
[45] Before Nemours, Anténor Firmin mounted a defense of Toussaint Louverture in his *De l'égalité des races humaines: anthropologie positive,* which was a seen as a trenchant response to Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines.* See: Miller, Paul B. "'Tous Les Hommes Sont l'homme' [Todos Los Hombres Son El Hombre] Anténor Firmin, Toussaint Louverture, La Igualdad Racial y El Hecho de La Negrez." *Toussaint Louverture: Repensar Un Icono*, edited by Mariana Past and Nathalie Léger, Editorial del Caribe, 2015, pp. 52–79.

strokes and pneumonia, proving that they were entirely capable of treating Louverture months earlier had the Napoleonic government not wanted to exacerbate and accelerate Louverture's death. In their detailed report, Tavernier and Gresset write extensively about Louverture's body:

> A little bit of mucus mixed with blood in his mouth and on his lips; the left lateral sinus, the vessels of the pia mater are saturated in blood; serous effusion in lateral ventricle, same side; the choroid plexus infiltrates and strewn with small hydatids; the pleura adhering largely to the substance of the lungs; blood engorgement of the right lung of the corresponding pleura; mass of purulent matter in this viscus; a small fatty polyp in the right ventricle of the resting heart was [sic] in its natural state; thinning of the omentum, a pathological state of this membrane similar to that which occurs after a long illness.
>
> The stomach [sic], intestines, liver [sic], spleen, kidneys, bladder showed no alteration.
>
> Consequently, we believe that apoplexy and pleuro-pleuropneumonia are the causes of death for Toussaint-Louverture
> (Nemours 269)[46]

Starting with superficial observations about Louverture's lips and mouth, the two doctors then begin to dissect his body, revealing the layers of internal trauma that he experienced during eight months of torture. If, indeed, these doctors believed that the composition of whites and blacks were so dissimilar, would they have conducted as detailed a report as they produce above? By including the medical report of Louverture's autopsy, both as an image and in a typed transcription, Nemours demonstrates the power of archival sources to reveal the cracks in French narratives of Louverture's imprisonment. Nemours writes, "They had ignored its existence (Louverture's autopsy) [...] During the trip I made with my wife to Pontarlier with my wife in 1927, suspecting that an autopsy report existed, I asked to perform meticulous records requests in

[46] "Un peu de mucus mélé [sic] de sang dans la bouche et sur les lèvres ; le sinus latéral gauche, les vaisseaux de la pie mère gorgés de sang ; épanchement séreux dans le ventricule latéral, même côté ; le plexus choroïde infiltre et parsemés de petites hydatides ; la plèvre adhérente en grand partie à la substance des poumons ; engorgement sanguin du poumon droit de la plèvre y correspondante ; amas de matière purulente dans ce viscère ; un petit polype graisseux dans la ventricule droit du cœur qui aureste était [sic] dans son état naturel ; amaigrissement de l'épiploon, état pathologique de cette membrane pareil à celui qui se rencontre après une longue maladie.
L'esthomac [sic], les intestins, le foye [sic], la rate, les reins, la vessie n'ont offert aucune altération.
En conséquence nous estimons que l'apoplexie, la pleuro-péripneumonie sont les causes de mort de Toussaint-Louverture."

the new, spacious city hall in La Cluse where we found it [on ignorait son existence (l'autopsie cadavérique) [...] Au cours du voyage que je fis en août 1927, à Pontarlier avec ma femme, soupçonnant son existence, je demandai de faire de minutieuses recherches dans le nouvel et spacieux Hôtel de Ville de La Cluse, où il fut découvert]" (113). Nemours's repetition of the words "its existence" here is telling because the production and forgetting of Louverture's autopsy record shows that the French government did, in fact, wish to obliterate the Haitian revolutionary from the historical record, to lose his death certificate among the many other death certificates that accumulated between September 1802 and December 1813. What is more, Louverture's autopsy reveals that while the French government saw it important to enforce the social effects of racism to justify denying Louverture access to medical care when he was alive, he was immediately dismembered and dissected for the practice of French postmortem procedures with no acknowledgement of any racial difference. In this instance, Nemours uses his archival practice and training to locate the documentary traces of Louverture's body, providing the potential for closure where the French controlled archives previously only presented a lack or an absence of finitude. But, can an autopsy report, replete with violence and medical jargon, ever offer a real sense of closure?[47]

In seeking to provide closure for Haitians, Nemours embarks on a literary historical search to recover the traces of Louverture's body after it was interred at the Château de Joux. As the autopsy report shows, Louverture's body was dissected and broken down to the point that the examiners were able to remark on the status of the *pia mater* and the choroid plexus, belonging to the skull, brain, and spinal column. Once the autopsy was complete, Louverture's remains

[47] This is one of the central questions Nicolas Mirzoeff asks, for example, in his article reading the Grand Jury transcript in the case against Darren Wilson regarding the murder of Michael Brown, see: Mirzoeff, Nicholas. "The Murder of Michael Brown Reading the Ferguson Grand Jury Transcript." *Social Text*, vol. 34, no. 1 126, Mar. 2016, pp. 49–71. doi:10.1215/01642472-3427129.

were buried at the Fort de Joux near the chapel in an unmarked grave and one source wrote in 1834 that "Louverture's bones are mixed with those of the humblest peasants, since on the site there remains no trace of his burial [les ossements de Louverture sont mêlés à ceux des plus humbles paysans, car il ne reste sur les lieux nul vestige de son inhumation]" (Nemours 149-150). However, by 1845, writers began to suggest that Louverture's body had been, at least in part, exhumed. Charles Bailly reported to having discovered his gravesite in 1850, causing Henry Wager six years later to revise his historical account of the Fort de Joux that he had originally written in 1845, stating that "the Negro general's coffin was discovered by M. Bailly [...] in the vault of an old chapel situated in the quad of the fort [le cerceuil du général nègre a été découvert par M. Bailly [...] dans un caveau d'une ancienne chapelle située sur la place de la caserne du fort]" (150). In the second edition of *Vibrations lyriques*, published in 1856, Wager acknowledges that while Louverture's entire body had yet to be recovered, "a fragment of Toussaint Louverture's skull, donated by M. Roland, a pharmacist, was deposited at the Pontarlier library [un fragment du crâne de Toussaint, donné par M. Roland, pharmacien, était déposé à la bibliothèque de la ville de Pontarlier...]" (Wager 107). Nemours also identifies Edouard Girod's 1857 *Esquisse historique, légendaire et descriptive de la ville de Pontarlier, du fort de Joux et de ses environs* where the local author states in a footnote about Louverture's death that the captain of an engineering crew "Toussaint's bones were easily recognizable among the skeletal remains of the five or six other cadavers, with his head marked by the depression in his skull and the swollen nature of his lower jaw, which are distinct and unalienable characteristics of the black race [reconnut aisément, parmi les ossements de cinq ou six autres cadavres, celui de Toussaint, à la tête marquée par la dépression du crâne et la saillie de la mâchoire inférieure, types invariables et distinctifs de la race noire]" (Girod 415). Girod's

description of Toussaint's disembodied skull carries the exact same language as Caffarelli's anthropometrically inspired physiognomy when referring to the "saillie de la mâchoire inférieure," which the author may have read in preparing his manuscript, but the imagery suggested by the "dépression du crâne" and Girod's insistance on the form of the skull as belonging to the black race shows just how diffuse the culture of racial science was in the mid-nineteenth century. Girod continues, writing that "le crâne fut scié; une partie en est déposée à la bibliothèque de Pontarlier" while the rest of Louverture's skull was purportedly left in the chimney of the cell he was detained in from 23 August 1802 until his death on 7 April 1803 (415).

Faced with many competing narratives about the location of Louverture's remains, Nemours relies on his archival training as a historian to respond to each possibility and in the process compiles an extensive archive of literary-historical references to Toussaint Louverture, exposing the pseudo-scientific fascination with the Haitian revolutionary's dead body and illuming the racial social climate of France in the afterlife of Louverture. Writers from the mid-nineteenth century often replicated narratives regarding the whereabouts of Toussaint Louverture's skull and skeletal remains. They followed three theories: they were either placed in a colonial reliquary like the Pontarlier library or the Musée de Dijon, or Toussaint Louverture's remains were sent to Bordeaux to be reclaimed by his son Isaac Louverture who resided in the city until his death in 1854, or ultimately that Louverture's body was never recovered and have since decomposed at the site of the Château de Joux. As far as French anthropologists are concerned, the first two claims are the most easily dismissed through empirical studies and comparative historical analysis, leaving the final option as the most viable. However, in examining the justifications used to dismiss the first two theories, Nemours finds that the first is

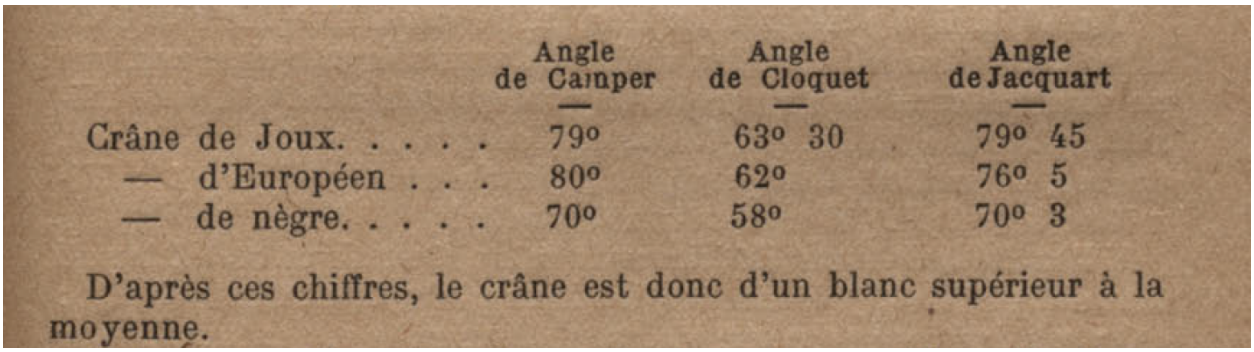
marred in the problematic history of anthropometry and racial pseudo-science while the second theory fails to provide sufficient evidence to account for Haitian attempts to recover the remains of their revolutionary leader beyond those of Isaac Louverture. Even though Nemours acknowledges that it may, in fact, be impossible to discern the exact location of Louverture's bones, he endeavors to collect sources and assemble an archive around his remains that provide what researchers and those in mourning share: the desire for narrative clarity.

The search for clarity in locating Louverture's remains begin at the turn of the twentieth century in August 1895, when the Haitian president Florvil Hyppolite commissioned his Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris to demand the repatriation of Toussaint Louverture ashes (Nemours 301). These efforts were stalled, however, because the French felt that by cooperating with a Caribbean nation at the same time that the Spanish and the United States were embroiled in military campaigns in Cuba and Puerto Rico might be interpreted as French support for indigenous sovereignty and Caribbean independence. Toussaint Louverture continued, even in the afterlife, to greatly impact the question of Caribbean freedom and self-determination. The efforts to locate and repatriate Louverture's remains recommenced in 1900 and Nemours includes letters to prefects, archivists, and museum curators in Doubs, Pontarlier, and Dijon from the Haitian Minister of Foreign Affairs in Bordeaux, F. Cardez. By including these documents, Nemours is able to not only confirm French narratives of the event, but also demonstrate the will of the Haitian government to recover physical and even archival traces of Louverture from the nation's former colonizer. In his letter to the archivist of the city of Pontarlier, Cardez asks to receive a copy of the transcript of Louverture's autopsy listed in a brochure by the Abbé J. Suchet entitled "Toussaint-Louverture prisonnier au Fort de Joux," so that the Haitian government could begin assembling their own archive of documents pertaining to one of their

foundational leaders (287). While the archivists and local prefects in Pontarlier are more than content to cooperate with Cardez regarding Louverture's autopsy, they even sent the Haitian delegation a series of photos of the Fort de Joux, they were hesitant to send the cranial fragments from either the Musée de Dijon, the Bibliothèque de Pontarlier, or the cell at the Fort de Joux.

Hoping to encourage local leaders in Pontarlier to transfer Louverture's remains, Cardez requested officials in Pontarlier to conduct an anthropmetric study of the cranial fragments in the library and at the Fort de Joux to determine whether they possibly belonged to Louverture. Remarkably, Cardez proposed that the French physicians Dr. Houdart and Cryil Clerc study the fragments at their disposal, but he also offered to acquire the skull of a black man to aid them in their research: "All that I am able to propose to you is the transmission of the skull of a black person belonging to the Anatomical Museum of the Faculté de Médecine de Bordeaux, it is prohibited from being destroyed, so an examination may have to suffice [Tout ce que je puis vous proposer actuellement c'est la communication d'un crane de noir appartenant au Musée anatomique de la Faculté de Médecine de Bordeaux, pièce qu'il est interdit de détruire si l'examen peut vous suffire]" (288). Lamenting that he could not purchase a skull for the two French researchers to "sacrifice and study," Cardez felt less optimistic that the study of a complete skull would yield conclusive results since the two fragments in Pontarlier were incomplete themselves. Additionally, Cardez writes that he was still waiting for replies from vendors of skeletal remains to see if he could acquire another black person's skull. From these efforts, Cyril Clerc's study, "Autour d'un crâne, Note sur Toussaint-Louverture," concluded that

the fragments found in the library in Pontarlier and the cell at the Fort de Joux "could only be, scientifically speaking, that of a white person" (Nemours 152).



	Angle de Camper	Angle de Cloquet	Angle de Jacquart
	—	—	—
Crâne de Joux.	79°	63° 30	79° 45
— d'Européen . . .	80°	62°	76° 5
— de nègre.	70°	58°	70° 3

D'après ces chiffres, le crâne est donc d'un blanc supérieur à la moyenne.

Figure 11: Facial angle data excerpted from Cyril Clerc's study "Autour d'un crâne, Note sur Toussaint-Louverture" from the "Pièces Justificatives" to Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint Louverture, Notre pèlerinage au Fort de Joux by Alfred Auguste Nemours (1929).

Although Nemours cites very little from Clerc's study, "Autour d'un crâne, Note sur Toussaint-Louverture," in his narrative text, he includes it in its entirety in the appendix, making it possible for subsequent researchers to query the text. In "Autour d'un crâne," Clerc takes issue with a cadre of writers who have claimed the skull in the cell at the Château de Joux belonged to Louverture, such as the French abolitionist Victor Schœlcher and Clerc's contemporary Henry Gauthier-Villars.[48] In disproving these historians and writers, Clerc delves in to an extensive discussion of facial angles, arguing that studies conducted by Petrus Camper, Jules Cloquet, Frédéric Cuvier, and Henri Jacquart (see Figure 11) are capable of proving that the portion of the cranium in the chimney belonged to an older white man rather than a Black man.

After more than a century of mythology and numerous studies of varying literary and historical merit, little could still be said for the whereabouts of Louverture's mortal remains.

[48] Victor Schœlcher, a French politician and abolitionist, is best known for leading the parliamentary push for the definitive abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in France and its colonies in 1848. He was also, in 1889, the author of *Vie de Toussaint L'Ouverture* in which he claimed that the Haitian general's body was not exhumed and transported to Bordeaux by Isaac Louverture.

Even though Nemours fails in his attempt to locate these "glorious relics," as he calls them, he is able to portray the numerous racially hostile environments that Louverture endured in life but also in the afterlife. The physical suffering that Louverture experienced locked away in a glacial prison cell and the metaphysical suffering that his bones, as well as those of innumerable other Africans and autochthonous peoples, endured to imbue European and American anthropology with the racist venture of anthropometry comprise the antiblack environment in which Louverture dwelled in the nineteenth century French imaginary.

By collecting sources and assembling an archive of Louverture's captivity and death, Alfred Nemours manages to build a narrative history of Louverture that goes beyond any charges of hagiography or pedestrian rigor. Nemours is able to narratively repatriate a large sum of documents that would have otherwise remained inaccessible in metropolitan French archives. In defrosting the *paroles gelées* in Pontarlier, Doubs, Paris, Brest, and Bordeaux, Nemours demonstrates a historical practice that amounts to an empirical form of mourning, or what Karla F.C. Holloway refers to as "mourning stories," where the act of writing or creating with stories that center black humanity contests the very occlusion of blackness in narrative by allowing readers to visit with the remains of renowned figures.

Sitting at three hundred and fifteen pages, Nemours constructed the most extensive narrative and archival treatment of Toussaint Louverture's captivity and death to this day. In most histories of Haiti and biographies of Louverture himself, these events normally comprise fewer than ten pages at most. As I have shown, Nemours harnesses the power of archival collection and narrative history to address the historical vacuum presented by Louverture's death in prison. His study also prompts numerous questions about the custodial nature of archives, the politics surrounding the repatriation of remains, and the still unresolved status of French

reparations to Haiti on a symbolic and financial plane. With no other alternative in sight, the French government Although the French have made strides towards recognizing slavery and the slave trade as "crimes against humanity," Toussaint Louverture is frequently co-opted by the French as a symbol of abolitionism rather than a Haitian revolutionary leader. Even the commemorative statues and busts of Louverture in the French cities of La Rochelle and Bordeaux, as well as the one in the cell at the Fort de Joux, were commissioned and donated to France by the Haitian state to commemorate the bicentenary of Haitian independence. It seems that the only remnant of the Haitian leader that remains in France was his commitment to the abolition of slavery, the rest has failed to withstand the weather of time.

CHAPTER 2

"Proof(s) of Memory": Massillon Coicou, Marie Chauvet, and Transgressive Mourning Under Totalitarianism

The fin-de-siècle Haitian poet Massillon Coicou saw poetry as a way to reflect on the past. In his 1892 collection *Poésies nationales,* Coicou dedicates individual poems to events, historical figures, and his literary forebears; poems entitled "Toussaint Messiah," "Vertières," "To Toussaint," "To Pétion," "To Christophe," "To Oswald Durand," as well as others, all composed in alexandrine verse. Among the titles dedicated to Haiti's 'Founding Fathers' there is one glaring absence—no poem carries Jean-Jacques Dessalines' name. At a glance, the Haitian bard's omission may seem like a disavowal of the ideas that Dessalines has come to represent, such as anti-colonialism or the ethno-national unity Haiti's first leader inscribed in articles 12-14 of his 1805 constitution.[49] A closer look at the poems themselves reveals that one of Coicou's primary poetic concerns in *Poésies nationales* is to sift through the legacy of civil war in Haiti that was inaugurated with Dessalines' murder at the Pont Rouge on October 17, 1806. Instead of situating Dessalines in the titles of his poems, the memory of Haiti's first emperor is woven throughout the collection in poems addressing his assassination "A Voice on the Pont Rouge," "His Tomb," "Exaltation," "At the Cemetery," as well as others on the theme of civil war.

Chief among Coicou's Dessalinian poems in *Poésies nationales* is "L'Alarme" ["The Alarm"], which opposes Haitian revolutionary struggles to the civil wars waged in Haiti throughout the nineteenth century on paper, in the halls of the government, on both sides of the island, and within the Haitian family. The poem begins with an eerily familiar call to arms,

[49] Articles 12 and 13 declared that no whites or foreigners (blancs) would ever be able to own property in Haiti again, except for the children of white and foreign women naturalized as Haitian citizens and their progeny; Article 14 declared all Haitians to be recognized as "Noirs," effectively overthrowing the colonial pigmentocracy. Joan [Colin] Dayan. *Haiti, History, and the Gods.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 23-27.

"Entendez-vous ce cri qui retentit : "Aux armes!"/ Encor l'horreur! encor du sang! encor les larmes! ["Do you hear the cry that rings out: "To Arms!"/ More horror! More blood! More tears!"] (*Poésies nationales* 148). However, the poet is quick to establish the morbid propos of the poem, revealing in the subsequent lines that the present battle cry is not ripped from the glorious past, but instead the sorrow of an ongoing civil war:

Ces lugubres échos, ce n'est pas le canon De la Crête-à-Pierrot qui tonne en sa furie Pour défendre ou venger les droits de la Patrie, Et chasser l'étranger envahisseur; oh! non,	These mournful echos, it's not the canon of the Crête-à-Pierrot that sounds its fury To defend or avenge the rights of the Nation By chasing out the foreign invader; oh! no
C'est le peuple debout, la nation entière Usant mal à propos de son ardeur guerrière; C'est le peuple debout contre le peuple enfin; C'est nous tous acharnés sur nous tous...	It's the people standing, the entire nation Misusing their passion as warriors; It's the people standing against the people It is all of us tearing each other apart (*Poésies nationales* 148)

Coicou not only memorializes Dessalines' body in poems such as "A Voice on the Pont Rouge," "His Tomb," and In the Cemetery," but he also commemorates Haiti's first emperor by weaving Dessalinian ideals and language throughout poems like "The Alarm." Haitian historians and constitutional scholars have long commented on the way that Dessalines shaped the Haitian political lexicon in his speeches and the laws he promulgated. For instance, in his April 28, 1804 speech, Dessalines proclaimed "j'ai sauvé mon pays, j'ai vengé l'Amérique!" ["I saved my country, I've avenged America!"], forever linking the idea of anticolonial vengeance – such as in the battle at Crête-à-Pierrot which Coicou cites in the stanza above – with Dessalines.[50] In addition to the language of anticolonialism, Coicou intentionally employs the adjective "lugubre/mournful/haunting" in the opening line of his poem because it harkens back to

[50] Casimir, Jean. "La Révolution de 1804 et l'État." *Genèse de l'État Haïtien (1804-1859)*, edited by Michel Hector, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009, pp. 77–92.

Dessalines' declaration of independence where he famously evoked the "le nom français lugubre encore nos contrées" ["the French name still haunts our land"].[51]

In the final lines of another poem, entitled "Au Cimetière" ["At the Cemetery"], Coicou claims that Dessalines, his gravesite, and the political manipulation of a Dessalinian lexicon have constrained and contorted "the shadow of Dessalines."[52] From 1806 until 1844, Dessalines had been consigned to oblivion until Charles Rivière-Hérard evoked his name in a January speech commemorating the fortieth anniversary of Haitian independence, announcing "It is to the glorious Dessalines, it is to his immortal comrades that the Country owes the new era into which she enters."[53] Rivière-Hérard and others like future Haitian presidents Lysius Salomon (1879-1888) and Pierre Nord Alexis (1902-1908) would also manipulate Dessalines' ideals to curry favor with the Haitian masses, essentially watering down his legacy so that what is recorded in the print archive often amounts to panegyrics or vacuous patriotism. In order to combat this false memory of Dessalines, Coicou sought to produce numerous versions or "proofs" of Dessalines in *Poésies nationales* and other later works, such as the poem "Oubli" ["Oblivion"] in *Impressions* (1904) and his play *L'Empereur Dessalines* (1906), so that the popular memory of Dessalines be incorporated into the written archive. Writing about the significance of Dessalines in the popular tradition, Colin Dayan argues, "the figure of Dessalines became a *proof of memory*: something gained by those who were thought to have no story worth the telling" (*Haiti, History, and the Gods* 30). Put another way, Dessalines became a way for Coicou to provide

---

[51] From Dessalines, Jean-Jacques. "The Haitian Declaration of Independence." *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789–1804: A Brief History with Documents*, edited & translated by Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006, pp. 188–91. On the translation of "lugubrer" as "mournful," see: Michael C. Reyes, "Haitian Indigeneity before Africa: Commemorating Columbus and Dessalines in Henri Chauvet's La Fille Du Kacik (1894)." *Research in African Literatures* 50, no. 4 (Winter, 2020): 176-177. On Dessalines use of "lugubrer" as a verb see: Sibylle Fisher, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in The Age of Revolutions.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 201-202.

[52] *Poésies* nationales, 245.

[53] From Thomas Madiou's *Histoire d'Haïti* as cited and translated by Colin Dayan. *Haiti, History, and the Gods,* 27.

proof of a heritage that existed before times of nineteenth-century civil war and well before the twentieth-century dictatorships of Pierre Nord Alexis, François Duvalier, and Jean-Claude Duvalier. His poetry and theatre also mounted a defense of Dessalines' memory, "defending the dead" as M. NourbeSe Philip puts it, by effectively localizing what remains of Dessalines gravesite in poetry while ontologizing the linguistic remains of an aspiring Haitian unity before the fall of the first empire.[54]

The poetic gestures that Coicou rehearsed in his writing, the process of incorporating someone's linguistic remains into a new text, is something that Marie Chauvet was drawn to in her literary career as way of providing proofs of memory through intertextuality. Chauvet's historical novel, *La Danse sur le volcan* (1957), draws on Jean Fouchard's *Le Théatre à Saint-Domingue* (1955) to reconstruct the world of colonial Haiti and the life of Minette, providing her with a subjectivity that history cannot provide. In *Fonds des nègres* (1960) Chauvet recovers and transforms into fictional scenes of Vodou ceremonies found in *Le Vodou haïtien: rite, radas -- canzo* (1945) by Dr. Louis Maximilien. In 1968, when she published *Amour, colère et folie*, Chauvet turned to Massillon Coicou's poetry, particularly "L'Alarme," to critique the same process of political amnesia that Coicou staunchly decried in his writing.

In *Folie*, the third novella of her celebrated triptych published in 1968 by the Parisian editor Gallimard, Chauvet resurrects Coicou's memory and poetry to critique the totalitarianism of the day. In many ways, *Folie* acts as a palimpsest, evoking the life and death of Coicou and the dictatorship of Haitian President Pierre-Nord Alexis, as well as tracing a genealogy of Haitian color politics from the nineteenth-century to the reign of François Duvalier.[55] The color

[54] Patricia Saunders, "Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M. NourbeSe Philip," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 63–79, https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-63.
[55] For more on the lived persecution of writers under Duvalier, see: Thomas C. Spear. "Marie Chauvet: The Fortress Still Stands." *Yale French Studies*. 128 (2016): 11-13.

politics in *Folie* are entrenched in a nineteenth-century Haitian reality of education and social classification—the role of assassinations and firing squads harken to the reign of Alexis and the haunting regime of *noirisme* evokes the concrete and symbolic violence of François Duvalier's dictatorship. In order to assess the palimpsestic complexities of *Folie*, I argue that Chauvet's recovery of Massillon Coicou's life and poetry during the first Haitian dictatorship of the twentieth century is central for understanding the novella as well as the larger project of *Amour, colère et folie*. I will demonstrate how, by taking up Coicou's mantle, weaving his literary project throughout parts of *Amour* and *Folie,* Chauvet manages to (re)produce a critique of persistent social and class divisions in Haiti from Alexis to Duvalier while re-inscribing the late poet into Haitian literary history. In what follows, I show how Chauvet salvages the proof(s) of Massillon Coicou's resistance to totalitarianism. Although Coicou has a spectral presence in *Folie*—the novella is about a fictional group of poets who recite Coicou's poem "L'Alarme"—Chauvet mobilizes the potential of his legacy as a reflection on the enduring legacy of militarism and totalitarianism within the Haitian state under Nord Alexis and François Duvalier.[56] "L'Alarme" designates a literary space, a poetic site of mourning with transgressive and seditious potential that allows Chauvet to destabilize the genre of prose fiction and unhinge the contextual setting of *Folie* to trace a genealogy of totalitarianism.

Recovering Marie Chauvet and Turning Toward *Folie*

Marie Chauvet's body of work is one of the most widely studied in Haitian letters; the centennial of Chauvet's birth was celebrated throughout academic and popular circles in both

[56] Scholars of *Amour, colère et folie* have established the importance of *Folie* to the collection, see Colin Dayan. "Gods in the Trunk, or Writing in a Belittered World." *Yale French Studies*, no. 128 (2016): 92–112.

Haiti where the author was born and New York where she died in exile.[57] Her trilogy *Amour, colère et folie* is the subject of numerous articles, book chapters, and dissertations by scholars in literary studies, French studies, comparative literature, and women's and gender studies. *Amour* and *Colère* treat themes of female sexuality, sexual violence, psychoanalysis and dream states, and patriarchal as well as hegemonic discourses on property. The critical work on these two novellas has led to a wealth of comparative pieces that link Chauvet with other Haitian writers, women writers in the African diaspora, and twenty and twenty-first century letters.[58] However, there is a stark contrast between the scholarship on the first two novellas, *Amour* and *Colère,* and the ultimate tale in the triptych, *Folie. Folie* (im)poses not only thematic constraints on critics, (including representations of Vodou, Duvalierism and dictatorship, and the *long durée* of Haitian color politics) but also destabilizes its own genre from within as Chauvet shifts between prose, poetry, and dramatic forms of writing.

Before writing prose fiction, Chauvet was a playwright, as Christopher T. Bonner has illuminates in his article "Staging Dictatorship: The Theatrical Poetics and Politics of Marie Chauvet's *Colère*." According to Bonner, "Chauvet's prose writing is heavily informed by theatrical conventions and, furthermore, that theater is crucial to her critique of Duvalierism in *Amour, Colère, Folie* [sic]" ("Staging a Dictatorship" 15). The novella *Folie* has often been referred to as a *huis-clos* or compared with Samuel Beckett's *En attendant Godot* because of its

[57] Although referred to often as Marie Vieux, Marie Vieux Chauvet, and Marie Chauvet, I will consistently use "Marie Chauvet," which is the name the author used during her lifetime. See Régine Joseph. "Ruins of Dreams: Marie Chauvet and Post-Apocalyptic Writing in Haiti." (PhD diss. New York University, 2010) viii

[58] On comparisons between Chauvet and Haitian writers, see: Jana Evans Braziel. *Duvalier's Ghosts: Race, Diaspora, and U.S. Imperialism in Haitian Literatures*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017.; Myriam J. A. Chancy. *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997.; Valerie Kaussen. *Migrant Revolutions: Haitian Literature, Globalization, and U.S. Imperialism*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008. For comparative studies within the African diaspora, see: Andrew Asibong. "Three Is the Loneliest Number: Marie Vieux Chauvet, Marie NDiaye, and the Traumatized Triptych." *Yale French Studies*, no. 128 (2016): 148–60.

theatrical elements—at one point during an interrogation scene, the dialogue takes the form of a script (Orlando 104; Walcott-Hackshaw 40-51). Stéphane Martelly explains that the various "cleavages and ruptures" in narrative form constitute the height of Chauvet's "jeux de l'énonciation" ["enunciation play"] in *Folie*. According to Martelly, this enables Chauvet to introduce the novella's characters – the poets René, André, Jacques, and Simon as well as others like Cécile, Marcia, and the anonymous men of local militia – while also giving her the choice of an interior or an exterior perspective like an internal monologue or an external dialogue that readers might encounter in a dramatic script or an interview transcript (Martelly 89-90). Charlee Redman Bezilla echoes Martelly's attention to this notion of the interior/exterior (literary) spaces in *Folie* with her analysis of the "canivalesque" in the novella. Redman Bezilla writes that "revolt and theatre become entangled through the public spectacle, reflected both in the literary form Vieux-Chauvet chooses and in the movement of the text from interior to exterior, public space" (Redman Bezilla 71).

Although many scholars have produced analyses of the literary forms and functions of *Folie,* only a few examine the Haitian social and literary terrain Chauvet incorporates into the novella. While studies of the literary and intertextual traces of Samuel Beckett, Arthur Rimbaud, and Denis Diderot certainly enrich our understanding of Marie Chauvet's literary influences on a global scale, especially since Chauvet introduces *Folie* with an epigraph from Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau,* Chauvet's direct citation of Massillon Coicou has yet to be fully explored. In his study *Trois études sur Folie de Marie Chauvet*, Maximilien Laroche acknowledges that Chauvet herself was influenced by the life of Massillon Coicou and the writing of Etzer Villaire and that it would be apt to examine *Amour, colère et folie* with regard to her Haitian contemporaries such as René Depestre, Jacques Stephen Alexis, and Frankétienne. Focusing on Chauvet's use of titles,

Laroche argues that her triptych deserves to be placed in the same conversation as many of her forebears and contemporaries for the way that it prolongs the discussion of madness in the realm of Haitian literature:

> "To put it another way, we must put the title of Marie Chauvet's novel in parallel with that of Philippe Thoby-Marcelin and Pierre Marcelin, *Tous les homme sont fous* (sic); replacing the term madness in the tradition of the Haitian novel, finally situating *Folie* alongside other works [such as] *Les poèmes de la mort* by Etzer Vilaire, *Mur à crever* by Franck Étienne, *Les dits du fou-aux-cailloux* by Anthony Phelps..." (Laroche 56)[59]

Even Laroche, though, concludes that *Folie* may be more emblematic of Haitian novels in the mid-twentieth century, suggesting that Chauvet was more of a "porte-parole de sa génération" ["spokeswoman for her generation"] rather than an author whose writing was as palimpsestic as it was contemporary.[60] The closest any critic comes to dissecting the importance of Massillon Coicou's poetry (instead of just the circumstances of his life) is Stéphane Martelly, in a footnote to her chapter on *Folie* in *Les Jeux du dissemblable*. Although, Martelly too, is more preoccupied with the significance Coicou holds as it relates to Haitian literary discourse as a whole rather than the poet's function in Chauvet's novella:

> ... [In] my opinion it would be just as apt to compare the beginning of *Folie* with other subversive, as well as descriptive, major narratives or novels of twentieth-century Haitian literature such as *Gouverneurs de la rosée* or *Les Arbres musiciens* to understand how these discourses (romantic for Coicou, 'indigenist' for [Jacques] Roumain, and 'the marvelous real' for [Jacques Stephen] Alexis) are reclaimed, displaced, and ultimately contested with great skill by [Chauvet] in the delirium of the mad. (Martelly 99-100, fn 6)[61]

---

[59] "Autrement dit il faut mettre le titre d Marie Chauvet en parallèle avec celui de Philippe Thoby-Marcelin et Pierre Marcelin, *Tous les hommes sont fous*; remplacer le terme de folie dans la tradition du roman haïtien, enfin situer *Folie* à côté d'autre œuvres: *Les Poèmes de la mort* d'Etzer Vilaire, *Mur à crever* de Franck Étienne, Les Dits du fou-au-cailloux d'Anthony Phelps..."

[60] Laroche, 64.

[61] "... il serait à mon avis tout aussi porteur de comparer le début de *Folie* avec ceux, tout aussi descriptifs, d'autres récits ou romans majeurs du XXe siècle littéraire haïtien tels que *Gouverneurs de la rosée* ou *Les Arbres musiciens* pour voir comment ces discours (romantique, comme pour Coicou, 'indigéniste' comme pour Roumain et 'réaliste merveilleux' comme pour Alexis) sont repris, déplacés et ultimement contestés avec une grande habileté par la romancière dans le délire des fous."

At the end of her promising and speculative footnote, Martelly explains that this work will have to wait leaving her questions about Coicou's place in Chauvet's writing as the subject of future study (Martelly 99-100, fn 6).

Murdering Poets: Social Critique as a Death Sentence

In her article "Marie Chauvet : Théoricienne sociale," Kaiama L. Glover argues that Chauvet "placed herself in the right in the eye of the sociopolitical hurricane that was Duvalier's Haiti" (Marie Chauvet : Théoricienne sociale" 21).[62] By setting herself and the project of *Amour, colère et folie* in direct opposition to the reign of François Duvalier, Chauvet comes to acutely understand the stranglehold Duvalierism has put on the Haitian élite, who, in Chauvet's words, "continue to shut their eyes and ears in order to live peacefully amidst the terror"(Marie Chauvet : Théoricienne sociale" 27).[63] For Glover, Chauvet's critique of the bourgeoisie and the Duvalier regime is grounded in a larger project that pervades the rest of her fiction and "[pushes] against the binaries embedded in social constructions of race, class, gender, and other totalizing systems" ("A Woman's Place is in" 116).[64] Given Chauvet's stance as a social theorist and critic, it is no surprise that in *Folie* she turns to Massillon Coicou. During his life, Coicou was considered the *barde national* of Haiti, recognized for his scathing critiques of Haitian in-fighting and social divisions. In his social history of Haitian literature, Hénock Trouillot argues that Coicou, especially in *Poésies nationales,* "believes in a possible regeneration of the sick and degenerate

[62] "…se situait dans l'œil même du cyclone sociopolitique qu'était l'Haïti de Duvalier…"
[63] "continuent à se boucher les yeux, la bouche et les oreilles pour vivre en paix dans la terreur" Letter to Simone de Beauvoir dated November 16, 1968, in Glover, "Théoricienne sociale," 27).
[64] For positions like these, Glover and others have sought to include Marie Chauvet among the cadre of intellectuals who constitute the Black Radical Tradition and help build an intellectual history of black women. Kaiama L. Glover. "A Woman's Place is in... The Unhomely as Social Critique in Marie Chauvet's Fille d'Haïti." *Yale French Studies*, no. 128 (2016): 116; see also, Kaiama L. Glover. "'Black' Radicalism in Haiti and the Disorderly Feminine: The Case of Marie Vieux Chauvet." Small Axe, vol. 17, no. 1, 2013, pp. 7–21.; Kaiama L Glover. "Daughter of Haiti: Marie Vieux Chauvet." Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women, edited by Mia Bay et al., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) 145–60.

motherland" (*Les origines sociales de la littérature haïtienne* 257).[65] It is no mistake then, that Chauvet engineers the confrontation between Coicou's poetry and the militarized state under Duvalier. For example, when the poets of *Folie* begin reciting Coicou's verse in public, the narrator recalls how the Commandant Cravache, the local section chief, reacts to Coicou's verse by kicking them and beating them with a billy club. This was not, however, the first time that Coicou's work was to be read or performed under a socially-ill militarized state. Beyond Haitian borders, illustrations and scenes of Haitian social turmoil like the lithography of Massillon Coicou's execution in the *Petit Journal* enabled France and other nations to challenge Haitian sovereignty by questioning Black humanity. As Jean-Claude Charles demonstrates by reproducing the image of the Coicou brothers in *Le Corps noir* (1980), the "figure du Sauvage extérieur" has been cultivated in the West to challenge Haiti's place among the "civilized nations" (Charles 121-122).[66] In this case, Nord Alexis is portrayed as the "sauvage extérieur" responsible for murdering a Haitian poet and playwright beloved by the French public.

In his lifetime, Coicou served as the director of the Association du Centenaire de l'Indépendance Nationale (Association for the Centennial of National Independence) created by Florvil Hyppolite and continued though the presidency of Nord Alexis (Zavitz 230-231). He later succeeded Anténor Firmin as the director of the Haitian delegation in Paris in 1902 when General Nord Alexis declared himself the President of Haiti. Cynically, Alexis sought to inscribe himself within the tradition of the great revolutionaries, like Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who helped liberate Haiti from the clutches of French colonialism and proclaim its freedom. When Alexis recited Dessalines' renowned Gonaives proclamation to commemorate its centennial, historian Erin Zavitz argues that the nationalistic performance "connected Alexis and his

[65] "croit en une régénérescence possible de la patrie malade et dégénérée."
[66] "the figure of the Savage abroad"

presidency to the original event in 1804" and attempted to legitimize his government in the eyes and ears of the people (Zavitz 231). To commemorate the centennial of Dessalines' murder, Alexis ordered nationwide memorial services including plays, the commissioning of the Haitian National Anthem, and other occasions—one of these ceremonies was Massillon Coicou's *L'Empereur Dessalines.* Already critical of divisive politicians, Coicou used the stage to differentiate the deceased revolutionary Dessalines from the contemporary dictator Alexis by placing Alexis in the same camp as Henry Christophe and Alexandre Pétion, the men responsible for seizing the reins of the country and plotting the assassination of its leader in 1806. Coicou returned to Port-au-Prince to present his play on October 7, 1906 at the Petit-Théâtre. The night of the premiere, the four hundred seat venue was packed with over a thousand spectators to witness Coicou's contestation of Alexis's manipulation of history.[67] Although it is unclear how Alexis reacted to the play, nearly two years after Coicou introduced *L'Empereur Dessalines* in March 1908, he and his brothers Horace and Pierre-Louis were arrested on the grounds of criminal suspicion and treason. They were then executed by firing squad in front of the Haitian National Cemetery in Port-au-Prince on the nights of March 14 and 15, 1908.

[67] For a review of Coicou's *L'Empereur Dessalines* in *Le Nouvelliste* the following day, see: "Théâtre Haïtien." *Le Nouvelliste*, 18 Oct. 1906, p. 4. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

Le Petit Journal

Le Petit Journal
CHAQUE JOUR – 6 PAGES – 5 CENTIMES
Administration : 61, rue Lafayette
Les manuscrits ne sont pas rendus

5 CENTIMES SUPPLÉMENT ILLUSTRÉ 5 CENTIMES

Le Petit Journal agricole, 5 cent. — La Mode du Petit Journal, 10 cent.
Le Petit Journal illustré de la Jeunesse, 10 cent.
On s'abonne sans frais dans tous les bureaux de poste

ABONNEMENTS

	SIX MOIS	UN AN
SEINE et SEINE-ET-OISE	2 fr.	3 fr. 50
DÉPARTEMENTS	2 fr.	4 fr. »
ÉTRANGER	2 50	5 fr. »

Dix-neuvième Année — DIMANCHE 29 MARS 1908 — Numéro 906

LA RÉVOLUTION EN HAITI

Douze notables de Port-au-Prince sont fusillés sans jugement

Figure 12: The full-color front page of Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré, March 29, 1908 featured a lithograph of Massillon Coicou's execution, a subsequent issue included an image of Nord Alexis fleeing Haiti for Jamaica. (Credit: Centre d'Information et de Documentation International Haïtienne, Caribéenne et Afro-canadienne)

In his haunting historical account of the execution of Massillon Coicou and his two brothers, Gérard Jolibois notes that Tiréseas Simon Sam, President of Haiti in February 1901, had, rather exceptionally, suspended the use of summary executions as a manner of state punishment for crimes.[68] Although Simon Sam's presidency showed greater democratic promise for governance in Haiti, his successor Nord Alexis wasted no time in re-instituting firing squads and summary executions as a means of silencing critics and snuffing out rebellion. The firing squad was used to silence Haitian intellectuals who opposed Alexis in a way not dissimilar from the way François Duvalier made a public display of state power and social control, most notably in the public execution of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin, Jr. in November 1964.

