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Tras à memwa:
The Emergence and Development of French Caribbean Cinema

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Tras à memwa:
The Emergence and Development of French Caribbean Cinema

by

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Tras à memwa:

The Emergence and Development of French Caribbean Cinema

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In December 1899, the Italian camera operator Giuseppe Filippi, trained by the famous French Lumière brothers, arrived in Haiti and began conducting film screenings for local audiences. Within the next two years, his Caribbean travels led him to Guadeloupe and Martinique, where he left behind him a seed of interest in an art form that, as I will demonstrate, would alternately develop and wane over the course of the twentieth century depending on funding and the turbulence of the fluctuating French Caribbean political and cultural climate. Chapters one and two provide a thorough roadmap of the development of the French Caribbean film industry and conclude chronologically, arriving at the current state of cinema in these islands. Though the debate over the existence of the industry still carries on amongst local film professionals, particularly in Guadeloupan and Martinican circles, these chapters offer compelling evidence of distinct and verifiable cinematic production. The final two chapters consist of an analysis of a set of five films, chosen for their relatively recent release as well as their thematic, aesthetic, and structural variety. This set of films constitutes evidence of a wave of films unified by their preoccupation with memory, an orientation that mirrors and reinforces a contemporary cultural movement in these islands, and by their advancement of overt, contextually relevant postcolonial political agenda.

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INTRODUCTION

During an interview conducted in 1988, the dynamic and influential Martinican intellectual Aimé Césaire remarked, "Antillean cinema is in its infancy" (Sephocle 368). Long-time mayor of Fort-de-France, highly regarded poet, co-founder of the Negritude movement and principal initiator in the launching of SERMAC (Service Municipal d'Action Culturelle), Césaire incontestably had his finger on the pulse of cultural endeavors in Martinique.[1] Possessing a very clear understanding of the obstacles film directors faced, Césaire, in this statement, refers to low production levels in the islands, and indirectly signals the economic obstacles in Martinique's filmmaking landscape, such as the lack of investment options and minimal distribution and diffusion opportunities.

Given that more than twenty years have passed since Césaire made this remark, it is pertinent to revisit the matter and consider whether the filmmaking in the French-speaking Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Haiti) has indeed had the opportunity to grow. An optimistic estimate indicates that, presently, the number of films (shorts, documentaries, and feature films) surpasses sixty in Martinique and Guadeloupe combined and eighty in Haiti. In fact, Guadeloupan film scholar Osange Silou set out twenty years ago to contradict the belief that Antillean cinema did not exist.[2] In her book *Le Cinéma dans les Antillais françaises* (Cinema in the French Antilles) she chronicles her insider knowledge of production, interviews film professionals, provides synopses of local films as well as a forum for debate about the existence of the industry. In her view, "French regional cinema, cinema of the African or African-Caribbean

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[1] In this study, Antillean cinema refers to Martinican and Guadeloupan cinema and French Caribbean cinema refers to Antillean as well as Haitian films.

[2] In an interview with RFO (*Radio France Outremer*, Overseas French Radio), Silou states: "Il y une vingtaine d'années, lorsque je parlais du cinéma antillais, on me disait que ça n'existait pas. Pour prouver le contraire, j'ai dû écrire un livre en 1990 sur le cinéma Antillais (Twenty years agao, when I was discussing Antillean cinema, everyone was telling me that it did not exist. To prove them wrong, I had to write a book in 1990 on Antillean cinema)." http://www.rfo.fr/article103.html "Entretien: Osange Silou;" Timothy Mirthil. Accessed 23 February 2009.

diaspora, with more than twenty feature films, forty-some short films, Antillean cinema exists" (Silou 13).[3]

The compelling evidence forwarded by Silou has not ended the debate, however. Divergent opinions about the state of the French Caribbean film industry persist today. On the side of Silou, for instance, is Tony Coco-Viloin, Guadeloupan director and current head of the *Bureau d'accueil de tournages de la région Guadeloupe* (Film Reception and Resource Office of Guadeloupe) located in the small city of Basse-Terre, the administrative headquarters of Guadeloupan government.[4] In 1998, Coco-Viloin had the intention of starting a film school in Guadeloupe, but once he discovered the degree of filming already taking place, he set his sights on organizing production. Selected by Victorin Lurel, the Guadeloupan deputy to the French National Assembly and current president of the region, to coordinate current production and assist local filmmakers in launching new projects, his duties have expanded to place him at the forefront of the Antillean cinematic landscape, offering his knowledge, services, and connections to virtually anyone interested in contributing to or gathering information about French Caribbean cinema.[5] When questioned about whether the industry exists and its prospects for the future, Coco-Viloin was overwhelmingly positive. Speaking enthusiastically, he reveals his ambition for Guadeloupe to become the capital of Caribbean film production. Given the improvements over the three year period from 2006-2009, he foresees continued growth: "The transformation is exponential. We're progressing from production to industry."[6] He calls the next three years "capital and decisive."[7]