The specter of the firing squad haunts the characters of *Folie* for much of the novella.[69] René and his three friends André, Jacques, and Simon attempt to hide their intellectual activities from the repressive state for fear of reprisals. From the very beginning of the novella, René understands that his poetry describing the devils (the local militia) has the potential to incriminate him as an enemy of the state. Chauvet casts René as a veritable poet, granting him textual space in the narrative in which to record his own verse:

> Red, black, gold !
> Flames, abyss, ambition
> Captivating colors of damnation! (*Love, Anger, Madness* 290)

Embedded within these apocalyptic lines are the colors of the Duvalerist regime. Evoking the Duvalier's changes to the colors of the Haitian flag, which substituted black for the traditional blue with golden cannons in the center. The cannon and the palm trees are carry-overs from the

[68] For analyses of Nord Alexis' regime and the assassination of Massillon Coicou and his brothers, see: Jolibois, Gérard. *L'exécution des Frères Coicou*. Bibliothèque Nationale d'Haïti, 1986.; Narcisse, J. P. Richard. *Dans l'ombre d'une exécution*. Éditions de l'Université d'Haïti, 2013.
[69] Even in the opening pages of the first novella, *Amour,* Chauvet refers directly to the persecution and torture of poets and other intellectuals (*Amour, colère et folie* 19-20).

traditional Haitian bi-color flag, but under the repressive state they take on murderous proportions. René explains that the colors in the poem refer to the devils' uniforms:

> Until now, no one has managed to describe them as well as I have, so intuitively. Before I saw them, I pictured them booted, armed, dressed in resplendent red and black uniforms decorated with gold buttons. I understood the symbolic shorthand: incandescent flames burning at the bottom of an abyss out of which the damned, in a supreme and vile temptation, would see a rain of gold. (*Love, Anger, Madness* 290).

The intimidating presence of the devils is enough to force René to commit his new poem to memory, for if there were any physical traces of his sedition, it would only exacerbate and prolong his suffering. The poem, although no longer physically present, becomes the proof of his existence. René laments that it might already be too late for him because the violence has already left one person lying dead outside the door to his house. René holds tight to his poems locked away in a trunk along with his precious materials for creating a Vodou shrine: marasa dishes, candles mirroring the seven colors of the rainbow, dried leaves and Makandal medallions offered to him by his mother. René's trunk is significant because it fuses his childhood during which he spoke Haitian Creole and served the *lwa* with his mother and his adulthood as an intellectual and a poet. Colin Dayan argues that the trunk is the lynchpin to understanding not only René but also the rituals of Chauvet's fiction, where "social rules and mores proliferate most in sites of terror" ("Gods in the Trunk, or Writing in a Belittered World" 95). René's "stigmatized property" essentially pronounces him dead because the devils will persecute him for possessing Vodou objects.

The indeterminate identity of the rotting corpse only seeks to heighten René's and the reader's sense of terror and impending doom. As Dayan continues, the confusion between the

species of the corpse and the presence of stigmatized property like the *métier de makandal*[70] and poetry transform René into an animalistic state:

> I don't want to write. At least, not as I have written before. I feel as if I am coming out of my apathy and becoming self-aware. Cornered, hounded like an animal, I take stock of my powers in silence and in fear, and plunge to the very bottom of my being […] We are indeed prisoners. Brave is he who ventures out. Even the beggars have deserted the streets. (*Love, Anger, Madness* 294)

Unlike the objects in his trunk, René must now keep his poetry locked away in the recesses of his mind in order to avoid persecution; writing poetry has become akin to sedition, an impetus for destruction by the state. Hunted by the devils, René and his comrades are the devils' prisoners, and for their final transformation into animals to be complete, the poets must be arrested and put to death ("Gods in the Trunk, or Writing in a Belittered World" 96). However, that Chauvet juxtaposes sacred Vodou objects with poetry elevates the status of the literary arts, making its practitioners—poets—the martyrs of the resistance to the totalitarian regime in the novel. If the *tafya* is what is presented to the *lwa,* poetry is the reverential material that is offered to the memory of Massillon Coicou.

Over the course of the novella, the four poets become increasingly intoxicated as they polish off numerous bottles of *tafya*—Simon even goes so far as to drink from the *marasa* dishes, thereby desecrating René's offering to the *lwa*. They then storm out of the shack and into the streets reciting verses from Massillon Coicou's "L'Alarme," repeating the line "to arms!" (*Love, Anger, Madness* 363). The poets are arrested along with Cécile, another local poet who does not wish for her peers to die alone. During their interrogation, the commandant discovers

[70] In *Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti*, Kate Ramsey elaborates how Vodou practice was codified in Haitian penal law under the general appellation of *sortilèges*, and later in 1826 as the "*métier* of Macandals." Ritual practices in Haiti during the nineteenth century were policed through an "economy of specificity and generalization" whereby the law circumscribed a category of acts capacious enough to encompass a whole range of possibilities (Ramsey 60).

the source of their rallying cry when another soldier asks, “who is this Massillon Coicou […] is he still in prison?” the commandant replies “He’s dead […] at least that’s what they’ve told me” (*Love, Anger, Madness* 364). In a moment of autocratic amnesia, the commandant and his followers have lost track of who has been killed. The executioners even fail to recognize that Coicou has long since perished under the reign of another leader.

Just as Coicou used his theater and poetry to denounce the absolutist regime of Nord Alexis, the prison guards argue that his verses are once again being deployed to mock those in power. In this moment, Chauvet crystallizes the connection between Coicou and the four poets in *Folie*. In the end, René and his compatriots march to the site of their execution where they are tied to posts and shot by a firing squad, completing the palimpsestic relationship between Coicou and René. In this regard, Chauvet weaves together various totalitarian regimes, making it is unclear where Nord Alexis’ regime begins and Duvalier’s ends.

The Alexian/Duvalierist State in *Folie*

The *fin-de-siècle* poet, playwright, politician, and Haitian historian Frédéric Marcelin famously wrote in his three-volume history of Nord Alexis’ regime that “Arbitrariness is the cardinal virtue of Haitian epaulettes. In our history, the sabre slices through ideas just as well as heads” (*Le Général Nord Alexis 8-9*)[71] Writing in exile from Paris in 1909, Marcelin followed the opposite trajectory from Massillon Coicou, leaving the tumult of Haiti after Alexis was deposed. Marcelin argues that Alexis’ summary persecution of intellectual life in pursuit of a militaristic society was predicated on keeping the United States from invading Haiti like it had in the neighboring Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Although there was widespread

[71] Frédéric Marcelin served under Nord Alexis as Minister of the Interior from 1905-1908. "L’arbitraire est la vertu cardinale de l’épaulette haïtienne. Le sabre tranche, dans notre histoire, les idées aussi bien que les têtes”

outrage, as Marcelin notes, over the "executions in Port-au-Prince on March 15" (Coicou's execution) as well as those in Saint-Marc, these acts were not enough for the broader society to turn their backs on the Haitian premier. For Marcelin, Alexis fits within a long line of Haitian military-leaders-turned-despots known for "sweeping the law under the rug" (*Le Général Nord Alexis* 8).

Writing under the dictatorship of François Duvalier, Marie Chauvet's references to militias, rogue chefs de section, and societies of assassinated intellectuals take root in Duvalierist terror. However, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot convincingly argues in *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism*, Duvalierism was not created in a vacuum, and its despotism and absolutism have long been part of the rapport between Haitian leaders and the people. For this reason, it is important to explore longer narrative of despotism Chauvet elucidates in *Folie* by way of temporal ambiguity. To put it another way, as readers, it is not always clear whether the repressive regime is that of Duvalier, but rather the product ofan accumulation of Haitian despotism and absolutism over time.

Chauvet foreshadows the means by which the poet will be executed at the end of the novella. *Folie* begins with René running from a hail of bullets. Bullets are a recurring motif in *Folie*, as René notes the "bullets whistling by [his] ears" at the beginning, and again "my senses grow sharp in this silence intermittently punctuated by cries or the whistling of bullets" (*Love, Anger, Madness* 289; 294).[72] Not only are the bullets constantly whizzing by outside René's shack, but they are accompanied by cries of terror, perhaps the cries of the hunted, or perhaps the cries of the loved ones forced to watch as their friends and family are summarily executed.

[72] Other references to gunshots or bullets are on pages 295, 297, 301, 304.

Traces of Blood: Color Politics and *Noiriste* Antecedents

When René's mother exclaims to her son that all mulattos are "[the] color of farts," this has a traumatic effect on the narrator. Plunging into his familial past, René reveals that his mother was identified as a "négresse" and his father was "so mulatto that he appeared to be white" (*Love, Anger, Madness* 293). René also suggests that Simon is incapable of seeing the devils because he is white. In *Folie* color politics emerge in layers: there is the historical circumstance of color politics in nineteenth-century Haiti through the *noiriste* political factions of the twentieth century and then there is the nexus of Chauvet's poets—René is mulatto, André and Jacques are black, and Simon is white. According to Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "color-cum-social categories operate in various spheres of urban life as part of different strategies of competition and struggle" (*Haiti, State Against Nation* 110) [73] Essentially, as Matthew J. Smith argues, when ideological sympathies and color consciousness are cited as the roots of social or political cohesion, the real objective is to gain "access to state power," and not to create unified identarian blocks (Smith 6). The access to and the possession of power was of primary concern under the regimes of Haitian leaders like Faustin Soulouque, Nord Alexis and François Duvalier. As such, they developed state-sponsored militias—the "zinglings" under Soulouque and the *Tonton Makout* under Duvalier, in an attempt to strengthen their stranglehold on the people. In

[73] Any discussion of color politics in Haiti from the Revolution to the Duvalier years would be incomplete without referencing David Nicholls work *From Dessalines to Duvalier* (1979). However, scholars like Alex Dupuy and Marlene L. Daut question the potential of Nicholls work for reproducing colonial thinking due to his insistence on the saliency skin color as a determiner of beliefs or behaviors among Haitians throughout history. Jean Dominique showed in an archived interview with Nicholls on Radio Haïti Inter's show Entre Nous that he was also dubious of the generalizations that Nicholls made based on skin color *as social class* rather than a more nuanced class-based analysis of Haitian politics. Furthermore, Nicholls "colorized understanding of Haitian society is […] actually a mere repetition of the kinds of colonialist understandings of 'race' that we find in the texts of nineteenth-century American and European writers," Marlene L Daut. *Tropics of Haiti: Race and the Literary History of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World, 1789-1865*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015) 22. See also: Dominique, Jean, and David Nicholls. *Entre Nous : David Nicholls Au Micro de Jean Dominique ; Amos Coulanges et Jho Archer à Paris*. 26 June 1996, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1285_01.

order to unravel the color politics in *Folie*, it is crucial to analyze the function of Massillon Coicou's poem "L'Alarme" as it relates to the themes of civil war, divisive politics, and power under authoritarian regimes.

Massillon Coicou's influence on *Amour, colère et folie* cannot go understated, particularly as it relates to the question of civil war and the annals of Haitian history. For Chauvet, the relationship between the community and intellectuals and the police is a matter best explained by history, when Claire, the protagonist of *Amour*, ironically explains, "Our endless civil wars have ages ago become the stuff of epic legend, regarded with a smile by our youth" (*Love, Anger, Madness* 10). One of the most oft-quoted lines of *Amour*, "we have been practicing cutting each other's throats since independence" closely resembles one of the main stanzas of Coicou's "L'Alarme": "Oh! Civil war… with its somber face,/ ardently impregnating innumerable passions,/ Passions which still push us to cut each other's throats"[74] (*Love, Anger, Madness* 8, Coicou 149). Thus, for Chauvet, the folly of Haitian youth, as well as a generation of adults who have become "gentle as lambs and more cautious than turtles," lies in the forgetting of this history of civil war, which Coicou's literary presence amplifies in *Folie.* J. Michael Dash notes that Coicou along with many of his contemporaries was "deeply troubled by Haiti's increasing chaos, [and] produced verse that was well-intentioned and sincere but in no way distinctive" (Dash 21-22). Although Dash credits Coicou for his talented writing, Chauvet's recuperation of "L'Alarme" provides an appropriate critique to claims that Coicou was indistinctive or merely writing in service of the national cause—for if there was merely one national cause, Coicou likely would not have been put to death by Alexis.

[74] "Oh ! La guerre civile, … avec sa face sombre,/ Fécondant ardemment des passions sans nombre,/ Elle nous pousse encore à nous entr'égorger"

Granting Coicou's "L'Alarme" the same textual status as René's poems in *Folie*, Chauvet interpolates a Haitian literary tradition denouncing the creation of political factions, for they only lead to civil war. Chauvet includes the first stanza of Coicou's poem, redacting the final unrhymed verse:

> Do you hear the cry that resounded: To Arms!
> Horror still! Blood still! Tears still!
> These mournful echoes, it is not the cannon
> Of *Crête-á-Pierrot* that thunders its fury
> To defend or avenge the rights of the Country…
> (*Love, Anger, Madness* 313-314)

By inserting this stanza of the poem into her novella, Chauvet retains the secrecy of her venture, critiquing civil war while using the example of the battle of Crête-à-Pierrot as the historical referent for civil war rather than Duvalier's dictatorship. For this reason, Chauvet's elision of the final line from the first stanza referring to the Leclerc's 1802 expedition, "And purge the foreign invaders; oh! No," is notable because to have the citation end with the invading forces would be to suggest that the greatest threat to Haiti comes from the outside instead of emanating from within.[75] Delicately excerpting Coicou's poetry as inspiration for René, Jacques, André, Simon helps Chauvet retain a sense of hope in poetry to create social change, calling out as "L'Alarme" states in stanza two "the people standing against the people in the end" (*Poésies nationales* 148).[76]

Eventually, color politics begins to divide the poets, when René laments that Simon writes like a white poet, while simultaneously recollecting the lamentable way his mother was treated due to her skin color and how his access to the upper echelons of society only come

[75] "Et chasser l'étranger envahisseur; oh ! non." In January 1802, Charles Victor Emmanuel Leclerc was sent to Saint-Domingue by Napoleon Bonaparte to quell the Haitian Revolution and re-instate slavery in the French colony, Laurent Dubois. *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004) 254-258.
[76] Coicou. *Poésies nationales*, 148. "le peuple debout contre le peuple enfin."

through her personal sacrifice. Michel-Rolph Trouillot recalls the infamous Haitian Creole proverb "Nèg rich se milat, milat pòv se nèg" in order to refer to the intricacies of the Haitian urban social ladder wherein the color line and the income bracket functions most prevalently (*Haiti, State Against Nation* 120).[77] Just like the Haitian proverb cited above, *noirisme,* or Haitian black populism, is much less a racially conscious movement than it is a means of seizing and retaining political or social capital. This is why René is held captive by his mother's past, traumatized by the need to abandon Vodou practice (in public) as well as Haitian Creole in order to survive in an urbane Haitian social bracket that doles out cultural value based on skin color and speaking the French language. These are also the implements of power that beget civil war, leading to totalitarianism as Massillon Coicou writes in the final lines of "L'Alarme":

> No, civil war, nothing about it is saintly:
> And it is an attempted assassination of God when we dare
> Unleash this horror, and we transform
> Our brothers into executioners, a people into assassins!
> (*Poésies nationales* 150) [78]

By the end of *Folie*, it is clear that the people have been successfully transformed into executioners, into assassins. Although Coicou wrote these lines in 1892 and about an entirely separate historical context, they anticipate the future regimes of Nord Alexis and François Duvalier because the ultimate means of retaining political power is to divide the people, to turn them on themselves, limiting the potential for citizens to challenge the current status quo.

[77] "A rich black man is a mulatto, a poor mulatto is a black man."
[78] "Non, la guerre civile, elle, n'a rien de saint ;/ Et c'est un attentat contre Dieu lorsqu'on ose/ Déchainer cette horreur, et qu'on métamorphose/ Des frères en bourreaux, un people en assassin!"

Write Out of History: Chauvet, Haitian Writers, and Politics

Since early 1990s when Marie Chauvet's work began to be reconsidered, scholars have sought to reframe the debates on Chauvet from establishing her as one of Haiti's foremost women writers to the most important Haitian writer of the twentieth century (Zimra 145). Other scholars have addressed the need to not only consider works outside of *Amour, colère et folie* but also to address criticisms lobbied against Chauvet by her male contemporaries.[79] Régine Michelle Jean-Charles goes as far as characterizing the study of the late Haitian author as the "Chauvet Turn," where critics elevate her works to near mythological status resulting in critics sharing their own personal "Chauvet stories" (Jean-Charles 51-52). As this chapter argues, even within Chauvet's most studied works there are layers of intertextual aspects of Haitian history and literature that course throughout her work that remain unexplored. Jean-Charles among others agree that critics embrace of Chauvet's "cult of myth and drama" has diluted the consideration of the richest depths of her writing in favor of a biographical treatment (Jean-Charles 52-53).

Massillon Coicou's literary legacy, like Chauvet's, also falls into ossified frames of criticism and biographical sketching that limit the potential of his poetic vision. Coicou's aforementioned contemporary Frédéric Marcellin wrote after his execution that "Thanks to a stupid firing squad Nord Alexis assured Massillon Coicou an immortality that his poetry could never have given him ("L'Exécution Du Poète")"[80] Historical works by Gérard Jolibois and Richard J.P. Narcisse that investigate the case of Coicou's execution almost ensure the legacy to which Marcellin refers by grounding our understanding of Coicou's life in his execution. As the

[79] See, Glover, Kaiama L. "A Woman's Place Is In... The Unhomely as Social Critique in Marie Chauvet's Fille d'Haïti." *Yale French Studies*, no. 128, 2016, pp. 115–30.
[80] "L'Exécution Du Poète." *Le Nouvelliste*. March 14, 2008. "Nord Alexis par une stupide fusillade assura à Massillon Coicou une immortalité que sa poésie ne lui aurait pas donnée"

imagery from *Le Petit Journal Illustré* depicts, the life of Coicou appears almost entirely reduced to the details of his death. As for Coicou's literary legacy, critics like Colin Dayan and Jana Evans Braziel have looked to Coicou for his praise of Défilée Bazile, the woman who collected the bones of the dismembered Jean-Jacques Dessalines and buried them. Perhaps in the same way as Défilée, Chauvet has tasked herself with gathering Coicou's bones and burying them within one of her most celebrated works to secure for Coicou a final resting place.

Perhaps compounding the obscuration of Coicou's literary merits, in *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915-1961* J. Michael Dash claims that many nineteenth-century Haitian writers "have a more secure and significant place in literary history than in literature *per se,*" writing that the period immediately following Haitian independence was saturated by a group of "disappointing creative writers" (*Literature and Ideology in Haiti* 1, 22). It is true that many of the writers of the "Génération de la Ronde" wrote commissioned poetry, theater, and fiction for the commemoration of Haitian independence. However, the analysis of Coicou's treatment of the theme of civil war reveals that these writings were far from vacuous and even less so willfully complicit in the machinations of Nord Alexis's political regime. As the rapport between Massillon Coicou's and Marie Chauvet's work illustrates, Haitian authors cannot be merely cast aside as bad writers or simple historical actors who ventured a few lines of poetry. To seriously consider Haitian writing is to not equivocate between poles such as "good" or "bad" writing, this is indeed the same process that has stifled the study of Chauvet's œuvre beyond *Amour, colère et folie* and has kept the study of influential poets such as Massillon Coicou out of a global discussion of Haitian and Caribbean letters. To seriously consider Haitian literature is to assess the extent to which Chauvet takes up Coicou's literary project as she hems and adjusts it to (re)frame persistent ideas of social and class division. To seriously consider the interplay

between these two writers is to, ultimately, identify how they locate the trenchant ideas of the dead in their poetry and prose—Dessalines for Coicou and Coicou for Chauvet—to critique the enduring legacy of governmental impunity with regard to the Haitian people and its intellectuals.

CHAPTER 3

The Gathering the Literary Debris of Jacques Stephen Alexis's *L'Espace d'un cillement*

> "This is your child, your eldest daughter who has since become a woman, writing to you from beyond the boundary of your endless absence. We have been deprived of one another for over twenty years, and today I want to speak to you about the book you left behind before returning to the stars, *In the Flicker of an Eyelid.*" (*"Letter to Jacques Soleil"* 242)[81]

In March 2017, les Éditions Zulma published a book that people had yearned for since the late 1950s, Jacques Stephen Alexis's novel, *L'Étoile Absinthe*.[82] *L'Étoile Absinthe* [*The Absinthe Star*] would have been Alexis's fourth novel and the continuation of his 1959 novel, *L'Espace d'un cillement* [*In the Flicker of an Eyelid*], about two star-crossed Cuban lovers in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince. However, Alexis's life and literary career were cut short when he was arrested on April 22, 1961, imprisoned, and secretly executed by the *Tonton Makout* for attempting a coup to overthrow François Duvalier's regime. His body was never recovered.[83] In the absence of a gravesite or a final resting place, his family, friends, critics, and admirers have turned to his literary works as a way to account for Alexis's absence. This is why when Laure Leroy acquired *L'Étoile Absinthe* from Alexis's eldest daughter, Florence Alexis, and she immediately began preparing it for publication. Leroy and Alexis knew that a long-lost novel by

---

[81] The translation cited above is from Carrol F. Coates and Edwidge Danticat's English translation of *In the Flicker of an Eyelid*. The French original reads: "C'est ton enfant, ta fille aînée devenue femme, qui s'adresse à toi par-delà ton absence interminable. Nous sommes privés l'un de l'autre depuis plus de vingt ans et aujourd'hui, je veux te parler de ce livre que tu nous as laissé avant de retourner dans les étoiles, *L'Espace d'un cillement*."

[82] Zulma's executive editor Laure Leroy explains to Yvan Amar on Radio France Internationale (RFI) that *L'Étoile Absinthe* "was in my dreams [...] everyone was talking about this novel, but nobody had read it" ["C'était dans mes rêves [...] tout le monde parlait de ce roman, mais personne ne l'avait lu..."] Amar, Yvan. "Danse Des Mots - Florence Alexis and Laure Leroy." *RFI*, RFI, 7 Mar. 2017, http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170307-alexis-jacques-stephen-florence-ecrivains-negritude-latino-americains-revue-presen.

[83] In his documentary film, *Jacques Stephen Alexis, Mort sans sépulture,* Arnold Antonin revisits Bombardopolis to reconstruct the events that led to Alexis's arrest, torture, and murder in a series of interviews with the author's friends and family. Among those included in the film are René Depestre and Florence Alexis whose editorial, literary, and political work will be under consideration in this chapter. See also: Chemla, Yves. "Jacques-Stephen Alexis." *Île en île*, 13 Jan. 2002, http://ile-en-ile.org/alexis_jacques-stephen/.

Jacques Stephen Alexis would mean a great deal to Haitians and admirers of Haitian literature. It promised to be a literary event capable of filling a void felt by many in the wake of Alexis's disappearance.

Accordingly, this chapter begins with the earliest attempts to comprehend the void left by the incomplete quartet, starting with Gérard Pierre-Charles's afterword to 1969 Spanish edition and Florence Alexis's preface to the French second edition in 1982. In the first instance, these paratextual materials help to weave together the intimate memories of those close to Alexis with the novels that he left unfinished after the publication of *L'Espace d'un cillement.* Second, the documentary impulses that undergird Pierre-Charles's and Alexis's paratexts encourage and facilitate much of the subsequent literary archeology that has been done to preserve the narrative futures of Alexis's novels after *L'Espace*.[84] The subsequent section of this chapter focuses on Haitian novels that narrativize aspects of Alexis's fiction in order to imagine the possible futures for the avant-garde elements of *L'Espace d'un cillement* and *L'Étoile Absinthe.*[85] Although I refer to texts by James Noël and Néhémy Pierre-Dahomey, I argue that *Les Immortelles* by Makenzy Orcel activates the literary debris Jacques Stephen Alexis left behind, making his life and life's work relate to Haitians in the twenty-first century.[86] The relationship between Orcel's novel and *L'Espace d'un cillement* allows us to see how *L'Espace* and *L'Étoile* influence Haitians in the

[84] I use the term "paratexts" frequently to describe the elements that exist around Alexis's novels themselves, and when appropriate, I will refer to the differences in various editions/translations of Alexis's novels to show how his life is recontextualized through posthumous editioning. For more on paratexts and their role in the manufacture of literary markets and taste, see: Watts, Richard. Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World. After the Empire. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2005.

[85] These elements include, but are not limited to, a dignified portrayal of sex work as work, depictions of a post-industrial and post-modern Port-au-Prince, and Alexis's signature reverence for the mysticism of Vodou and folk knowledge in Haiti.

[86] My use of the word debris is an homage to Florence Alexis's preface where she refers to his unfinished projects as "les débris épars [...] semés derrière toi [the scattered debris you left behind]" (*L'Espace d'un cillement* 13).

twenty-first century, encouraging young artists to re-imagine *La Quadrature du cœur* in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.

Jacques Stephen Alexis and the Future of Haitian Fiction

For years, Alexis's books have served as a gathering place for Haitians living in exile during the Duvalier years, but also for generations of young Haitians who grew up in the diaspora. Aspiring Haitian writers of all ages have either looked to Alexis's fiction for inspiration or have been granted a path to publication through writing prizes named after the late Haitian writer. For example, in 1996, Kettly Mars received the inaugural Prix Jacques Stephen Alexis de la Nouvelle for her short story "Soleils contraires" about maritime Haitian migration during the 1980s and 1990s, often called the "Boat People" era.[87] This prize, like the Prix Jacques Stephen Alexis du roman launched by the Direction Nationale du Livre in 2016, aims to "pérpétuer la mémoire et l'œuvre de Jacques Stephen Alexis [continue the memory and the work of Jacques Stephen Alexis]" by providing a path to publication for writers who share in the legacy of the late Haitian writer (Shoomatove Vincent n.p.).[88] Prior to the creation of the Prix Jacques Stephen Alexis de la Nouvelle, for two decades there was only one other literary prize in Haiti, the esteemed Prix Deschamps. These prizes not only recognized the writers for their excellence in literature, but they also promised publication. In this way, Alexis's name stands at the crossroads between the past, present, and future of Haitian literature. Alexis represents a legacy for younger writers to look back upon for inspiration, a source of solace for his friends and family who were left with a hole in their lives after his disappearance, and his memory paves the way for future

[87] In November 1995, the Haitian novelist Gary Victor endowed the new prize, which, in its first year, solicited 150 short stories. "Entre Nous : « Soleils Contraires » , Kettly P. Mars / Radio Haiti Archive / Duke Digital Repository." *Duke Digital Collections*, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1299_01. Accessed 31 Oct. 2020.
[88] Shoomatove Vincent, Meem. "Le Prix National Jacques Stephen Alexis Du Roman Est Lancé." *Le Nouvelliste*, https://lenouvelliste.com/article/163046/le-prix-national-jacques-stephen-alexis-du-roman-est-lance. Accessed 31 Oct. 2020.

generations of writers to contribute to the humanistic project Alexis imagined through his novels and short stories.

Even though Jacques Stephen Alexis posthumously opened up pathways for future generations of Haitian writers, his place in Haitian literary history is just as dependent on future generations of family members, friends, literary critics, and writers to carry on his legacy. For a period of time after his death, Gallimard suspended the publication of his novels *Compère Général Soleil, Les Arbres musiciens, L'Espace d'un cillement*, and his collection of short stories *Romancero aux étoiles*. In the 1960s and 1970s, Spanish translations published in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico helped to fill the void left by the French originals. These translations often carried prefaces by Haitians like Gérard Pierre-Charles and René Depestre who sought to commemorate the life of their late friend while also presenting his writing to a host of new readers in the Caribbean and Latin America. Pierre-Charles and others, like Jean Jonaissant, prepared special journal issues in France (*Europe*) and Canada (*Collectif Paroles*) to urge readers and critics to remember Alexis the person as well as the writings he left behind. These literary commemorations eschewed hagiographic framing at the same time as they preserved the intimacy between the author and Alexis. For instance, in his preface to the Cuban edition of *Compère Général Soleil* (*El compadre General sol,* 1974) René Depestre suggested that the proper way to remember Alexis was by observing how the late writer spoke of his literary mentor Jacques Roumain in a short text called "Jacques Roumain vivant." Depestre explained how Alexis warned against the effects of "the type of mummifying mystification that amounts to a parsing out of the negative aspects of a person in order to turn them into a god or a person without the looming shadow of an artist at work"("Hablar de Jacques Stephen Alexis" 143).[89]

[89] "... la especie de mistificación momificante que consiste en quitarle al ser humano sus aspectos negativos para hacer de un dios o un hombre sin la sombra de una artista en su metal..."

Like Alexis did for Roumain, Depestre reminded readers that Alexis was a human being in every sense of the word. Alexis was capable of inspiring others to reach for new heights of artistic and humanistic expression just as he was capable of committing errors, which ultimately had consequences for his loved ones and those close to him.

In addition to commemorative special issues, a number of events in Montreal and New York helped make Alexis's memory a source of community building for Haitians in exile. On October 29-30,1982 the Association of Haitian Writers Abroad worked in partnership with the Black Studies Department at CUNY City College to inaugurate a Jacques Stephen Alexis Festival sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (Joseph and Blot 25). A similar gathering was held at the Brooklyn Public Library a month before, meant to honor Alexis as "one of Haiti's finest writers and social commentators" ("Around Brooklyn"). These physical and literary events allowed Haitians living in Canada, France, and the United States to "re-encounter" the life and work of Alexis while simultaneously engendering new forms of community building through literature. Although they were significant at the time, many of these attempts to fill the void left by Alexis were ephemeral. The special issues featured short print runs and were never reissued. Most of the Spanish translations of Alexis's novels and short stories are no longer in print circulation, yet some remain available in circulating collections in libraries across the globe. And even the literary prizes that bear Alexis's name remain precarious and often experience multi-year gaps where no prize is issued.[90] Though the events honoring Alexis's life eventually faded away, Haitian readers could still experience Jacques Stephen Alexis through his

[90] The first Prix Jacques Stephen Alexis de la Nouvelle was handed down in 1997, the second in 1998, and the third was issued in partnership with the Haitian group FOKAL (Fondasyon Koneysans ak Libete) in 2006. See: "Relance Du Prix Jacques Stephen Alexis de La Nouvelle." *Le Nouvelliste*, 16 Nov. 2005, https://lenouvelliste.com/article/22658/relance-du-prix-jacques-stephen-alexis-de-la-nouvelle.

collected works once Florence Alexis had them reprinted with Gallimard Imaginaires in 1982-1983.

Even during his lifetime, Alexis's friends and family turned to his books to fill his absence when he was in exile from Haiti or traveling to international events in Africa, China, or the Soviet Union. In life, just as in death, Alexis's name was often spoken in the same breath as his novels. His friends and family members would identify Alexis as "Jacques Soleil" in reference to his debut novel, *Compère Général Soleil.* Looking back on the reception of *Compère* and *Les Arbres musiciens,* his second novel, critics compared him to Emile Zola and Fydor Dostoyevsky for his realist style and empathy towards the working class and the socially ostracized. The French press raved, claiming that Alexis presented "vigorous poetry," "clairvoyance," and "a novel in which 'the psychological detail and emotional elements go beyond literary subtlety'" ("Introduction to *General Sun, My Brother* xiii). When *Les Arbres musiciens* was released, critics saw it as a formidable follow-up to *Compère Général Soleil*, especially for how Alexis continued to plumb Haitian literature novel and nostalgic themes like the ecological ethos of the countryside, Vodou, and the folk rhythms found in Haitian *rara* music. In his review of *Les Arbres musiciens* for *Présence Africaine*, Depestre ventures more than one reference to Alexis's debut, concluding that "Alexis magnificently confirms the creative talents that struck us in his *Compère Général Soleil*. With great vigor and grace, he has rounded the 'second novel,' this obstacle that critics often look toward when certifying an author's authenticity" ("Les Arbres Musiciens par Jacques Stephen Alexis" 189).[91] As Depestre suggested

[91] "Alexis confirme magnifiquement les dons créateurs qui nous avaient déjà frappés dans son *Compère Général Soleil*. Il a tourné avec beaucoup de vigueur et de grâce autour du 'second roman,' cet écueil où la critique à habitude de guetter le jeune romancier pour se prononcer sur son authenticité."

with his title to his review of *Compère*, an Alexis novel release meant the coming of the next "Great Haitian novel."

L'Espace d'un cillement is set in Port-au-Prince during the wake of the US Occupation of Haiti (1915-1934). For the most part, the action unfolds in the brothel where Eglantina Covarrubias y Perez works as a prostitute under the alias of "La Niña Estrelllita." Eglantina is well-known at the Sensation Bar where she is a major player in the libidinal economy of the Haitian capital. Her name rings out amongst construction workers building the HASCO railroads and byways as well as the US Marines stationed in the Caribbean or who are on leave.[92] Under the protection of her stage-name, La Niña goes about her life with a worker's dignity, she refuses to be abused by her clients, and she refuses to buy into her own celebrity or vanity.[93] La Niña's story runs parallel to another Cuban named Raphaël Guttierez, a name that is mentioned only once in the novel, who is known in the novel as El Caucho and who works as a bricklayer and construction worker.[94]

---

[92] HASCO was the Haitian-American Sugar Company, an American corporation and sugar mill located south of Port-au-Prince in what is now Cité Soleil. It was established in 1912 by Charles Steinham, Franck Copay, and John Christie and closed in 1987, fourteen months after Jean-Claude Duvalier fled the country for asylum in France. HASCO, along with the MacDonald Sugar Company, play a major role in Frankétienne's 1975 novel written in Haitian Creole, entitled *Dezafi*, which depicts the depravity and dispossession caused by American corporations in under François and Jean-Claude Duvalier. When HASCO shuttered its doors, a former employee named Lucien Félix described the impact of the closure in the face of a governmental transition in a Reuter's report, saying: "[We Haitians, w]e're dead, and it's the government that's causing us to die" ("Another Blow for Haiti: A Sugar Mill Closes").

[93] This is arguably one of the greatest points of departure Jacques Stephen Alexis makes from Emile Zola's novel *Nana,* which, when it was published, was perhaps the most influential work in French in regarding sex work as having the potential for dignified work. Zola's novel, however, ends with the eponymous character's brutal and unsympathetic demise. Carrol Coates explains in his preface to the English translation of *Compère Général Soleil* that Alexis is often compared to Zola for his sweeping narratives and socio-critical stance on politics and literature. See: Meï, Siobhan Marie, and Carrol F. Coates. “Haiti in Translation: General Sun, My Brother and In the Flicker of an Eyelid by Jacques Stephen Alexis.” *Callaloo*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2017, pp. 871–877.

[94] El Caucho is derived from the French "L'Homme Caouchouc" or "Rubber Man," because his character is said to be adaptable and when met with a new challenge his feet hit the ground like the rubber meets the road (*L'Espace d'un cillement* 56 for "El Caucho"; 206 for "Raphaël Guttierez"). In Cuban Spanish, "El Caucho" can also be a euphemism for a condom. On La Niña's names in both novels (*L'Espace d'un cillement* 72 for "La Niña Estrellita"; for Eglantina Covarrubias y Perez 229; *L'Étoile Absinthe* 24 and 41).

L'Espace d'un cillement is structured in six "mansions" or parts that correspond to the five senses, plus a sixth sense, and a coda. La Niña and El Caucho meet in the first mansion, "La Vue," and over the course of the novel they are involved in a burgeoning relationship that ruptures towards the end, resulting in La Niña's flight from the Sensation Bar and a newly found desire to discover who she is outside of sex work and her financial dependence on men. In the final scenes of the novel, in the Coda, she discovers that her friend and colleague "La Rubia" has committed suicide. And so, La Niña leaves the Sensation Bar forever to look for life elsewhere. This is where *L'Étoile Absinthe* begins, too, with La Niña careening through the streets of Port-au-Prince looking for a place to stay. With the money she has saved, she decides to invest in the salt business with a woman named Célie Chéry who she met in the *pension Colibri.* La Niña, choosing to reclaim her name Eglantina (Eglantine), takes to the Caribbean Sea with Célie Chéry on a ship they have commissioned to transport the salt they hope to harvest. However, the *Dieu-Premier* gets caught in a tempestuous storm that ultimately shipwrecks on a beach booming with *rada* drumming, reminiscent of Alexis's 1957 novel *Les Arbres musiciens*. *L'Étoile Absinthe* ends abruptly, with the *Dieu-Premier* setting sail once more and Eglantina reflecting on the reality that "the sea is only a manifestation of disorder, where humans and the gods get tangled up and collide with one another in a grand chaos" (*L'Étoile Absinthe* 146).[95]

The public reception of Alexis's writing shifted with the publication of *L'Espace d'un cillement,* in part because it was the first volume in what was supposed to be an epic four-volume quartet about a Cuban couple and their odyssey in the twentieth century Caribbean, but also because Alexis would not return to Haiti until April 1961 where he lived his final moments. *L'Espace d'un cillement* did not receive advance reviews, nor was it announced in Haitian dailies

[95] "... la mer n'est qu'une confusion où les peuples des dieux s'emmêlent et se heurtent farouchement dans un chaos énorme..."

like *Le Nouvelliste* or the English-language *Haiti Sun* along with other literary current events.[96] Part of this may have been because when Alexis spoke about the larger project of the quartet, he imbued it with a sense of anticipation, causing critics to await the subsequent volumes before reaching a conclusion about *L'Espace*. In this way, Alexis's final novel and incomplete literary saga created a vacuum in Haitian literature, one where those left waiting for Alexis's next great Haitian novel would never be satisfied. Like those left waiting for their father, their husband, their friend to appear once again, the readers and writers who looked to Alexis for inspiration would have to address that void with their own creative, literary acts of grief that consisted of gathering the remains of Alexis's unfinished corpus.

As such, this chapter aims to show how various Haitians gathered the debris of Alexis's literary life and passed them on to future generations so that they could continue to work with them. While the details and story of *L'Espace d'un cillement* and *L'Étoile Absinthe* certainly have much to do with the legacy of the unfinished project itself, but the objective here has less to do with how Alexis imagined his story evolving over time than how his family, friends, and admirers/readers collected, preserved, and created new futures for the quartet by working from those very details. This chapter will elaborate on the lengths that people went to make sure that Alexis's novels were translated, re-issued, criticized, put into the historical context of a withering dictatorship, and re-imagined in his wake. The point is to examine the sense of responsibility that people faithful to Alexis's words and message felt as they sought to capture the meaning behind

[96] One of the ironies of Alexis's writing career is that he was often permitted by Ernest Chauvet and his son Max Chauvet, the successive editors of *Le Nouvelliste,* to publish letters and articles about social and political issues, but his novels were never publicized. Although, *Le Nouvelliste* did publish Alexis's short story "L'Amourette" in the Christmas issue of 1959. See: Alexis, Alexis, Jacques Stephen. "'L'Amourette,' Un conte de Jacques Stephen Alexis." *Le Nouvelliste*. December 23, 1959. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

his absence while simultaneously recognizing that the work cannot stand in for or fill the void left by his sudden departure.[97]

Literary Rituals and the Paratexts to *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* (1969) and *L'Espace d'un cillement* (1983)

Even though Alexis had piqued the interest of many serious literary circles in Haiti, France, and abroad, they discontinued the publication of his four books in their prestigious "Collection Blanche." When asked why Gallimard quit publishing her father's writings, Florence Alexis explained that the literary market has its own demands, making "a dead author much harder to defend than an author who is alive [un auteur mort est [...] beaucoup plus difficile à défendre qu'un auteur vivant]" (Amar). In this sense, Alexis shares a similar experience with many Francophone Caribbean writers of the mid-twentieth century. Authors who published regularly tended to assure that their previous works would remain in print.[98] However, Alexis is one of the few authors who has managed to re-emerge posthumously due to the impact of foreign language translations, unauthorized reprints of his writing, and the tireless efforts of his family and compatriots. There are many people in Haiti, Canada, France, and elsewhere who felt a great sense of responsibility toward Alexis's literary legacy, so much so that they would risk their own

[97] I use words like "capture" and "address" when referring to the void left by Alexis's death and the suspension of his literary life rather than words like "fill" because the former better describes the literary intentions of the people who preserve Alexis's legacy. Here, I'm drawing from the poetic intentions that M. NourbeSe Philip and Patricia Saunders discuss when referring to the literary archive of the enslaved. Saunders writes, "Part of [the] responsibility [to the dead] is also about finding the form that begins to, I don't want to say to fill that space, because it captures that space. I think the form offers a kind of justice. It's a kind of redress, of acknowledgement, of commemoration, and I say commemoration in the sense of naming the dead." See: Saunders, Patricia. "Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M. NourbeSe Philip." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism 12, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 63–79. https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-63.

[98] This has also been the case for major Haitian authors like Jacques Roumain and Marie Chauvet, but it is also a phenomenon that touches Francophone Caribbean literature rather acutely if we consider the works of Michèle Lacrosil, Jacqueline Manicom, and Myriam Warner-Vieyra, just to name a few examples. Translation in English in the case of Roumain, Chauvet, and Warner-Vieyra has allowed for their key novels to circulate in both academic and public reading spheres. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for an analysis of Marie Chauvet's publication history.

lives by shepherding his work back into print while they lived in exile. Although it is sometimes difficult to account for the roles that individuals play in the publication of a given work, especially first editions, one of the sites where these stories are most evident in translations and subsequent editions is in a book's paratext (frontmatter, backmatter, etc.).

In *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World*, Richard Watts convincingly argues that prefaces and afterwords are more than just beginnings or the end of a book, but that they are the "ritualized forms of the publishing world, the literary institution" (Watts 2). However, unlike the paratexts that either seek to "move the merchandise," or impose a proprietary or colonial marker on the text, I argue that Haitian paratexts aim to and allow us to trace intellectual lineages as well as intimate filiations (3-5). In this way, the first Spanish edition, *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* (1969, trans. Jorge Zalamea), and the second edition of *L'Espace d'un cillement* (1983), provide readers access to much more than just the novels themselves, they show how intimate prefacers can graft their own personal stories of exile onto a book and cause that book to convey meaning in the absence of the author. In this section, I will demonstrate how Gérard Pierre-Charles and Florence Alexis weave their experiences of exile in Mexico City and Paris into their admiration of *L'Espace d'un cillement* to recover Alexis's literary life. Put another way, I aim to show how these literary rituals of beginning and end provides an opening for Pierre-Charles and Florence Alexis to instill their own intimate relation to Jacques Stephen Alexis and the novel itself. I argue that these intimate and documentary paratexts not only mount a defense of Alexis's artistic merits, but that they also make it possible for future Alexis readers to dream about the potential completion of the *L'Espace* saga, and what the quartet that could have meant for Haitians and the rest of the Caribbean.

***

Though much more can be said about Jacques Stephen Alexis's life and literary career than is possible here, certain biographical, aesthetic, and political aspects of his background will prove critical to analyzing Gérard Pierre-Charles's and Florence Alexis's paratexts. Alexis was born on April 22, 1922 to a Dominican mother, Lydia Nuñez, and a Haitian father, the itinerant diplomat and novelist Stephen Alexis.[99] Alexis is often referred to as a direct descendant of the first Haitian head of state, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, through his paternal grandmother Rosanna Jean-Philippe Daut.[100] Though Alexis was born in Gonaïves, Haiti, he grew up in Paris while his father was serving as the Haitian ambassador to London. There he attended the Collège Stanislas for his primary schooling, and when his family returned to Haiti in the early 1930s, he completed his baccalaureate at the Institution des Frères de Saint-Louis de Gonzague in Delmas. Afterwards, Alexis studied medicine at the Faculté de Medicine in Port-au-Prince where he began to meet scores of other students who were organizing a resistance to Haitian administration and the presidency of Élie Lescot. Along with René Depestre, Théodore Baker, Laurore Saint-Juste, Gérard Chenet, Gérard Bloncourt, and others, Alexis founded *La Ruche* in December 1945, a periodical dedicated to the struggles and aspirations of the Haitian youth.[101] Writing for *La Ruche* was a formidable experience for Alexis as well because the journal featured his column "*Lettres aux Hommes Vieux*" ["Letters to the Old Guard"] where week in

[99] In 1933, Stephen Alexis published a novel entitled, *Le Nègre masqué*, about the vocation and condition of elite Haitian society under the US occupation. For more on this novel, see: Ménard, Nadève. "The Occupied Novel: The Representation of Foreigners in Haitian Novels Written during the US Occupation, 1915-1934." University of Pennsylvania, 2002.

[100] René Depestre introduces this element to Alexis's biography in the preface to *El compadre general sol* in the first Spanish edition of *Compère Général Soleil*, published by Casa de las Américas. Gérard Pierre-Charles also includes this information in his afterword to *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos*, published in Mexico City in 1969, but does not include as much genealogical information as Depestre. See: Depestre, René. "Prólogo (Preface to El Compadre General Sol)." In El Compadre General Sol, vii–xl. Havana, Cuba: Casa de las Américas, 1974.

[101] *La Ruche* ran from December 7, 1945 to December 9, 1946. Théodore Baker served as the director, Depestre was the editor-in-chief, and Bloncourt filled the role of secretary general.

and week out he cut his teeth on the latest charges of corruption, the ills of capitalism, and the malevolent effects of class- and race-based prejudice under the pseudonym "Jacques la Colère."[102] The student movement, buoyed by organizers and periodicals like those involved with *La Ruche*, caused the ouster of Lescot in January 1946 and marked the beginning of what a lot of Haitians called "the Revolution of 1946."[103] Depestre later wrote that if it were not for the lessons about human dignity and solidary that Alexis gleaned from his experience with *La Ruche*, he would not have been capable of writing about these themes so vividly in the fiction that he produced in the following decade.[104]

For Alexis, fiction was at once a mode of storytelling that enabled him to capture the experiences of everyday Haitians, regardless of their background, and at the same time a mode of artistic creation that allowed him to relate to the full spectrum of the human condition ("Hablar de Jacques Stephen Alexis" 156). For this reason, his novels depict specific historical periods—*Compère Général Soleil* (1920s-1937), *Les Arbres musiciens* (1941-1946), and *L'Espace d'un cillement* (1947-1951)—as they develop novelistic aesthetics that range from Haitian *lodyans* (storytelling) to the social realism that many critics consider the hallmark of any Alexis novel.[105] For Alexis, politics and aesthetics were always entwined, and as he supported the Haitian worker's party, he was forced to flee Haiti under President Paul Magloire. During his presidency, Magloire, known popularly as *kanson fè* ("Iron Pants"), imprisoned dissidents, forced artists to

[102] I owe a debt of gratitude to Katerina Gonzalez Seligmann for sharing with me the entire print run of *La Ruche*, archived and digitized by the Center for Research Libraries. For more on Alexis's career as "Jacques la Colère," see: Cadet, Jean-Jacques. *Le Marxisme Haïtien: Marxisme et Anti-Colonialisme en Haïti*. Paris: Editions Delga, 2020.
[103] For a general overview of the transition from the US occupation (1915-1934) through the Revolution of '46, see: Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), 265-320.
[104] For a focused analysis on the impact and afterlives of the 1946 Generation, see: Munro, Martin. *Exile and Post-1946 Haitian Literature : Alexis, Depestre, Ollivier, Laferrière, Danticat*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007.
[105] For more on the aesthetics of social realism and the anti-socialist critique of Alexis, see: Bonner, Christopher T. "The Alignment of Writing : Cold War Geopolitics and Literary Form in Francophone Caribbean Literature." Ph.D., New York University, 2015.

flee, and demanded fealty to his platform of multinational industrialization. In these years, from 1952-1957, Alexis and his family lived in France where he wrote and published his first two novels. He returned to Haiti in June 1957 to witness Daniel Fignolé, the popular labor party candidate, lose to François Duvalier in the presidential election. After several months of publishing and circulating anti-Duvalier leaflets and publishing editorials in Port-au-Prince's various newspapers, Alexis went back into exile, and supported the worker's party (*Parti d'Entente Populaire*, PEP) at international communist conventions where he rubbed elbows with Nikita Kruschev and Ho Chi Minh ("Hablar de Jacques Stephen Alexis" 160). Alexis's affiliation with the PEP kept him connected to compatriots in Haiti like Gérard Pierre-Charles and Georges Castera at the same time as his constant travel kept him away from his wife Andrée Roumer and daughter Florence Alexis. It was during these travels that he composed and published his final two books, *L'Espace d'un cillement* (1959) and *Romancero aux étoiles* (1960). Alexis would finally return to Haiti on his thirty-ninth birthday from Cuba to overthrow the "totalitarian négritude" regime that had taken ahold of the country, but he never made it past the city of Bombardopolis in the northwest before he was abducted and disappeared. Though his body was nowhere to be found, his novels, letters, and the lasting impressions he left on friends and family permeate the posthumous editions of his literary corpus.

Gérard Pierre-Charles and the Afterword to *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* (1969)

In many ways, Gérard Pierre-Charles's afterword, "Sobre el autor," to *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* serves as an elegy, an homage to not only a celebrated writer, but a "companion and a brother in arms" ("Gérard Pierre-Charles with Jean L. Dominique, November 16,

1989").[106] Pierre-Charles begins with a lengthy citation of Alexis's 1960 essay "Jacques Roumain vivant," in order to suggest that Alexis, like Roumain, would live on through his writings. Other parts of the afterword feature quotations from *Compère Général Soleil* where Pierre-Charles suggests that Alexis's death mirrors that of the novel's celebrated protagonist, Hilarius Hilarion, who is murdered by Dominican soldiers at the height of "El Corte," the 1937 Dominican massacre of Haitian sugar cane workers. Pierre-Charles also places Alexis into a transnational literary context, explaining to a Spanish-speaking audience that he was a reader of Maxim Gorky and Ilya Ehrenburg, he emulated Zola and Anatole France, and he often rubbed elbows with Louis Aragon, Aimé Césaire, and Léopold Sédar Segnhor ("Sobre el autor" 225). In this way, Pierre-Charles markets Alexis as both a writer of global importance and a writer whose literary career can be defined by narrative styles like social realism (Zola, Gorky, and Ehrenburg), "Third World" political solidarities (Césaire and Senghor), and global Marxist intellectualism (Aragon, Gorky, and Ehrenburg). While these details present Alexis to a general Spanish-speaking audience, Pierre-Charles must rely on his own experience with Pan-American and circum-Caribbean geographies and political solidarities to present *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* and its author to a Mexican audience. In what follows, I will show how we can read Pierre-Charles's markets Alexis's novel to Mexican readers in "Sobre el autor" through a sentiment of Pan-American solidarity, documenting Haiti, the novel, and the author's contributions to a hopeful "Third World" political project. At the same time, I will demonstrate how the afterword serves not only to document Alexis's life as a literary ritual of memory, but also how the bibliographic

[106] Dominique, Jean L. *Gérard Pierre-Charles with Jean L. Dominique, November 16, 1989*, 1989. Radio Haiti Archive. https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-RR-0523_01.

details of this rite enable us to recover intimate details of Pierre-Charles's life in exile, including his connection to other artists and intellectuals at UNAM.

Figure 13: Front cover of the Mexican translation Jacques Stephen Alexis's L'Espace d'un cillement (En un abrir y cerrar de ojos) translated by Jorge Zalamea and published by ERA Ediciones in 1969. (Credit: Google Images)

The Spanish translation of *L'Espace d'un cillement* was part of ERA Ediciones's grand project of consolidating a collection of literature that contributed to and expanded the realm of Latin American literature, and they enlisted Gérard Pierre-Charles to solder the connection between Haiti, Alexis, and Latin America through translation. By the time the Mexican publisher released *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos*, they had already established a global catalog of essays, novels, and poetry grounded in Marxist aesthetics (Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*), social realist narration (Georg Lukács's *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*), and Black radical poetics (Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to my Native Land*). Still, ERA had never published Haitian novel before. Their first foray into Haitian literature not only needed correspond to the

themes of the rest of their catalog, but they needed help marketing this novel as a Pan-American work of progressive literature, so they tabbed the Colombian intellectual Jorge Zalamea for the translation and selected Pierre-Charles to write the afterword. In her article "La traducción como proyecto editorial: Análisis de dos traducciones de *L'Espace d'un cillement* de Jacques Stéphen Alexis," Nadxeli Yrizar Carrillo clarifies ERA's overall project writing that "the publication of J.S. Alexis's novel is part of a sociopolitical current (of novels) that conforms to the taste of militants in favor of inclusive social change, with the potential to impart certain social discourses that help contribute to the 'intellectual' construction of a different Mexican nation" (Carrillo 191).[107] For these reasons, the choice of Pierre-Charles was a natural one since he and other intellectuals who fled fascist regimes in the Caribbean and Europe were contributing to the construction of a "new Mexican nation" in real time. After almost a decade of exile in Mexico, Pierre-Charles would help ERA accomplish their goal of presenting Alexis's final novel as "one of the greatest contributions to the modern Latin American narrative tradition."[108]

One of the most significant ways that Pierre-Charles courts Latin American readers is by reminding them that the story of colonialism in the Americas that began on Haitian shores, which is also the site of Jacques Stephen Alexis's final moments. In this way, Alexis and Haiti go hand in hand with the Latin American past, Pierre-Charles writes:

> The writer Jacques Stephen Alexis landed with four other patriots, in the middle of April 1961, on a solitary beach off the Northeast coast of Haiti. The sands of Haiti's Northeast are made of exoticism and are covered by the pastures of history. The tragedy of Haiti

[107] "... la publicación de la novela de J.S. Alexis se inscribe en una línea sociopolítica, obedece a un gesto militante en pro de un cambio social y a la vez incluyente, con la idea de importar ciertos discursos sociales que ayudaran a la construcción "intelectual" de una nación mexicana diferente..."

[108] Carrillo refers to the back ad copy for *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* as an example of Pascale Casanova's notion of "literary capital," so when ERA places Alexis within the "moderna narrativa latinoamericana" Alexis strengthens the genre at the same time as the genre helps readers identify and consume Alexis's writing.

began there, and, in a way, so did the tragedy of our Latin America.] ("Sobre el autor 222).[109]

By channeling the rhetoric of José Martí's celebrated essay "Nuestra América," Pierre-Charles draws on Caribbean geography to trace a common history between Latin American readers and the Haitian novel he is tasked with presenting. He mentions other Pan-American geographical landmarks like the Windward Passage and the Isthmus of Panama in the same breath as the land formations like the Môle Saint-Nicolas and Bombardopolis that Alexis passed through on his final trip to Haiti. In a sense, the tragic events of Alexis's death, just like the tragedies of Haitian and Latin American history, can be read through the beaches of the Caribbean.

At the same time as Pierre-Charles relates the tragic circumstances that led to Alexis's death, he shows how *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* provides a window onto the aesthetic and political ambitions that align with the progressive values that ERA Ediciones readers looked for in literature. Pierre-Charles explains that the novel "shows a new creative perspective [...] In every way, La Niña Estrellita is the daughter of this cruel society who withers away on an island made of dreams. And El Caucho unifies the tenderness and sensuality of the Caribbean with the calm virility and drive of the proletariat" (226).[110] In his decidedly gendered description of the novel's protagonists, we can see how Pierre-Charles courts readers whose hopes, like La Niña Estrellita's, withered under dictatorial regimes like François Duvalier's in Haiti, Raphael Léonidas Trujillo's in the Dominican Republic, Fulgencio Batista's in Cuba, and Francisco Franco's in Spain. He makes direct reference to the first two — "la tiranía duvalierista" and "los

[109] "El escritor Jacques Stephen Alexis desembarcó con otros cuatro patriotas, a medidos de abril de 1961, en una playa solitaria del noreste haitiano. Las arenas del noreste haitiano están hechas de exotismo y recobiertas del pasto de la historia. La tragedia de Haití empieza allá, y también en cierta medida la de nuestra América Latina."
[110] "... muestra una nueva perspectiva creadora [...] La Niña Estrellita es hija en todos los sentidos de esa sociedad cruel que se resquebraja en una isla de sueño. Y El Caucho une la ternura y la sensualidad Caribes a la tranquila virilidad de decisión del prolitario..."

fascistas trujillistas" — as well as the haunting presence of militias like the "presencia ubesca de los *tonton macoutes*" (223, 222). Just as Pierre-Charles traces sympathetic alliances between the readers and La Niña Estrellita, he presents El Caucho as the prolitarian hero who could restore reader's hopes for victory in progressive struggles for freedom.

Though Pierre-Charles stops short of declaring El Caucho as the intellectual savior of the Caribbean, he does insist that El Caucho's social consciousness causes him to resemble the author of the novel himself. Pierre-Charles writes, "His social conscience emerges with such force, like writer's pen, to share a message of limitless faith in mankind" (226).[111] There are two ways of reading this passage, on the one hand, El Caucho is simply an invention of his author, a character who was formed by Alexis's own sense of self, while on the other hand, we can read this as Alexis's attempt to root El Caucho's social conscience in the Haitian Marxist literary tradition beginning with Jacques Roumain. Indeed, Pierre-Charles confirms latter interpretation on the subsequent page when he compares Roumain's platform for the Parti Communiste Haïtien (*Análasis esquemático 1932-1934*) to Alexis's platform for the Parti d'Entente Populaire (*Manifiesto-programa de la segunda independencia*). Since the novel and the manifesto both appear in 1959, Pierre-Charles finds El Caucho nearly indissociable from Alexis and the man that wrote the Marxist platform for Haiti's aborted "second independence." By comparing El Caucho to Alexis, just as he does with Jacques Roumain to Alexis, Pierre-Charles articulates and traces a genealogy of Haitian Marxist thought in the twentieth century where the texts that these individuals produce or wherein, they are imagined, stand in for the person themselves. Essentially, we can see how Pierre-Charles means to preserve Alexis's intellectual contributions

[111] "Su consciencia social emerge con tanta fuerza como la pluma del escritor para expresar un mensaje de fe ilimitada en el hombre."

to Pan-American Marxism in "Sobre el autor" while simultaneously immortalizing his friend through the rites of the publishing world.

Just as Pierre-Charles immortalized Alexis through the publication of his afterword, it also created a record of his life in Mexico, a record that encourages us to examine the paratexts to his own writings to locate the details of the life and intimate ties he cultivated in Mexico. During his 27-year exile in Mexico, Gérard Pierre-Charles earned a PhD in political science from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), he traveled throughout the hemisphere promoting Marxism as a powerful tool of political analysis, and he met other Haitians who fled Duvalier, like his future wife, the historian Suzy Castor.[112] Though Pierre-Charles would publish dozens of books during his lifetime, his first book was published in Spanish rather than either Haitian Creole or French, his two native languages. On the one hand, this made Pierre-Charles's entrée into publication inseparable from the notion of exile, while on the other, it connected him to a Pan-American network of Marxist, anti-fascist, anti-Makout, and anti-totalitarian compatriots and friends. Though he wrote his dissertation "L'Économie haïtienne et sa voie de développement" in French, the friends and colleagues he made at UNAM, like María Teresa Toral, a Spanish expat who had been imprisoned by Francisco Franco's regime, helped Pierre-Charles as a newly minted Haitian professor publish his first book in Spanish in 1965.[113] By the time Pierre-Charles published his dissertation in French in 1967, he was well on the way to finishing his first of many books in Spanish.

---

[112] While speaking with Dominique, Pierre-Charles explains that "Marxism is a fundamental contribution to social sciences, meaning that it helps us to understand the society we're living in, it's not only for Haiitan society... Marxism is an analytical instrument, a theory of action [Maksis se yon apò fondamental a la syans sosyal, se di pou konprann sosyete n ap viv la, se pa selman sosyete ayisyen nan... Maksis se yon enstriman analiz, se yon teyori pou aksyon]" ("Gérard Pierre-Charles with Jean L. Dominique, November 16, 1989").

[113] María Teresa Toral worked at UNAM and the Instituto Politécnico Nacional as a chemist, but she would later leave the sciences to become a painter, see: Mujeres con ciencia. "María Teresa Toral, la ciencia encarcelada | Vidas científicas," December 28, 2016. https://mujeresconciencia.com/2016/12/28/maria-teresa-toral-la-ciencia-

Pierre-Charles's next book, *Radiografía de una dictadura: Haíti bajo el régimen del doctor Duvalier* was released in the same year as *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* with the Mexican publisher Editorial Nuestro Tiempo. As the title suggests, it sought to diagnose the ills of François Duvalier's regime and analyze the twelve-year stranglehold he had had on the country. Pierre-Charles wished to send a message to Duvalier with this book, so he asked Claude Cinéas, the Haitian ambassador to Mexico, to deliver the President-for-Life a personal copy in April 1969 (*Radiographie d'une dictature* 30). The Haitian author had not only learned Spanish, but he had found the proper formula for resisting the dictatorship in exile. Similar to the afterword "Sobre el autor," there is no evidence in the book's frontmatter that suggests Pierre-Charles needed a translator, meaning that nine years into his exile the Haitian expat had become fully mobile in Spanish. In addition to his acquisition of Spanish, *Radiografía de una dictadura* carried a preface by Juan Bosch, the exiled former President of the Dominican Republic, who not only helped to promote the Pan-American ethos of Pierre-Charles's analysis, but also found in the space of the preface a chance to share his own experience of being thrust into exile through a Pentagon organized coup (*Radiographie d'une dictature* 21-23). Bosch's endorsement helped to establish *Radiografía* as a text that held meaning beyond the island borders of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which lent the book a wider readership and presumably contributed to further editioning and translations in Francophone literary spheres like Quebec and eventually in Haiti. As we have seen with Pierre-Charles for Alexis, Bosch promoted Pierre-Charles's book in a similar way, ensuring that Latin American readers would find common cause with *Radiografía*: "In Haiti, better than in any country of Latin America, can we see the socio-political roots of the

encarcelada/. Pierre-Charles, Gérard. *La economia haitiana y su via de desarrollo.* Translated by María Teresa Toral. Mexico: Cuadernos Americanos, 1965.

Latin American problem, depicted magisterially by Gérard Pierre-Charles" (*Radiographie* 21).[114] Securing readers and finding an audience in exile can often be difficult, but with connections like María Teresa Toral and Juan Bosch, Gérard Pierre-Charles had found a home for his publications abroad.

Throughout the rest of his career, Pierre-Charles would publish in Spanish in many other Latin American and Caribbean markets, like Santiago (Chile) and Havana (Cuba), while continuing to publish in Mexico. One of the last books that Pierre-Charles published in Mexico was *Haíti: pese a todo la utopía* with Siglo Vientiuno Editores in 1999, which marked a nearly forty-year relationship with Mexico. Although Pierre-Charles had published with Siglo Vientiuno before, it was his wife, Suzy Castor who published her first book with them in 1971 when she transformed her dissertation on the United States occupation into *La ocupación norteamaricana de Haíti y sus consecuencias (1915-1934)* ("An incomplete bibliography of the writing of Suzy Castor").[115] Castor and Pierre-Charles's lives, and their academic careers coincided with one another and they often published with the same editors throughout the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America: Siglo Veintiuno Editores and Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, (Mexico), Casa de las Américas (Cuba), CRESFED (Haiti), and Hunter College (NY, USA). The two would coauthor one book together, *Échec du pouvoir olgarchique [sic] et alternative de changements en Haïti*, that was published in French in 1984 and in Spanish with UNAM in 1986 at the final moments of their almost three-decade long life in the Mexican

[114] "Dans un aucun pays d'Amérique Latine, on ne peut voir mieux qu'en Haïti, ce fondement politico-social du problème latino-américain, décrit de façon magistrale par Gérard Pierre-Charles."
[115] The Public Archive posted the cover image to Castor's 1971 *La ocupación norteamaricana de Haíti y sus consecuencias (1915-1934),* but it does not list the publication information for the book, which is erroneously listed in WorldCat as Castor's earliest publication "Castor, Suzy. *La Ocupación Norteamericana de Haití y Sus Consecuencias (1915-1934).* Mexico: Siglo veintiuno editores, 1961." In the "avant-propos" to the first French edition, which won the Société Haïtienne d'Histoire, de Géographie et de Géologie prize in 1987, Castor explains that it was published in Spanish in 1971 with Siglo Veintiuno.

capital.[116] When the couple returned from their exile in Mexico, Pierre-Charles published a Haitian edition to *Radiografía,* augmenting the earlier Spanish version and the 1973 French edition that was published in Canada. For her part, Castor submitted her manuscript for *L'Occupation americaine d'Haïti* to the Société Haïtienne d'Histoire et de Géographie, and she won the first prize which meant that she, like her husband, would finally be published in her home country. In her acknowledgements, Castor thanks many Haitian and foreign colleagues who provided her feedback on her book that she had carried with her for almost two decades.

In many ways, Pierre-Charles and Castor's books are acts of memory. They recognize their friends who have perished in the fight for justice and democracy. They bear witness to atrocities and vividly recount them in their individual and collective works. Therefore, it is fitting that in the same year that Pierre-Charles published his hopeful "Sobre el autor" he wrote in *Radiografía* that the frontispiece to the first edition of Jacques Stephen Alexis's *L'Espace d'un cillement* read: "Make no mistake, this story is the foretelling of massacres." (*Radiographie d'une dictature* 48).[117] And indeed, the lives of Pierre-Charles and Castor were full of massacres, lost friends, and exile. At the same time, the two itinerant Haitian academics had one another in exile, and, as Castor wrote in her dedication to the Haitian edition of *L'Occupation américaine d'Haïti*, they were partners in life (Castor 16).

Florence Alexis and the Second Edition of *L'Espace d'un cillement* (1983)

Although the process of editing, translating, and republishing Jacques Stephen Alexis's works had begun more than a decade earlier with *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos* in Mexico, when Florence Alexis reissued her father's four books in 1982-1983 it marked a literary event. Readers

[116] Castor, Suzy, and Gérard Pierre-Charles. *Échec du pouvoir olgarchique [sic] et alternative de changements en Haïti*, 1984.; Castor, Suzy, and Gérard Pierre-Charles. *El fracaso del poder oligárquico en Haití y las alternativas de cambio*. México: Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986.
[117] "Il ne faut pas s'y tromper, cette histoire annonce des massacres."

suddenly had access to Alexis's novels and short stories in their original form for the first time since the release of his last book, *Romancero aux étoiles*, in the spring of 1960. These new editions coincided with literary events and homages like in New York at the City University of New York, City College as well as special journal issues like the Quebecois revue *Collectif Paroles* that documented the importance of Alexis's writing for large segments of the Haitian diaspora in North America and Europe.

The reedition of his books was significant for readers across the globe, but it also held personal importance for Alexis's friends and family, especially his eldest daughter, Florence, who oversaw the project and contributed a preface to *L'Espace d'un cillement* in the form of an epistolary exchange with her father beyond the grave. Just like Gérard Pierre-Charles's "Sobre el autor," Florence Alexis's paratext initiates a "literary ritual" wherein she renders a heart-felt homage to her father and gathers the debris left in the wake of his unfinished literary project. In this way, Alexis's preface serves a dual purpose: to express her personal grief regarding the absence of her father, and to document the ambitions behind her father's incomplete quartet *La Quadrature du cœur*.[118] Though her contribution to Jacques Stephen Alexis's literary legacy is often overlooked, I will show how a renewed attention to her editorial vision for *L'Espace d'un cillement* enables her to mourn her father's absence while providing an opening for future Caribbean writers to take up the novel's themes and perspectives.

One of the difficulties in assessing Florence Alexis's editorial vision comes with the role she occupies on the margins of publishing world, and that critics are uncertain about how to recognize her contribution to *L'Espace d'un cillement* because prefaces, though a part of the book's frontmatter, exist outside of the realm of the novel. We can see in Marie-José Nzengo-

[118] I refer to the quartet by this name because Florence Alexis indicates that this is the name that perhaps best summarizes the goal of her father's project ("Lettre à Jacques Soleil" 13).

Tayo's review of the second French edition how the publisher Gallimard was recognized for its role in reproducing an out-of-print work in their catalog, while those involved in the reproduction process escape from view. Musing about why the novel was not reproduced sooner, Nzengou-Tayo credits the "L'Imaginaire" imprint within Gallimard for understanding the novel's importance:

> It is also possible that the novel's style, part socially engaged (or engagé) and part poetic with its riffs on (Caribbean) identity and the 'six senses,' may have disconcerted Alexis's regular readership since they had to wait until 1983 to witness its reedition in the "L'Imaginaire" collection with Gallimard. The spirit of this collection–derived from the constructions of the imagination—recalls the literary character of the novel... ("Lecture fin de siècle de *L'Espace d'un cillement*" 137)[119]

From this perspective, publication and editorial practice are seen as passive aspects in the production of literature, either the novel no longer presented an aesthetic challenge to a respectable and elite readership, or the "L'Imaginaire" imprint somehow selected Alexis's collected works for reedition. Although she wrote the preface to the novel, Florence Alexis is relegated to the background, even when the narrative through-line of the review focuses on the sudden emergence of a work long out of print circulation. Later on, in reviews for the 2002 English translation of the novel, *In the Flicker of an Eyelid* (trans. Carrol Coates and Edwidge Danticat), Nzengou-Tayo and Bob Corbett credit Florence for her preface to the novel, but since her preface has been literally relegated to the backmatter, the critics cannot see how Florence's "Letter to Jacques Soleil" speaks to an affective editorial and archival project. Corbett writes:

> There is much rich information in the touching (if a bit pretentious) letter that Florence Alexis writes to her father's memory in 1983. However, I was disappointed in the letter since it focused almost exclusively on the larger issue of the (alleged) allegorical nature of the novel and focuses on the larger Caribbean issues. I had just finished reading one of the most sensuous and erotic novels of my whole life and am treated then to a political

[119] "Il est également possible que le style du roman, mi-social (engagé), mi-poétique (variations sur l'identité et les "six sens") ait déconcerté le lectorat habituel d'Alexis puisqu'il a fallu attendre 1983 pour voir sa réédition dans la collection "L'Imaginaire" de Gallimard. L'esprit de cette collection—axée sur les constructions de l'imagination—rappelle le caractère littéraire de ce roman..."

> treatise which, while not at all unbelievable as Alexis' intention, was clearly secondary to what was given to the reader. (Corbett "*In the Flicker of an Eyelid*: Two Sets of Comments of Bob Corbett")

In his commentary for the "Corbett List," a now-defunct gathering space for Haitians and Haitianists in the web 1.0 era, Corbett suggests that the preface's two goals (providing information and presenting an affective commemoration of her father's life) are incompatible with one another, as though the details of her father's literary career were not entangled with the life he led. The French literary critic Gérard Genette writes that the paratexts (the author's name, the title, the preface, etc.) that appear at the beginning of a book strive to "*present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world" (Genette 1). Drawing on Genette, the difficulty that Corbett and Nzengou-Tayo have in acknowledging the affective and documentary purpose of Florence Alexis's preface may be lost in the space between the *presentation of a book* (introducing the story) and the work that goes into *making a book present in the world* (making sure a book, the object itself, is published). As I will show below, these distinctions are crucial to understanding Florence Alexis's editorial project and the affective power of her preface.

In many ways, the preface to *L'Espace d'un cillement* is a way for Florence Alexis to reassemble the disparate pieces of her father spread across many continents in the final decades of his life. By bringing them together in a presentation of the novel, through the narrative frame of a letter to her father, Florence copes with her own experience of loss and exile. Florence sees the novel as a trail of scattered debris that will eventually lead her back to the Caribbean. Since *L'Espace d'un cillement* is her favorite of her father's novels, the preface not only affords Florence the space to "rassembler au fil du temps les débris épars [gather over time the scattered

debris]" that Jacques left behind, but it is also a chance for her to have a conversation with her father that she was never able to have when he was alive.

Over the course of Florence's letter, she documents the literary debris of *L'Espace*, giving readers a sense of the work that has been cut short due to Jacques's death. Florence begins with the names of the novels that were meant to follow *L'Espace d'un cillement,* "*La Rose des yeux, L'Églantine*, ou *La Quadrature du cœur,*" introducing to her father's readers, new and old, to his ultimate literary ambitions. She continues, addressing her father directly in the afterlife, "for a long time you hesitated in choosing among those titles" writing that "you wanted to undertake that enigmatic geometry, the eternal callenge, and the hypothetical solution of love between a man and woman in a universe, the Caribbean, where those relations are often carried to a point of absolute caricature" (*L'Espace* 13; *In the Flicker* 242).[120] Florence Alexis designates the third title as the ideal representative for the quartet for two ostensible reasons: if the plan was to write four novels, then each volume would to represent one of the four chambers of the heart, forming the perfect marriage between Jacques Stephen Alexis's education in medicine and his work as a novelist. The other reason is symbolic and figurative. As the story of La Niña and El Caucho flows from one volume to the next, from one chamber to the next, their love endures tests and challenges becoming deoxygenated and re-oxygenated over the course of the quartet. By the end of the final volume, when they return to their native Cuba "their love" as Alexis himself put it, "will be a little more possible" and full of the oxygen necessary to sustain life (Vilaine and Alexis 23).

[120] " tu as longtemps hésité choisir parmi ces titres... tu voulais aborder la géométrie énigmatique, le défi éternel et la solution hypothétique de l'amour de l'homme et de la femme dans un univers, la Caraïbe, où ces relations sont souvent portées à la caricature absolue."

Re-introducing the titles of the subsequent novels is important because it allows Florence Alexis to home in on the narrative thrust of *L'Espace d'un cillement* and to show how this novel defied many conventions in Haitian and Caribbean literature at the time it was written. Prior to *L'Espace d'un cillement,* Caribbean women characters and particularly in Haitian writing in the early twentieth century often serve as narrative décor rather than as agents who cause the story to progress forward. In her 1993 essay "Order, Disorder, Freedom and the West Indian Writer," the Guadeloupian novelist and critic Maryse Condé explains how two texts, Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* [*Notebook of a Return to my Native Land*] and Jacques Roumain's *Les Gouverneurs de la rosée* [Masters of the Dew], "established a[n aesthetic] model which is still largely undisputed to this day" (Condé 126). According to Condé, Caribbean literature was, and arguably still is, held to the following order if it is to secure permanence:

> 1. The framework should be the native land.
> 2. The hero should be male, of peasant origin.
> 3. The brave and hardworking woman should be the auxiliary in his struggle for his community.
> 4. Although they produce children, no reference should be made to sex. If any, it will be to male sexuality.
> 5. Of course, heterosexuality is the absolute rule.
> 6. Society should be pitied but never criticized. All its errors should be redeemed by the male hero. (126)

Although Condé writes this in 1993, the path that Césaire and Roumain illuminate lead to an idea of Caribbean literature that Jacques Stephen Alexis troubles with *L'Espace d'un cillement.* This is not to say that *L'Espace* is the perfect re-ordering of Condé's model, but it is a challenge nearly every single rule Condé stipulates except for the first. Eglantina is one of the novel's two protagonists (and the only one in *L'Étoile Absinthe*), she is not El Caucho's sidekick, and their love life is full of erotic, pleasure-seeking love, that makes possible a fuller spectrum of sexual expression and orientation beyond heterosexuality.

Beyond Roumain, Alexis's Haitian literary predecessors like the novelists Fernand Hibbert, Justin Lhérisson, and Stephen Alexis, frequently portrayed Haitian women as objects or plot elements to introduce conflicts between male protagonists and antagonists.[121] For Florence Alexis, the Haitian woman is, "a caricature, the parody of a woman, a female, abandoned and confined to her role [une caricature, une parodie de femme, une femelle, reléguée et cantonnée dans ce rôle]" and all of these elements remain present in her father's novel from the outset (*In the* Flicker 243; *L'Espace* 15). Like her fictional predecessors, Niña possesses:

> She has all the attributes that are usually bestowed on the "eternal woman": her bitchiness, her hypersensitiveness, her sex appeal, her unique vocation for pleasure, traits that alternate with her exceptional beauty, her fraternal relations with her fellow galley slaves, her basic, suppressed uneasiness, her recurring neurosis, her desperate true nature. (243; 15)[122]

However, La Niña knows how to seamlessly shift between virginal purity and unbridled coquettishness that are used, in novels prior to *L'Espace d'un cillement*, either for comedic effect or in order to produce a moralized and monolithic idea of "the Haitian" woman. Florence Alexis argues that La Niña is not the Virgin Mary readers may have expected, instead she is the prostitute, "[a taboo character about whom little is said in our literature, which most often only speaks of a few high-class 'courtesans' trying to climb the social ladder... (244; 16)[123]. Although

---

[121] The role of women in Haitian novels changes markedly after the US Occupation, with writers like Marie Chauvet and Cléanthe Valcin who introduce and center women in their narratives as dynamic characters. On the dynamism of women in Caribbean literature, see: Glover, Kaiama L. *A Regarded Self: Caribbean Womanhood and the Ethics of Disorderly Being*. Duke University Press, 2021. For more on Valcin, a contemporary of Innocent, Hibbert, and Stephen Alexis, see: Ménard, Nadève. *The Occupied Novel: The Representation of Foreigners in Haitian Novels Written during the US Occupation, 1915-1934*. University of Pennsylvania, 2002. On Fernand Hibbert's use of women characters in *Les Simulacres/Pretenders*, see: Robertshaw, Matthew, and Nathan H. Dize. *Haiti in Translation: Translating Pretenders by Fernand Hibbert, an Interview with Matthew Robertshaw*. 20 Feb. 2019, https://networks.h-net.org/node/116721/discussions/3740218/haiti-translation-translating-pretenders-fernand-hibbert.

[122] "Tous les attributs dont il est convenu de doter la 'femme éternelle': sa chiennerie, son hypersensibilité, son sex-appeal, sa vocation unique pour le plaisir alternent avec sa beauté souveraine, sa fraternité avec les campagnes de galère, son inquiétude fondamentale et refoulée, sa névrose récurrente, chronique, sa vérité désespérée."

[123] " un personnage tabou dont on parle peu dans notre littérature, qui n'a, la plupart du temps, décrit que quelques "respectueuses" de haut vol en quête de promotion sociale..." It should also be mentioned that the desecration of female virginity is a major theme in Haitian fiction in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. For example, the

Florence Alexis appears to, in these lines, suggest that La Niña still occupies one role, she clarifies that her position is much more dynamic because she exists "hors de la société" (16). La Niña's position "outside of society" allows her to observe and critique life from the margins, to remake herself from the fruits of her observations. Colin Dayan articulates the importance of La Niña in terms of the Haitian *lwa* Ezili because she "hints at what it might mean for women on the margins to serve Erzulie" ("Erzulie: A Women's History of Haiti").[124] In what Dayan describes as the "fictions of Erzulie" La Niña is perhaps best seen as a representation of Ezili Freda, the goddess of coquetry and love, who desires both heterosexual and homosexual intimacy (La Niña has sex with numerous men throughout the novel as well as with her Cuban counterpart, La Rubia). Like Ezili, La Niña contains multitudes, and escapes the rigid, fictional *cadre* into which women are forced in Haitian fiction prior to Alexis's 1959 novel. Dayan and Florence Alexis are in accord, La Niña is neither the virgin, nor the repentant prostitute of old. La Niña thrusts *L'Espace d'un cillement* into a new genre of novel "which disturbed literary conventions, the social code, rigid structures (death), and ambient prudishness, in spite of the bluntness that kills language, its haunting disarray, and the terror of impotence" (244; 16).[125]

In her preface, Florence Alexis plays the role of the literary historian *par excellence*, providing both interpretations of the impact of *L'Espace d'un cillement* as well as tracing a

---

words in Haitian Creole for "rape" (kadejak) and "rapist" (kadejakè) are first articulated in Justin Lhérisson's *Zoune, chez sa ninnaine* when the eponymous protagonist is violated by a character named Cadet Jacques (Kadejak). Another example is the killing of Romulus and Remus's mother "Marie l'Africaine" in Emeric Bergeaud's *Stella*. For more on Stella's literary history, see: "Introduction" in Bergeaud, Emeric. *Stella: A Novel of the Haitian Revolution*. Edited by Christen Mucher and Lesley S. Curtis, Translated by Christen Mucher and Lesley S. Curtis, NYU Press, 2015.

[124] Dayan uses the spelling 'Erzulie' in her article, "Erzulie: A Women's History of Haiti." For consistency with this dissertation, I will use the spelling "Ezili" according to current Haitian Creole orthography, but it should be recognized that "Erzulie" is one of the most frequent spellings used by Francophone Haitians and scholarship on Haiti to present.

[125] "... qui dérange les convenances littéraires, le code social, l'ordonnancement figé (mort), la pudibonderie ambiante en dépit de la verdeur assassine du langage hantée par le désarroi, la terreur de l'impuissance."

genealogy of her father's incomplete quartet. Throughout "Lettre à Jacques Soleil," Florence Alexis includes footnotes that direct readers to secondary sources and, most crucially, the literary debris of the novel's planned sequels. While an introduction had been added to the aforementioned Spanish translation of *L'Espace d'un cillement* in 1969 and René Depestre wrote first draft of his essay "Parler de Jacques Stephen Alexis" as the preface to *El compadre jeneral Sol* (Cuba 1972), Florence Alexis's is the only one to introduce the extant drafts and ideas for the novel's sequels in the text of her preface as well as in the footnotes.[126] The footnotes are critical for Alexis's goal of documenting her father's planned quartet. Without the references she includes from father's interviews with Sophie Brueil (*Les Lettres Françaises*) and Anne-Marie de Vilaine (*Afrique-Action*), which I have cited from above, the larger project of *La Quadrature du cœur* becomes the stuff of mythmaking. Her footnotes perform two crucial functions for documenting and recovering the incomplete sequels of *L'Espace d'un cillement*: first, the notes create traces of evidentiary proof that her father's project existed and, second, they allow Florence Alexis to archive her intimate knowledge of her father's writing for future readers and critics of his œuvre. For example, citational footnotes on pages 14 and 25 refer readers to her father's interviews with Sophie Brueil (*Les Lettres Françaises*) and Anne-Marie de Vilaine (*Afrique-Action*):

> "La Rose des yeux" in *Les Lettres françaises* du 14-20 février 1957, nº685; interview accordée à Sophie Brueil. (14)
>
> "Le Couple aux Caraïbes", in *Afrique-Action*, nº11 du 26 décembre 1960; interview accordée à Anne-Marie de Vilaine. (25)

[126] The English translation of *L'Espace d'un cillement* (*In the Flicker of an Eyelid*) by Carrol Coates and Edwidge Danticat provides ample paratextual resources for Anglophone readers to approach the novel, along with a translation of Florence Alexis's "Lettre à Jacques Soleil." For a discussion of Jacques Stephen Alexis and the question of paratexts in translations, see: Meï, Siobhan Marie. "Haiti in Translation: General Sun, My Brother and In the Flicker of an Eyelid by Jacques Stephen Alexis." *Callaloo*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2017, pp. 871–877.

Although these footnotes seem like banal references to quotations in the body of the preface, from the standpoint of the literary historian, Florence Alexis has provided her readers with the roadmap to her father's incomplete quartet. As far as the reception history and Jacques Stephen Alexis's planned writings are concerned, these interviews contain the traces, the debris of *La Quadrature du cœur*. In other footnotes, Florence Alexis synthesizes her intimate and personal knowledge of her father's literary ambitions, distilling them for readers into brief footnotes without a cited source:

> "Jacques Stephen Alexis, *L'Étoile Absinthe,* suite inédite et inachevée de *L'Espace d'un cillement*.
>
> "*Dans le blanc des yeux* : cette expression est annoncée parmi les titres "en preparation" en 1959." (24)

Popular readers of the novel and its preface may not comprehend the sentiment behind these footnotes, but as we saw earlier with Jacques Stephen Alexis devotees like Laure Leroy and the author's friends and family like Emile Ollivier, these literary traces bear significant emotional weight. If passionate readers of Alexis were looking for proof that other novels and plans for novels existed Florence Alexis has provided them with ample documentation. For those close to Alexis, his daughter and *prefacière* has carefully written an introduction to her favorite of his novels, reframing the text as a sort of intergenerational letter of affection.