Another director, Sylvaine Dampierre, a French born woman of Guadeloupan origin, is of the same opinion. Her recent filming experience in the island makes her a

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[3] "Cinéma régional français, cinéma de la diaspora africaine ou afro-caribéen, avec plus de vingt longs métrages, une quarantaine de courts métrages, le cinéma antillais existe" (Silou 13).

[4] In the interview, Coco-Viloin was explicit that his office was not the Film Office of Guadeloupe. It had a specific mission to cater to film professionals, but given the lack of a Film Office, his time and resources were often spent on task outside the scope of his office's mission. Interview with author, Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

[5] Interview with author, Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.
Information on Victorin Lurel: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/tribun/fiches_id/268048.asp

[6] La mutation est exponentielle. On passe du stade d'activité au stade d'industrie." Interview with author, Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

[7] "capitale et décisive." Ibid.

credible judge of the industry as well. In the press review for her documentary *Le pays à l'envers* (2009) filmed in Guadeloupe, she states "There is an active film industry here, in the midst of development, rich with talent and ambition that one hears more and more about…The country is so rich and there are so many stories to tell." [8]

On the other hand, Jean-Marc Césaire espouses an opinion similar to that of his late grandfather, Aimé Césaire. Jean-Marc's expertise and involvement in French Caribbean cinema make him a locally renowned authority on the matter. He is passionately immersed in an atypical project of film distribution called *Ciné Woulé*. Rather than working for a private theatre chain such as the Rex-Arbaud company, that offered him a management position just days prior to our meeting, he receives funding from local government for this itinerant cinema project of his own conception (discussed in greater detail at the end of Chapter three). In our discussion about the existence of the French Caribbean film industry, Césaire stated matter-of-factly: "Antillean cinema does not exist. There are people who make films…Without state money,one cannot earn a living from this cinema."[9] Qualifying his opinion, he continued by explaining that there can be no industry without a strong distribution component, "We do not have local distribution. Aside from Elisé, nothing is available."[10] His colleague at the DRAC (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* – Regional Management of Cultural Affairs), Marie Beaupré, also added in this discussion that Antillean cinema lacked another important element, a "critical organ" (meaning film scholars or professional reviewers) to which Césaire agreed.[11] Although Césaire agrees that there is active

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[8] http://www.lacid.org/fichesfilms/presse/dp_pays_a_lenvers.pdf
p. 6
"Il y a ici un cinéma vivant, en plein développement, riche de talents et d'ambitions, dont on entend de plus en plus parler…Le pays est si riche et il y a tant d'histoires à raconter."
Accessed June 15, 2009
Review of the film in *Le Monde*: http://www.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2009/04/28/le-pays-a-l-envers-la-guadeloupe-et-sa-memoire-esclave_1186469_3476.html
April 28th, 2009 by Jacques Mandelbaum.

[9] "Il n'existe pas de cinéma antillais. Il y a des gens qui font les films…sans l'état, on peut pas en vivre."
Interview with the author. Friday, August 21st, Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe. DRAC.

[10] "On n'a pas de distribution locale. A part d'Elisé, il n'y a personne."
Ibid.
Elisé is a monopolistic movie theatre chain operating in Guadeloupe that I will discuss much more in Chapter three.

[11] "organe critique."
Interview with the author. Friday, August 21st, Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe. DRAC.

production in the Antilles, as well as available trained film professionals, well-organized film festivals, and ample local interest in French Caribbean films, he argues that without fair circuits of internal and external distribution, the industry is deficient.

Comparing these passages reveals that film professionals are operating with different stipulations in mind. Because they do not agree on the same conditions for proof of an industry, they have not reached a consensus and it remains impossible to presently lay this debate to rest. This study does not hinge on their agreement, however. Regardless of one's opinion about the existence of an industry per se, at least eight fairly prolific filmmakers - Raoul Peck, Eugène Palcy, Guy Deslauriers, Christian Lara, Gabriel Glissant, Elsie Haas, Tony Coco-Viloin, Jean-Claude Flamand Barny – have directed films. That is to say, whether or not one will acknowledge the existence of industry is unrelated to the fact that French Caribbean films are most certainly being produced and released.