The final pages of Florence Alexis's preface close as they began, by recognizing that the novel itself and its re-edition has enabled her to have a conversation with her father from beyond the realm of this world and to expose her connection as well as her grief associated with the novel to its future readers. She interprets her father as the voice behind the third person omniscient narrator when he asks at the close of the fifth mansion "le toucher," "You ask: what is the power of memory? What is the power of love? Let's remember that it is immense and

revolutionary." (250; 24)[127] For Florence Alexis these questions are crucial because they embody her project of re-issuing her father's texts: her father cannot be forgotten if his literary works remain. On an intimate scale, the second edition of *L'Espace d'un cillement* serves as an act of memory that fills the void left by her father's death, "Since that very memory and that very love allow me to speak to you today beyond the laughter and tears of a child, beyond your blood and my adult tears" (250; 24).[128] This novel, along with the reissuance of the others, has become the means by which Florence Alexis reconciles the past and the present, her life as a fatherless daughter and her adulthood in the shadow of her father's severed adulthood. Her father's writings allow her to unhinge herself from the weight of the past twenty-two years. She can once again imagine her father writing, dreaming alongside of him: "So, as the incorrigible daughter of a father-dreamer of realities, 'your *gwo-mechan-kriyèl,*' your child has begun dreaming. And I imagine what you would have written afterward: *L'Églantine* or *La Quadrature du cœur, Dans le blanc des yeux*, *L'Etoile Absinthe*" (253; 27).[129] Florence Alexis's speculation about her father's writing remains intact from 1983 until the publication of *L'Étoile Absinthe*. As she explains the provenance of her father's manuscript, she says to the RFI host: "I imagine he left manuscripts here and there, perhaps he entrusted friends with them, maybe he forgot about them in some house..." (Amar).[130] For Florence Alexis, speculative thought about her father and his dreams is a productive venture because it allows her to sift through the pieces her father left behind, reminding her of his adventurous and humane spirit. Addressing speculation as a mode of

[127] "Quel est le pouvoir de la mémoire ? Quel est le pouvoir de l'amour ? demandes-tu. Il est immense et radical, souvenons-nous-en."
[128] "Puisque cette même mémoire, ce même amour me permettent de te parler aujourd'hui par-delà mes rires et mes pleurs d'enfants, ton sang et mes larmes d'adulte."
[129] "Alors, en incorrigible fille d'un père rêveur de réalités, "ton Gros-Méchant-Cruel," ton enfant se prend à rêver. Et j'imagine ce que tu aurais écrit ensuite... *L'Eglantine* ou, *La Quadrature du cœur, Dans le blanc des yeux... L'Etoile Absinthe...*"
[130] "J'imagine qu'il laisse des manuscrits à ici et là, peut-être qu'il les confie à des amis, peut-être qu'il les oublie dans une maison..."

thinking, Keguro Macharia explains that "the ‘speculative’ becomes part of the asymptotic narration, the gap in representation" (Parham). Or put another way, by continuing to imagine her father's life, Florence Alexis is able to assuage the grief of his passing.[131] She admits, in the end, that she felt reunited with him through his sixtieth birthday and the publication of his œuvre, "On your sixtieth birthday, I have just experienced a close and sumptuous encounter with you." (253; 27)[132]

Through her preface, Florence Alexis issues a call to contemporary and future readers of Jacques Stephen Alexis, which along with her editorial work in her "Lettre à Jacques Soleil," encourages future generations of readers and writers to engage with the themes of his writing: "Let's listen to the shrewdness of each one of your words, each one explosive since your voice was abruptly silenced" (253; 27).[133] As we will see in the final portion of this chapter, Haitian writers from Florence Alexis's generation and beyond have recast Alexis's literary project, attempting themselves to fill the void, to repair the gap, the *twou* left in Haitian literature by the absence of Jacques Stephen Alexis's final three novels in his planned quartet *La Quadrature du cœur*.

Following La Niña Estrellita's Footsteps: Makenzy Orcel, *Les Immortelles, and L'Espace d'un cillement* in the Wake of Disaster

> "For me, the novel is not solely an act of witnessing, a description, but an action, an action in the service of mankind, a contribution to the forward progress of humanity. Human life is brief, I felt that by choosing this life [...] that I could contribute to our common humanity. For me, being a novelist is more than about creating art, it's about giving my life a sense of purpose."[134] Jacques Stephen Alexis

[131] Parham, Marisa. “Breaking, Dancing, Making in the Machine: Notes on . Break. Dance.” *Sx Archipelagos*, 10 July 2019, doi:10.7916/archipelagos-96nw-0f89.
[132] "Je viens de vivre une année dense, ton soixantième anniversaire, de retrouvailles somptueuses avec toi."
[133] "Écoutons l'acuité de chacun de tes mots, qui doivent être explosifs, puisque l'on t'a fait taire, très vite"
[134] " Le roman n'est pas seulement pour moi un témoignage, description, mais action, une action au service de l'homme, une contribution à la marche en avant de l'humanité. La vie humaine est brève, j'ai eu le sentiment qu'en choisissant ainsi [...] je pouvais contribuer à l'œuvre commune. Pour moi, être romancier, c'est plus que faire l'art,

> "1986 is the end of the [Duvalier dictatorship] and 2010 is the earthquake and the beginning or end of everything... the earthquake is always the end of something."[135] - Néhémy Pierre-Dahomey

At the Bocas Lit Fest in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in May 2019, Mary Abdulah asked Néhémy Pierre-Dahomey whether it was a coincidence that his novel *Rapatriés* (2017) is set between the years 1987 and 2010 or if, since the author's lifespan corresponds exactly to that of the novel, this was some sort of autobiographical impulse. Pierre-Dahomey replied smiling that it was not a gesture towards autobiography, especially since he is not a woman like the novel's protagonist, but rather an acknowledgement that writers often write about what they know, what they have experienced. Although Pierre-Dahomey never experienced the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship, it was important for him to establish a link between 1986 and 2010 because they are two years in which everything for Haitians came to an end, to a new beginning. For a young generation of writers like Pierre-Dahomey, the end of the dictatorship and the 2010 earthquake have served as sources of inspiration for writing novels and poetry in a similar way as Jacques Stephen Alexis when he looked toward the Caribbean labor movements, political struggles in Haiti, and the global push for socialist solidarity as the antidote to capitalist exploitation of the working class.

This young generation of writers—especially James Noël, Néhémy Pierre-Dahomey, and Makenzy Orcel—have looked to Alexis and *L'Espace d'un cillement* in particular for his approach to *literature as action*, his themes of social justice and the search for amorous love against all odds, and his use of poetic form within the structure of a novel. In Noël's 2018 poetic

---

c'est donner un sens à sa vie." Alexis, Jacques Stephen. “Où va le roman.” *Présence Africaine*, vol. 13, no. avril-mai, 1957, pp. 95.

[135] Abdulah, Mary. *Take Two: Néhémy Pierre Dahomey and Ayanna Gillian Lloyd at Bocas Lit Fest*. 2019. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiQTkNvcnps.

novel *Belle merveille,* the protagonist speaks "déreglement de tous les sens [...] L'oïe, la vue, l'odorat, le goût et le toucher" he feels when he is around his Italian lover, Amore, who has come to Haiti in the wake of the 2010 quake to work for an NGO. Noël's references to the five senses here correspond exactly to the names of the first five mansions of *L'Espace d'un cillement*, which is concluded with a final mansion "the sixth sense" and a coda. For his part, Néhémy Pierre-Dahomey's text resembles Alexis's writing in his command of narrative, story-driven prose. Like Alexis, dialogue is a secondary concern for Pierre-Dahomey as his characters are shaped and handled by an epic narrative voice that closely resembles epic or even scripture. In writing about *L'Espace d'un cillement,* Carrol Coates explains in the "Afterword" to the English translation that Alexis's choice to separate his novel into "mansions" rather than parts (fitting within a French novelistic tradition) or into "tableaux" (fitting within a dramatic or poetic framework) was perhaps to evoke the epic nature of the bible:

> I suspect that Alexis's usage relates to the expression in the King James version of the New Testament, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14, 2). The Louis Second translation of the bible uses *demeure* (one obsolete meaning of *mansion* in French). [In] French [a] *mansion* was also a relay station along the main highway from Rome (used by Roman officials as rest stops)—the Sensation Bar is in fact a stopping place for La Niña in her journey toward love. (*In the Flicker* 266)

Following Coates's lead, perhaps *L'Espace d'un cillement* and its six mansions have themselves become a sort of *demeure* or a place where Alexis's novelistic style remains active, perhaps in repose, waiting for another generation of writers to access and put it into practice.

While the elements of Alexis's style can be readily observed in young writers of the early twenty-first century, Makenzy Orcel's 2010 novel *Les Immortelles* is the only one that fully activates the socio-critical impact of *L'Espace d'un cillement* by directly thrusting the novel itself into a (post-)earthquake Haitian context. If for Noël and Pierre-Dahomey Alexis's novel is a stop-over, for Orcel in *Les Immortelles* it is the whole *demeure*. In *Les Immortelles,* a twelve-

year-old girl called Shakira leaves her mother's home behind for the infamous brothels of Grand Rue in the heart of Port-au-Prince. Shakira leaves an impression on the novel's unnamed narrator from the moment she arrives at her doorstep one rainy evening. The narrator takes her in, offering Shakira a place to stay and help establish a new way of life away from her mother. That is, until the earthquake causes the brothels of Grand Rue to crumble, burying Shakira in its wake. After the quake, when the novel begins, the narrator makes a deal with a client of hers who happens to be a writer: to write down Shakira's story, immortalizing the young girl along with the other women who perished alongside her, in exchange for sex. Throughout the story that ensues, the narrator refers to Shakira affectionately as "la petite," while one of her clients, a literature professor at the local university, calls her "my little Niña Shakira" in the spirit of the protagonist from her favorite novel: *L'Espace d'un cillement*. In what follows, I will demonstrate how Orcel's novel posits *L'Espace d'un cillement* as a mode of lamentation in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, circumscribing a world in which not only writers, but also their subjects are rendered immortal through the act(ion) of a novel.

Makenzy Orcel opens his debut novel with a dedication "to all the whores of Grand Rue/ Taken by the violent earthquake January 12, 2010," which sets the meditative tone of the book, blending mourning and remembrance in a fictional yet realist portrayal of life on Grand Rue before the earth shook at 4:53 in the afternoon on January 12, 2010. *Les Immortelles* begins with the deal between an unnamed writer and an anonymous narrator on the verge of a sexual transaction. The writer agrees to copy down the story the woman tells him in exchange for sex and he, rather cynically, feels that this is perhaps a better means of compensation than hoping that a book will sell. Just before she begins to speak, the narrator walks towards the window of the brothel, looks out, and lets out a sentence that stuns the writer: "The little girl. She's still stuck under the rubble,

twelve days after having prayed to all of the saints..." (Orcel 2).[136] The narrator is intent on telling Shakira's story the way that she would have it, with an attention to the literary, recalling not only her transactional relationship with the literature professor but also her love for poetry:

> I still remember the day where she broke all the bonds between us and ran off with this man, this so-called professor of literature [...] Useless to dig up old bones now. Let's begin. I'll talk. You, the writer, you write. You transform. The others always begin with prayer. I want us to begin with poetry. She loved poetry. (5)

As the novel takes shape, it becomes clear that the narrator does not understand how Shakira can maintain a love for literature while continuing to work as a sex worker. To her, the narrator, the realm of sex work is of this world; sex work is visceral and real while fiction is imagined and separate from any lived reality. However, what the narrator does not understand is the link between sex work, the little girl named Shakira, the literature professor, and Shakira's favorite novel, *L'Espace d'un cillement*. So much of this revolves around the narrator's understanding of fiction and whom it is meant for, and what it is meant to do.

Even though the narrator wishes to memorialize Shakira's story through the written word, in book form, her understanding of literature is one of utility, if Shakira is to waste her time reading, the narrator would rather the book hold something instructive within. This perhaps best explains her frustration when the narrator openly curses Jacques Stephen Alexis:

> Go fuck yourself, Jacques Stephen Alexis! Everyone says that you're such a great writer, and your books can't even teach one of your faithful readers what an earthquake is. How to react when one occurs. What is the point of even being a writer? She died because of you. Because your words were incapable of saving her. (22)

What the narrator is entirely unaware of is that Jacques Stephen Alexis has taught Shakira everything she knows about survival, which to this point has consisted of running away from her

[136] All of the translations from *Les Immortelles* are drawn from my English translation: Orcel Makenzy. *The Immortals*. Trans. Nathan H. Dize. SUNY Press, 2020. Orcel's novel was published by Mémoire d'encrier in 2010 and later edited and republished in France with Éditions Zulma in 2012, which published Alexis's *L'Étoile Absinthe*, and any reference to the French edition will follow the Zulma pagination and chronology.

mother's house, seeking refuge, and earning her way in life so that she might find a modicum of freedom. Shakira's fugitivity mirrors La Niña Estrellita's at the end of *L'Espace d'un cillement* and the beginning of *L'Étoile Absinthe* when she runs away from the Sensation Bar after she discovers her friend La Rubia, a Mexican colleague, has committed suicide. The reasons for Shakira's flight home come into view much later in *Les Immortelles* when the narrator asks her writer-client to include the pages of Shakira's journal in his manuscript. In one of her journal entries, Shakira explains: "*As long as I'm her daughter and her this man's wife, I'll never find freedom and she'll never be my mother. For me, there exist two great journeys. Reading and the sumptuous shipwreck of entangled bodies. I love freedom too much. I have too many fantasies*" (110). For Shakira, the only two things that matter are reading and sex both of which she believes, in the end, will set her free. Modelling her life off of La Niña Estrellita, Grand Rue has the dual allure of removing her from her mother's grasp, her father's control, and access to money and the means to liberate herself from her feelings of captivity. For this reason, she grants herself a new name, one of her choosing that will break from her past: *"Shakira is the name I would have chosen to break with all this, with the tears that she never manages to hide from me. It will be my name, my name in exile, in constant flight*" (97).

Although the narrator is largely unaware of it, having never read Alexis herself, but Shakira ultimately wishes to become La Niña Estrellita, allowing her professor client to even go as far as to call her his "Niña Estrellita," causing other clients to insist on calling her Shakira after the popular Colombian singer, even though she had already chosen this name for herself (92). Although the literature professor tries to claim Shakira as his own, paying twelve months in advance for Shakira's services, he cannot take credit for her love of Alexis, *L'Espace d'un cillement,* and her desire for the liberatory escape of the marvelous real in which Alexis's Niña

lives. In her journal Shakira writes: *"In my dreams, I often see myself on this street. This street that cuts the city in two. This street buried in its noise, its contradictions, its own escapes. Between my parents' incessant arguing and the Niña-Estrellita's eyes"* (113). Shakira projects the novel onto her own life, which enables her to dream in the airtight space of her parents' home; it is here where she dreams of becoming La Niña Estrellita, to be worshipped by an honorable man like Alexis's protagonists El Caucho, "*[to] be the chest that shimmers like the stars*" (110).

However, like La Niña Estrellita's life due to the death of her author, Shakira's hopes of becoming Alexis's character are cut short by the earthquake, leaving her writing behind in the hands of the narrator. In this way, Shakira closely resembles La Rubia, the woman who bequeaths all of her earthly possessions to La Niña Estrellita in the coda of *L'Espace d'un cillement*. The coda of Alexis's novel is ultimately what makes Shakira's character possible because it is where readers learn of La Rubia's love of writing, the poetry of So Juana Inés de la Cruz, and the expression of her own nuanced identity.[137] Alexis's characters, El Caucho and La Niña, for all of their humanistic verve and passion, never express themselves through literature and the same could be said for the narrator of *Les Immortelles* until Shakira came into her life. Shakira helps her to believe in the power of literature with her passing, but prior to Shakira's death, the narrator constantly tells her to "to put away her books, to walk the streets and stir up more clients" (33). Orcel's narrator, though, never fully comes to understand the impact *L'Espace d'un cillement* has on the way Shakira sees herself, how the novel encourages her to write in spite of and because of her experiences with sex work and her personal past. La Rubia uses poetry as a vessel into which she can pour all of her emotions and desires that she cannot actively express in

[137] Alexis includes an epigram to the "Coda" from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's poem "En que describe racionalmente los efectos irracionales del Amor," stanzas three and four, in Spanish and French.

her sex work at the Sensation Bar. In the suicide note she prepares for La Niña Estrellita she tells her to "Keep this paper and the others as long as you are alive. Sometimes, when you have the time or when your heart has become too heavy, try to read these lines—you'll see what all of us are and why I had to do what I've done..." (*In the Flicker* 233; *L'Espace* 344).[138] Although Orcel's narrator and La Rubia do not share the same affinity for writing or poetry—readers are led to believe that Orcel's narrator is illiterate while La Rubia used to perform Aztec scansion verse when she worked in Acapulco—they possess a similar fatalism about sex work and its (in)compatibility with love. Once the literature professor impregnates and abandons Shakira toward the end of the novel, causing her to leave Port-au-Prince for a "fugue" in the countryside and entrust her child in the care of persons unknown to readers and the narrator. Upon returning to the city, Shakira is no longer the same, "she no longer talked about Jacques Stephen Alexis, even less about the professor. Done with books" (Orcel 105).

Shakira and La Rubia's writings ultimately outlive them both and as long as they are not destroyed, they remain immortal traces of their lives. These imagined writings within Alexis and Orcel's novels also bear a great deal of significance for the large works themselves, since La Rubia's collection of poems carries the title *En un abrir y cerrar de ojos—L'Espace d'un cillement, In the Flicker of an Eyelid*—and the narrator of *Les Immortelles* tells the writer to do with it what he will, knowing that if he published it Shakira's story would live on in the world of books. In the end, all of these women, fictional sex workers in the world of Haitian fiction are connected to one another through the nexus of *L'Espace d'un cillement*. La Niña is the protagonist and recipient of the poems bearing the same name, La Niña and La Rubia are Shakira's source of inspiration and freedom, and Shakira's story then goes on to impact the

[138] "Conserve ce papier et les autres tant que tu seras en vie. Parfois, quand tu auras du temps ou que ton cœur sera lourd, essaie de les lire, tu y verras ce que nous sommes toutes et pourquoi j'ai dû faire ce que j'ai fait..."

anonymous narrator of Orcel's novel, changing the way she sees herself as a sex worker and as a person. What is more, for Florence Alexis, Kettly Mars, Makenzy Orcel, and indeed others, Jacques Stephen Alexis's life and work has served as a source of inspiration, creating a vacuum, a void, a *twou* that Haitian artists and writers have been trying to think through and work with since his murder in April 1961. *L'Espace d'un cillement, L'Étoile Absinthe,* and the remaining incomplete novels of Alexis's epic Caribbean love story are the stuff of dreams; they are promise of possibility in the face of the impossible; they are the past, present, and future of Haitian literature as their impact continues to grow stronger with every new generation of writers working through the themes most dear to Alexis: humanity and the search for love and companionship in the face of tyranny.

CHAPTER 4

Performing Insurgent Memory: Archives, "Coffin Texts," and the Execution of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin

"The exercise of state power is *always* violent; the state *always* claims a monopoly on force." Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism*

"We might also be like the ancient Egyptians, whose gods of death demanded documentation of worthiness and acceptance before allowing them entry into the next world. Might we also be a bit like the ancient Egyptians in the way of their artists and their art, the pyramid and coffin texts, tomb paintings, and hieroglyphic makers?" Edwidge Danticat, "Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work"

On February 7, 2014 the collective called the "Collectif Contre Impunité" (Collective Against Impunity) launched the website www.haïtiluttecontre-impunite.org from Port-au-Prince and Montréal. The website's primary goal was to draw attention and decry systemic acts of governmental and judicial impunity through documentation. Individual menu tabs guided users through curated digital exhibits that cover the early years of Haitian dictator François Duvalier's reign in the 1950s and extend through the end of his son Jean-Claude' Duvalier's regime in February 1986.[139] These exhibitions featured historiographic accounts of the dictatorship and contemporary photographs, videos, ephemera, and newspaper clippings as well as information drawn from documentation that individual users uploaded to the website. As such, *Haïti: Lutte Contre Impunité* was an open-source, living archive on Duvalier-era terror and its banalization of government abuse. These documents chronicled quotidian acts of violence, property theft, extortion, beatings, rape, and murder committed by François Duvalier's militia, the *Tonton Makout*. [140] The website made visible a documentary history that was never supposed to be

[139] François "Papa Doc" Duvalier rose to power in 1957 through various efforts to scare and suppress voters (*The Aftershocks of History* 320-324; Smith 152). As a medical doctor, hence the nickname "Papa Doc," Duvalier became renowned for his fieldwork in the Haitian countryside leading to a cure for maws. His son Jean Claude, while not a doctor at all, fed off of his father's cult of personality when he was abdicated the presidency at the age of 17 and continued his father's repressive regime.

[140] The *Tonton Makout* are the secret police and militia started by François "Papa Doc" Duvalier (1957-1971) and continued under the rule of his son Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier (1971-1986). In the Haitian folk tradition, *Tonton Makout* is a frightening character who kidnaps naughty children in his "makout," or bag (*The Aftershocks of History* 312). After the period of *dechokaj* (uprooting) of those who served as Duvalier's accomplices in decades of

preserved. François Duvalier's regime recorded proof of its abuses to paralyze the Haitian people, but it did not intend to supply its victims with the materials necessary to commemorate a rebellious past once the dictatorship had fallen. In the thirty-four years since Jean-Claude Duvalier boarded a United States Air Force jet bound for Grenoble, France, Haitians have sought to heal the wounds left after decades of living under a totalitarian government.

In this chapter, I wish to do three things. First, I will demonstrate the importance of archiving and community-based record keeping practices for Haitians living in Haiti and in the diaspora by delving into the ruins of the *Haïti: Lutte Contre Impunité* website. In many ways, these archival practices have helped the Haitian community cope with the emotional and physical pain caused by almost thirty years of the Duvalier era dictatorships as well as other periods of Haitian history. I will examine Edwidge Danticat's 2010 essay "Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work" to show how Haitian writers and artists today make use of documents produced by François Duvalier's regime to undermine the legacy of the dictatorship in the twenty-first century. And finally, I will illustrate how Danticat constructs a new, literary archive of Haitian resistance to preserve the memory of insurgent rebels as well as that of many anonymous Haitians who risked their lives through the literary and performing arts. It is in this last portion where I turn to Danticat's notion of "coffin texts" as an essential literary practice for Haitians in the years following the Duvalier era. Even though literature and rigorous documentation cannot bring back the many lives lost, it can help those still alive salvage the memories of their loved ones.

***

atrocities, many *Makout* went into exile in Canada, the US, and the rest of the Americas. Today, *Makout* is synonymous with the idea of power.

While community archives and documentary practice have the potential to bring together Haitians in the diaspora, they are not without their challenges. The *Lutte Contre Impunité* site is no longer active. The linked page above is dead; it no longer leads to a documentary past, but a 403 error, meaning that the user needs permission to access the content. In the language of the Internet, we might call the *Lutte Contre Impunité* archive an "orphan page." Like a person who has recently experienced a loss, its users are no longer sure where to navigate to next, or where to look at all. And yet, orphaned though it may be, its existence in the first place leads us to ask questions about the stakes of preserving the memories of victims under the Duvalier dictatorships in Haiti from 1957 until 1986. As family members are massacred and disappeared by repressive regimes, in what ways do virtual and literary artifacts offer visitors a means by which to remember their loved ones? How do diasporic communities, especially those in exile, confront the crux of memorialization that Marianne Hirsch characterizes as "an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture" (Hirsch 205)?

Although the documentary contents of the *Lutte Contre Impunité* archive are lost from the internet, users can still visit an archived version of the webpage via the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine making it possible to recover the virtual remnants of Haitian attempts to find justice and reconciliation for the victims of governmental persecution.[141] The Wayback Machine was unfortunately incapable of salvaging the website's downloadable content, losing more than twelve pages of personally submitted documents. At this point, the Internet Archive does not

[141] The Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine" captures versions of publicly available javascript and html websites, making them available even after a website is taken down or crashes. It derives its name from Mr. Peabody's time machine, the "WABAC (pronounced "way back") Machine" in the Cold War era cartoon The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends. When I could no longer locate the *Haïti: Lutte Contre Impunité* website I sent a tweet to Dr. Laura Wagner, Gotson Pierre, and Jasmine Narcisse, an archivist, a journalist, and a literary scholar, respectively, to find out if they knew the whereabouts of the site. John Russell of the Center for Humanities & Information at Penn State University replied to my tweet, drawing my attention to the archived versions of the *Lutte Contre Impunité* in the Internet Archive. In a subsequent tweet, Russell lamented that all of the downloadable content was lost when the site crashed or ran out of financial support.

have a complete version of the website in any one of the page's four languages—English, French, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. The ruins of www.haïtiluttecontre-impunite.org are preserved as an eclectic mix of pages. The Internet Archive periodically captures the content of publicly available websites, preserving them locally and publicly on their servers.[142] This is what allows users to access bits and pieces of the four instances where the Internet Archived the *Lutte Contre Impunité* site. To delve into the remains of this project, users have to be mobile in all four languages. In the last version of the website archived on May 26, 2017, there is an embedded image paying homage to the thirteen members of the insurgent paramilitary force known as Jeune Haïti who were all killed as they sought to free Haiti from the grip of François Duvalier. Besides the image of Jeune Haïti, the Internet Archive managed to archive the page dedicated to telling the story of Marcel Numa and Louis "Milou" Drouin Jr's public execution. As the website creators argue on the "about" page, the families of the victims of these crimes deserve the right to justice and reconciliation in the face of a nearly thirty-year long dictatorship ("A propos du projet").[143] The documentary contents of the *Lutte Contre Impunité* site are partially preserved in the 2014 companion book *Mourir pour Haïti* published by the Centre de Documentation et d'Information Haïtienne, Caribéenne et Afro-Canadienne (CIDICHA), which only contains a

[142] The Internet Archive is a non-profit organization building "a digital library of the internet" (About IA). Started in 1996 it holds a surplus of 100 terabytes of archived webpages. On the FAQ page for the "Wayback Machine" the Internet Archive explains that the importance of their collections impacts the cultural heritage of the internet age; "without such [digital] artifacts, civilization has no memory and no mechanism to learn from its successes and failures" (Internet Archive Frequently Asked Questions).

[143] The "About" page states: "En Haïti les *crimes d'État*, les *crimes politiques* aussi bien que les *crimes individuels*, font rarement l'objet d'une sanction prévue par la loi. Souvent, aucune enquête ni procédure judiciaire n'est ouverte après la perpétration d'actes criminels et illégaux. Les rares enquêtes, quand elles sont entreprises, n'aboutissent guère, voire jamais. Et la justice défaillante, quand elle se prononce, s'éloigne du droit et de la vérité la plupart du temps. Les victimes, les familles des victimes n'ont pas véritablement de recours face aux criminels et souvent elles doivent affronter le mépris de leurs souffrances et l'arrogance de leurs bourreaux. Elles sont contraintes au silence par peur de subir les représailles de leurs bourreaux ou elles choisissent de se taire convaincues que le système judiciaire haïtien est incapable de rendre justice. Quand elles décident de porter plainte, généralement les victimes se heurtent aux murailles de l'impunité, se retrouvant devant une justice sourde-muette."

smattering of the resources previously on the web—audio and video resources are also no longer publicly available.[144]

Other websites such as executedtoday.com and potomitan.net have archived narrative accounts of the Jeune Haïti insurgency, reproducing screenshots from the YouTube video of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin's public execution.[145] Blogs and public writing forums such as Kreyolicious, the Haitian History Blog, and journalist Michael Deibert's personal blog also host pages that provide a brief summary of Jeune Haïti's resistance.[146] But the documentary loss of the Lutte Contre Impunité website looms large given that the content on all of these sites are situated according to a narrative frame that foregrounds Duvalierist violence rather than contemporary Haitians' personal and intimate forms of resistance. [147] And while physical markers

[144] If you visit the "Bibliothèque" tab, you can view which videos and audio files used to be on the website, but most of these files, including the links to YouTube videos are gone or result in 404 Errors—a dead link. For instance, the link to the video "La population gagne les rues—entre joie et colère" you are able to see the description of the video and a black embedded media file above, but the video never plays despite perpetually loading. The video description available in Kreyòl and French reads: "Un vent de liberté et de colère souffle sur tout le pays; les Haïtiens sont dans les rues librement pour exprimer colère et joie à la fois. Quelques scènes de pillage après la chute de Baby Doc; même les tombes des dignitaires duvaliéristes décédés, y compris celle de François Duvalier, ne sont pas épargnées. Des images saisissantes. Documentaire réalisé en 1986 par les frères Denis (Haïti), 14mn59. [Yon gwo van libète mele ak gwo kolè t ap soufle sou tou peyi a. Popilasyon san krent pran lari pou montre lajwa ak kolè li ansanm. Nou ka wè anpil dechoukay fèt nan biznis, lakay patizan divalyeris yo, tonton makout e latrie. Menm tomb Divalye Pèp souvren te dechouke, ansanm ak tomb gwo kriminèl divalyeris. Imaj sa yo te filme an 1986 pa de frè Denis yo (Ayiti), 14mn59.]"

[145] Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin's execution is archived on the website www.executedtoday.com, which describes itself as "Executed Today is a daily chronicle — each day the story of an historical execution that took place on this date, and the story behind it" that seeks to provide access to global political history through the lens of executions (Executedtoday.com "About"). Another important website for the Haitian diaspora community, www.potomitan.info also narrates Numa and Drouin's death providing a link to the video of their execution available through YouTube.com (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hgGacP6SuM). The video was uploaded by the *Haïti: Lutte Contre Impunité* collective, set to Danièle Magloire's song "Atelye wòch dife [The Fire-Stone's Workshop]" and their channel hosts four other videos previously in the website's library.

[146] Roopika Risam refers to this type of social media participation as the creation of "digital diasporas." See, Risam, Roopika. Digital Homes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVAIUq6h9Jc. TEDxSalemStateUniversity, Salem, MA. Blogs and Haitian history websites have become an important element of Haitian diaspora consciousness, especially for the generations of Haitians born in Canada, the US, and Europe. The Haitian History Blog, a Tumblr dedicated to Haitian history from the colonial era to the present has been instrumental in sharing academic and lay perspectives on Haiti since 2013. The blog's primary Administrator, Admin A, chooses anonymity in order to protect herself from Duvalierists who may read the site and threaten her online. Admin A openly identifies as a female PhD student in history, studying Noirisme and the Duvalier regime. Her blogging work and academic pursuits are enmeshed in the process of sifting through the aftermath of dictatorship.

[147] See *Mourir pur Haïti, La Résistance à la dictature en 1964.* Les Éditions du CIDIHCA, 2015. Many of the documents on the *Haïti: Lutte Contre Impunité* website are included in the CIDIHCA volume, citing the website as

of Numa and Drouin's legacy survive in their hometowns of Jérémie and Port-au-Prince, the fact that many Haitians fled the country during the Duvaliers' reign means that for most, memory of the victims and the capacity to mourn the loss of the thirteen insurgents is limited to virtual materials and markers (see figure 14).[148] Now, with the YouTube video as the most publicly available, open-access form of documentation of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin's lives for Haitians in the Diaspora, Edwidge Danticat's 2010 essay "Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work" becomes even more important for the families of the members of Jeune Haïti as well as for all victims of Duvalierist terror.[149] Danticat's essay performs an act of diasporic mourning and history telling, turning the archive onto itself, countering the archived state curated narrative of Jeune Haïti to produce Numa and Drouin as subjects of history rather than simply the objects of a public spectacle.

---

the source for photographs, newspaper clippings, and governmental documents. There is an open-access PDF version of *Mourir pour Haïti* available online at (http://www.windowsonhaiti.com/docs/mourir_pour_haiti.pdf).

[148] *Mourir pour Haïti* features images of memorials to the members of Jeune Haïti and their families in the volume's appendix. For more on the work of the Haitian muralist Jerry, see: Kivland, Chelsey L. "Sympathetic Graffiti in Haiti: Jerry's Murals as a Scene of Pedagogical Curiosity." Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism, vol. 21, no. 2 (53), July 2017, pp. 22–43.

[149] "Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work" was initially presented as an address at Princeton University on March 25, 2008 in the Richardson Auditorium (https://vimeo.com/253707092). Two years later the essay appears in the eponymous collection of personal essays *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work* via Princeton University Press where Danticat clearly revises her speech, referring to events like the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

Figure 14: Mural by "Jerry" of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin

***

Part of a larger collection of essays and texts initially that Danticat presented as contributions to the Toni Morrison lectures at Princeton University in 2008, the opening and eponymous chapter “Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work” begins and ends with Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin’s insurgent lives. Danticat situates the Jeune Haïti movement within a range of artistic, journalistic, and resistant acts under the reign of François Duvalier as

"dangerous undertakings, [as] disobedience to a directive" ("Create Dangerously" 11).[150] Indeed, under a repressive state where major print publications such as *Le Nouvelliste* and *Le Matin* served as the media arms of the dictatorship, any public writing, performance, or gossip was subject to violent scrutiny. The print archive of the dictatorship took control over the written narrative of the time, making embodied acts and performances of resistance a crucial repertoire of knowledge for Danticat to draw on when commemorating the lives of Numa and Drouin, along with the other 11 members of Jeune Haïti. Working through these acts of resistance Danticat puts into practice Diana Taylor's notion of the relationship between the archive and the repertoire whereby "writing [becomes] far more dependent on embodied culture" to wrest memorializing processes from those in power (*The Archive and the Repertoire* 17).[151] Taylor refers to this dialectic in performance terms as the archive and the repertoire—or the document and the series of acts necessary to recreate and alter the original to produce a critique of the archived event (*The Archive and the Repertoire* 69). Working with the Duvalierist archive requires a restoration of the idea of resistance and insurgency through the practice of memory work and archival thinking. Riffing on Taylor's concept of the archive and the repertoire Marianne Hirsch grounds her concept of "postmemory" in the "intergenerational acts of transfer" that pass a previous generation's trauma onto a subsequent generation, especially in the diaspora, through photography, affect, and performance (Hirsch 104-106). In this sense, Danticat might be seen as presenting the postmemory of the François Duvalier's dictatorship, where through an engagement with her parents anecdotes, moving and still images, and cultural ephemera such as

[150] Citations of the essay appear in quotation marks, and references to the essay collection appear in italics.
[151] In the original context, Diana Taylor is discussing the destruction of Nahua codices and the rewriting of Mesoamerican history according to Spanish colonial rule. See: Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas.* Duke University Press, 2003.

newpaper clippings, literature, and the like, she imagines, projects, and creates a memorial to Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin's lives.

The government's expressed purpose of filming the firing squad and snapping pictures of the two inert young Haitians was to suppress anti-Duvalier sentiments and to discipline the Haitian public. In doing so, manipulated the narrative of the lives of Marcel Numa, Louis Drouin, and the other eleven members of Jeune Haïti. School was cancelled, the government was closed for the day, and many Haitians were even bussed from the provinces so that as many Haitians as possible could witness the public display of violence. The footage was shown in movie theaters, broadcast on the radio throughout the country, and the photographs landed on the front page of every Haitian daily (Danticat 2-4). If "…history is lived as an open wound" as Kirsten Weld observes about life under repressive dictatorial regimes, then Danticat's focus on embodied acts of resistance as well as archival documents from the dictatorship itself can be seen as an attempt to suture the wound (Weld 5). Even though the coup has been thoroughly chronicled in oral histories and via word-of-mouth, the Duvalier government itself played a significant role in archiving Numa and Drouin's execution by filming and photographing their execution. Kirsten Weld refers to this process of archiving as amassing a "counterinsurgent" archive where dictatorial regimes document their violent acts, compile dossiers of surveillance, and inventory the lives of those in captivity, barring them from access to their loved ones and controlling their narrative in the public sphere (Weld 16). To read the archive of Jeune Haïti "against the grain" as Ann Laura Stoler instructs entails unraveling the official narrative of the Duvalierist state in order to understand how the dictatorship managed to transform the thirteen Haitian rebels into "fetishes of the state," objects of repressive politics and cautionary tales for opponents of totalitarianism (*Along the Archival Grain* 33).

Additionally, Danticat's choice of sources is also indicative of the inequalities of historical power under the Duvalier regime. In "Create Dangerously" word-of-mouth and *zen* (gossip), bedtime stories, communal reading practices, and community theater initiatives bear as much or more historical weight than official government directives and communiqués. In rewriting the account of Numa and Drouin's execution and resistance to the Duvalier dictatorship Danticat takes seriously the argument Michel-Rolph Trouillot makes about power and historical traces: "sources are thus instances of inclusion, the other face of which is, of course, what is excluded… sources imply choices" (*Silencing the Past* 48). As we will see, Danticat's choices reflect both an intent to include embodied sources as sites of knowledge, but an attempt to create textual memorials, or in her words, "coffin texts" for the victims of Duvalierist violence ("Create Dangerously" 20). In what follows, I will show how François Duvalier and his regime simultaneously narrativized and archived the Jeune Haïti coup as a foreign paramilitary invasion and how Duvalier and his government sought to exclude the members of Jeune Haïti from history by dispossessing them of their citizenship, their families, and the claim to a shared Haitian past. In response to the creation of a formal, state narrative of the past, I will demonstrate how Edwidge Danticat re-documents Jeune Haïti and instantiates an insurgent narrative of the coup and collective resistance in the wake of Numa and Drouin's November 1964 execution. By recreating the archive of Numa and Drouin's life work, Danticat not only accounts for embodied mourning practices as a source, but performs her own act of mourning through writing from the diaspora. Danticat's reflection on Numa and Drouin's deaths ultimately leads her to theorize the concept of "coffin texts," which allow diasporic Haitians to mourn those who have passed from afar and especially in the absence of the materials necessary to build physical mausoleums.

Archiving Spectacles of Violence Under François Duvalier

In her 1997 study, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War,"* Diana Taylor focuses on the period of the "Dirty War" (1976-1983) to investigate the role that public spectacle plays in reifying or dismantling notions of community and nationhood. Taylor posits that spectacle is the way "a small group of power brokers […] engenders and controls a public through the performance of national identity, traditions, and goals" (*Disappearing Acts* ix).[152] Taylor further articulates, like Judith Butler and others have shown regarding gender, that "nation-ness is also performative" (92).[153] A performance of the nation must, therefore, be articulated in terms of "doing" rather than "being," something that is constituted through the continuous repetition of acts such as public acts of violence, visible attempts to censure the public voice, and state sponsored pageantry that upholds a specific vision of the nation. In Argentina, Taylor argues, "[the] spectacle of the Dirty War […] was a theatre of panic, of isolation, silence, and unnaming […] Argentineans were assigned to spectatorship – watching themselves, looking up to (or out for) the military, scrutinizing others" (94). Similar abuses took place under Papa Doc, including the stripping of Haitian citizens of their nationality and their property as a result of their opposition to his regime. Taylor's insights into the uses of power and the performativity of the military regime in Argentina help to provide a frame for

[152] In *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas,* Diana Taylor opts for the use of the Spanish language derived "performatic" (from *performático*) in order to distance her usage of performance from discursive understandings of the term "performative" used by J.L. Austin, Jacques Derrida, and Judith Butler. Performatic seeks to focus on the nondiscursive realm of performance, providing a challenge to Western logocentrism (*Archive and the Repertoire* 5-6).

[153] For quite some time, gender and sexuality have influenced the conception of performance studies. Years before the publication of *Gender Trouble,* Judith Butler employed the Beauvoirian formulation "on ne naît pas femme, on le devient" to explain that gender is "instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" such as bodily gestures, movements, and enactments that grant the "*appearance of substance*," or of gender identity (Butler 519-520). For more on the performance of sexuality and gender within the context of Haiti and spiritual practice, see: Chapman, Dasha A., Erin L. Durban-Albrecht and Mario LaMothe. "*Nou Mache Ansanm* (We Walk Together): Queer Haitian Performance and Affiliation." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory.* 27.2 (2017): 143-159.

analyzing the employment of public spectacle as a means of disciplining the public in Haiti between 1957 and 1973.

However, unlike the military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and other Latin American and Caribbean contexts, the abuses of François Duvalier's regime were not entirely mobilized by the military, but through the work of the *Tonton Makout*. Duvalier's henchmen were the proverbial soldiers who carried out many mass killings, bombings, and stoked terror in the public sphere.[154] While extreme state violence had been normalized in Haiti in the years leading up to Duvalier's reign, including the imprisonment of political dissidents, leftists and those who sought to oppose General Paul Magloire's flair for military pomp, the Duvalier dictatorship took things further (Smith 150-172).[155] Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that what made the Duvalier dictatorship distinct from previous authoritarian regimes in Haiti was that "Duvalierism distinguished itself by a *new kind* of state violence, one that systematically violated the code governing the use of force by the state" (*Haiti: State Against Nation* 166).[156] This culturally established code, in effect since Haitian independence, protected the senseless killing and violation of children, the elderly, and women. In addition, before Duvalier, high-ranking civil servants as well as social groups such as towns, villages, and provinces were traditionally left out of the arbitrary violence of the government that surrounded Port-au-Prince. Duvalierism gave

[154] For instance, the jailing and torture of Radio Haïti Inter journalist and poet Richard Brisson. See: Wagner, Laura. "For the Eyes of a Princess: Jean Dominique on the Life and Death of Richard Brisson." *The Devil's Tale, Dispatches from the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library*, 17 Jan. 2018, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2018/01/17/for-the-eyes-of-a-princess-jean-dominique-on-the-life-and-death-of-richard-brisson/.

[155] In *Red & Black in Haiti: Radicalism, Conflict, and Political Change*, Matthew J. explains that between 1950 and 1957 persecution became the norm, leading to an institutionalization of military governance. Paul Magloire, the leader of the Haitian Army, won the 1950 election with 99% of the popular vote thus "becoming the first military president since 1915" (Smith 152). Under Magloire, no group suffered more than the left. Four days before leaving Haiti for Jamaica after relinquishing the executive branch to the Supreme Court, Magloire imprisoned more than 100 political opponents as his final show of military force.

[156] Emphasis in original.

way to the killing and raping of children, the disappearing of entire families, or the sudden massacre of entire villages at the will of François Duvalier (166-168).

By the end of the 1950s the state violence that had begun under Magloire came off the rails under Duvalier not only in scale, but also in the way that it was carried out. The Duvalier regime often made use of spectacle to normalize state violence, forcing Haitians to conform to a particular brand of citizenship and obedience. Haitians knew that if they did not conform to the rules of the dictatorship their friends and family could either be disappeared or murdered. However, these rules were hardly ever defined, instituting what Trouillot refers to as a "climate of terror" (169). The goal was simple, to prove to the Haitian people that Duvalier's power was supreme and that any opposition, or allegiances to opposition would be snuffed out. Indeed, the entire community of Jérémie was under constant threat by Duvalier following the incident and numerous children – second cousins of the Jeune Haïti militiamen – were raped and killed (*Haiti: State Against Nation* 168 and Voltaire 46).

On the morning of November 12, 1964, Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin, the two remaining members of the Jeune Haïti militia, were taken to the cemetery walls, tied to posts, and executed by firing squad in downtown Port-au-Prince for attempting to overthrow François Duvalier's totalitarian regime. Although Numa and Drouin's attempted coup d'état failed in ousting Duvalier, the Jeune Haïti movement is one of the most significant acts of resistance to mark the history of the Duvalier dictatorship from 1957 until the forced exile of Jean-Claude Duvalier in February 1986.[157] Generally speaking, the early 1960s were a hotbed of rebellious activity; from April 1963 until November 1964, Haitian paramilitary groups like Jeune Haïti trained in both the Dominican Republic and the United States staged multiple offensives against

[157] After his death in 1971, the Haitian presidency was abdicated to François Duvalier's 18-year-old son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier.

the state army and the *Tonton Makout.* In April 1963, Haitian rebels attempted to kidnap and assassinate Jean-Claude and his sister, Simone, but they were thwarted by the Haitian army.[158] In the autumn of that same year, a Roman Catholic priest named Gérard Bissainthe based out of the Dominican Republic began to recruit Haitian exiles living in the United States to form a rebel force christened Jeune Haïti (Dierderich 239). CIA agents drove members of the group to upstate New York in covered vans and later instructed the Haitian recruits in guerilla warfare and insurgent military tactics. The small group was then transported by cover of darkness to an army base in North Carolina to learn how to recruit new members to their cause once on the ground in Haiti. However, the group was sent back to New York immediately following the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy, which caused a shift in US foreign policy towards Haiti and Caribbean dictatorships (261).[159]

Meanwhile, another insurgent group of Haitian paramilitary forces underwent training in the Dominican Republic and planned to strike along the interior border by crossing the Massacre River into Haiti from the east. Led by Fred and Reneld Baptiste, the group called themselves the "Camoquins" which was the name of a popular anti-malarial drug at the time (*Mourir pour Haïti* 38). For the Camoquins, they saw a coup d'état as the only possible cure to the viral grip of Duvalier's repressive hold on society.[160] Once Papa Doc declared himself President for Life on June 14, 1964 Fred Baptiste decided that the Camoquins would strike without delay at the

[158] François Duvalier blamed Lieutenant François Benoît and the government of the Dominican Republic for the attempted murder and kidnapping plot, Benoît to flee Haiti for New York ("Haïti rompt les Relations Diplomatiques avec la République Dominicaine" n.p.). Duvalier later ordered the Benoît family and their military relatives in the Édeline family to be rounded up, tortured, and massacred, see: Temwanyaj sou 26 avril 1963 (26 avril 1986) / Radio Haiti Archive / Duke Digital Repository. 26 Apr. 1986, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-0035_01. Radio Haiti Archive, RL10059CS0035. For a narrative account on François Benoît and April 26, 1963, see: Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. Metropolitan Books, 2010.

[159] Bernard Diederich argues that this shift in policy was a result of the shift from the Kennedy administration to the Johnson administration, which saw Duvalier as more stable, anti-communist government (Burt and Diederich 261).

[160] See Burt and Diederich pages 283-297 for more on the Camoquins.

beginning of July. The June 14, 1964 issue of *Le Nouvelliste* announced with aplomb that François Duvalier was to be the President for life, claiming that "dans l'enthousiasme le peuple haïtien pour le maintien à vie du Dr. Duvalier à la Présidence de la République" ("Journée historique du 14 juin 1964" n.p.). Even though the newspapers gave the outward appearance of democratic process, Duvalier had already demonstrated that any opponents, whether civilian or parliamentary, would suffer from the consequences of their dissidence. Earlier, on May 25, 1964 the Haitian legislative body issued a new constitution announcing that "The Citizen Doctor François DUVALIER, following the dispositions of the 92nd article of the present Constitution the elected President of the Republic will exercise His Highest Functions for Life [Le Citoyen Docteur François DUVALIER, élu Président de la République exercera à Vie Ses Hautes Fonctions, suivant les dispositions de l'article 92 de la présente Constitution]" (*Constitution de la République d'Haïti, 1964* 37).[161] Clearly the legislative body and Duvalier himself had already made plans concerning the presidency without awaiting the results of a vote or any democratic process to later unfold. The Camoquins, while initially successful in catching the Haitian army off guard, quickly lost steam and began to incur major losses to their stock of weapons as well as to their ranks. Gérald "Géto" Brierre of Jeune Haïti, hearing of the dwindling strength of the Camoquins, rallied his comrades saying "si nous ne venons pas en aide à Fred Baptiste, comment pourrions-nous nous regarder dans un miroir et nous dire que nous sommes des hommes ?"

Despite this setback, the group remained committed to their mission and with the financial support of Haitians in the US, nine months later, on August 5, 1964, the thirteen-members of Jeune Haïti landed at Petite-Rivière de Dame Marie on Haiti's southwest coast to

[161] The 1964 constitution also claims the newspaper *Le Moniteur* the official mouthpiece for the government, although the articles cited in this chapter all reveal the extent to which other newspapers like *Le Matin* and *Le Nouvelliste* also contributed to the edification of the dictactorship. See: *Constitution de la République d'Haïti*, 1964. Imprimerie de l'Etat, http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00000621/00001/3j. Accessed 14 Dec. 2018.

enlist locals and lead a coup d'état against Duvalier (*Mourir pour Haïti* 41). Unfortunately, the coup was short-lived. After several months of fighting with the *Tonton Makout* and a torrid hurricane season, only Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin remained alive by November of that year, though they were imprisoned in the state prison in Port-au-Prince, and their execution was eminent.

Figure 15: The Headshots of the Thirteen Members of Jeune Haïti published by Le Nouvelliste on October 28, 1964 after they had all been captured or killed in action. (Image courtesy of the Digital Library of the Caribbean)

At the beginning of October Géto Brierre, Jacques Wadestrandt, Charles Forbin, Jacques and Max Armand, Mirko Chandler, and Jean Gerdès had already been killed and the Jeune Haïti

forces were cut down to six in total. Marcel Numa was arrested on September 23, disguised as a peasant while collecting supplies from a local market in Coteaux (43). Louis Drouin was injured in a skirmish at La Rochelle, arrested, and sent to Port-au-Prince. On October 26, Roland Rigaud, Guslé Villedrouin, and Réginald Jourdan were killed near L'Asile. After 81 days and more than 260km of mountainous terrain covered, the *Tonton Makout* defeated Jeune Haïti, killing eleven of the thirteen, with Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin kept alive, imprisoned in Duvalier's prison Fort Dimanche.[162] Two days later, Duvalier's Foreign Affairs minister, René Chalmers issued a communiqué in the Port-au-Prince daily *Le Nouvelliste* announcing the deaths of eleven of the thirteen Jeune Haïti troops and the arrest and impending executions of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin. *Le Nouvelliste* issued headshots of all thirteen, some of them dead or in various stages of dying.[163] This undoubtedly cast an ominous shadow on their remaining family members, since in the days leading up to and following Jeune Haïti's insurgency, the *Tonton Makout* had been actively torturing and maiming any known relatives.[164] Less than two weeks later Numa and Drouin were executed by firing squad with the whole country watching either as captive witnesses, consumers of the press, movie theater-goers, school children, or members of

[162] Reneld and Fred Baptiste were imprisoned at Fort Dimanche until their deaths on August 5, 1973 and June 16, 1974, respectively.

[163] After a great deal of reflection, I decided to include this picture from *Le Nouvelliste* portraying members of Jeune Haïti both dead and alive. As Christina Sharpe explains in her encounters with photography of Black subjects under conditions of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and the ethnographic gaze of photojournalists, displaying the photos of Jeune Haïti help us ask another set of questions about those resisting the Duvalier dictatorship (*In the Wake* 43-45). First, we pause and realize that there are 15 photos for 13 members of the militia, there are some that are doubled and others that only include a photo of a living or of a dead or dying subject. Among these photos are the animated expressions of rebels who are always in historical accounts prefigured as dead. By seeing Marcel Numa's ear-to-ear smile we can see his brilliant youthfulness that Danticat talks about in her essay. Including the images allow us to ask "Who can look back?" as Sharpe wonders (45). This not only makes us more aware of the individuals whose downcast eyes visually convey their passing, but for the living it places their lives outside of the photographic arrangement manipulated by Duvalier's media henchmen. When we see Marcel Numa and others staring back into the camera either elegantly dressed for a family portrait or smiling for a joyous occasion, we find in the violent Duvalierist archive traces of life outside of the present period of dictatorship.

[164] This took place in Jérémie, where the majority of the members were born; their family members are remembered as the "Vêpres de Jérémie" and there is a memorial to them and Jeune Haïti in the center of town (see *Mourir pour Haïti* 80-81 for images of the memorial).

the clergy. The following day in a short article on page three of *Le Nouvelliste,* Duvalier stripped the property and citizenship from all of Numa and Drouin's family members; Papa Doc was intent on not only taking the lives of everyone associated with Jeune Haïti, he wanted to dispossess them of everything that tied them to Haiti and the nation ("Avis" n.p.).

The Restaging Spectatorship: Captive Assemblies and Intimate Viewers

In *Create Dangerously: An Immigrant Artist at Work,* Edwidge Danticat refers to the execution on Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin as her creation myth, as her artistic awakening. Danticat first heard the story of the execution as a child. By engaging with archival sources from the execution such as photographs, newspaper articles, books and films, Danticat returns to the scene of Numa and Drouin's assassination, transforming herself into a spectator ("Create Dangerously" 5). Danticat is an intimate viewer who watches the video at home at a great temporal remove from the execution itself. This framing allows Danticat to carefully reconstruct the narrative of the execution – filling in the lacunae of the archival sources with her imagination and memories of subjective accounts of the event. The memories Danticat draws on are also kept in the realm of rumor and word-of-mouth since Danticat never reveals the sources of the gossip. In the spirit of the Haitian play on words, *vwazinaj fè tripotaj* (neighbors gossip), the group of people or the neighbors speaking, talking about, and keeping the memory of Numa and Drouin alive is amorphous and unidentifiable, thus safe from Duvalierist reprisals.

Danticat's attention to gossip as a mode of coping with widespread panic shows a form of quotidian resistance to the narrative of the dictatorship as capable of entirely suppressing dissent. In *Idle Talk, Deadly Talk: The Uses of Gossip in Caribbean Literature* Ana Rodríguez Navas writes: "even within the circumscribed efforts at dictatorship novels and other dissident fiction that have marked the Haitian and exilic fiction of the Duvalier eras, however, gossip plays a

smaller role than it does in Cuban and Dominican literature" (Navas 142). She continues, "This may be simply because Duvalier cracked down harder and earlier on writers than did Castro or Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, leading the vast majority to flee the nation" (142). However, as we will see later in this chapter, Danticat shows how gossip permeated reading publics differently, through chosen texts to read and/or stage as parts of public and secretive community initiatives. The archive allows Danticat to cast herself as a lone spectator while simultaneously recognizing the group of spectators captured on film. Her experience as a spectator is important not only for Danticat's creative process, but also to make her readers "[recognize] the privileges they have as members of the diaspora and as readers" (Clitandre 63). The people present at the execution, school children, bureaucrats, inhabitants of Port-au-Prince, *Tonton Makout*, Haitian soldiers, and a priest are the original spectators to the historical events unfolding before their eyes. Comparing and contrasting these two positions of spectatorship, Danticat's and those present at the execution, will provide an understanding of how the archived event is re-mediated in order to create a counter-history, a counter-archive of resistance.

Figure 16: Marcel Numa (left) and Louis Drouin (right) tied to wooden posts outside of the Haitian National Cemetery in Port-au-Prince. (executedtoday.com)

While the repertoire of Duvalierist violence traps the spectator in the cycle of violence as Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin, the archive provides possibilities to escape the temporal realm of social control and the climate of terror that surround the event of the execution on November 12, 1964.[165] There are, of course the contemporary spectators of this archival footage who, under Duvalier, may have been subject to similar conditions as the hundreds assembled to watch the execution and therefore might relive that trauma in watching the tape—connecting the past to the present. In movie theaters and schools where the film was projected, Haitians were imbued with a sense of terror and obedience to the Duvalier regime lest they chose to face the consequences. However, 46 years after the execution, Edwidge Danticat is able to use this archival footage to alter the narration of the event:

> On November 12, 1964, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, a huge crowd gathered to witness an execution. The president of Haiti at that time was the dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who was seven years into what would be a fifteen-year term. On the day of the execution, he decreed that government offices be closed so that hundreds of state employees could be in the crowd. Schools were shut down and principals were ordered to bring their students. Hundreds of people from outside the capital were bused in to watch. ("Create Dangerously" 1)

Mediating this state sponsored event, Danticat reminds the reader that this was an engineered spectacle, using passive constructions—"decreed," "ordered," and "bused"—to grammatically illustrate the extent to which the original spectators lack agency with regard to the dictatorship and its crimes. Apart from, and perhaps including the members of the Haitian army, all of the people assembled to watch Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin be put to death are forced to be there, they have no active choice in the matter. Danticat then explains the genesis of the Jeune Haïti movement, details that were subsumed in official government narratives of the movement. While

[165] Samuel Stienberg offers a useful reading of the distinction between the archived event and the collective, traumatic memory of violence through his treatment of the afterlives of the student Tlatelolco Massacre at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. See: Steinberg, Samuel. *Photopoetics at Tlatelolco: Afterimages of Mexico, 1968*. University of Texas Press, 2015.

Jeune Haïti did produce its own written traces in the form of communiqués, Marcel Numa was the director of communications, the 13 members were all killed by Duvalier's forces and therefore could not frame their own tale of resistance. Newspapers such as *Le Matin* and *Le Nouvelliste* were either prevented from providing editorial comments about the attempted coup or fed the stories that they could publish regarding the execution (5). As mentioned before, stories about Jeune Haïti in *Le Nouvelliste* sought to dispossess the members of the militia and their families of their belongings and their status as Haitian citizens. For instance, in the opinions section of the November 13, 1964 issue of *Le Nouvelliste*, René Chalmers published a communiqué listing the names of the surviving members of the militia's families declaring that they had now lost "les droits et prerogatives attachés à la qualité de citoyen Haïtien [sic]" ("Avis" n.p.). Printed adjacent to movie showtimes, Barbancourt rum advertisements, and the announcement of the premiere of *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond*, the dictatorship revoked the citizenship of fourteen people and decried their property confiscated and sold to profit the government.[166] After recounting the event, Danticat reminds her readers that "one of the first things the despot Duvalier tried to take away from them was the mythic element of their stories" (7). By retelling their story, Danticat cauterizes the wounds left by the Duvalierist archive reminding readers in and after the 2010 publication of her essay that Numa, Drouin, and the eleven other members of Jeune Haïti still had a story to be told.

In "Create Dangerously," Danticat consciously takes the role of a lone spectator, and as she watches the archival footage of the execution she narrates the whole event, filling in the gaps

[166] The third article of the decree stipulated that the following people were to lose their citizenship: Roger Villedrouin, Mme Chenier Villedrouin, Louis Drouin, Gérard Guilbaud and his wife, Pierre Sansaricq and his wife, Fred Sansaricq, Jean-Claude Sansaricq and his wife, Guy Villedrouin and his wife, Edith Laforest, and Fernande Villedrouin. The following article of of the same decree called for the seizure and sale of the property belonging to the people mentioned in article 3 ("Avis" n.p.)

where the recording lacks. Danticat begins by describing the way that Numa and Drouin are dressed, "Numa and Drouin are dressed in what on an old black-and-white film seems to be the cloths in which they'd been captured—khakis for Drouin and a modest white shirt and denim-looking pants for Numa." She also grants the two a sense of back-story, so that their lives are not entirely defined by their violent end, explaining that:

> In addition to his army and finance experience, Louis Drouin was said to have been a good writer and the communications director of Jeune Haiti. In the United States, he contributed to a Haitian political journal called *Lambi.* Marcel Numa was from a family of writers. One of his male relatives, Nono Numa, had adapted the seventeenth-century French playwright Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid*, placing it in a Haitian setting. (6)

Through an affective practice of spectatorship and storytelling, Danticat grants depth and subjectivity to the lives of Numa and Drouin. She places them back into family structures and lineages. She gives them lives outside of their military careers and, more importantly, outside of François Duvalier's regime from 1957-1973. What is more, through the medium of personal essay, Danticat resists the burden of historical proof, denying the Duvalierist archive the power to reign over their stories even in death. In this sense, she witnesses their lives anew, free of the constraints of historical writing and the bias of government sources born of the violence of a dictatorship.

Mediated through the film, Danticat also expands the realm of subjectivity that the archive provides for Numa and Drouin by interpreting the colors and textures of their clothing. Additionally, Danticat makes sure to frame the two as captives, rather than criminals, which is one of the possible readings of the archive. To be sure, the repertoire of political violence under Duvalier certainly opted for a criminalized frame. Danticat continues:

> Numa, the taller and thinner of the two, stands erect, in perfect profile, barely leaning against the square piece of wood behind him. Drouin, who wears brow-line eyeglasses,

> looks down into the film camera that is taping his final moments. Drouin looks as though he is fighting back tears as he stands there, strapped to the pole, slightly slanted. Drouin's arms are shorter than Numa's and the rope appears looser on Drouin. While Numa looks straight ahead, Drouin pushes his head back now and then to rest it on the pole. (3)

Further animating Numa and Drouin as subjects, humanizing them, Danticat shifts the positioning of the archival footage from the view of the state to the view of the two rebels. In doing so, Danticat reveals the possibility of the archive as not only serving to document state violence, but also as a means of countering the dictatorships' narrative of the Jeune Haïti rebellion. Put otherwise, Danticat draws on what Régine Michelle Jean-Charles terms the "affective politics of spectatorship" to assert that Numa and Drouin have the right to see as well as to be seen. According to Jean-Charles, to dismantle visual discourses that situate Haitian life within an "iconography of suffering," where the grammar of the shot produces an object rather than a subject, is to provide a reading of images that allow Haitians "to be fully present, embodied, able to speak for oneself, and allowed to dream" ("Occupying the Center" 143).[167] The very nature of the documentary footage belies the possibility of the two as anything other than the objects of the camera's lens, as seen in figures 16 and 17 where neither of them look back into the camera or where the entire shot is focuses on the foreboding position of the firing squad's raised rifles. Instead of Numa and Drouin being the objects of dictatorial order, Danticat presents them as subjects mounting resistance to governmental impunity through her own subjective viewing of the footage. Noting the lack of sound on the film, the compression of the

[167] Jean-Charles's article "Occupying the Center: Haitian Girlhood and Wake Work" *Small Axe* 57 (November 2018): 141-150. is a response to Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* where she draws on Sharpe's discussion of a photograph taken after the January 2010 earthquake to imagine new ways of contextualizing visual representations of visual archives of Haitian life, particularly Haitian girls. Jean-Charles argues that the imagination and the creation of narratives where Haitian girls are the subjects of their stories and dreams are the paths to a more equitable scope of representation of Haitian life and Haitian girlhood.

time, Danticat fills in the sensorial lacunae: " schoolchildren mill about," "[some] audience members shield their faces from the sun," "Drouin shakes his head as to say, let's get it over with," "Off screen someone probably shouts 'fire!' and they do," "the men's bodies slide down the poles," "[blood] spills out of Numa's mouth. Drouin's glasses fall to the ground, pieces of blood and brain matter clouding the cracked lenses" ("Create Dangerously" 3-5).[168] This work, is, of course, done in hindsight as an act of mourning by Danticat to ensure that the archive is contextualized in a manner that critiques the violent reign of François Duvalier. As such, the archival footage, while still remaining the primary source for the execution, is not the only way to access the history of Jeune Haïti and the executions of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin.

Figure 17: Marcel Numa (left) and Louis Drouin (right) with military officers as they await their final benediction. (executedtoday.com)

[168] At one point, Danticat mentions that the copy of the footage she owns has no sound and at times the images skip ("Create Dangerously 3). On the YouTube.com version of the execution there is no sound, either, but Danièle Magloire's song "Atelye wòch dife" has been layered over the footage. It is clear from Danticat's narration that she is not watching the online version, but rather that she has compiled her own personal archive of Haitian ephemera from the Duvalier era.

Figure 18: The firing squad aiming at the bound Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin seconds before their execution. (executedtoday.com)

By performing a viewing of the recorded execution, Danticat – like historians and archivists have done in the past – grants a new way of viewing the archive, countering the originally intended purpose of the film. The footage is no longer the same footage that was screened in movie theaters throughout Haiti in the 1960s to discourage popular resistance; instead, Danticat frames the film as the final act of resistance. In addition, Danticat is able to connect the physical acts of resistance of Jeune Haïti to a longer tradition of resistance in the arts. As Diana Taylor articulates on the impact of embodied experience and culture on the written record, "the space of written culture then, as now, seemed easier to control than embodied culture. But writing was always far more dependent on embodied culture for transmission than the other way around" (*Archive and the Repertoire* 17). Taylor's interpretation here draws on the Spaniard's burning of the Nahua codices in the fifteenth century, emphasizing the importance of Mesoamerican embodied practices as a means of recovering these lost written artifacts. Centuries later, however, it is clear that Jeune Haïti's embodiment of resistance is just as generative for

Danticat who is then able to re-inscribe a written history of anti-Duvalierist action. The embodied repertoire of resistance is, according to Danticat, thoroughly engrained in Haitian popular memory, writing that "no matter how hard he tried, Papa Doc Duvalier could not make their words go away. Their maxims and phrases would keep coming back, buried deep in the memories by the rote recitation techniques that the Haitian school system had taught so well" ("Create Dangerously" 9).

Crafting "Coffin Texts": Literary Sites of Mourning and the Disruption of Dictatorial Temporality/Space

About halfway through "Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work," Danticat reflects on her experience as a writer as well as writers who lived, and died under conditions of totalitarianism. She writes that "in many ways, Numa and Drouin shared the destiny of many Haitian artists" drawing on examples of writers like Jacques Stephen Alexis who was killed and disappeared by the *Tonton Makout* as well as that of writers and artists who lived under the dictatorship like Frankétienne and Dany Laferrière either to remain in Haiti writing in styles too obscure for the government to decode or by going into a life-long exile. Reflecting on her own experience as a writer, Danticat acknowledges that her ability to tell Numa and Drouin's story is in many respects a matter of space and time where "reading, and perhaps ultimately writing, is nothing like living in a place and time where two very young men as killed in a way that is treated like entertainment" (12). Despite the widespread terror of the Duvalier years, Haitians continued to read, write, and stage plays to help process the world around them. Danticat recounts stories of local reading clubs in Bel Air like the *Club de Bonne Humeur* reading Albert Camus' adaptation of Caligula as well as stagings of Félix Morisseau-Leroy's *Antigòn*, a Haitian

adaptation of the classical play by Sophocles (8- 10).[169] These examples lead her to ask "is there a border between Antigone's desire to bury her brother and the Haitian mother of 1964 who desperately wants to take her dead son's body out of the street to give him a proper burial, knowing that if she does this she too may die?" (16) Transgressing spatial and temporal boundaries, writing about classical times and 1964 in 2010, Danticat disrupts the Duvalierist framing of Numa and Drouin's execution. Because she resides in the diaspora, Danticat does not have access to the typical materials used to commemorate the dead, to create a physical site or mausoleum to the memory of Numa and Drouin so she uses her personal essay to create "coffin texts" that provide a permanent resting place for the two members of Jeune Haïti. In this final section, I will elaborate how Danticat's essay stands as a "coffin text" for Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin, a site of mourning and a disruption of the temporal, spatial, and linguistic violence of the Duvalierist archive and how it portrays the event of their execution.

Throughout "Create Dangerously" Danticat refers to memorial art, sites, and concepts that "stand in for," as much as possible, the lives of the deceased. From Vodou epistemologies of the *lwa* Gede and Bawon Samdi watching over the dead or the cemetery to the ancients and the Egyptians use of monumental art and hieroglyphics to narrativize the lives of the dead, projecting the image of eternal life via commemorative art. "Bearing witness," as Colin Dayan writes of *Create Dangerously* "is nothing less than a reclamation. For Danticat, writing is akin to ritual practice: the shards and the grit that counter the mythical fictions of politicians…" ("Review of *Create Dangerously," New West Indian Guide* 266). Not only does this art represent

[169] Félix Morisseau-Leroy goes beyond merely translating Sophocles' play as Danticat suggests, he recasts it to include the voices of Haitian Gods Ezili and Legba along with ideas of Haitian mortuary practices. In the prologue to his play *Antigòn*, Morisseau-Leroy writes "Antigone pr'allé enterer Polinice cou ça ta passé en Haïti. Roi Créon pr'allé touyer Antigone cou youn grand nèg Haïtien ta conne régler oun zaffai con ça" [In modern Kreyòl: Antigòn prale entère Polinis kou sa ta pase ann Ayiti. Wa Kreyon pral touye Antigòn kou yon grand nèg Ayisyen ta konn regle yon zafè konsa. English: Antigone will go bury Polinice like would happen in Haiti. King Creon will kill Antigone like any powerful Haitian would be used to handling a similar affair."

a physical or visual manifestation of the departed, but they also project their ideas and beliefs into the future, disrupting the temporal cycle of life represented in Western culture by the opposing poles of birth and death. In the case of Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin, their lives are bound by a second set of temporal poles, that of the successive Duvalier regimes. Narrative histories of François Duvalier's presidency tend to replicate the same sequence of events from 1963 to the end of 1964 where Numa and Drouin's execution is merely a definite example of the cruelty of his totalitarian regime. In their history of Duvalierism *Papa Doc and the Tontons Macoutes*, Al Burt and Bernard Diederich present a rich timeline from the attempted assassination/kidnapping of Jean-Claude and Simone Duvalier in 1963 to their father's ascent to the status of "President-for-life," from April 1963 to June 1964. Afterwards, Burt and Diederich account for both the Baptiste brothers, Fred and Reneld, and the Camoquin insurgency, followed by Jeune Haïti's three-month resistance campaign, ending with the execution of Numa and Drouin at the gates of the Port-au-Prince cemetery (Dubois 339-349).[170]

The prevailing concept in typical historical presentation of Jeune Haïti's resistance is a linear sense of time, not unlike that of a headstone, which traces a progressive march from birth to death. Carefully crafting her "coffin text," Danticat begins with Numa and Drouin's death, using the quarter of her text to set the scene of Duvalierist terror and to recount her experience witnessing their execution. Then, Danticat ruptures the reader's sense of time through a series of literary references to novels and plays written before and after Numa and Drouin's death—Albert Camus' *Caligula,* Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid*, Sophocles' *Œdipus Rex* and *Antigone,* Félix Morisseau-Leroy's *Antigòn*, Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Dany

[170] This is also a series of events that Laurent Dubois discusses in his 2010 history of Haiti, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, which covers more than 200 years of Haitian history from the colonial period through the 2004 bicentennial of Haitian independence.

Laferrière's *Je suis un écrivain japonais*. In this eclectic list of works, many of them disrupt the linearity of time by transporting the reader or spectator to a bygone era like the third Roman empire, eleventh-century Spain, or nineteenth-century Colombia. This disruption in linear time is not just something that the textual references provide, but like the citation of García Márquez demonstrates, a careful curation of literary culture that calls on the archival record of Numa and Drouin's execution. For example, the first sentence of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reads, "[m]any years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice" (García Márquez 1).[171] Like in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, "Create Dangerously" posits an *a priori* to the execution, a life not bound to Duvalier's dictatorship. Danticat writes that a local Bel Air book club, *Le Club de Bonne Humeur,* read Camus' *Caligula* at same time as Jeune Haïti fought the *Tonton Makout* in the hills of Grand'Anse ("Create Dangerously" 7). Written in during World War II and published in 1944, Camus' play acted as a cipher to critique Nazism and the Vichy government's collaboration in the Holocaust. The significance of reading and potentially performing *Caligula* under François Duvalier's rule becomes apparent when Danticat cites Camus: "execution relieves and it liberates. It is a universal tonic, just in precept as in practice. A man dies because he is guilty. A man is guilty because he is one of Caligula's subjects. Ergo all men are guilty and should die. It is only a matter of time and patience" (8). The practice of despotism in the play perfectly aligns with the circumstances surround Numa and Drouin's execution; everyone was guilty under Duvalier. The absurd logic of Camus' *Caligula* might have served a palliative purpose for Haitian readers and actors in 1964, but for Danticat, the very notion that people

[171] For a discussion of the translation of the first sentence of *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* see Rabassa, Gregory. *If this be Treason: Translation and its Discontents, A Memoir*. New Directions, 2005. The original sentence reads: "Muchos años después, frente al pelotón de fusilamiento, el coronel Aureliano Buendía había de recordar aquella tarde remota en que su padre le llevó a conocer el hielo" (Rabassa 97).

would dare to enact a play that could clearly cause them bodily harm is what allows her to circumscribe a larger resistance effort than just the Camoquins and Jeune Haïti rebels. By associating literary and literate legacies of resistance with Numa, Drouin, and Jeune Haïti, Danticat alters historical time and space to further contextualize the idea the thirteen insurgents represented in a wider frame of resistance to governmental impunity in Haiti. The effect of presenting overlapping and alternating time-spaces, is that Danticat is able to truncate, shrink, and mark the closure of François Duvalier's reign. As previously cited, when Danticat writes "the president of Haiti at that time was the dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who was seven years into what would be a fifteen-year term" she fractures the most defining feature of his legacy, its ability to brand a fifteen-year stretch of time. Marking the end of Duvalier's presidency, Danticat enshrines Numa and Drouin in the annals of Haitian resistance, turning her essay into a piece of memorial art that bears witness to their impactful lives in Haiti and in the diaspora.

To return to the *Lutte Contre Impunité* archive and its potential as a site for diasporic memory, Danticat shows that the traces of the dead permeate spatial and temporal boundaries, blending together as part of a palimpsestic present. Now ten years old itself, Danticat's text has aged, like the archive, and still stands for future generations to read and pour over as they try to reclaim the pieces of a personal or familial past. For Danticat, the immigrant or diasporic artist is caught in a contemplative space, an undefinable *here* and a very definite *home* or *there* where the memories of the dead help close the liminal space between. She writes, "the artist immigrant, or the immigrant artist, inevitably ponders the deaths that brought her here, along with the deaths that kept her here, the deaths from hunger and executions and cataclysmic devastation at home, the deaths from paralyzing chagrin in exile, the other small deaths in between" (17). By putting

the lives of the deceased on the page, creating a memorial space through a hieroglyphics of words, symbols, and ideas, Danticat employs what she has available to her as a diasporic artist to construct innumerable coffin texts. Is her use of literary space, then, any different than the creators of the *Haïti: Lutte Contre Impunité* website? They both, through the utilization of the spaces and available materials, aim to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of memory and account for personal loss during an era of dictatorship. Given Danticat's literary status as one of the most recognizable writers of the twenty-first century, her work certainly does not face the same challenges as the website, which still remains unavailable for interactive use outside of the Internet Archive. Danticat, in fashioning a coffin text, a literary mausoleum for Marcel Numa and Louis Drouin, has ensured that their memories will carry on to generations still yet to come.

CHAPTER 5

Travay avèk Jean Do: The Literary Afterlives of Jean Dominique

> Jean, zanmi m. Jean, zanmi peyizan. Jean, pot vwa peyizan. Asasen yo touye w pou laverite [...] Jean bay tout sitwayen konsekan mikwo, pou yo bay opinyon yo libe- libè. Li klè ke tout verite Jean te konn di, ap di yo pou pale pou sa ki pa ka pale, pou sa ki pè pale—tout verite sa yo te menase lespri kriminèl yo.
>
> Jean, my friend. Jean, friend of the peasants. Assassins killed you over the truth [...] Jean gave every citizen the microphone, to give their opinions freely. It is clear that all the truth Jean spoke was for those who could not speak, for those who were afraid to speak—and all that truth threatened the criminals.
>
> — Charles Suffrard, Eulogy for Jean L. Dominique at the Stade Sylvio Cator April 8, 2000[172]

In 2001, Maxan Jean-Louis painted a picture already engraved in the minds of many Haitians, the assassination of Jean Léopold Dominique on April 3, 2000. *Yo touye Jean Do* depicts Jean's radio station, Radio Haïti Inter, the bodies of Jean Dominique and Jean-Claude Louissaint laying inert on the pavement of the courtyard, the police, and many people, some gathered as though dressed for a funeral and others comporting themselves as though staging a protest or a public vigil. Jean is laying on the ground, his lightly complexioned body juxtaposed with the darker Jean-Claude Louissaint, next to his signature pipe and a microphone. From this day forward, he would never again grace the airwaves first thing in the morning with his wife, Michèle Montas, to read the breakdown of the day's headlines.

[172] For the complete quotation and translation, see: Wagner, Laura. "Nou Toujou La! The Digital (After-)Life of Radio Haïti-Inter." *Archipelagos*, no. 2, Columbia University Libraries, July 2017. *archipelagosjournal.org*, doi:10.7916/D8J394ZN.

Figure 19: "Yo touye Jean Do" by Maxan Jean-Louis. The painting is in the private collection of Michèle Montas. (Credit: The Devil's Tale blog)

The people gathered outside of the radio station in an apparent vigil carry signs reading: "DOWN WITH CRIMINALS." "WE MUST HAVE JUSTICE." "DOWN WITH THE DEATH MACHINE." "LONG LIVE PEACE." "JUSTICE FOR JOURNALISTS. JUSTICE FOR JEAN DOMINIQUE."[173] For the grieving crowd, this list of demands, this public airing of grievances evokes the spirit of the work to which Jean Dominique dedicated his life and which he stood for even in his passing[174]. In Jean-Louis' painting a blue sign hangs beneath the hedges of bougainvillea, it reads: "APRIL 3, 2000. GOODBYE JEAN DOMINIQUE. THE PEASANTS

[173] Wagner, Laura. "April 3: Jistis Pou Jando." *The Devil's Tale*, 4 Apr. 2016, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/04/04/april-3-jistis-pou-jando/.
[174] Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, 2004.

WILL NEVER FORGET YOU." As the sign on the wall as well as those in the hands of the people attest, Jean Dominique, and the work for which he stood will never be forgotten. The message of Maxan Jean-Louis' painting is heard loud and clear: people will never forget Jean Dominique. They will continue to work with him and through him, even in his absence. In some ways, Jean-Louis' painting reminds us how people exercise their "right to appear" and assemble in order to express their grievances toward the government as others mourn the loss of an individual person or people (*Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* 18). Though the crowd gathered at Radio Haïti's gates occupy a central position in the painting, with their grievances on full display, it is important to shift our gaze to the upper left quadrant of the image, to notice those standing over his body with tears in their eyes. Crying is a reflexive act in Haitian Creole (*m gen dlo nan je mwen*), meaning that the person crying, their eyes, and the tears that they produce are all accounted for. Just like the picket signs below, the tears in the eyes of the group gathered around Jean Dominique and Jean-Claude Louissaint make individual and collective grief legible. Although we cannot read into the depths of their pain or understand their calls for justice as clearly as the sign-carriers, we can see that they are in mourning. Their tears are the outward expressions of a "privatized" grief within each person standing before the victims.[175] What is not clear from the painting, perhaps due to its naïve aesthetics, is who these teary-eyed observers are. In the grammar of the painting, we cannot confirm the identify of those in grief as easily as we can those who have perished. And, even if we were able to identify Jean's wife, Michèle Montas, or his colleagues, they would all be involved in a collective act of mourning, rather than one that is capable of speaking to the intimate and subjective ways that

[175] Judith Butler explains that grief has a distinct way of privatizing the process of mourning, "return[ing] us to a solitary situation," and causes grief to lose its political valence (*Precarious Life* 22). At the same time, mourning can also cause us to join a community of kindred spirits, united in our grief, that forms the bedrock of a collective, public, and politicized mourning process.

they experience this loss. In order for the individual acts of grief surrounding the death of Jean Dominique, to read the reflexive meaning behind the teardrops in Jean-Louis' painting, we have to turn elsewhere.

In the wake of Jean Dominique's death, many Haitian writers have narrativized his passing. These texts often feature a self-reflexive quality and, like the falling of tears, they demonstrate the impact that Jean and his passing had on their own lives. In this way, literary non-fiction—essays, memoir, and autofiction—provides a space that makes subjective acts of mourning possible. Through an analysis of Edwidge Danticat's essays on Jean Dominique in *The Butterfly's Way,* Jan J. Dominique's *Mémoire errante* and, Emmelie Prophète's *Le Reste du temps,* I will show how writers cope with the loss of Jean Dominique as an individual, a friend, a father, and a colleague in ways that humanize Jean Dominique beyond the realm of his political actions and ideas. These three writers, employing conventions of the genres in which they work (essay, memoir, and autofiction, respectively), demonstrate the importance of intimate depths of being human as equally crucial to creating a living memory of a person.[176] These subjective treatments of Jean Dominique show through the sharing of private and intimate acts between two individuals like reading, writing, and conversation, that mourning on even the smallest scale, like that of a single tear, can leave a trace throughout the course of time.

[176] In her dissertation, Jasmine Narcisse reveals the benefits of disregarding the elements of style that make up the various autobiographical genres. Instead, she argues that different types and uses of Haitian "écritures du soi" is worthwhile because it "carries a *sui generis* with it that poses a few unavoidable problems: the questioning (and crisis of) individual identity and the Haitian writer, the issue of his or her status in relation to the collective, as well as the author's position in the face of the occidental paradigm which entails a differentiated I/subject-object that can be isolated and must be explored [porte certainement *sui generis* à soulever quelques problèmes incontournables : celui du questionnement (et de la crise) identitaire de l'être et de l'écrivain haïtien, celui de sa situation par rapport au collectif, autant que son positionnement face au paradigme occidental d'un moi/soi-objet différencié, isolable et thème obligé d'exploration]" (Jasmine Narcisse 70).

Toujou *Guapa!*: Editing with Jean Dominique in *The Butterfly's Way*

Along with her numerous creative projects, novels, short story collections, children's and young adult fiction, and creative non-fiction writing, Edwidge Danticat has also edited a number of collections of writing by Haitian authors living in Haiti and in the diaspora. She edited *Haiti Noir* and *Haiti Noir 2* in 2010 and 2014, respectively, with Akashic Books (Brooklyn, NY) which presented established and classic Haitian writers like Kettly Mars, Jacques Stephen Alexis, and Georges Anglade alongside then emerging writers like Ibi Zoboi, Nick Lake, and Roxane Gay. These two volumes helped establish a quorum of Haitian authors and voices capable of placing current events like the 2010 earthquake and the subsequent cholera epidemic into context, especially given the groundswell of "attention-grabbing" works about Haiti that have come out since January 2010 ("When Outsiders Tell the Tale" 289). Before the *Haiti Noir* volumes, though, Edwidge Danticat edited a collection of Haitian writing in 2001 called *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Dyaspora*[177] *in the United States*. The anthology introduces American readers to writing by Haitians living in the United States and serves as a primer to how decades of Haitian migration have resulted in more than a million Haitians living outside of the country, creating what many refer to as the "Tenth Department."

To introduce the assembled texts for US readers and to explain the contours of the Haitian concept of diaspora, Danticat begins writing her introduction with the morning she learned that Jean Dominique had been assassinated in front of his radio station in Port-au-Prince. As a person whose life was constantly in flux, caught between life in Haiti and in exile, Dominique becomes the ideal person to think with and through the concept of diaspora in life, but also in death. In this sense, the introduction to *The Butterfly's Way* allows Danticat to call on

[177] *Dyaspora* is the Haitian Creole orthography for "diaspora" and it also can be used as a noun, usually in the pejorative sense, to refer to a Haitian that lives outside of Haiti.

and reactivate her memories of and with Jean Dominique once again.[178] Editing with Jean enables Danticat to articulate a delicate and personal definition of *dyaspora* capacious enough so that all Haitians living outside of the country can see themselves, at once, as fully Haitian and fully human.

Similar to Emmelie Prophète's *Le Reste du temps*, Danticat's introduction begins on the morning of April 3, 2000 with the murder of Jean Dominique and Jean-Claude Louissaint in the courtyard of Radio Haïti Inter. As the editor, Danticat joins Jean's death with the process of editing *The Butterfly's Way* in the same breath: "I have the extremely painful task of beginning this introduction on the same day that one of Haiti's most famous citizens, the radio journalist Jean Dominique, was assassinated" (ix). No stranger to Jean Dominique and his life's work, Danticat was one of the producers of Jonathan Demme's film, *The Agronomist*, and she had woked with Jean on a number of projects early in her writing career. Like all Haitians, the author first came to know Jean as a voice on the radio, the fearless journalist and advocate for the Haitian people in a media landscape largely controlled by the government. As Danticat explains, "we had all come to think of him as heroically invincible..." and so his sudden death came as a shock to those close to Jean, but also to millions of people living in Haiti and in the diaspora (ix-x). Living in Miami at the time, Danticat elaborates how she received several phone calls and emails about Jean. The first came through as rumors, followed by a second round verifying that Jean had been shot seven times and was in critical condition, and the final wave confirmed Danticat's deepest fears, that Jean was dead. In the wake of the news, Danticat returned to her

[178] The introduction to *The Butterfly's Way* also appears as an essay entitled "I Am Not a Journalist" in *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. Although a comparative analysis of the two versions of the essay would be fruitful, I wish here to focus on the act of editing with Jean Dominique rather than just simply writing with him. In "I Am Not a Journalist," the traces of *The Butterfly's Way* are removed or edited out to frame the piece as an "essay" rather than an "introduction."

office after teaching her courses to even more phone calls of despair, consolation, and disbelief (ix).

***

Jean Léopold Dominique was four years old when the Marines left Port-au-Prince, bringing an end to the United States' nineteen year occupation of Haiti. As a child, Jean would accompany his father, Léopold, on business trips to the Haitian countryside where he met with farmers, traders, and other Haitians living lives outside of the capital. These experiences influenced Jean's decision to study agronomy after highschool in Damien, Haiti at the Faculté d'Agronomie and, later, to continue at the Institut National Agronomique in Paris in the late 1940s and early 1950s. After returning to Haiti in 1955, he worked with Haitian farmers in the north of the country on projects related to rubber and sisal cultivation. During this time, Jean also began avocating for agrarian reforms that sought to ameliorate the conditions of farmers and agricultural workers throughout the country who were languishing under the policies put forth by the Sociéte Haitiano-Américaine de Développement Agricole (SHADA).[179] While his organizing work certainly perturbed the local section chiefs, Jean's activity was far from the purview of François Duvalier's regime. Yet, in 1958, Jean was arrested after his brother Philippe was killed in an attempt to assassinate Duvalier and he was imprisoned in the capital until the early 1960s.[180]

Once Jean was released from prison, he collaborated with the Institut Français to create Haiti's first film club and he began working as a freelance journalist at a local radio station

[179] For a novelistic portrayal of these policies and how they left Haitians behind in favor of extractive industrial agriculture, see *Dezafi* by Frankétienne.
[180] This biographical sketch is drawn from Jean's life as presented in Jonathan Demme's documentary, *The Agronomist*. These details are also reiterated in Laura Wagner's article, "Nou toujou la! The Digital (After-)Life of Radio Haïti-Inter" and Jennifer Garçon's dissertation, "Haiti's Resistant Press in the Age of Jean-Claude Duvalier, 1971-1986."

named Radio Haïti run by Ricardo Widmaïer. In 1970, Widmaïer asked Jean if he was interested in buying the station. He was, so he purchased the station with two intentions: to report on the local news, culture, politics, and foreign affairs and to do it in Haitian Creole. In a scene from *The Agronomist*, Jean explained that reporting the news under Duvalier was a delicate matter, and doing it in Haitian Creole as opposed to solely in French meant that they also drew the negative attention of the wealthy elites. But, Jean exclaimed, there is something particular about Haitian Creole, something in its verbal gestures and gesticulations like the attitudinal *tchuip* that many Haitians use to garnish their opinions that convey the unspeakable conditions of life under a dictatorship.[181] Despite his reserved personality off-air, Jean Dominique and the team of journalists at Radio Haïti Inter produced programming that was as effusive as it was trenchant.[182]

As a result of their investigative journalism, Radio Haïti employees were often the targets of abuse and harassment by Jean-Claude Duvalier's governement and the *Tonton Makout*. On November 28, 1980, Richard Brisson was abducted by the army and taken to the Casernes Dessalines for interrogation. Jean was nowhere to be found, and there was an outstanding order for him to be shot on sight. When Michèle Montas learned of his kidnapping, she and the Radio Haïti journalists took to the airwaves, broadcasting that the two were missing, asking anyone with knowledge of their whereabouts to contact the station. Within two hours, the army arrived at the station, arrested everyone, and took them to the Casernes Dessalines as well. The army tortured Richard Brisson and another journalist, Konpè Filo, intimidating them to cease their truth-seeking journalism. After this incident, Richard Brisson lost hearing in one ear.[183]

---

[181] The *tchuip* is a sucking of the teeth. For an artistic exploration of the connotations of this practice in the African diaspora see, "Suck Teeth Compositions" by Michèle Pearson Clarke (2018).

[182] In *The Agronomist*, Jan J. Dominique described her father as "someone who is timid at his core, very discreet, but when he writes, he says things that he wouldn't normally have said to your face. [c'est quelqu'un au fond de timide, très discret, mais quand il écrit, il dit des choses qu'il n'aurait jamais dites en face]."

[183] Brisson was killed two years later for attempting a coup with Bernard Sansaricq.For more on Richard Brisson's death, see: Edmé, Rodney. “Haitian Politics and Culture in Translation: “Once upon a Time...Richard Brisson".” *H-*

Meanwhile, Jean had sought refuge in the Venezuelan embassy in Port-au-Prince and then fled to Caracas, where he briefly shared an apartment with the Haitian documentarian, Arnold Antonin. Three months later, Jean Dominique joined Michèle Montas in Manhattan for what would become a six year period of exile.

In Manahattan, the couple found a softness and an intimacy that they had been denied all those years in Port-au-Prince. Montas and Dominique married in 1983, surrounded by their friends and family who were also forced to flee Duvalier fils. They returned to a grand reception when an estimated 60 thousand people met them at the airport, Montas explained to Jonathan Demme that on the car ride to the station it felt as though they were being carried the whole way by supporters. The couple remained in Haiti until 1991 when the military coup led by General Raoul Joseph Cédras led to the ouster of the democratically-elected Jean Bertrand Aristide. Once the United States reinstated Aristide as the president in 1994, Jean and Michèle returned to Haiti from their second exile. Ever involved in politics, Jean supported Aristide until it became clear that he was incapable of stoppering the structural violence of life in Port-au-Prince. When Aristide's term was over in 1996, Jean worked served as a consultant for René Préval's government while continuing to broadcast the radio.

It was clear to Jean Dominique that the radio was one of the only ways ensure that Haitians in the countryside could participate in and be represented in the Haitian political landscape. For this reason, Radio Haïti Inter built an extension onto their broadcast antenna so that they could offer 19-hours of FM radio, capable of reaching 95% of the country. Despite his desire to connect Haitians living in the capital to the countryside and vice versa, the station

---

Haiti Blog, translated by Laura Wagner, Jan. 2017, https://networks.h-net.org/node/116721/blog/h-haiti-blog/163485/haitian-politics-and-culture-translation-%E2%80%9Conce-upon.

continued to receive threats of violence. And, on the morning of April 3, 2000 Jean was gunned down with the station securuty guard, Jean-Claude Louissaint. Five days later, Jean and Jean-Claude's public funeral drew an audience of more than fifteen thousand people, many wearing T-shirts with the message: "Frè Jan Dominique w ale, men lide w yo ap kontinye [Brother Jean Dominique, you're gone, but your ideas will continue on]."

Figure 20: Jean Dominique greeted at the airport by reporters in March 1986. (Credit: Radio Haiti Archive, Rubenstein Rare Book Library at Duke University)

When Jean Dominique and Michèle Montas returned from exile in New York after the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier's regime, they were met by thousands of Haitians at the Port-au-Prince airport. As a pioneer of free and independent journalism in Haiti Jean was joined on the tarmac by friends and carried through the airport by loyal supporters and avid listeners, the *pèp ayisyen* who Jean addressed every morning with resounding warmth (figures 20 & 21). This reception was just another confirmation of the widespread public approval of Jean and the work of Radio Haïti Inter, but after Jean's death even more people came out to support the message of

the free press and the fight against the impunity of those in power. Danticat explains that the flight back to Haiti for Jean's funeral "seemed like a microcosm of Haiti." Jean's death sent shockwaves throughout the Haitian diaspora, causing those who could manage the travel, to return to Haiti for the funeral. Indeed, Jean's funeral activated a network of Haitians abroad, causing hundreds of people to go back to the country. At the same time, it exposed the cracks and fissures in diasporic communities. Not all Haitians living abroad could afford to pay their respects. Some may risk deportation or reprisals if they were to attempt travel or return to Haiti. Essentially, not all Haitians living abroad enjoy the same rights.[184] All of the people on the packed 727 flight back to Port-au-Prince from Miami have the ability to travel, either a green card, a student or work visa, or something allowing them, granting them access to one last moment with Jean Dominique. On her flight back, Danticat was accompanied by "young rich college students returning from Miami-area college campuses for the weekend, vendors—*madan* and *mesye sara* travelling with suitcases filled with merchandise from abroad, three male deportees being expatriated from the United States […] and up front the former president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, returning from a speaking engagement at the University of Miami," showing that clearly the ability to attend Jean's funeral was a matter of diasporic privilege (xiii). In life, everyone with a transistor radio had access to Jean and the other journalists at Radio Haïti Inter, but with Jean's death, the diasporic Haitians on the margins—those who migrated over decades of economic squalor, due to dictatorship, or escaping the other trappings of a country trapped on the "outer periphery" of the community of nations.[185]

[184] For more on Haiti and diaspora, see: Jackson, Regine O., editor. *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*. Routledge, 2011.
[185] Fatton, Robert. *Haiti: Trapped in the Outer Periphery*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

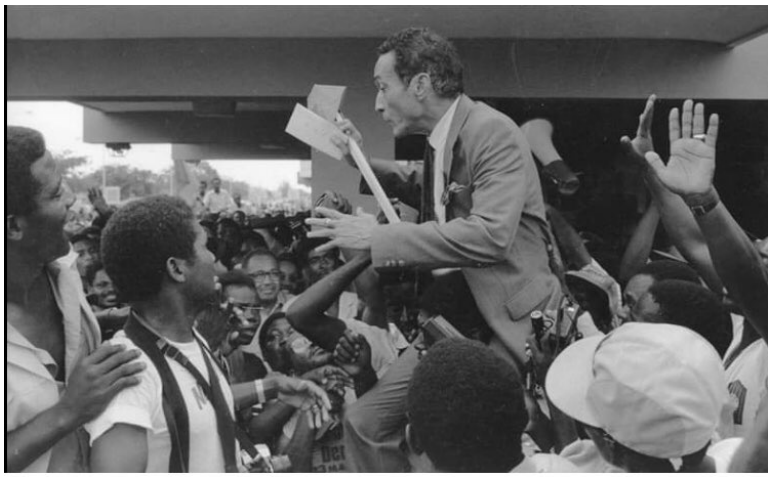


Figure 21: Jean Dominique greeted at the airport by reporters in March 1986. (Credit: Radio Haiti Archive, Rubenstein Rare Book Library at Duke University)

On the plane, Danticat thinks back on her interactions with Jean Dominique over the years, the first time they met, and their work with Jonathan Demme on the history of Haitian filmmaking at Ramapo College. Over the years, the memories that stand out are the times spent driving between Manhattan and Demme's office in Nyack, NY. One day, on the way to Demme's office, Jean explains that he rediscovered the Spanish expression *Guapa!* in a film that he saw the night before, which he cannot wait to share with Danticat and Demme's assistant, Neda:

> While puffing on his ever-present pipe, Jean took great pains to explain to us that someone who was *guapa* was extremely beautiful and courageous. Demanding further clarification, Neda and I would take turns shouting out the names of women the three of us knew, starting with Jean's wife.
> 'Michele is very—'
> '*Guapa!'* he yelled back with great enthusiasm. This was one of many times that Jean's vibrant love for life easily came across." (xii)

The expression, *Guapa!*, comes to structure future interactions between Danticat and Jean over the years. When the two see each other in Port-au-Prince, she tells Jean that he is looking *guapa* that day. On the "*Guapa* day" in the car ride back to Manhattan, Danticat and Jean drove for hours in New York traffic attempting to find their way home while "Jean was trying to tell some hysterical story, smoke a pipe, and follow my uncertain directions all at the same time." (xii)

Along the way, lost in the Palisades, the two talked about Haiti, the political situation, and their personal feelings about the country's progress. For Jean, each time that he went into exile, it was due to the political climate, escaping the reaches of a political regime intent on silencing his voice. He tells Danticat that "'My country is suffering,' he would say. 'It is being held captive by criminals. My country is slowly dying, melting away'" (xiv). As a political exile, Jean and Michèle frequently returned to New York, and occasionally traveled to Canada and Europe. Even though the two were asylees, their life in exile spent longing to return to Haiti to continue exposing government corruption and speaking for the Haitian peasantry, they benefitted from a life of élite circumstance in the diaspora. Danticat's experience with diaspora differs greatly from Jean's. Her parents left her and her brother in Haiti to live with their uncle until they had the means to bring them to the United States years later.[186] Articulating her feelings about Haiti in the same formulation as Jean, Danticat writes: "My country, I felt, was something that was then being called the tenth department. Haiti has nine geographic departments and the tenth was the floating homeland, the ideological one, which joined all Haitians living in the *dyaspora*" (xiv).

For Danticat, her country was literally defined by the experience of diaspora, like Jean's, although in a different manner since Danticat has lived in the United States almost her entire life. The diaspora has become her home country in Haiti's tenth department.[187] As Danticat introduces the writers in *The Butterfly's Way,* she continues to return to Jean Dominique and what he told her about the Haitian diaspora:

> However, in *this* introduction, I can't help but think of Jean's reaction to my *diaspora* dilemma in a conversation we had when I visited his radio station one summer […] 'The *Dyaspora* are people with feet planted in both worlds,' he had said. 'There is no reason to be ashamed of being *Dyaspora*. There are more than a million of you. You are not alone.' (xv)

[186] This is one of the stories central to Danticat's memoir, *Brother, I'm Dying*.
[187] In the introduction to *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*, Régine O. Jackson credits the Haitian geographer Georges Anglade with coining the term the "Tenth Department" when referring to the Haitian diaspora (Jackson 1).

Over the course of the introduction, it becomes clear that Jean is not only the subject of the piece, but also the guiding thread for thinking about notions of diaspora, belonging, and the nuanced experiences of Haitians living between multiple worlds. The introduction also provides Danticat with the creative space to think with Jean once again, to remember moments spent with him over a number of years. By editing with Jean, Danticat is reminded of the importance of stories from the Haitian diaspora as they resonate with, build on, and complicate notions of home, country, and identity. In closing, she writes:

> Before Jean's death, I had been hopeful that this book would give voice to some singular experiences of an admittedly small but wide-ranging fragment of the Haitian *dyaspora* in the United States. After his death, I find myself cherishing the fact that the people whose lives are detailed and represented here do travel between many worlds. This book for me now represents both a way to recount our silences […] and to say good-bye. (xv-xvi)

Essentially, Jean Dominique in life, and in death inspires Danticat to think through the meaning of diaspora, to come to terms with its challenges and its discontents as well as the value of its perspective. The introduction, and the book ultimately become a way for Danticat to remember and to mourn Jean's death, opening *The Butterfly's Way* with Jean's enduring wisdom. The final word of her introduction is "*guapa!*" an expression perhaps describing Jean, those in the diaspora, or just anyone daring to tell their story amidst great adversity.

In the Wake of April 3, 2000: Writing with Jean Dominique in *Mémoire errante*

In her 2008 memoir, *Mémoire errante*, Jan J. Dominique tells the story of how she became a writer, how she returned to writing in the wake of her Jean's assassination, and how she continues to struggle to cope with her father's absence.[188] The narrative starts in April 2003,

[188] For clarity, I will either refer to Jean Dominique with his full name or simply as "Jean," to not confuse him with Jan J. Dominique, the author whose works are in question in this chapter.

three years after Jean Dominique and Jean-Claude Louissaint are killed, as Dominique leaves Haiti to begin her permanent exile in Montreal. Accompanied by Jean's widow, Michèle Montas, the two embark on the world premiere of *The Agronomist*. One of the defining characteristics of *The Agronomist* is that it helps make Jean Dominique's electric personality known to the world outside of Haiti, buoyed by the notoriety of its Academy Award-winning director, Jonathan Demme. Jean is the protagonist in the film and it presents his life story through carefully edited footage and interviews. Despite the film's pulpy aspects (machine gun samples, zooms, extreme close-ups, and rewind-sequences), Demme endeavors to present Jean to those unfamiliar with him. In *Mémoire errante,* however, Jan J. Dominique offers a more intimate, often complicated portrayal of her father. Her depiction of her father is entwined with her personal narrative of becoming a writer in Jean's presence and, often, in his shadow. The tension that exists between Dominique's desire to become a writer on her own merit, coupled with her the impossibility of sharing her writing with her departed father, make *Mémoire errante* an instantiation of what Christina Sharpe refers to as "wake work."[189] In this way, *Mémoire errante* is a book about the unraveling of grief. In her memoir, the act of writing, the rehabilitation her writerly muscle memory, and the ongoing process of coping with her father's tragic murder serve to remember Jean in a way that only his daughter can, through the intimacy of a father-daughter relationship 47 years in the making. In the following analysis, I will demonstrate how Jan J. Dominique writes *with* Jean Dominique—how she deploys him as an interlocutor, a character, and a calming presence in her memoir—in order to return to the process of writing that she has lost since April 3, 2000.

[189] Sharpe writes: "Wakes are processes; through them we think about the dead and about our relations to them; they are rituals through which to enact grief and memory" (Sharpe 20).

According to Dominique herself, she admits that she would not consider herself to be a writer until after the publication of her third work of fiction, a feat which she achieved in February 2000, with the publication of *Inventer… La Célestine*. Here, Jan J. Dominique's thinking recalls Toni Morrison's 1996 lecture entitled "God's Language," where she writes that not until she had published her third novel, *The Song of Solomon*, did she call herself a writer: "I had written three books. It was only after I finished *The Song of Solomon*, that I finally thought,' Maybe this is what I do *only*.' Because before that I had always said that I was an editor *who* also wrote books or a teacher *who* also wrote. I never said that I was a writer. Never" ("God's Language" 302). Like Morrison, Jan J. Dominique held other jobs as a journalist and the station manager at Radio Haïti Inter, making her a professional *who* also writes.

Her novel *La Célestine* takes place during the final months of 1986 and the early days of *dechoukaj* that took place after then Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier fled the country for France in February 1987.[190] In the novel, Pierre and Mireille meet through a mutual acquaintance at an art opening and enter into a platonic friendship where the two begin sharing their writing with one another. Pierre is an established poet dabbling in fiction and Mireille is a literature professor seeking to write a family history of Pierre's great-grandmother, a Cuban woman whose origins can be traced back to the Haitian Revolution. Their relationship breaks down when Pierre confesses to Mireille that as he painstakingly read her manuscript his boredom caused him to reinvent the story of his Cuban ancestors (hence, the reason why the novel was originally featured "Inventer" in the title), injecting the narrative with intrigue and panache that Mireille's

[190] "Dechoukaj" refers to the process of deracination, or the uprooting of a system, such as a political regime. The period of dechoukaj in Haiti involved the violent rooting out Duvalierism and the *Makout* from Haiti. For

non-fiction rendering sorely lacked.[191] While Jean Dominique never took to writing or re-writing one of his daughter's novels, the first direct appearance of Jean in *Mémoire errante* is when the author is talking about the way her father gave her writing feedback as a developing writer:

> I persevered even when, sitting before the first pages I timidly offered him, my father spat: "I don't want to read a Sagan! [...] I didn't understand until much later that he didn't see the feminine side of Sagan, he saw the bourgeois. He worried about seeing me write from the height of privilege or based on the prejudices of a petty bourgeoisie which he refused to belong to. (*Mémoire errante* 36)[192]

This first instance of Jean's voice in Dominique's memoir draws him from obscurity, the realm of generalizations, and the public arena, a style of writing about the Haitian radio man after his death.

Those who knew Jean personally have always shied away from merely touting his record as a human rights activist and a crusader for the Haitian people, in the above quote, Jan J. Dominique portrays Jean in a role foreign to everyone but her, the role of the father. Dominique explains that as a child and throughout her life, "j'ai toujours écrit. Dans la peine, dans la joie, je trouvais toujours le temps" (36). This came with the occasional critique from her father, but also his much sought-after approval, "I wrote even though I wasn't publishing anything, especially when I wasn't publishing anything. Between *Memoir of an Amnesiac* and *Évasion,* twelve years. Nothing but time. Four years later, in February 2000, *La* Célestine [...] I had said that I wouldn't be a writer until after my third publication. It was complete. I was a writer, my father loved *La* Célestine" (37).[193] As readers of Dominique's memoir, we know that in two months Jean will be

---

[191] The first edition, published with Éditions des Antilles (Port-au-Prince) in 2000 and later reprinted in Montreal in 2004 with Les Éditions du Remue-Ménage, the same press that would eventually publish *Mémoire errante* in 2008 and later *L'Écho de leurs voix* in 2016.

[192] " J'ai persévéré, même quand mon père, devant les premières pages offertes timidement, me lança : 'Je ne veux pas d'une Sagan !' [...] Je n'ai pas compris que bien plus tard que mon père ne voyait pas la femme en Sagan, il voyait la bourgeoise. Il craignait de me voir écrire du haut de la suffisance ou des préjugés d'une petite bourgeoisie à laquelle il refusait d'appartenir."

[193] "J'ai écrit même quand je ne publiais rien, surtout quand je ne publiais pas. Entre *Mémoire d'une amnésique* et *Évasion*, douze ans. Rien que du temps. Quatre ans après, en février 2000, *Inventer... La Célestine* [...] j'avais dit que

assassinated, and so Dominique importantly signals that her father liked *La Célestine* to indicate that he had the chance to read her latest work before his death. Jan J. Dominique's memories of the months before and the years following the publication of *La Célestine* serve to structure the process of mourning Jean's death. She is constantly returning to the potential that her writing habits had to illicit realized and imagined paternal affection. By seeking refuge in these memories, Jan J. Dominique is able to recover her lost writing habits that ceased for three years after Jean's murder.

Dominique begins *Mémoire errante* with three words, "demain je pars," which recur throughout her text as a reminder of the time that has passed since April 3, 2000, the day her father died, but also the time when she last felt capable of writing. The first paragraph of Dominique's memoir begins: "I'm leaving tomorrow. These words swirled around in my head. I couldn't sleep so I reached for a piece of paper to write. No, not to write! I don't write, I haven't written in more than three years. I cannot. I don't even try" (9).[194] Without giving readers any context, Dominique thrusts them into the writer's block that has haunted her for three years. This hyper-awareness of the act of writing, the significance of tearing a piece of lined yellow paper from a legal pad, signals that the writer and, by extension, the reader there is more to writing than the act itself. Dominique conveys emotions (rejection, anxiety, desire, and dejection) as well as an understanding of time (she was a writer, she is not a writer, she did not know when she would write in the future) marred in a past trauma. The words that flow from her pen reflect a sense of loss anchored in the past, we understand that something *caused* her to stop writing, and

---

je ne serais pas écrivain qu'après ma troisième publication. C'était fait. J'étais écrivain, mon père aimait *La Célestine*"

[194] "Demain je pars. Ces mots tournaient dans ma tête. Je n'arrivais pas à dormir et j'ai pris une feuille de papier pour écrire. Non, pas pour écrire ! Je n'écris pas, je n'écris plus depuis trois ans. Je n'y arrive pas. Je n'essaie même pas"

that event took place three years ago. Dominique explains that she had not intended to write "demain je pars," she had initially meant to take note of banal details concerning her travel, " the flight number, the arrival time in Miami, information for the rental car, important telephone numbers in the United States" (9).[195] These details, however routine, and her spontaneous enunciation, "demain je pars," spark an extended reflection on the reasons for and the circumstances of Dominique's voyage to Miami.

In the subsequent pages, Dominique divulges that she and Michèle are traveling to Miami to participate in the world premiere of *The Agronomist* at the 2003 installment of the Miami International Film Festival. This is first moment that reader is cognizant of time in the concrete sense. It is also the first moment where we can see a direct link between Dominique's writer's block and her father's murder. Dominique admits that in the three years since Jean's death she wrote certain things: "I take note of certain bits of useful information, I reach out to friends overseas, I write copy for radio programs,"[196] but she is cut off from the creative writing that has been a constant presence in her life for as long as she can remember (9). The film as well as her impending travel provide Dominique with a mode of writing about her father that is personal and subjective, that actively engages with her desire to recover from the loss of Jean. She and Michèle screened every cut of the film until the final version was complete. In a way, the completion of the film, like the conclusion of Jean's story, signifies the conclusion of Jean's life: "Jonathan Demme put his final touches on the film. The story of Jean, the journalist and agronomist, has also ended" (10).[197] We can see how the film serves as a potential substitute for

[195] "le numéro de vol de l'avion, l'heure d'arrivée à Miami, les consignes pour la voiture, les numéros de téléphone importants aux États-Unis"
[196] " je prends note de certaines informations utiles, je communique avec des amis outre-mer, je rédige des émissions pour la radio"
[197] "Jonathan Demme a mis le point final à son film. L'histoire de Jean, journaliste et agronome, est elle aussi terminée"

Jean's life, but the film only manages to replicate the sense of loss Dominique experiences. Her desire to keep Jean's memory present in her life caused her to approach the film as a substitute for her father. In this regard, we can see how the Freudian mode of mourning proves insufficient for characterizing the author's grief. To Freud, successful mourning meant that the grieving person had managed to exchange one object for another. By replacing the feeling of loss with something else, a person can surmount their melancholic state through feelings of hopefulness. In Freud's terms, this would mean that Jan J. Dominique would have to replace her feelings of loss, or Jean the person, with the idea of Jean in the documentary, as a protagonist on the big screen. But things are not so simple, and it reveals the flaws in Freud's conception of mourning. To replace her father with the film might mean that she would have to forget her father as she knew him, to fully substitute him for the Jean in the movie, if that were even possible.[198] The film was only a temporary fix, one that indicates the shape of Jan J. Dominique's grief could not be generalized. The documentary is inadequate, though, because once the various stages of editing have concluded, so has Jean's presence in Dominique's everyday life.

While Freud's notion of substitution holds in the example of the documentary, Demme's film serves mostly as the springboard that launches Jan J. Dominique into a deeper exploration of herself and her process of coping with the traumatic past through what Saidiya Hartman and Christina Sharpe refer to as the "autobiographical example." Hartman and Sharpe call on the "autobiographical example" in their critical work as a means of speculating on and coping with the range of emotions and feelings of loss derived from past traumas on an intimate and a global scale. Riffing on Hartman and Patricia Saunders, Sharpe explains that the reason why she

[198] Judith Butler levies an important critique against Freud in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, writing about "substitutability": "I do not think that successful grieving implies that one has forgotten another person or that something else has come along to take its place, as if full substitutability were something for which we might strive" (*Precarious Life* 21).

includes personal anecdotes in her study *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* is to "connect the social forces on a specific, particular family's being in the wake to those of all black people in the wake; to mourn and to illustrate the ways our individual lives are always swept up in the wake produced and determined, though not absolutely, by the afterlives of slavery." While Dominique may not be tracing a story rooted in the afterlife of slavery, her personal tale of grief and mourning as a Black woman from the Caribbean now living in exile serves a purpose similar to Sharpe's: "to tell a story capable of engaging and countering the violence of abstraction" (*Lose Your Mother* 8, quoted in *In the Wake* 8).

For Dominique, the autobiographical form allows her to gather her own intimate memories of Jean, which results in not only a writing of the self—autobiography— but also a writing *with* Jean *through* the polysemic concept of *mémoire* (memory and memoir). As we continue reading the three words “demain je pars” and its relation to Jean’s assassination ebb and flow through the first chapter of the book:

> So here we are en route to The Miami International Film Festival. On the sheet of yellow paper, *I managed to write I'm leaving tomorrow***.** I looked at these words as though they were going to leap from the page and jump right at my face. And then I began to cry. *Not because I'm leaving tomorrow. Because I wrote these three words.* (My emphasis, 10)[199]

Dominique explains that these three words mean much more than they are capable of expressing. They hold the promise of the flow of more words, a possible resolution to the “le tourbillon qui s'agite dans mon corps et le vide qui m'envahit la tête,” and an understanding that she needs to write in order to calm herself and to cope with the past (35). It is clear that writing will provide Dominique with a healthy mode of mourning her father’s passing, although it will be an ongoing,

[199] "Nous voilà en route pour ce festival, The Miami International Film Festival. Sur la feuille de papier jaune, *j’ai fini par écrire : demain je pars.* J’ai regardé ces mots comme s’ils allaient quitter la page et me sauter au visage. Et je me suis mise à pleurer. *Pas parce que demain je pars.* Parce que *j’ai écrit ces trois mots*."

often disrupted process. Ultimately, writing allows her to imagine and invent new stories while recovering her memories of Jean.

Throughout her works of fiction and nonfiction, Jan J. Dominique frequently shifts between different perspectives and modes of storytelling, allowing polyphony to take hold of the narrative structure.[200] The interplay between genres is present in *Mémoire errante* as each of the three parts of the book reflect different styles of writing. The first part, "Le Nom des Villes [The Names of Cities" resembles a version of travel writing where the content of each subsection takes on themes or lived experiences inspired by each individual place—Miami, Long Island, Orléans, Montreal. The next section, "Les Cahiers de l'éphémère [Notebooks of Ephemeralities]" breaks with the first in two distinct ways: the narrative shifts from the first person to the third and it is set in the months leading up to Jean-Claude Duvalier's departure from Haiti in 1986, bringing a formal end to the Duvalier dictatorship. The third section, "Traverser la frontière [Crossing the Border]" returns to the first-person narration in the mode with which Dominique began in "Le Nom des Villes," but the narrative structure is based on episodic reminiscences rather than the itinerant structure of the opening pages of *Mémoire errante*. This type of literary bricolage is perhaps most evident in her first published work, *Mémoire d'une amnésique*, which Dominique published in 1984 after winning the coveted Prix Deschamps prize. From a very young age, the act of writing had always been a part of Dominique's life, but she was reluctant to call herself a writer. She reflects:

> Twenty years ago, *I decided to be a writer*. Twenty years ago, because Nik was a little boy then [...] Twenty years ago, when Nik was a little boy, I finally accepted the idea that the text that I was polishing and repolishing for years had to become a book. It's the moment in particular when I was daring. It was a text without a name, then *The Legitimate Daughter* eventually came to me, which described me to a T, but failed to

[200] These are also post-modernist tendencies that Jan J. Dominique explores in her novels *Mémoire d'une amnésique* and *Inventer… La Célestine.*

> satisfy me. And then in a flash, *Memory of an Amnesiac*. I had the title; *I had decided to be a writer*. (My emphasis, 35-36)[201]

In this passage drawn from memory, we see a different version of the author, one who, despite her lack of publications, is able to declare herself a writer and set the intention that redefines who she sees herself as. The act of writing, polishing, and editing were just part of everyday life before Dominique decided to be a writer. Writing was always already part of Dominique's practice of daily life which allowed her to imagine new worlds and invent stories that transported her from one set of life experiences to another.[202] As we saw before, even though Dominique decides here that she would be a writer, she only finally considers herself a writer after the publication of her third work, *Inventer… La Célestine,* sixteen years later. Although *La Célestine* occupies an important place in both Dominique's memory of Jean and the months before he was killed, the relationship between *Mémoire errante* and *Mémoire d'une amnésique* reveals the importance of various forms of writing as a mode of remembrance and mourning.

[201] "Il y a vingt ans, *j'ai décidé d'être écrivain*. Vingt ans parce que Nik était alors un petit garçon [...] Il y a vingt ans, lorsque Nik était petit garçon, j'ai fini par accepter que le texte que je polissais et repolissais depuis des années devait devenir un livre. C'est surtout le moment où j'ai osé. C'était alors un texte sans nom, puis celui de *La Fille légitime* s'est glissé, qui me décrivait à la perfection sans me satisfaire. Et dans un éclair, *Mémoire d'une amnésique.* J'avais le titre, *j'avais décidé d'être écrivain*."

[202] Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven F. Randall, University of California Press, 2011.

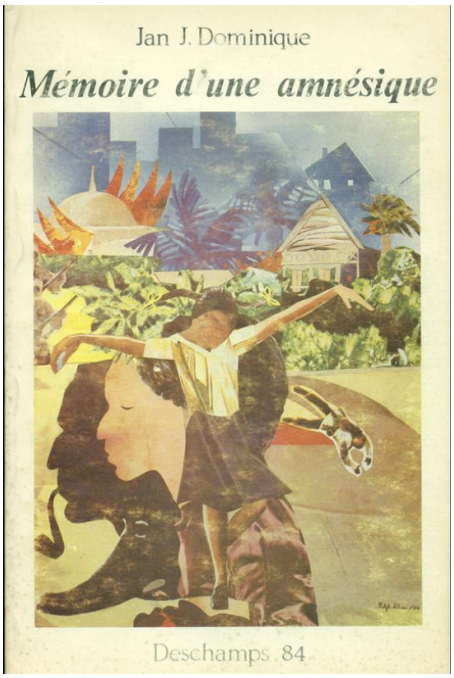


Figure 22: The Front cover of Jan J. Dominique's Mémoire d'une amnésique, the 1984 winner of the Prix Henri Deschamps. (Credit: Google Images)

Published in 1984 with Editions Henri Deschamps and later reissued in Montreal with the Editions Remue-Ménage, *Mémoire d'une amnésique* tells the coming-of-age story of a Haitian woman Paul/Lili through a series of analepses and prolepses in the form of fairytales, letters, journal entries, and other modes of writing.[203] According to the author, *Mémoire d'une amnésique* is not a novel, but a *récit* (a narrative), and it should not be qualified as an autobiographical text.[204] Rather than pointing to the potential autobiographical similarities between *Mémoire d'une amnésique* and *Mémoire errante*, it is more important to trace the stylistic and thematic filiation between the first text and the second.

[203] For an analysis of genre play in *Mémoire d'une amnésique*, see: Smith, Paulette Anne. "The Stakes of the 'I-Game' in 'Mémoire d'une Amnésique.'" *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2002, pp. 56–78.
[204] In an interview with Maude M. Adjarian, Dominique explains that although many people have asked whether the novel should be considered autobiographical, she insists that it is not, despite the intellectual play involved in the act of writing itself. Dominique, Jan J., and Maude M. Adjarian. "A Passion for Literature: An Interview with Jan J. Dominique." *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2005, pp. 76–93. Dominique also addresses the "autobiographical" in her interview with Monique Lafontant on Entre Nous, a radio program the two hosted at Radio Haiti Inter: Dominique, Jan J., and Monique Lafontant. *Entre Nous : « Inventer... La Célestine », J.J. Dominique*. 13 Feb. 2000, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1017_01.

The style and themes of *Mémoire d'une amnésique* inform and influence the narrative, style, and content of the Dominique's 2008 memoir. This begins with the place of the writer/narrator, but extends to the repetition of the lines "Demain je pars," which appears in the final sentence of her 1984 novel.[205] Sliding between first- and third-person narration, like the structure of the three parts of *Mémoire errante,* Dominique's character Paul explains that this urge comes from a desire for self-effacement: "I started to write this text in the third person, to hide myself, and I know this is a ridiculous camouflage. My fingers narrate "she," "he" while my head is thinking 'me,' 'Paul'" (*Mémoire d'une Amnésique* 15).[206] Paul also insists on writing fairytales and the importance of multiple forms of writing in order to transmit a story, to pass them down to Maya, her unborn daughter. The narrative of *Mémoire d'une Amnésique* alternates between numerous literary forms where the "I" or the "je" fluctuates between a fictional and metafictional character. Like Paul, Dominique erases herself or slips into a fictional state as she writes *Mémoire errante.* This helps her recover her writing practice amidst the grief caused by Jean's absence. At the end of the first subsection in *Mémoire errante* Dominique's trip to Miami causes her to spontaneously invent the beginning of a novel:

> I am in my home, contemplating my garden in the low light of an afternoon in February, and I'm leaving tomorrow for a short trip. It could be the beginning of a fluffy novel, a rosy story in which the heroine, a journalist exhausted from years of toiling in a fractured country, finds happiness in the arms of a rich Chinese business man—no, Cuban, not Chinese, since I'm going to Miami. I'm leaving tomorrow, and I haven't played with words in three years. (11)[207]

[205] The final sentence of *Mémoire d'une amnésique* reads "Demain je pars, – pause."
[206] " j'ai commence à écrire le texte à la troisième personne, pour me chacher, et je sais ce camouflage ridicule, mes droits racontent 'elle,' 'lui,' ce que ma tête pense ;'je,' 'Paul,' 'Paul'"
[207] "Je suis dans ma maison, je contemple mon jardin dans la pénombre d'une fin d'après-midi de février et demain je pars pour un court voyage. Cela pourrait être le début d'un roman léger, d'une histoire à l'eau de rose où l'héroïne, journaliste épuisée par des années de labeur dans un pays déchiré, découvre le bonheur dans les bras d'un riche homme d'affaires chinois, non pas chinois, cubain puisque je vais à Miami. Demain je pars, et je n'ai pas joué avec les mots depuis trois ans."

The exercise that began as a simple set of notes for her voyage to Miami and other international destinations becomes an opening of the floodgates of sorts, and Dominique is able to imagine writing a story again, inventing new fictional realms that allow her to process her lived experience. In these closing lines to the first subsection of *Mémoire errante,* Dominque returns to writing by noting the three-year absence of writing in her life, which serves as a constant reminder Jean's death, his departure. In this way, Jan J. Dominique is able to "play with words" once again by looking forward to her departure from Haiti, knowing that when she leaves, her father will always remain with her in her writing through the temporal marker she places each time she repeats "depuis trois ans."

As the *Mémoire errante* progresses from the first to the third section of the book, Dominique moves beyond the temporal formulation of "depuis trois ans," and indicates Jean's absence by acknowledging the that the day he was killed, April 3, has restructured her life. Picking up the first-person narration again after the second section, Dominique anchors the third part of her memoir, "Traverser la frontière," in the three years that have passed since she left Haiti in 2003: "Three years since leaving Haiti. Six years since Jean's murder. April 3, 2006, I woke up even more troubled than normal. More anxious than all the other April 3rds [...] Since the year 2000, my life has been regulated in accordance with April 3rds" (129).[208] In "Traverser la frontière," Dominique recounts the cycles of pain she has felt after Jean's death, numerous miscarriages, and a cancer scare. If the writing in "Le Nom des Villes" served to ease Dominique back into a writing practice through itinerant, travel writing, whereby each stop on her journey led to a reflection in the present moment, then the writing in "Traverser la frontière" enables

[208] "Trois ans depuis le départ d'Haïti. Six ans depuis l'assassinat de Jean. Le 3 avril 2006, je me suis réveillée plus oppressée que d'habitude. Plus angoissée que les autres 3 avril […] Depuis l'an 2000, ma vie est en partie rythmée par les 3 avril"

Dominique to reach further into her traumatic past to recover tender memories cast of Jean, which she then (re)casts in different literary forms: the "chanson-pointe" (comptine/nursery rhyme) and imagined dialogue.

In the first titled subsection of "Traverser la frontière," Jan J. Dominique recalls a "chanson-pointe," or nursery rhyme, that she used to hear as a child, which for her accesses a sonorous memory of her with her mother and father. She explains that these songs are usually employed to "play with words," to innocently tease, to make light of a difficult daily routine, or sung by the oppressed to critique the powerful. Her *chanson-pointe* holds a much more personal tenor, as the rhymes play with both her filiation as Jean's daughter, but also as someone who shares the same name as her father:

Papa l' se msye Jan,
Manman l' se madan Jan,
Li menm se manzè Jan
Ala Jan, san lajan (133)[209]

The *chanson-pointe* identifies the father as "Msye Jan/Monsieur Jean/Mr. Jean," the mother then becomes "Madan Jan/Madame Jean/ Mrs. Jean," she (Jan J. Dominique herself) is "Manzè Jan/Mademoiselle Jean/Miss Jean."[210] In Haitian Creole, the way that familial ties are drawn, and the way that possessive adjectives are accorded, are based on the name of the person, which grammatically grants Msye Jan/Mr. Jean possession of both his wife and his daughter. Thinking back on this innocuous nursery rhyme, the author explains that the difficulties she had carrying the same name as her father, always being identified as Jan Dominique by those outside of her intimate circle: "In getting married, girls not only witness the amputation of their family name.

[209] Normally, Haitian Creole orthography would not include apostrophes or any other diacritics beyond the accent grave/accent fòs. I have retained Jan J. Dominique's spelling in the citation.
[210] In Haitian Creole phonetics, the name "Jan" forms a nasal vowel that resembles the French nasal "an/en," which makes Jean Dominique and Jan J Dominique's name sound the same despite the different orthography. In order to form the feminine of Jean (Jeanne) in Haitian Creole, an accent grave needs to be added, making it "Jàn."

They also lose their first name. They are no longer individuals, [but] *wives.* As for me, I was mademoiselle Jean" (134).[211] As a woman who carries both her father's first and last name, Jan J. Dominique has never been able to shake the association with her father, making the quest for her own sense of self entwined with Jean's.

Dominique later elaborates that her name always has posited her in her father's shadow, which means that not only does she always carry a piece of her father with her every time she publishes a work, but that with her first publications she struggled to find her place, her identity as a writer. Just as before where Dominique argues that marriage causes women to be cut off from their own names, the act of publishing had a similar effect on her. She not only regards writing from a creative standpoint, but from a maternal aspect of creation. The ability to claim writing as her own was crucial for her to establish her identity as a writer, "I brought a text into the world, I therefore had the right to claim an identity. Which one? The first crisis. The first dispute [J'avais mis au monde un texte, j'avais le droit de revendiquer une identité. Laquelle ? Première crise. Première dispute]" (135). Until this point in her life, Dominique had always been the girl in the *chanson-pointe*, identified as Mademoiselle Jan, Jean Dominique's daughter. When she tells her father that she proposed the pseudonym "J.J." for the cover of *Mémoire d'une amnésique*, Jean is furious claiming that she was ashamed to bear his name. For Dominique, this dispute, especially the recollection of it, remains an open wound: "I cried, I wailed, and on the front cover of *Memory of an Amnesiac* I was Jan J. On the back of the book, simply J. J. A Compromise. I thought once and for all I would impose a first name that would be mine alone,

[211] "Les filles en se mariant ne se voient pas seulement amputées de leur nom. Elles perdent aussi leur prénom. Elles ne sont plus personne, les *madan*. Moi, j'étais bien mademoiselle Jan"

but his anger deprived me of that right. This episode has stayed with me like a wound" (135).[212] Nearly twenty-two years after the publication of her first book, the impact of this episode lingers, particularly in Jean's passing.

Dominique consents to carry her father's name on her publications, even if that means living slightly in his shadow, it was a compromise that the two made together. As evinced by the general tone of *Mémoire errante*, Dominique explains that her writing project is as intentional as it is an internal process, which also includes in large part the memory of Jean. She admits that the choice to carry his name on her books was out of a desire for closeness with Jean, "I couldn't bear the idea of being estranged from him. I couldn't bear the idea that he may no longer love me [...] And I would certainly die without his affection" (137).[213] Jan J. Dominique's relationship to writing and her pursuit of her father's affection are inextricably linked. When she writes, "I write to try to understand who I am, even though he is no longer here. To understand how I can still be here, even though he is no longer [j'écris pour tâcher de comprendre qui je suis, alors qu'il n'est plus. Comprendre comment je peux encore être, alors qu'il n'est plus]," she brings her father back into existence by acknowledging his syntactical presence on the page. The *chanson-pointe* allows Dominique to recall the persistence of her father's memory in her writing, in her name, in her life. The infantile playfulness of the genre provides an entrée into the more dolorous memories of her maturation as a writer and as Jean's daughter.

In the final subsection of "Traverser la frontière," Jan J. Dominique recreates a conversation she and Jean had when her third publication, *Inventer... La Célestine*, came out in

[212] "j'ai pleuré, tempêté, et sur la couverture de *Mémoire d'une amnésique*, je suis Jan J. Sur le dos du livre, J. J. simplement. Compromis. Je croyais une fois pour toutes imposer un prénom qui ne soit qu'à moi, sa colère m'en a privée. Cet épisode m'est resté comme une blessure"
[213] "je ne supportais pas l'idée de lui être étrangère. Je ne supportais pas qu'il puisse cesser de m'aimer […] Et j'étais sûre de mourir sans son amour"

February 2001. Similar to the earlier scene where Dominique imagines the beginning of a new novel as she is sitting in her garden, she presents this final scene as though it were drawn from a larger work of fiction, told from the third-person omniscient perspective. In this episode, the fictionalized frame of Dominique's memory places she and Jean on the same plane, they are both living, conversing, sharing the textual space in equal part. It is from this vantage point that readers gain access to the tenderness between the departed father and his daughter: this perspective grants Jean a voice and provides a fleeting glimpse into his rapport with his daughter. Set in the weeks following the publication of *La Célestine*, Jean and J.J discuss her writing. It is important to understand the intimacy between the two, so I have quoted the passage at length:

> —You never tell me what you're writing about, I read your books at the same time as everyone else, the father said in an affectionate tone that would have made the Lord's ears perk up.
>
> —You know that I'm shy, the daughter murmured.
>
> Then he heard the clear laughter of his wife. And the Lord waited for the father's response.
>
> —I like talking with you about the books we read, the ones that we like. So, why don't we talk about yours?
>
> —I'll try, she said.
>
> —Now that you've published his latest one, you must be relieved, the father continued.
>
> [...]
>
> —I promise, she said in an irrepressible impulse, I promise you that we'll talk about the next one. I'll try to at any rate. Look! The next story will be a happy one.
>
> [—Tu ne me parles jamais de ce que tu écris, je découvre tes textes en même temps que tout le monde, dit le père d'un ton affectueux qui attira l'attention de Dieu.
>
> — Je suis timide, tu le sais, murmura la fille.
>
> C'est là qu'il entendit le rire clair de la femme. Et Il prêta l'oreille à la réponse du père.

— J’aime discuter avec toi des livres que nous lisons, que nous aimons ; alors pourquoi pas les tiens ?

— Je vais essayer, dit-elle.

— Maintenant que tu as sorti ce dernier, tu dois être soulagée, poursuivit le père.

[…]

— Je te promets, dit-elle dans un brusque élan qu’elle ne réprime pas, je te promets de te parler du prochain. De faire l’effort en tout cas. Tiens ! Il s’agira d’une histoire gaie.]

(169)

In the passage above, we bear witness to an intimate scene between the author and her father. Jean's affectionate tone, his desire to learn more about his daughter's writing, her passion, is both awkwardly out of place—it draws God's attention—but also indicative of a profound sense of paternal love. This effectively assuages the readers' fears that Jean did not sufficiently love his daughter, and by writing this passage Dominique herself is able to recall her father in these affectionate terms.

Even though Dominique had already previously mentioned this conversation in the first part of *Mémoire errante*, here we have a sense of the verbal and affective exchange between she and her father. Although, unlike the earlier iteration of the conversation about *La Célestine*, we do not have the same level of fictional suspense as above. We know, like the author and her omniscient narrator, that Jean will not live to read her next novel. What is more, we know that it will not be a happy story because her next conversation would be *Mémoire errante*. This fictionalized conversation exposes another aspect of the wound Jean's death represents for Dominique, all of the conversations that she will never be able to have with her father after his murder. While the two rarely spoke about Dominique's personal writing, she and Jean often talked about other writers, her father's love of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, which he

hoped to read over again.[214] Although Dominique does not care for Proust herself, she enjoys listening to Jean talk about his interests, his frustrations, and his pretensions, above all "elle aime l'écouter, parfois elle s'attendrit en surprenant une petite poussée de pédantisme, si petite qu'elle serait imperceptible à un observateur étranger" (171). Dominique reveals that this conversation took place on April 1, 2000, which has also become part of the annual rhythm that structures her life and causes her a great deal of pain. She writes that her "memory, every first of April, withers like a rotten fruit [mémoire, tous les premiers d'avril, se ratatine comme un fruit pourri]," returning to the cyclical nature of her father's death.

In writing about and with her father Jean Dominique, Jan J. Dominique is able to process his death, her painful memories, and recover a piece of her life that was explicitly hers. Throughout her life, Dominique has sought out ways to imagine her own life, to find her own identity all while sharing the same name as her father and living in the shadow of Jean Dominique's public persona. *Mémoire errante* reconstitutes the author's intimate memories with her father. However, *Mémoire errante* is not only a text that memorializes Jean. The autobiographical form allows Jan J. Dominique to salvage her identity amidst the violent assassination of her father. In the wake of Jean's death, *Mémoire errante* presents Jan J. Dominique's ongoing process of mourning, writing with and through the memories of her father.

Meeting the Dead in the Subjunctive: Literary Intimacy and Reading as Mourning

> "— The most painful thing?
> — Yes, I'd like to know.
> — I lacked books.
> — You lacked books....

[214] " Il lui parle de Proust, qu'il va relire au complet. Proust, qu'elle n'aime pas et qu'il désespère de lui faire apprécier. Elle l'écoute avec un demi-sourire, ce mouvement des lèvres qui, à son insu, révèle une si grande confiance dans ce savoir que l'homme partage, ces connaissances jamais étalées qu'elle absorbe avec plaisir sans se pressentir qu'elles lui manqueront si atrocement."

— ..."[215]

The sense of loss in Emmelie Prophète's 2010 auto-fictious novel *Le Reste du temps* is unavoidable. It begins and ends with the deaths of two people close to the author, the novel's protagonist. In the opening pages of the novel, on the first Monday of April, the third day of the month in the year 2000, Jean Dominique and Jean-Claude Louissaint are shot outside of the offices of Radio Haïti Inter. The news of Jean Dominique's death sends Port-au-Prince into widescale period of mourning, culminating in the statewide funeral for Dominique and Louissaint at the Stade Sylvio Cator, adjacent to the Grand Cimetière. At the end of the novel, Jean-Baptiste, the protagonist's preferred bookseller, dies and leaves the protagonist the final missing work in her collection of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* to be delivered to her by his dear friend Faustin.

Although there are three Jeans in the protagonist's life who die within a three-week span, the losses of Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Claude are overshadowed by the global spectacle of Jean Dominique's murder. However, all three Jeans are linked through Prophète's intimate portrayal of her connection to the three men and their connections, either real or imagined, to one another. Intimacy can often entail romance, but it can also come to represent the relationship between people, the "space in between" individuals that gives way to deeper reflections on human life (D'Erasmo 3). In some cases, Stacey D'Erasmo refers to intimacy as "meeting in the *if*" or "[meeting] in the subjunctive," a literary game of smoke and mirrors that is "suited to holding open the possibility that an event is occurring and not occurring, that this or that might happen if it were to occur" (14). In fiction, intimacy is "an optical illusion that is also potentially quite a powerful tool for summoning up desire and loss simultaneously and causing the reader to

[215] " —Ma plus grande souffrance ?/ — Oui, j'aimerais savoir./ — Je manquais de livres./ — Tu manquais de livres…/ — …"

experience both states with equal force" (14). However, as the story in *Le Reste du temps* develops, the reader becomes aware that the teacher in its opening pages is Emmelie Prophète. The autobiographical nature of the book would seem to call into question it's classification as a novel, or even a work of semi-autobiographical fiction.[216] The tension between fiction and autobiography and autofiction is something that Prophète invites because it is trangressive. According to Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, autofiction "transgresses the boundaries between autobiography and literature as well as the boundaries between literature and life" (Wagner-Egelhaaf 2). What might Prophète gain by crossing the boundaries of fiction and non-fiction, or by crossing the boundary between literature and life? The generic ambiguity in *Le Reste du temps* is important for Prophète and we must ask: how and to what end does she negotiate the tension between fiction—intertextuality, protagonists, character development and plot, and dialogue—and memoir—personal recollection, anecdote, and subjectivity? How does this genre play enable her to remember Jean Dominique in a distinct and novel way?

***

Throughout *Le Reste du temps* Prophète never identifies herself by name, choosing instead to supply details of her connection to the three Jeans that only they, or perhaps readers personally close to the author, would be able to identify. In a sense, fiction and all of its imaginary tools provide Prophète with a means by which to process her own feelings of desire and loss after the deaths of Jean-Baptiste, Jean-Claude Louissaint, and Jean Dominique. By leaning into autofiction, as the literary critic Yolaine Parisot puts it, "Prophète never completes

[216] It is important to acknowledge the author's intent in referring to the work in terms of fiction, especially within discussions of French and Francophone literary studies, because Francophone writers of color are frequently charged with writing "semi-autobiographical" works or even expected to "write about [insert nationality] identity" by the Hexagonal French literary market. While the terms are different in the Canadian literary panorama of which Emmelie Prophète is also a part, claims of autobiographical writing (other than autofiction) is unevenly heaped on writers of color. Question was recently brought back to Léon-François Hoffman and his critique of early Haitian women's writing as a feminization of the self 38:00-39:00 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXdF05-_OAM

the autobiographical pact, (making it) as though documentation and fiction authenticate one another [ne conclut jamais explicitement le pacte autobiographique, comme si le document et la fiction devaient s'autoriser l'une l'autre]" (Parisot 30). This makes it possible for the author to imbue the story with personal details while maintaining a critical distance behind the veil of fiction. Renée Larrier reminds us, too, that Caribbean literature is replete with first person narrators in fiction and non-fiction. She argues that the Caribbean first person perspective is so compelling because "it [challenges] the *grand récit* (the Master narrative)" that first emerged in the era of European colonization (Larrier 7). The *grand récit* assumes that there is only one story and one way of telling it. When Caribbean writers evoke the first person, they dispose with the idea of a single story and assert a subjective narration, unique to that individual writer or speaker. *Le Reste du temps* shows, through the subjectivity of the first person, that there is more than one story surrounding the death of Jean Dominique, this one just happens to be the author's.

Emmelie Prophète is not just the author of the novel, she is the first-person narrator and the protagonist. For Jean Dominique, Prophète was a friend and co-worker. Even though they met when Jean was 68 years-old, they frequently discussed jazz and literature together. Their favorite authors to read together were Marcel Proust and Victor Hugo. To Jean-Claude Louissaint, the narrator was a colleague, a person whom she did not know very well, but someone who she saw as a kind man as he opened for her the gate to the radio station every day for five years. For Jean-Baptiste the bookseller, the narrator was simply "La cliente," his client on a seemingly never-ending quest to possess all seven books in Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu.* The relationship between Jean-Baptiste and the narrator hinges on the very subjective nature her search for Proust's volumes, which the narrator refers to as their "game": " Jean-Baptiste continued to look for the seven volumes of *In Search of Lost Time,* we both know

that there was little chance that he would find them one day, but we continued to play the game" (130).

For the protagonist, books, whether discussing them with friends, or browsing for them on the streets of Port-au-Prince provide the memorial grist of the novel. When she remembers a person, there is often a book at the center of their relationship. In a conversation with Jean Dominique midway through the novel, Jean asks Prophète about her most painful experience as a child. She simply replies: “I lacked books [je manquais de livres]” (*Le Reste du temps* 70). The elliptical exchange between the two demonstrates how Prophète employs micro-moments and fragments of personal conversations to give her readers a sense of anticipation, a longing to know what happens in the conversation by deferring its conclusion. By finding them once again in a physical, auto-fictitious literary space Prophète allows for her own story, her love of books and Marcel Proust, to form the connective tissue between Jean-Baptiste, Jean-Claude, and Jean, three men who, in the realm of the living, share little more than a first name. By following the narrator's search for a copy of *Sodom et Gommorhe* as well as other literary references in *Le Reste du temps*, we can see how memories of a shared literary corpus construct the intimate bonds between Prophète, the protagonist, and the three Jeans. By narrativizing the three Jeans, making them a part of her life and vice versa, Prophète closes the “space in between” the three people.

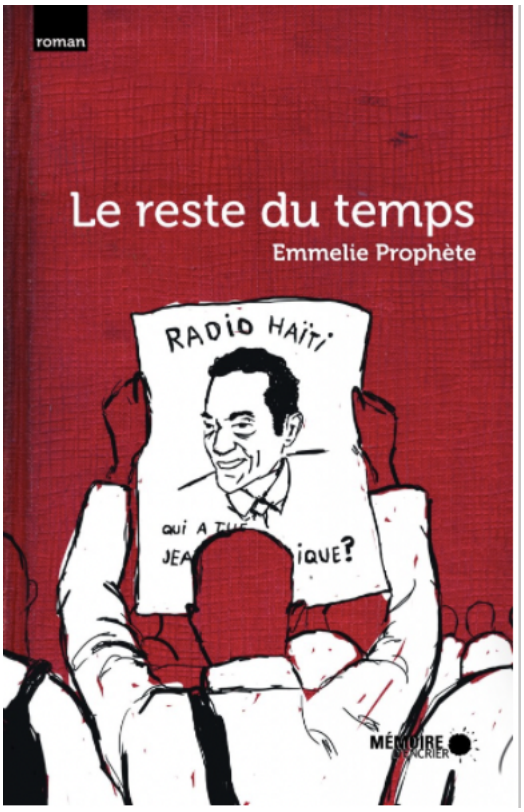


Figure 23: First edition cover of Le Reste du temps (2010) published by Mémoire d'encrier. (Credit: Mémoire d'encrier)

From the book's appearance through the initial chapters, *Le Reste du temps* seems to be almost entirely focused on understanding the events that led up to and immediately followed the assassination of Jean Léopold Dominique on April 3, 2000. Even though the novel unfolds in the wake of Jean Dominique's passing, Prophète's intent is to contrast the public Jean Dominique with the private. By doing so, she chips away at the glossy edges of the mythological radio man, comparing him to the two other Jeans. We see how public life has eroded Jean Dominique's right to privacy in favor of public spectacle. In a Port-au-Prince where living and dying are part of everyday life, the differences between Jean Dominique, Jean-Claude Louissaint, and Jean-Baptiste the bookseller fade away.

Early in the novel, at Jean Dominique's public viewing, the protagonist shows us the cost of larger-than-life status. Jean Dominique's colossal public image made him "un mythe. Un

patrimoine" (32). Every day, people would tune their radios to the proper frequency and hear Jean Dominique's voice ring out through their homes. Whenever a public figure dies, their admirers experience a sense of loss. Though this loss is different from the people who knew the individual personally, admirers still feel the need to pay their respects. For Jean Dominique, this came in the form of a public funeral and viewing, which he shared with Jean-Claude Louissaint. Unfortunately, this public event came at the expense of Dominique's and Louissaint's family's sense of intimacy. Prophète's narrator explains that "the viewing organized for Jean was grosteque... it's difficult to belong to everyone [La veillée organisée pour Jean était grotesque… Il est difficile d'appartenir à tout le monde]" 40). She is uncomfortable with the whole scene and the spectacle it became:

> Jean-Claude's family, sad and modest, was there as well. They didn't understand what was going on and none of this made any sense to them. At a particular point in time, I wanted to know Jean-Claude's story. You would have had to be a terrible child to subject your family to similar circumstances. To impose this official atmosphere, this media scandal upon these poor people who almost seemed scared to shake the hands of those who greeted them, those who came primarily for Jean. (55)[217]

For the protagonist, the state funeral overshadows Jean-Claude's story, placing his family in the uncomfortable position of having to mourn their son in public, surrounded by people who came, instead, for Jean Dominique. Not only was their son taken from the Louissaint family, but they also lost the ability to choose how they performed personal mortuary rites. Normally, a funeral provides family and loved ones with the opportunity to linger in the past, to reflect on the memory of the deceased, but Jean-Claude's family has to endure the indignity and the shame of a

[217] "La famille de Jean-Claude, triste et modeste, était là aussi. Elle n'avait rien compris et ne comprendrait rien à cette histoire. J'ai eu envie, à un certain moment, de connaître l'histoire de Jean-Claude. Il faut avoir été un enfant terrible pour mettre sa famille dans une telle situation. Imposer cette ambiance officielle, ce tollé médiatique à ces pauvres gens qui semblaient avoir peur de serrer la main à ceux qui venait les saluer, qui venaient pour Jean principalement."

public ceremony meant to honor another person, a person for whom Jean-Claude merely opened the radio station gate every day.

In his commentary on *Le Reste du temps*, Martin Munro acknowledges the "deeply unsatisfactory" nature of Jean's public funeral because it didn't succeed in uniting the nation or creating a space to properly mourn the deceased (*Writing on the Fault Line* 150). However, Munro fails to demonstrate how Prophète's manipulation of autofiction and its spare yet meaning-laden prose sets the elegiac purpose of the novel. Munro calls her style "deliberately flat, the sentences short and to the point," yet he does not account for how they constitute a sort of lamentation in the first person (146).[218] Autofiction grants the author the space to share her raw feelings, on the one hand her sense of outrage that Jean's funeral was turned into a public spectacle and, on the other hand, her empathy for Jean-Claude's family who perhaps wanted nothing more than to mourn the loss of their son in private. The space between fiction and non-fiction also allows the protagonist's thoughts to wander. She wonders about Jean-Claude's parents and their emotional state. She expresses a sudden urge to know more about this man who would forever be the person who died next to Jean Dominique. Though the language is direct and the is often syntax straightforward, moments like these reveal the emotional depth of *Le Reste du temps.*

Earlier in the novel, the narrator points out that death, especially in the city of Port-au-Prince is part of the quotidian reality, remarking that the sidewalks of the city, some mornings, served as “strange beds where perforated bodies lay in rest [des lits étranges où se reposait des

[218] Munro also categorizes *Le Reste du temps* as a "post-earthquake" novel because it was released in 2010 after the January 12 earthquake. Indeed, its publication date thrusts the novel into a period that some call "post-quake" Haitian literature, but the novel was in production before the earthquake and makes no reference to the event. Referring to the novel as "post-earthquake" only succeeds in making the novel, and the stories therein, legible to readership outside of Haiti unversed in the continuities of Haitian literature and storytelling.

corps troués]" (34). Suddenly part of the natural landscape of Port-au-Prince, inert, perforated bodies became normal aspect of daily life in the city during the nineties and the early 2000s when gangs and political factions vied for control of public spaces with United Nations "peace-keepers" and the Haitian police. As Edwidge Danticat reminded us in the previous chapter, under the Duvaliers, père and fils, the *Makout* and the Haitian army would often leave the bodies of loved ones in the street to lure the rest of the family out of hiding in order to persecute them as well. The conflicts of the 1990s, with the ouster and reinstallation of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the presidential palace also led to similar types of public displays of violence between warring local factions. Reflecting on more than a decade of public violence in Port-au-Prince from 1990 to 2006, Greg Beckett writes that "the killing of bad people became the basis of politics" in Port-au-Prince (185). To explain this type of reality, the narrator draws on Arthur Rimbaud's poem "Le Dormeur du val" where the poetic figure discovers a decomposing corps in a peaceful valley during the Franco-Prussian war. Prophète writes:

> Eyes bulging. Mouths open as though wishing to speak a final word. Flesh and blood for the flies. A spectacle for the unemployed who came to spend hours of their free time to look at the cadaver, laying on the sidewalk. The longer the spectacle, the more banal it became. We were no longer shocked, or very little, to see bodies spread out in the sun in the same position as Rimbaud's *Sleeper in the Valley*. Yet there was no war—nothing but the disarray that persists today. (34)[219]

Although Haiti not in the midst of a war, Prophète adapts the Rimbaldian imagery in "Le Domeur du Val" to the Port-au-Princean landscape. Like Rimbaud's young soldier, the "corps troués" lie on sidewalks that resemble strange beds, which like in the valley, cradling the

[219] "Yeux exorbités. Bouches ouvertes comme voulant prononcer un dernier mot. De la viande et du sang pour des mouches. Du spectacle pour les chômeurs qui venaient à loisir regarder pendant les longues heures le cadavre, resté sur le trottoir. Plus le spectacle était long, plus il était banal. On ne s'étonnait plus, ou si peu, de voir des corps étalés au soleil dans la pose du *Dormeur du val* de Rimbaud. Il n'y avait pourtant pas la guerre, rien qu'une confusion qui perdure aujourd'hui."

cadavers slowly becoming parts of the natural environment as they decompose in the sun. [220] The passage above demonstrates the narrator's discomfort with these abject spectacles of death. At the first funeral she ever attended, her grandfather's, she was worried that the body would sit up and start walking around like a zombie, so in order to comfort herself she joined her family members in telling stories about the departed to cope with his passing. By referring to Rimbaud, Prophète is able to reframe the deaths of the anonymous victims of daily life in Port-au-Prince. Paying attention to the positioning of their bodies, the articulation of their limbs, and the last traces of life on their faces the protagonist tries to challenge the abjection of public death.

At the funeral, the narrator notes the bizarre contrast between the funeral as a public spectacle and a private mortuary rite; the large capacity of the stadium and the hundreds of people present disrupt the careful placement of the bodies in their caskets as the two men lie next to one another one last time. The protagonist laments that she cannot see Jean-Claude's hands, the part of him that constantly makes the narrator think back to his role as the person who opened the gates of the radio station every day, because they are tucked under the blue and red Haitian flag. When she looks at Jean Dominique, she experiences a nauseous feeling as she notices the contrast between his skin color and the bullet hole in his forehead, the entry wound that announced his death. "Jean had a black hole at his temple, which contrasted with his skin. I gazed into it. I suddenly felt exhausted, as though I had just sat down. This large black hole in his temple gave his corpse an exceptional quality" (55).[221] Lying beside the body of Jean-Claude in a half-empty stadium, Jean's body and wounds seem out of place. Jean's entry wound, represented

[220] Arthur Rimbaud's poem begins: "C'est un trou de verdure, où chante une rivière/ Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons/ D'argent; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,/ Luit: c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons. Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue,/ Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,/ Dort; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,/ Pâle dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut."

[221] "Jean avait un trou noir à la tempe qui contrastait avec sa peau. Je l'ai regardé. J'ai senti un brusque épuisement comme si je venais de m'asseoir. Ce gros trou noir à la tempe donnait un aspect peu ordinaire au cadavre."

here like Rimbaud's soldier as a "trou noir," also connects Jean to the wider history of violence in Port-au-Prince, although his death and funeral has overshadowed everyone else's, including Jean-Claude Louissaint's.

Apart from the postmortem bond Jean-Claude and Jean share, the narrator cannot help but contrast the two, the former as an employee who oversaw the cleanliness of the office toilets and the latter whose voice, his signature "bonjour" rang out in the hearts and minds of an entire country. Even when trying to remember the timbre of Jean-Claude's voice the narrator cannot, saying "He died voiceless [...] Jean-Claude, he was only a set of hands. Hands that were used for dusting, serving, opening and to closing the gate, waving to say goodbye. [Il mourut silencieux […] Il n'avait eu que des mains, Jean-Claude. Des mains qui époussetaient, servaient, ouvraient et refermaient la barrière, s'agitaient pour dire adieu]" (57). Continuing in an intimately reflective mode, the protagonist homes in on the myriad acts performed by Jean-Claude's hands, hands that, like Jean-Claude himself at his own funeral, were imperceptible. Like Arthur Rimbaud, whose contemplation of the whole anatomy of the fallen soldier in the valley serves as a means by which to mourn his passing into a more tranquil realm, Prophète's attentiveness to the bodies of Jean-Claude Louissaint and Jean Dominique reveals a desire to disrupt the spectacular nature of their funeral. In the end, though the narrator acknowledges the lives that each of the men lived, one of the supreme injustices of memory is that Jean's voice will live on in the minds of a generation, while Jean-Claude's, even in the minds of his family members, will quickly fade away.

Before, during and after Jean's funeral, people spoke of Jean the militant, or Jean the journalist, but Prophète, the writer and the narrator, is fixates on the version of Jean that she knew and does not wish to forget. At one point she told a group of friends and family gathered in

Jean and Michèle's house "that we might talk about the Jean who stayed at home to read. That we talk about the lover of Proust [(que) l'on parlait du Jean qui s'enfermait pour lire. Que l'on parle du grand amateur de Proust]" that was, but instead everyone continued to discuss his public legacy (44). At separate moments in *Le Reste du temps*, the narrator returns to the specific conversation she has with Jean Dominique where she replies "Je manquais de livres…" and their discussions of Proust form the lion's share of the personal memories Phophète holds near and dear (24, 70).[222] Proust, and Jean's copy of *Sodôme et Gommorhe* more specifically, becomes not only an important link between Jean Dominique and Prophète the narrator, but also between Jean Dominique and Jean-Baptiste, the bookseller from whom Prophète bought books during her years at university until his passing at the end of April 2000.

A la recherche du temps perdu is what allows the narrator to imagine a world in which both Jean Dominique and Jean-Baptiste meet. The seven-volume Gallimard folio set solders a connection between the two and Prophète over a number of years. In many ways the two men are polar opposites, Jean is a "flamboyant universitaire" who has traveled the world, acquiring a number of other nationalities due to his multiple exiles, and Jean-Baptiste is an old bookseller who never had the luxury of a day off and has traveled very little apart from his trips from Port-au-Prince to the department of Ganthier.[223] Like the distinction between Jean Dominique and Jean-Claude, the narrator acknowledges that in relation to Dominique, Jean-Baptiste represented a "silence, a heavy track through the dust, or the mud, according to the season" (152).[224] Although their relationship is not reciprocal, Jean-Baptiste know Jean Dominique quite well over years of listening to Radio Haïti Inter:

[222] Maybe need a note about the importance of memory to Proust and *À la recherche du temps perdu*?
[223] Ganthier is a department in the west of Haiti, bordering Lake Azuei.
[224] "silence, un pas lourd dans la poussière, ou dans la boue, selon la saison"

> In their own ways, the radio figured into the lives of Jean-Baptiste and Jean. Jean-Baptiste cultivated a relationship with each and every radio host and commentator he listened to. One might say that he wanted to dive into the secret lives of the country. Much later, I understood that what escaped the old bookseller also escaped Jean. No matter what family you're born into, or what you fought for in life, one dies understanding nothing at all. (153)[225]

Jean-Baptiste and Jean met through the radio waves, they were brought together through the sound emitted from a transistor speaker. Although they never met in person to the narrator's knowledge, they shared a kindred struggle that only in their passing the narrator is able to identify. Despite their different upbringings and social standing, the two were more alike than different to Prophète. The way that Jean knew Port-au-Prince and the rest of the country was through his work with Radio Haïti Inter, and the way that Jean-Baptiste knew Jean, and Prophète for that matter, was as a radio host. However, Jean-Baptiste and Jean both knew that Prophète was missing one volume from her collection of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the fourth book in the set, *Sodôme et Gomorrhe*.

The week that Jean was killed, the narrator went to Jean's house every day to check on Michèle, Jean's wife. Although the furniture was constantly being rearranged, the one constant, never changing element of the house was a copy of *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* on the table by the door. Prophète writes, "on the table in front of the door sat *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* by Marcel Proust, a used copy of the folio classique, a slightly yellowing, banal element of the décor that nobody paid any attention to—except for me [sur la table devant la porte, était posé *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* de Marcel Proust, un exemplaire bon marche de folio classique, un peu jauni, un élément banal du décor auquel personne ne faisait attention. Sauf moi]" (157). Reliving an earlier

[225] " Chacun à sa manière, la radio faisait partie de la vie de Jean-Baptiste et de Jean. Jean-Baptiste entretenait une relation avec chaque animateur, chaque présentateur qu'il écoutait. Il voulait percer quelque secret de la vie de ce pays aurait-on dit. J'ai su longtemps après que ce qui échappait au vieux libraire échappait aussi à Jean. Peu importait dans quelle famille on naissait, peu importait son combat, on mourait sans rien comprendre."

scene in the novel when the narrator accompanied Michèle back to her house, she noticed characteristics of the house that had never before drawn her attention. Narrativizing her the visit to Jean and Michèle's house at the beginning of the novel, Prophète returns to the description of the book, its placement on the table, and the intimacy of her conversations with Jean as a *mise-en-abîme* of Proust's own literary practice of memory and recollection. The first scene reads differently, but in a way still recognizable to the reader:

> I remember the front door had pale blue shutters. They were half-open and did not lead to the living room. Someone turned the doorknob. I walked in. Right after Michèle. On a little wooden end table, right in front of us, sat *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* by Marcel Proust. (21)[226]

In this first scene the reader is not yet aware that the first-person narrator is Prophète herself. Perhaps she is just a friend of Michèle's or a character in a narrativization of Jean's death, all that the reader knows is that the protagonist is a teacher and knew Jean personally. Denying the reader the details of her personal life early on, Prophète uses autofiction to maintain her personal distance from the story and introduce elements of the novel that will become important for weaving together the lives of Jean Dominique, Jean-Claude Louissaint, and Jean-Baptiste the bookseller.[227] Proust, the seven volumes of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and the redaction of Prophète's name from the narrative itself allows the author to create this "game" mentioned earlier. It signals a back and forth between imagined and real connections, indicative and subjunctive intimacies.

---

[226] "Je me rappelle que la porte d'entrée avait des persiennes bleu pâle, elles étaient semi-ouvertes et ne communiquaient pas avec le salon. Quelqu'un a tourné la poignée. Je suis entrée. Tout de suite après Michèle. Sur une petite table basse, en bois, tout en face, se trouvait *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* de Marcel Proust."

[227] Prophète never fully unveils her identity in the novel. When Jean-Baptiste addresses her, he calls her "la cliente." Readers familiar with Prophète's career as a schoolteacher and a jazz program host at Radio Haïti Inter will unmistakably recognize the protagonist as Prophète herself. For more see: "Emmelie Prophète." *Île en île*, 6 Mar. 2007, http://ile-en-ile.org/prophete_emmelie/.

While the protagonist never mentions until the end which volume of the seven is missing from her collection, her recurring meetings with Jean-Baptiste about *A la recherche du temps perdu* and her conversations about Proust and missing books with Jean Dominique link the two men in over the course of the novel. When the protagonist shares with Jean that the most painful memory of her childhood is having lacked books, we understand even more what keeps drawing her to the bouquinistes *au bas de la ville,* it is a desire to fill a long-felt absence. The protagonist explains, "I often had the bookseller, Jean-Baptiste, in mind during my conversations with Jean, the journalist [j'avais souvent en tête Jean-Baptiste, le libraire, lors de mes conversations avec Jean, le journaliste]" (146). Although the nature of these conversations was different, and unlike hers with Jean-Baptiste, they often had more substance to them than just books or the game between a bookseller and his clientele. However, similar to the conversations the narrator has with Jean, Jean-Baptiste never ceases to promise her a complete set of Proust: "I turned into a gust of wind, a client with a suspended order, an order that was impossible to undo. He assured me each time that one of these mornings I would walk by and find the seven volumes of *A la recherche du temps perdu* by Marcel Proust [J'étais devenue un coup de vent, une cliente avec une commande en suspens, une commande impossible à défaire. Il m'assurait chaque fois qu'un de ces matins je passerais et trouverais les sept volumes de *À la recherche du temps perdu* de Marcel Proust" (142). The protagonist notes many times how difficult it can be for Jean-Baptiste to get new books during the early 1990s due to trade embargoes and the comings and goings of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the presidential palace. Even though the narrator is uncertain about the possibility of ever having all seven volumes, the conditional tense is also considered part of the subjunctive mode in French grammar, her relationship to Jean-Baptiste is told in the indicative. She is his client. Her book order, however impossible to fulfill, cannot be undone.

At one point, the protagonist decides to quit her job at another radio station and her relationship with Jean-Baptiste changes. Although the protagonist preferred not having to commute downtown to her job, she regrets not being able to see Jean-Baptiste more often, and when she does venture to his storefront, Jean-Baptiste is distant. The protagonist says that Jean-Baptiste preferred "this busy-body client, always anxious, never knowing whether she would find a ride to arrive at her job on time, this female client who he could see and then listen to on the radio within two hours of one another [cette cliente affairée, toujours anxieuse, ne sachant si elle trouvera un transport pour arriver à l'heure à son travail, cette cliente qu'il pouvait voir et écouter à la radio à moins de deux heures d'intervalle" (131). To Jean-Baptiste, the way in which he formed and cultivated a personal relationship with Prophète was not just through books, but also by intently listening to her voice as she read the daily news bulletins. However banal or ordinary the content of the news, like the protagonist passing by on her way to work, the importance of their constant contact provided Jean-Baptiste with the necessary means to feel close to Prophète's the narrator. Once back on the radio, working for Jean Dominique at Radio Haïti Inter, Jean-Baptiste is delighted to finally listen to the protagonist present her show, even though he knows nothing about jazz (142).

The old bookseller's relationship to the narrator/protagonist works similarly to his friend Faustin, a man twenty odd years his junior, who sits with him every day at work. The protagonist admits that while she has never heard the two exchange a word to one another, that they accompany one another to the city as a matter of friendship and a need for a companion. When the protagonist describes their relationship, it is clear that proximity, the storefront, and the drama of life in Port-au-Prince brings the two together:

> Faustin enjoyed the company of this quiet and agreeable man [...] they hung out with each other for a whole month, barely saying a word to each other, sitting near the

> drainpipe that separated their two houses. One slowly read an old novel that he handled with care because he intended to sell it later, and the other drew shapes in the dirt with a twig. (127)[228]

Despite the silence that forms between the two men, their proximity evinces, to the narrator, their personal connection to one another. Unlike Jean Dominique and the protagonist, whose voices formed a constant presence in Jean-Baptiste's life, the intimacy shared between him and Faustin is visible in the way that the one reads quietly always with part of his attention on the art of the sale while the other draws in the dirt with a twig. This almost juvenile relationship is impossible for the protagonist to cultivate with Jean-Baptiste, and so she contents herself with the game they have created out of the search for a complete set of *Á la recherche du temps perdu*. The narrator finds comfort in knowing that her voice rings familiar for Jean-Baptiste even though she was merely his client; "I remained the client. A voice who spoke to him like hundreds of others over the radio waves, offering him music that he didn't understand, but that he listened to. It's always nice to hear a familiar voice [je restais la cliente. Une voix qui s'adressait à lui, comme à des centaines d'autres, par la voie des ondes, lui offrant une musique qu'il ne comprenait pas, mais qu'il écoutait. C'est toujours bon d'écouter une voix connue]" (155).

The novel ends with two brief chapters at which Proust's *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* is at the center. The first is the recurring scene at Jean Dominique's home with the same yellowing copy of the Gallimard folio edition sitting on the table by the door. Seeing the book allows the protagonist to imagine Jean alive once again, that he placed the book on the table as he was exiting the house only to be the first object he would pick up when he returned. The idea of Jean departing and returning distinguishes the imaginary Jean with the Jean who died on April 3.

[228] "Faustin aimait la compagnie de cet homme silencieux et agréable […] Ils étaient restés tout un mois, se parlant à peine, assis près de la rigole qui séparait leurs deux maisons, l'un à lire lentement un vieux roman qu'il manipulait avec précaution parce qu'il avait l'intention de le vendre après, et l'autre, dessinant, avec une brindille, des formes dans la terre."

Then the protagonist thinks back on the conversations they had about books, and Proust in particular, and that the book's placement by the door meant that Jean would have "an umpteenth conversation with me about Marcel Proust's collected works [une énième conversation avec moi sur l'œuvre de Marcel Proust]" (158). In Jean's own house, where he invited his closest friends, of all of the people who came and went after his passing, the protagonist is certain that she is the only one who noticed the simple, used copy of *Sodôme et Gomorrhe.* Thinking back on the book and its individual materiality allows her to resurrect the image of Jean Dominique once again, to relive her memories of the conversations they once had together.

In the final chapter of the book, the protagonist ventures downtown after a long absence, looking to browse the latest books and see Jean-Baptiste again. However, she soon feels lost when she does not see Jean-Baptiste in his normal spot, so she goes looking for him at his home. When the protagonist gets there, she finds herself nose-to-nose with Faustin who greets her kindly with a "bonjour cliente" as though it were her name (164). She asks him whether Jean-Baptiste moved his business, if they are in the same spot or not, and Faustin regrettably replies that Jean-Baptiste died in his sleep one Thursday morning. Before he turns to leave, Faustin hands the protagonist a book: "it was a used copy, folio classique, numbered 2047, yellowed, of *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* by Marcel Proust [c'était un exemplaire bon marché, folio classique, numéroté 2047, jauni, de *Sodôme et Gomorrhe* de Marcel Proust]" (165).

After Jean Dominique

In the wake of Jean Dominique's death, Radio Haïti Inter remained open for nearly three more years under the direction of Jan J. Dominique and Michèle Montas. In the final broadcast on 22 February 2003, Michèle spoke for about five minutes.[229] After Jean and Jean-Claude

[229] Montas, Michèle. *Le Point: Fermeture de Radio Haïti*. 20 Feb. 2003, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1859_01.

Louissaint's murder, the station and its journalists continued to receive death threats. Every day, they went to work and reported the news knowing that the work they did was dangerous, that it could cost them their lives. On Christmas Day, 2002 Michèle was attacked and Maxime Seïde, her bodyguard lost his life in her defense. In her editorial, Michèle turned once again to Jean for guidance, to show the newsroom and the country the decision that had to be made. She began her address: "As of 22 February, Radio Haiti will temporarily cease broadcasting, as we believe the protection of lives is paramount. *This is the decision Jean Dominique would have made*. [A partir du samedi 22 février, Radio Haïti s'arrêtera temporairement d'émettre, car nous croyons primordial de protéger d'abord des vies. Cela aurait été la décision de Jean Dominique]."[230] Radio Haïti Inter never returned to the airwaves.

Instead of carrying on Jean's legacy over the radio waves, the texts explored in this chapter show how his ideas permeate Haitian literature and continue in his absence. Far from rudimentary memorials, these texts also demonstrate how literature enables the writers themselves to cope with Jean's death, making something different and novel with his memory. Edwidge Danticat credits Jean with her sense of self-acceptance as a Haitian person living in the diaspora, which she channels in the preface to a volume of writing by new coming authors from Haiti, like Roxane Gay and Katia Ulysse, who we recognize in the literary landscape of today. For Jan J. Dominique, her father's passing meant a devastating rupture with her home country and flight into exile. Her memoir, *Mémoire errante* serves as a memorial collage in which she recalls the various stages in her literary career to mount an elegy for her father. And, finally, Emmelie Prophète employs the space between fiction and autobiography—autofiction—to reassemble the intimate moments she shared with Jean as a friend and colleague. The genre

[230] Translation by Laura Wagner in "Nou toujou la! The Digital (After-)Life of Radio Haïti-Inter," I have modified it with the elided portion in italics.

allows her to adjust her level of proximity to the story, simultaneously revealing a Jean that is larger-than-life, and reserved at the same time. In the same way as Danticat and Jan J. Dominique, the way that Prophète writes affords other characters like Jean-Claude Louissaint and Jean-Baptiste the bookseller the same weight as Jean, showing that the three shared more in life, and in death, than just their first name.

CONCLUSION

Resting Places, Repozwa

Eleven years ago, I read Edwidge Danticat's *Brother, I'm Dying* in a Caribbean literature course. It was the first book by a Haitian author that I ever read. Two weeks before the start of the semester, at 4:53 in the evening on 12 January, the fault lines that lie beneath Gonaïves, Haiti produced a series of shockwaves that brought the country to its knees. After the initial reports, the news media began to present tired storylines that hardly bear repeating here. Haitians living abroad in North America, Europe, and elsewhere sat by the phone, glued to the TV and the computer screen, hoping to find out whether their loved ones were safe or whether they had gone *lòt bò dlo*, to the other side of the waters, to be with the spirits.

At the time, many Haitians were asked to write about their families and friends for news outlets. In the US, *The New Yorker, The New York Times,* and *NPR* commissioned pieces by Edwidge Danticat, Gina Ulysse, and others. In France Yanick Lahens, Kettly Mars, Jean Métellus, and Emmelie Prophète's writing regularly appeared in the pages of *Libération*.[231]

On the first of February, *The New Yorker* printed a personal essay by Edwidge Danticat entitled, "A Little While," whose opening lines announce: "My cousin Maxo has died. The house that I called home during my visits to Haiti collapsed on top of him" ("A Little While" n.p.). Her essay presents an intimate blend of reminiscences that recount moments from Maxo's childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, culminating with the point where Danticat's family recovers his remains buried beneath the rubble. Much to their relief, this would ensure Maxo would receive a

[231] See "A Little While" by Edwidge Danticat, "Amid the Rubble and Ruin, Our Duty to Haiti Remains" by Gina Athena Ulysse, "L'Urgence de dire" by Emmelie Prophète, "Vivre" by Evelyne Trouillot, "Un reveil en enfer" by Kettly Mars, "Terre meurtrière et d'immortalité" by Jean Métellus, and Yanick Lahens "La Sante du malheur."

proper burial, unlike many Haitians who would be interred in mass graves to prevent the spread of disease.

Though her essay provides a brief glimpse of Maxo's final moments, readers of *Brother, I'm Dying* already knew him quite well. Maxo's father was Danticat's uncle Joseph, who watched over her and her brother Bob after their parents migrated to the United States to build a life abroad until they could afford return for their children. In *Brother, I'm Dying* readers witness Edwidge and Bob grow up around Maxo and other family members. We learn the many dimensions of their lives as well as the spaces in which they live, like her uncle Joseph's church and the house that would eventually entomb his son. Told in a series of flashbacks and narration in the present, readers bear witness to Danticat's father, Mira, and Uncle Joseph's health complications. On the one hand, her father struggles to live amid the late stages of pulmonary fibrosus, while on the other her Uncle Joseph battles throat cancer, leaving him with a permanent need for a voice box, and diabetes. In perhaps the most mortifying scenes of her memoir, after Maxo and Uncle Joseph flee Haiti in the face of death threats, we read about their detention at the Krome detention facility, her father's failing health, and his fits of vomiting and violent seizures in Maxo's arms on the floor of the courtroom that was set to decide whether they were to be granted asylum or if they were to be deported.

While not every *New Yorker* reader would have read *Brother, I'm Dying*, but for those who had, "A Little While" offered a chance to remember one of Danticat's loved ones who she had enshrined in one of her books. I remember my professor waited until we were finished reading the memoir before she shared "A Little While" with the class. By doing so, she gave us the chance to know Maxo, to learn of his life and his place in Danticat's, before we had to say goodbye. To paraphrase the quotation I cite from Danticat's *The Art of Death* in the introduction:

the more we knew about the dying person on the page, the more likely we were to grieve for that person. In withholding this story until we knew of Maxo's life, my professor illustrated how literature could serve as a vehicle for processing grief, and mourning individuals who we may only know from the descriptions that we have read on a page. Nevertheless, literature about death and dying matters, and it can help us live.

For the people involved in the production of Haitian literature studied in this dissertation, books as well as virtual and material artifacts, can serve as the final resting place for the memories of the dead just as they can represent a *repozwa*, or a place to rest, for those who create them. In the final chapter of *Brother, I'm Dying*, Danticat describes how she received a message from a friend after the birth of her niece that read "May you be a repozwa [...] a place where children can rest." A repozwa can also refer to a liturgical space within the Catholic faith. Though the word is outmoded in English, according to the Centre National des Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, a *reposoir* is an "an altar decorated with flowers and ornate foliage that is erected during a procession onto which the priest places the holy sacrament during a moment of rest [Autel orné de fleurs et de feuillages, dressé sur le parcours d'une procession et sur lequel le prêtre expose le Saint Sacrement au cours d'une halte]." While the texts studied here do not all present a religiously motivated propos, they all represent places of rest. They are more or less permanent spaces where the deceased people incarnated within them can rest, for as long as they need. These works of literature are also important objects, narratives, and stories to which the living can always turn to for guidance and assistance with living a full life, even in the presence of death.

Bibliography

Abdulah, Mary. *Take Two: Néhémy Pierre Dahomey and Ayanna Gillian Lloyd at Bocas Lit Fest*. 2019. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiQTkNvcnps.

Abdurraqib, Hanif. *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us*. Two Dollar Radio, 2017.

Alexis, Florence. "Lettre à Jacques Soleil." *L'Espace d'un Cillement*, 2nd ed., Gallimard, 1983, pp. 11–27.

Alexis, Jacques Stephen. "Appel." *Le Nouvelliste*, 24 Nov. 1959, pp. 1–2.

---. *Compère Général Soleil*. 2nd ed., Gallimard, 1982.

---. "Du Réalisme Merveilleux Des Haïtiens." *Présence Africaine*, no. 8/10, 1956, pp. 245–71. JSTOR.

---. "Du Réalisme Merveilleux Des Haïtiens." *Présence Africaine*, no. 165/166, 2002, pp. 91–112. JSTOR.

---. *El Compadre General Sol*. Translated by Aída Aisenson, 3rd ed., Casa de las Américas, 1974.

---. *En Un Abrir y Cerrar de Ojos*. Translated by Jorge Zalamea, Era Ediciones, 1969.

---. *General Sun, My Brother*. Translated by Carrol F. Coates, University of Virginia Press, 1999.

---. *In the Flicker of an Eyelid*. Translated by Carrol F. Coates and Edwidge Danticat, University of Virginia Press, 2002.

---. "La Belle Amour Humaine." *Europe*, vol. 501, no. January, 1971, pp. 20–27.

---. "La Rouille Des Ans." *Présence Africaine*, vol. 16, no. octobre-novembre, 1957, pp. 89–93.

---. "'L'Amourette,' Un conte de Jacques Stephen Alexis." *Le Nouvelliste*, 23 Dec. 1959, pp. 17–20. Digital Library of the Caribbean, LTUF.

---. *Les Arbres Musiciens*. 2nd ed., Gallimard, 1982.

---. *L'Espace d'un Cillement*. 2nd ed., Gallimard, 1983.

---. *L'Étoile Absinthe : Suivi de Le Léopard*. Zulma, 2017.

---. *Mi Compadre General Sol*. Translated by Aída Aisenson, 6th ed., Taller, 1987.

---. "Où va Le Roman." *Présence Africaine*, vol. 13, no. avril-mai, 1957, pp. 81–101.

---. *Romancero Aux Étoiles*. 2nd ed., Gallimard, 1983.

---. *Romancero de Las Estrellas*. Translated by Idea Vilariño, 2nd ed., Taller, 1982.

Alexis, Jacques Stephen, and Anne-Marie de Vilaine. "Entretien: Le Couple Aux Caraïbes." *Afrique Action*, vol. 11, no. December 26, 1960, pp. 23–24.

Alexis, Stéphen. *Le nègre masqué: roman : tranche de vie haïtienne*. Butterfly Publications, 2013.

Amar, Yvan. "Danse Des Mots - Florence Alexis and Laure Leroy." *RFI*, RFI, 7 Mar. 2017, http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170307-alexis-jacques-stephen-florence-ecrivains-negritude-latino-americains-revue-presen.

Amer, Henry. "Jacques Stephen Alexis: L'Espace d'un Cillement, Le Romancero Aux Étoiles." *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, no. Janvier-Juin, 1960, p. 969.

Antonin, Arnold. *Jacques Stéphen Alexis, Mort sans Sépulture*. Centre Pétion-Bolivar, 2015.

"Around BROOKLYN: Jobs for Youth." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, 4 Sept. 1982, p. 10. Proquest, Web.

Artières, Philippe, editor. *Général Toussaint Louverture; Mémoires, Suivi Du Journal Du Géneral Caffarelli*. Mercure de France, 2016.

Asibong, Andrew. "Three Is the Loneliest Number: Marie Vieux Chauvet, Marie NDiaye, and the Traumatized Triptych." *Yale French Studies*, no. 128, pp. 148–60.

Bajeux, Jean-Claude. *Rapèl sou Jeune Haïti*. 12 Nov. 2002, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-RR-1104_01. Radio Haiti Archive, Tape ID: RL10059RR1104.

Beachy-Quick, Dan. "Thinking as Burial Practice: Exhuming a Poetic Epistemology in Thoreau, Dickenson, and Emerson." *21 | 19 Contemporary Poets in the Nineteenth-Century Archive*, edited by Kristen Case and Alexandra Manglis, Milkweed Editions, 2019.

Beard, J. R. (John Relly), and James Redpath. *Toussaint L'Ouverture: A Biography and Autobiography*. Boston, J. Redpath, 1863. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/toussaintlouvert00bear.

Bell, David A. "Haiti's Jacobin." *The Nation*, Nov. 2016. *www.thenation.com*, https://www.thenation.com/article/haitis-jacobin/.

Bell, Sharon. *Instructing Revolution: Didacticism in the Short Stories of Jacques Stephen Alexis, with a Translation of His "Romancero Aux Étoiles" (Haiti)*. Brown University, 1987.

Bellegarde-Smith, Patrick, and Claudine Michèle. "Koko Na Pa de Pwèl: Marasa Reflection on Gede." *In Extremis: Between Life and Death in 21st Century Haitian Art*, Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2012, pp. 13–16.

Bergeaud, Emeric. *Stella: A Novel of the Haitian Revolution*. Edited & translated by Christen Mucher and Lesley S. Curtis, NYU Press, 2015.

Bergner, Gwen. "Danticat's Vodou Vernacular of Women's Human Rights." *American Literary History*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2017, pp. 521–45. *Crossref*, doi:10.1093/alh/ajx021.

Berry, Daina Ramey. *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*. Beacon Press, 2017, https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/538529/the-price-for-their-pound-of-flesh-by-daina-ramey-berry/.

Boisrond-Tonnerre, Louis Félix. *Mémoires Pour Servir à l'histoire d'Hayti*. Imprimerie Centrale du Gouvernement, 1804.

Bonner, Christopher T. "Staging a Dictatorship: The Theatrical Poetics and Politics of Marie Chauvet's Colère." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 19, no. 48, 2015, pp. 50–63. *read-dukeupress-edu.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu*, doi:10.1215/07990537-3341813.

---. *The Alignment of Writing : Cold War Geopolitics and Literary Form in Francophone Caribbean Literature*. New York University, 2015. *ProQuest*, http://search.proquest.com/docview/1753899159/abstract/CD48323F37F7429BPQ/1.

Bournon, Fernand, and F. Mazerolle. *La Correspondance Historique et Archéologique : Organe d'informations Mutuelles Entre Archéologues et Historiens*. Librairie A. Fontemoing, 1903, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5774786s.

Braziel, Jana Evans. "Daffodils, Rhizomes, Migrations: Narrative Coming of Age in the Diasporic Writings of Edwidge Danticat and Jamaica Kincaid." *Meridians*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2003, pp. 110–31.

---. *Duvalier's Ghosts: Race, Diaspora, and U.S. Imperialism in Haitian Literatures*. Reprint edition, University Press of Florida, 2017.

---. "Re-Membering Défilée: Dédée Bazile as Revolutionary Lieu de Mémoire." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 9, no. 2, Sept. 2005, pp. 57–85. *read.dukeupress.edu*, doi:10.1215/-9-2-57.

Brisson, Richard, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot. *Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Ti Difé Boule Sou Istwa Ayiti," Interview Richard Brisson. 1977.* 1977, https://soundcloud.com/radiohaitiarchives. Radio Haiti Archive.

Brown, Vincent. *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*. Reprint edition, Harvard University Press, 2010.

Buder, Leonard. "Owner of Newspaper for Haitian Emigres Is Slain in Brooklyn." *The New York Times*, 23 Sept. 1983. *NYTimes.com*, https://www.nytimes.com/1983/09/23/nyregion/owner-of-newspaper-for-haitian-emigres-is-slain-in-brooklyn.html.

Burt, Al, and Bernard Diederich. *Papa Doc and the Tontons Macoutes*. Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009.

Cadet, Jean-Jacques. *Le Marxisme Haïtien: Marxisme et Anti-Colonialisme En Haïti*. Editions Delga, 2020.

Casimir, Jean. "La Révolution de 1804 et l'État." *Genèse de l'État Haïtien (1804-1859)*, edited by Michel Hector, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009, pp. 77–92.

Castor, Suzy. *La Ocupación Norteamericana de Haití y Sus Consecuencias (1915-1934).* Siglo veintiuno editores, 1961.

---. *L'Occupation Américaine d'Haïti*. 3rd ed., CRESFED, 1988.

Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven F. Randall, University of California Press, 2011.

Chalmers, René. "Communiqué du Département des Affaires Étrangères." *Le Nouvelliste*, 28 Oct. 1964, p. 1. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

---. "Haïti rompt des Relations Diplomatiques avec la République Dominicaine: Le gouvernement haïtien rejette les charges du gouvernement dominicain." *Le Nouvelliste*, avril 1963, p. 1. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

Chancy, Myriam J. A. *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women*. Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Charles, Jaqueline. “Haiti Artists, Influencers Criticized after Student Killing.” *Miami Herald*, 9 Nov. 2020, https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article247036137.html.

Charles, Jean-Claude. *Le Corps Noir*. Mémoire d’encrier, 2017.

Chemla, Yves. “Jacques-Stephen Alexis.” *Île en île*, 13 Jan. 2002, http://ile-en-ile.org/alexis_jacques-stephen/.

Chivallon, Christine. “L’émergence Récente de La Mémoire de l’esclavage Dans l’espace Publique: Enjeux et Significations.” *Revue d’histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, vol. 52, no. 4, 2005, pp. 64–81.

---. “Representing the Slave Past: The Limits of Museographical and Patrimonial Discourses.” *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World*, edited by Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, Liverpool University Press, 2015, pp. 25–48.

Coicou, Massillon. *Poésies nationales*. Imprimerie V. Goupy et Jourdan, 1892.

Condé, Maryse. “Order, Disorder, Freedom, and the West Indian Writer.” *Yale French Studies*, vol. 83, no. 2, 1993, pp. 121–35.

Constitution de La République d’Haïti, 1964. Imprimerie de l’Etat, http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00000621/00001/3j. Accessed 13 Dec. 2018.

Corbett, Bob. “In the Flicker of an Eyelid: Two Sets of Comments of Bob Corbett.” *The Corbett List*, Oct. 2002, faculty.webster.edu/corbetre/personal/reading/alexis-flicker.html.

Create Dangerously by Edwidge Danticat - Toni Morrison Lecture, Princeton. 2008. *Vimeo*, https://vimeo.com/253707092.

Curtius, Anny Dominique. “À Fort-de-France Les Statues Ne Meurent Pas.” *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 and 2, 2008, pp. 87–106.

Daniels, Kyrah Malika. “Mirror Mausoleums, Mortuary Arts, and Haitian Religious Unexceptionalism.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 85, no. 4, Dec. 2017, pp. 957–84.

Danticat, Edwidge. “A Little While | The New Yorker.” *The New Yorker*, no. February 1, 2010, Jan. 2010, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/02/01/a-little-while.

---. *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

---. “Evelyne Sincère Is Haiti; She Is Also All of Us.” *Woy Magazine*, 6 Nov. 2020, http://woymagazine.com/2020/11/06/evelyne-sincere-is-haiti-she-is-also-all-of-us/.

---. “Message to My Daughters.” *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race*, Scribner, 2016, pp. 205–15.

---. *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story*. Graywolf Press, 2017.

Darwish, Mahmoud. *Memory for Forgetfulness*. Translated by Ibrahim Muhawi, University of California Press, 2013.

Daut, Marlene L. *Tropics of Haiti: Race and the Literary History of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World, 1789-1865*. Liverpool University Press, 2015.

---. “Un-Silencing the Past: Boisrond-Tonnerre, Vastey, and the Re-Writing of the Haitian Revolution.” *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2009, pp. 35–64.

Dayan, Colin. “Gods in the Trunk, or Writing in a Belittered World.” *Yale French Studies*, edited by Kaiama Glover and Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken, no. 128, Jan. 2016, pp. 92–112.

---. *The Law Is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

Dayan, Joan (Colin). “Erzulie : A Women's History of Haiti.” *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 25, no. 2, Summer 1994, pp. 5–31.

---. *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. University of California Press, 1998.

Deibert, Michael. "Michael Deibert, Writer: Jeune Haiti." *Michael Deibert, Writer*, 12 Nov. 2015, http://michaeldeibert.blogspot.com/2015/11/jeune-haiti.html.

Demme, Jonathan. *The Agronomist*. Clinica Estetico, HBO/Cinemax Documentary, 2004, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377031/.

Depestre, René. *Bonjour et Adieu à La Négritude: Suivi de Travaux d'identité, Essais*. Seghers, 1980.

---. *Buenos Días y Adios a La Negritud*. Translated by Ofelia Gronlier, Casa de las Américas, 1987.

---. "Les Arbres Musiciens Par Jacques Stephen Alexis." *Présence Africaine*, vol. 16, Nov. 1957, pp. 188–89.

---. "Prólogo (Preface to El Compadre General Sol)." *El Compadre General Sol*, Casa de las Américas, 1974, pp. vii–xl.

---. "Un Grand Roman Haïtien Compère Général Soleil, Par Jacques Stephen Alexis." *Présence Africaine*, vol. 16, no. Octobre-Novembre, 1957.

Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: the state of the debt, the work of mourning and the new International*. Edited by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg, Translated by Peggy Kamuf, Routledge, 2006.

Dessalines, Jean-Jacques. "The Haitian Declaration of Independence." *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789–1804: A Brief History with Documents*, edited & translated by Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006, pp. 188–91.

Dize, Nathan H. "Colonial Colette: From Orientalism and Egyptian Pantomime to Polaire's Jamaican 'Slave.'" *Nursing Clio*, 19 Feb. 2019, https://nursingclio.org/2019/02/19/colonial-colette-from-orientalism-and-egyptian-pantomime-to-polaires-jamaican-slave/.

---. “The Persistence of Félicité Kina in the World of the Haitian Revolution: Kinship, Gender, and Everyday Resistance.” *The Routledge Companion to Black Women’s Cultural Histories*, edited by Janell Hobson, Routledge, 2021, pp. 137–45.

Dominique, Jan J. *Mémoire errante*. Mémoire d’encrier, 2008.

Dominique, Jan J., and Maude M. Adjarian. “A Passion for Literature: An Interview with Jan J. Dominique.” *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2005, pp. 76–93.

Dominique, Jan J., and Monique Lafontant. *Entre Nous : « Inventer... La Célestine », J.J. Dominique*. 13 Feb. 2000, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1017_01.

Dominique, Jean L. *Gérard Pierre-Charles with Jean L. Dominique, November 16, 1989*. 16 Nov. 1989, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-RR-0523_01. Radio Haiti Archive.

Dominique, Jean, and David Nicholls. *Entre Nous : David Nicholls Au Micro de Jean Dominique ; Amos Coulanges et Jho Archer à Paris*. 26 June 1996, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1285_01.

Douglas, Rachel. *Making the Black Jacobins: C.L.R. James and the Drama of History*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. Metropolitan Books, 2013.

Dubroca, Jean François. *La vie de Toussaint-Louverture, chef des noirs insurgés de Saint-Domingue; : contenant son origine, les particularités les plus remarquables de sa jeunesse*. Chez Dubroca, 1802. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/laviedetoussaint00dubr.

Ducasse, Vendenesse. *Fort de Joux, ou, les derniers moments de Toussaint Louverture*. Éditions Vétéran, 1957.

Edmé, Rodney. “Haitian Politics and Culture in Translation: “Once upon a Time...Richard Brisson".” *H-Haiti Blog*, translated by Laura Wagner, Jan. 2017, https://networks.h-

net.org/node/116721/blog/h-haiti-blog/163485/haitian-politics-and-culture-translation-%E2%80%9Conce-upon.

"Emmelie Prophète." *Île en île*, 6 Mar. 2007, http://ile-en-ile.org/prophete_emmelie/.

Eng, David L., and David Kazanjian. "Introduction: Mourning Remains." *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, University of California Press, 2003, pp. 1–25.

"Entre Nous : « Soleils Contraires » , Kettly P. Mars / Radio Haiti Archive / Duke Digital Repository." *Duke Digital Collections*, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1299_01. Accessed 31 Oct. 2020.

"Exécution ce matin des condamnés Louis Drouin et Marcel Numa." *Le Nouvelliste*, 12 Nov. 1964, p. 1. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

Farge, Arlette. *Le Goût de l'archive*. Seuil, 1989.

Fatton, Robert. *Haiti: Trapped in the Outer Periphery*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

FightImpunityHaiti. 18 Apr. 2016, https://web.archive.org/web/20160418071315/http://www.haitiluttecontre-impunite.org/videos/26.

Firmin, Anténor. *De l'égalité des races humaines : anthropologie positive*. Edited by Ghislaine Géloin, Editions L'Harmattan, 2004.

Fischer, Sibylle. "Atlantic Ontologies: On Violence and Being Human." *Emisférica*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2016, https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-121-caribbean-rasanblaj/12-1-essays/e-121-essay-fischer-atlantic-ontologies.html.

---. *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*. Duke University Press, 2004.

Fleming, Crystal Marie. *Resurrecting Slavery: Racial Legacies and White Supremacy in France*. Temple University Press, 2017.

Foix, Alain. *Toussaint Louverture*. Gallimard, 2007.

Forde, Maarit. "Introduction." *Passages and Afterworlds: Anthropological Perspectives on Death in the Caribbean*, Duke University Press, 2018, pp. 1–30.

Forsdick, Charles. "Monuments, Memorials, Museums." *Francosphères Francosphères*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2014, pp. 81–98.

---. "The Panthéon's Empty Plinth: Commemorating Slavery in Contemporary France." *Atlantic Studies Atlantic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2012, pp. 279–97.

Forsdick, Charles, and Christian Høgsbjerg. *Toussaint Louverture: A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions*. Pluto Press, 2017.

Fouchard, Jean. *Le Théâtre a Saint Domingue*. Imprimerie de l'État, 1955.

Fradinger, Moira. *Danbala's Daughter: Félix Morisseau-Leroy's Antigòn an Kreyòl*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Frith, Nicola. "The Art of Reconciliation: The Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes." *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World*, edited by Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, Liverpool University Press, 2015, pp. 68–89.

Gallery, Forest City. "Suck Teeth Compositions (After Rashaad Newsome)." *FCG*, 20 Oct. 2020, https://www.forestcitygallery.com/post/suck-teeth-compositions-after-rashaad-newsome-1.

Garçon, Jennifer. *Haiti's Resistant Press in the Age of Jean-Claude Duvalier, 1971-1986*. University of Miami, 22 June 2018, https://scholarship.miami.edu/discovery/fulldisplay/alma991031447790002976/01UOML_INST:ResearchRepository.

Gauthier-Villars, Henry. “Toussaint Louverture au Fort de Joux (D’après des documents inédits).” *La Revue hébdomadaire*, vol. 8, Librairie Plon, 1901, pp. 83–101.

Gay, Roxane. *An Untamed State*. Grove/Atlantic, 2014.

Geggus, David Patrick. “Slave, Soldier, Rebel: The Strange Career of Jean Kina.” *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 137–51.

Geis, Terri. “Myth, History and Repetition: André Breton and Vodou in Haiti.” *South Central Review*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2015, pp. 56–75.

Genette, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Girard, Philippe. *Toussaint Louverture: A Revolutionary Life*. 1 edition, Basic Books, 2016.

Girod, Édouard. *Esquisse historique, légendaire et descriptive de la ville de Pontarlier, du fort de joux et de leurs environs*. J.C. Thomas, 1857.

Glover, Kaiama L. “A Woman’s Place Is in... The Unhomely as Social Critique in Marie Chauvet’s Fille d’Haïti.” *Yale French Studies*, no. 128, 2016, pp. 115–30.

---. “‘Black’ Radicalism in Haiti and the Disorderly Feminine: The Case of Marie Vieux Chauvet.” *Small Axe*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2013, pp. 7–21.

---. “Daughter of Haiti: Marie Vieux Chauvet.” *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, edited by Mia Bay et al., University of North Carolina Press, 2015, pp. 145–60.

---. “Marie Chauvet : Théoricienne Sociale.” *Legs et Littérature*, no. 8, 2016, pp. 19–28.

Gobineau, Arthur de. *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines*. Firmin-Didot, 1853.

Godefroy, Robert. *Rapports Du Préfet et de La Commission Départementale: Procès-Verbaux Des Déliberations Du Conseil Général, Session d’aout 1908*. Imprimerie et lithographie J. Millot et C[ompagni]e, 1908, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5734797g.

Gordon, Leah. “Gede: The Poster Boy for Vodou.” *In Extremis: Between Life and Death in 21st-Century Haitian Art*, Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2012, pp. 101–14.

Gutarra Cordero, Dannelle. *El Cautiverio de Toussaint L’Ouverture En Fort de Joux: Raza, Colonialismo y Modernidad En La Coyuntura Histórica de La Revolución Haitiana*. Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, 2012.

---. “Toussaint Louverture’s Captivity at Fort de Joux.” *Journal of Caribbean History*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2015, pp. 145–59.

Handal, Nathalie, and Edwidge Danticat. “We Are All Going to Die.” *Conversations with Edwidge Danticat*, edited by Maxine Lavon Montgomery, University Press of Mississippi, 2017, pp. 117–27.

Hansen, Will. “Rubenstein Library Acquires Radio Haiti Archives.” *The Devil’s Tale*, 31 Mar. 2014, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2014/03/31/rubenstein-library-acquires-radio-haiti-archives/.

Hartman, Saidiya. “Venus in Two Acts.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 12, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 1–14, doi:10.1215/-12-2-1.

Hirsch, Marianne. “The Generation of Postmemory.” *On Writing with Photography*, edited by Karen Beckman and Liliane Weissberg, University of Minnesota Press, 2013, pp. 202–30.

Ho Tai, Hue-Tam. “Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory.” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 106, no. 3, June 2001, pp. 906–22. doi:10.1086/ahr/106.3.906.

Holloway, Karla F. C. *Passed on: African American Mourning Stories : A Memorial*. Duke University Press, 2003.

Hourcade, Renaud. “Commorating a Guilty Past: The Politics of Memory in the French Former Slave Trade Cities.” *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, edited by Ana Lucia Araujo, Routledge, 2013, pp. 124–40.

---. “Shaping Representations of the Past in a Former Slave Trade Port: Slavery Remembrance Day in Nantes.” *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World*, edited by Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, Liverpool University Press, 2015, pp. 90–108.

Jackson, Regine O., editor. *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*. Routledge, 2011.

James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. 2d ed., Vintage Books, 1963.

---. *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History : A Play in Three Acts*. Edited by Christian. Høgsbjerg, Duke University Press, 2013.

Jean-Charles, Régine Michelle. “Occupying the Center: Haitian Girlhood and Wake Work.” *Small Axe*, vol. 57, no. November, 2018, pp. 141–50.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Observations sur la Virginie*. Translated by André Morellet, Barrois, 1786.

Jolibois, Gérard. *L’exécution des Frères Coicou*. Bibliothèque Nationale d’Haïti, 1986.

Joseph, Carole Berotte, and Richard K. Blot. *Project HAPTT: Haitian Parent and Teacher Training Program. Program Evaluation, 2nd Year. Final*. City University of New York, 1983.

Joseph, Régine. *Ruins of Dreams: Marie Chauvet and Post-Apocalyptic Writing in Haiti*. New York University, 2010.

Joseph, Régine Isabelle. “The Letters of Marie Chauvet and Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical Introduction.” *Yale French Studies*, no. 128, 2015, pp. 25–39.

Joseph-Gabriel, Annette K. “Creolizing Freedom: French–Creole Translations of Liberty and Equality in the Haitian Revolution.” *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 36, no. 1, Jan. 2015, pp. 111–23. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, doi:10.1080/0144039X.2014.888869.

Jung, Ara Chi. *Dictating Manhood: Refiguring Masculinity in Haitian Literature of Dictatorship, 1968-2010*. Northwestern University, 2018.

Kaussen, Valerie. *Migrant Revolutions: Haitian Literature, Globalization, and U.S. Imperialism*. Lexington Books, 2008.

Kénol, Chantal. “Writing on the Fault Line: Haitian Literature and the Earthquake of 2010.” *Journal of Haitian Studies; Santa Barbara*, vol. 22, no. 2, Fall 2016, pp. 182–88.

Kim, Sandra So Hee Chi. “Suji Kwock Kim’s ‘Generation’ and the Ethics of Diasporic Postmemory.” *Positions*, vol. 24, no. 3, Aug. 2016, pp. 653–67. doi:10.1215/10679847-3618202.

Kivland, Chelsey L. “Sympathetic Graffiti in Haiti: Jerry’s Murals as a Scene of Pedagogical Curiosity.” *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 21, no. 2 (53), July 2017, pp. 22–43. doi:10.1215/07990537-4156750.

Korngold, Ralph. *Citizen Toussaint*. Little, Brown and Company, 1944.

---. *Ralph Korngold to Bontemps Donating MS Copy of Citizen Toussaint*. 7 July 1945. Fisk University Special Collections, Arna Bontemps Collection.

la Colère [Alexis], Jacques Stephen. “La Montée d’une Génération.” *La Ruche: Organe de La Jeune Génération*, vol. 1, no. 1, 7 1945, pp. 1–2.

“La journée historique du 14 juin 1964: Dans l’enthousiasme le peuple haïtien a voté massivement pour le maintien à vie du Dr. Duvalier à la Présidence de la République.” *Le Nouvelliste*, juin 1964, p. 1. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

Lahens, Yanick. “Haïti Ou La Santé Du Malheur.” *Libération*, 19 Jan. 2010, https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2010/01/19/haiti-ou-la-sante-du-malheur_605105.

Laroche, Maximilien. *Trois Études Sur Folie de Marie Chauvet*. GRELCA, 1984.

Leclerc, Charles. *Arrestation et renvoi en France de Toussaint-Louverture et de toute sa famille*. Imprimerie de Simard, 1802. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/nouvellearrive00lecl.

Loichot, Valérie. *Water Graves: The Art of the Unritual in the Greater Caribbean*. University of Virginia Press, 2020.

Louverture, Toussaint. *Mémoires Du Général Toussaint-L'Ouverture, Écrits Par Lui-Même*. Edited by Joseph Saint-Rémy, Paris, 1853, http://archive.org/details/mmoiresdugn00tous.

Marcelin, Frédéric. *Bric-à-brac*. Imprimerie de Kugelmann, 1910.

---. *Le Général Nord Alexis, 1905*. Imprimerie de Kugelmann, 1909.

“María Teresa Toral, la ciencia encarcelada | Vidas científicas.” *Mujeres con ciencia*, 28 Dec. 2016, https://mujeresconciencia.com/2016/12/28/maria-teresa-toral-la-ciencia-encarcelada/.

Mars, Kettly. “Un Reveil En Enfer.” *Libération*, 19 Jan. 2010, https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2010/01/19/un-reveil-en-enfer_605111.

Martelly, Stéphane. *Les Jeux Du Dissemblable: Folie, Marge et Féminin En Littérature Haïtienne Contemporaine*. Nota Bene, 2016.

Martin, Katrina. “Duvalierism, With and Without Duvalier: Radio Haiti Commemorates the Massacres of April 26, 1963 and 1986.” *The Devil's Tale*, 26 Apr. 2016, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/04/26/duvalierism-without-duvalier-radio-haiti-commemorates-massacres-april-26-1963-1986/.

---. “Forces of Change against Forces of Death: The Jean Rabel Massacre in the Radio Haiti Archives.” *The Devil's Tale*, 25 July 2016,

https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/07/25/forces-change-forces-death-jean-rabel-massacre-radio-haiti-archives/.

---. "On Radio Haiti, the Drum Never Stops Beating." *The Devil's Tale*, 20 Sept. 2016, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/09/20/radio-haiti-drum-never-stops-beating/.

---. "The Noise in the Silence: Radio Haiti During the Coup Years." *The Devil's Tale*, 28 Sept. 2015, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2015/09/28/the-noise-in-the-silence-radio-haiti-during-the-coup-years/.

---. "'The Poetic Inflections of a Voice Addressing a Tribe of Men Besieged by Beasts': Radio Haiti's Cultural Programming." *The Devil's Tale*, 9 Mar. 2016, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/03/09/the-poetic-inflections-of-a-voice-addressing-a-tribe-of-men-besieged-by-beasts-radio-haitis-cultural-programming/.

Maude M Adjarian, and Jan J Dominique. "A Passion for Literature: An Interview with Jan J. Dominique." *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, For the Haitian Studies Association by The Center for Black Studies Research, 2005, pp. 76–93.

Maximilien, Louis. *Le vodou haitien: rite radas, canzo*. Henri Deschamps, 1985.

Medlin, Dorothy. "Thomas Jefferson, André Morellet, and the French Version of Notes on the State of Virginia." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1978, pp. 85–99. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/1922572.

Meï, Siobhan Marie, and Carrol F. Coates. "Haiti in Translation: General Sun, My Brother and In the Flicker of an Eyelid by Jacques Stephen Alexis." *Callaloo*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2017, pp. 871–877.

Ménard, Nadève. *The Occupied Novel: The Representation of Foreigners in Haitian Novels Written during the US Occupation, 1915-1934*. University of Pennsylvania, 2002.

Métellus, Jean. "Terre Meurtrière et d'immortalité." *Libération*, 19 Jan. 2010.

Miller, Paul B. *Elusive Origins the Enlightenment in the Modern Caribbean Historical Imagination*. University of Virginia Press, 2010. *WorldCat Discovery Service*, ebrary http://site.ebrary.com/id/10495616.

---. "'Tous Les Hommes Sont l'homme': Anténor Firmin, Toussaint Louverture, Racial Equality and the Fact of Blackness." *Reconstructing the Social Sciences and Humanities: Antenor Firmin, Western Intellectual Tradition, and Black Atlantic Tradition*, Routledge, 2021, p. Forthcoming.

---. "'Tous Les Hommes Sont l'homme' [Todos Los Hombres Son El Hombre] Anténor Firmin, Toussaint Louverture, La Igualdad Racial y El Hecho de La Negrez." *Toussaint Louverture: Repensar Un Icono*, edited by Mariana Past and Nathalie Léger, Editorial del Caribe, 2015, pp. 52–79.

Mitchell, Robin. *Vénus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France*. University of Georgia Press, 2020.

Montas, Michèle. *Le Point: Fermeture de Radio Haïti*. 20 Feb. 2003, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-1859_01.

Muñiz, Humberto García, et al. "La Colección Alfred Nemours de Historia Haitiana, Una Fuente Olvidada, En El Bicentenario de La Independencia de Haití." *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2004, pp. 181–242.

Munro, Martin. *Exile and Post-1946 Haitian Literature : Alexis, Depestre, Ollivier, Laferrière, Danticat*. Liverpool University Press, 2007.

Narcisse, J. P. Richard. *Dans l'ombre d'une exécution*. Éditions de l'Université d'Haïti, 2013.

Narcisse, Jasmine. *Rhetorique du soi dans la litterature francophone haïtienne du xxe siecle. manques et manquements?* City University of New York, 2018.

Nemours, Auguste. *Histoire de La Captivité et de La Mort de Toussaint Louverture : Notre Pèlerinage Au Fort de Joux*. Berger-Levrault, 1929.

Nemours, Général. *Nos Deux Collines Inspirées : Le Fort de Joux, La Citadelle*.

---. *Toussaint Louverture Au Fort de Joux.*

Niort, J. F. *Le Code noir*. Cavalier bleu, 2015.

Noël, James. *Belle Merveille*. Zulma, 2018.

---. "Black Prayer." *Lit Hub*, translated by Nathan H. Dize, 5 June 2020, https://lithub.com/black-prayer/.

Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire." *Representations*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1989, pp. 7–24.

Olukotun, Deji. "A New Refuge for Haitian Writers." *World Literature Today; Norman*, vol. 87, no. 1, Feb. 2013, pp. 26–28.

Orcel, Makenzy. *Les Immortelles*. Zulma, 2012.

---. *The Immortals*. Translated by Nathan H. Dize, SUNY Press, 2020.

Orlando, Valérie. ""Out(in)Side the Confinement of Cultures: Marie Chauvet's Amour, Colère, et Folie and Mariama Bâ's Un Chant Écarlate." *Of Suffocated Hearts and Tortured Souls: Seeking Subjecthood through Madness in Francophone Women's Writing of Africa and the Caribbean*, Lexington Books, 2003, pp. 97–123.

Owens, Deirdre Cooper. *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*. University of Georgia Press, 2018.

Parham, Marisa. "Breaking, Dancing, Making in the Machine: Notes on .Break .Dance." *Sx Archipelagos*, 10 July 2019, doi:10.7916/archipelagos-96nw-0f89.

Parisot, Yolaine. “L’Ecrivain-Journaliste Dans La Littérature Haïtienne Ulta-Contemporaine.” *Another Life/Une Autre Vie*, Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2016.

Peabody, Sue. *“There Are No Slaves in France”: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime*. 1 edition, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Phillips, Wendell. “Toussaint Louverture, Delivered in New York and Boston, December 1861.” *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters*, Boston : Lee and Shepard ; New York : C. T. Dillingham, 1884, pp. 468–94. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/speecheslectures7056phil.

Pierre-Charles, Gérard. *La economia haitiana y su via de desarrollo.* Translated by María Teresa Toral, Cuadernos Americanos, 1965.

---. *Radiografía de Una Dictadura: Haití Bajo El Régimen Del Doctor Duvalier*. Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1969.

---. *Radiographie d’une Dictature: Haïti et Duvalier*. Nouvelle Optique, 1973.

---. “Sobre El Autor.” *En Un Abrir y Cerrar de Ojos*, Era Ediciones, 1969, pp. 221–28.

Pierre-Dahomey, Néhémy. *Rapatriés*. Seuil, 2017.

Pierrot, Grégory. *The Black Avenger in Atlantic Culture*. University of Georgia Press, 2019.

Pigallet, Maurice. “La Captivité et La Mort de Toussaint Louverture.” *La Révolution Française Revue d’histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, vol. 32, no. 7, 1913, pp. 511–20.

Pluchon, Pierre. *Toussaint Louverture: un révolutionnaire noir d’Ancien Régime*. Fayard, 1989.

Prophète, Emmelie. *Le Reste du temps*. Mémoire d’encrier, 2018.

---. “L’urgence de Dire.” *Libération*, 19 Jan. 2010, https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2010/01/19/l-urgence-de-dire_605108.

Rabassa, Gregory. *If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Discontents, A Memoir*. New Directions, 2005.

Rainsford, Marcus. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. Edited by Paul Youngquist and Grégory Pierrot, Duke University Press, 2013. *Open WorldCat*, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10674426.

Ramsey, Kate. *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Rankine, Claudia. "The Condition of Black Life Is One of Mourning." *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race*, Scribner, 2016, pp. 145–55.

Redman Bezilla, Charlee. "He Carnivalesque Theatre of Revolt in Marie Vieux-Chauvet's Folie." *Marie Vieux Chauvet's Theatres: Thought, Form, and Performances of Revolt*, edited by Christian Flaugh and Lena Taub Robles, Brill, 2018.

"Relance Du Prix Jacques Stephen Alexis de La Nouvelle." *Le Nouvelliste*, 16 Nov. 2005, https://lenouvelliste.com/article/22658/relance-du-prix-jacques-stephen-alexis-de-la-nouvelle.

Reuters. "Another Blow for Haiti: A Sugar Mill Closes." *The New York Times*, 12 Apr. 1987. *NYTimes.com*, https://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/12/world/another-blow-for-haiti-a-sugar-mill-closes.html.

Reyes, Michael. "Haitian Indigeneity before Africa: Commemorating Columbus and Dessalines in Henri Chauvet's La Fille Du Kacik (1894)." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter), 2020, pp. 165–81.

Ribbe, Claude. *Le crime de Napoléon*. Privé, 2005.

Risam, Roopika. *Digital Homes*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVAIUq6h9Jc. TEDxSalemStateUniversity, Salem, MA.

Robertshaw, Matthew, and Nathan H. Dize. *Haiti in Translation: Translating Pretenders by Fernand Hibbert, an Interview with Matthew Robertshaw*. 20 Feb. 2019, https://networks.h-

net.org/node/116721/discussions/3740218/haiti-translation-translating-pretenders-fernand-hibbert.

Saint-Aubin, Arthur F. *The Memoirs of Toussaint and Isaac Louverture: Representing the Black Masculine in Narratives of Mourning and Loss*. Lehigh University Press, 2015.

Saint-Rémy, Joseph. *Vie de Toussaint-L'Ouverture*. Paris, 1850. *Internet Archive*, http://archive.org/details/viedetoussaintlo00sain.

Saugera, Éric. "Question(s) de mémoire : le souvenir négrier à Nantes et Bordeaux." *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, no. 89, 89, Association Paul Langevin, Oct. 2002, pp. 61–68. *journals.openedition.org*, doi:10.4000/chrhc.1537.

Saunders, Patricia. "Defending the Dead, Confronting the Archive: A Conversation with M. NourbeSe Philip." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 12, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 63–79, doi:10.1215/-12-2-63.

Sepinwall, Alyssa Goldstein. "Beyond the Black Jacobins: Haitian Revolutionary Historiography Comes of Age." *Journal of Haitian Studies; Santa Barbara*, vol. 23, no. 1, Spring 2017, pp. 4–34.

Sharpe, Christina. "Black Life, Annotated." *The New Inquiry*, 8 Aug. 2014, https://thenewinquiry.com/black-life-annotated/.

---. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Sharpley-Whiting, T. Denean. *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French*. Duke University Press, 1999.

Shoomatove Vincent, Meem. "Le Prix National Jacques Stephen Alexis Du Roman Est Lancé." *Le Nouvelliste*, https://lenouvelliste.com/article/163046/le-prix-national-jacques-stephen-alexis-du-roman-est-lance. Accessed 31 Oct. 2020.

Smartt Bell, Madison. *Toussaint Louverture, A Biography*. Pantheon Books, 2007.

Smith, Katherine. "Genealogies of Gede." *In Extremis: Between Life and Death in 21st Century Haitian Art*, Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2012, pp. 85–100.

Smith, Paulette Anne. "The Stakes of the 'I-Game' in 'Mémoire d'une Amnésique.'" *Journal of Haitian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, Center for Black Studies Research, 2002, pp. 56–78.

Souffrant, Claude. *Sociologie prospective d'Haïti. Essai*. Editions du CIDIHCA, 2005, http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/souffrant_claude/socio_prospective_Haiti/socio_prospective_Haiti.html.

Sourieau, Marie-Agnès. "Dessalines in Historic Drama and Haitian Contemporary Reality." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 9, no. 2, Sept. 2005, pp. 24–39. *read.dukeupress.edu*, doi:10.1215/-9-2-24.

Spear, Thomas. "Marie Chauvet: The Fortress Still Stands." *Yale French Studies*, no. 128, 2015, pp. 9–24.

Steinberg, Samuel. *Photopoetics at Tlatelolco: Afterimages of Mexico, 1968*. University of Texas Press, 2015.

Sterlin, Franck. "Avis." *Le Nouvelliste*, 13 Nov. 1964, p. 1. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

Taylor, Diana. *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War."* Duke University Press, 1997.

---. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Duke University Press, 2003.

TEDx Talks. *Digital Homes | Roopika Risam | TEDxSalemStateUniversity*. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVAIUq6h9Jc. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

Temwanyaj sou 26 avril 1963 (26 avril 1986) / Radio Haiti Archive / Duke Digital Repository. 26 Apr. 1986, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-CS-0035_01. Radio Haiti Archive, RL10059CS0035.

The Public Archive. "An Incomplete Bibliography of the Writing of Suzy Castor." *The Public Archive*, 17 Feb. 2017, https://thepublicarchive.com/?p=4694.

"Théâtre Haïtien." *Le Nouvelliste*, 18 Oct. 1906, p. 4. Digital Library of the Caribbean.

Trouillot, Evelyne. "Vivre." *Libération*, 19 Jan. 2010, https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2010/01/19/vivre_605106.

Trouillot, Hénock. *Les origines sociales de la littérature haïtienne.* Impr. N.A. Théodore, 1962.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Haiti, State against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism*. Monthly Review Press, 1990.

---. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press, 1995.

---. *Ti Difé Boulé Sou Istoua Ayiti*. Lakansyèl, 1977.

Ulysse, Gina Athena. "Amid Rubble And Ruin, Our Duty To Haiti Remains." *NPR.Org*, 14 Jan. 2010, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122567412.

---. *Because When God Is Too Busy: Haiti, Me, & The World*. Wesleyan University Press, 2017.

---. "Introduction: Caribbean Rasanblaj." *Emisférica*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2016, p. n.p.

Ulysse, Gina Athena. *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post-Quake Chronicle*. Translated by Nadève Ménard and Évelyne Trouillot, Wesleyan University Press, 2015.

Vieux-Chauvet, Marie. *Amour, colère et folie: roman*. Zulma, 2015.

---. *Dance on the Volcano*. Translated by Kaiama L. Glover, Archipelago Books, 2017.

---. *Danse Sur Le Volcan*. Zellige, 2005.

---. *Love, Anger, Madness: A Haitian Triptych*. Translated by Myriam Rose-Réjouis and Val Vinokur, Modern Library, 2010.

Wagner, Laura. "April 3: Jistis Pou Jando." *The Devil's Tale*, 4 Apr. 2016, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2016/04/04/april-3-jistis-pou-jando/.

---. "For the Eyes of a Princess: Jean Dominique on the Life and Death of Richard Brisson." *The Devil's Tale, Dispatches from the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library*, 17 Jan. 2018, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2018/01/17/for-the-eyes-of-a-princess-jean-dominique-on-the-life-and-death-of-richard-brisson/.

---. "How Jonathan Demme Walked the Walk in Haiti." *Slate Magazine*, 5 May 2017, https://slate.com/culture/2017/05/jonathan-demme-s-love-of-haiti-and-his-documentary-the-agronomist.html.

---. "Nou Toujou La! The Digital (After-)Life of Radio Haïti-Inter." *Archipelagos*, no. 2, Columbia University Libraries, July 2017. *archipelagosjournal.org*, doi:10.7916/D8J394ZN.

Wagner-Egelhaaf, Martina. *Handbook of Autobiography | Autofiction*. De Gruyter, 2019.

Walsh, John Patrick. *Free and French in the Caribbean Toussaint Louverture, Aimé Césaire, and Narratives of Loyal Opposition*. Indiana University Press, 2013.

Watts, Richard. *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World*. Lexington Books, 2005.

Weld, Kristen. *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala*. Duke University Press, 2014, https://www.dukeupress.edu/paper-cadavers.

White, Charles. *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man, and in Different Animals and Vegetables ... : White, Charles, 1728-1813 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive*. Printed for C. Dilly, 1799, https://archive.org/details/b24924507.

Zavitz, Erin. “Revolutionary Commemorations: Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Haitian Independence Day, 1804-1904.” *The Haitian Declaration of Independence: Creation, Context, and Legacy*, University of Virginia Press, 2016, pp. 219–37.