In these islands, new directors are surfacing on a yearly basis, many of whom display their films at festivals in the Caribbean and beyond. Film festivals and educational programs in these islands authenticate a concerted effort to enhance exposure of French Caribbean films and establish careers in the field to island residents. These festivals, which I will discuss in detail at the end of chapter one and two, constitute strong evidence of a surge of unprecedented collaboration that has begun to impact French Caribbean cinema and helps account for recent increased film production. In July 2004, the Jacmel Festival in Haiti, for instance, provided free outdoor showings to thousands of Haitians, a remarkable opportunity for an overwhelmingly poor and illiterate population: "the first Jacmel film festival featured 195 projections of 85 films shown free-of-charge at six different venues, including a large open-air public space for night-time screenings" (Arthur). The fourteenth annual St. Barth's film festival and the sixteenth annual FEMI (Festival International Cinéma et Femme de Guadeloupe) also took place in the spring of 2009.[12] Perhaps the most well-known festival is the Montreal International Haitian Film

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[12] http://www.lefemi.com/index-1.php?ir=pages/programme
Accessed February 22, 2010.
http://www.filmfestivals.com/servlet/JSCRun?obj=Fliche&CfgPath=ffs&Cfg=search.cfg&id=4486
Accessed October 31, 2007

Festival.[13] Festival organizers, now preparing for the sixth year of the event, have expanded the screenings to take place in both Montreal and Quebec City. The festival occurs concomitantly with Haiti on Fire, a live performance series of music, dance, and theatre attracting thousands of spectators.[14]

Further evidence of the increased collaboration in the French Caribbean cinema surfaces in the recent agreements between the *Centre National Cinématographique* (National Cinematographic Center or CNC) and local government in Martinique and Guadeloupe. These agreements, which I investigate and discuss in Chapter two, have resulted in augmented funding for local films. Since 2005, upwards of one million Euros has been allocated on a yearly basis to Guadeloupan film projects at various stages.[15] These developments in the French Caribbean cinema strongly suggest that it is at a turning point.

Nonetheless, documentation and analysis of films produced in the French Caribbean is not keeping pace with these changes. Up until this point, analysis of films produced in the French-speaking Caribbean has remained in the shadows of film studies. Aside from Euzhan Palcy's 1983 film *Rue Case-Nègres*, the critical work that exists on the subject is sparse. And although not all of the French Caribbean films are readily available, the film archives in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* (National Library of France or BNF) contain several of them for scholarly viewing. Given the evolving context of the French Caribbean landscape, it is time to undertake this project. With over a hundred films to account for, the active production evident in the film festival circuit, and the need to extend and deepen Silou's work from the early 1990's, a study of French Caribbean cinema has value that has been heretofore overlooked. Presently, critical scholarship is necessary to record the preceding history and rising development of French Caribbean cinema and to offer a filmic analysis of French Caribbean films. At stake in

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[13] The Montreal International Haitian Film Festival is now in conjunction with the Montreal International Black Film Festival.
http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/home.html

[14] http://www.haitienfolie.com/

[15] Funding breakdown provided to me on Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe by Kelly Palmain of the Guadeloupan *Conseil Regional* (http://www.cr-guadeloupe.fr/culture/?ARB_N_ID=693&ARB_N_S=693&ART_N_ID=2328#ENCRE2328 http://www.cr-guadeloupe.fr/aides/?ART_N_ID=967&ARB_N_ID=798&MERE=&REGION=).

this project, therefore, is the extraordinary opportunity to examine the intersection of a virtually unknown body of French Caribbean films with the increased dynamism of the local industry and related advancements in film theory and cultural studies.

I. TERMS & ORGANIZATION

A. Definition of French Caribbean Cinema

As a category unto itself, French Caribbean Cinema moves from farthest periphery of Francophone film studies to fuel its own debates. In addition to the debate over existence, another area surely to fuel future discussion is the definition and categorization of French Caribbean cinema. In a 1982 interview, the Guadeloupan filmmaker, Christian Lara, proposed a definition of French Caribbean film. He stated that "the director should be from the Caribbean, the subject matter should be a Caribbean story, the lead actor/actress should be from the Caribbean, Creole should be used,[and] the production unit should be Caribbean (Cham 10)."

After having located and watched a number of "French Caribbean" films at the BNF, I noted that they did not follow all of Lara's stipulations. For instance, I found that most of the films did employ Creole, but not always, and certainly not in a consistent fashion. Second, the production units in the films I discuss are occasionally Caribbean, but it is common to note the involvement of foreign companies, mainly metropolitan French production units.

The production company, *Kreol,* serves as a perfect example in explaining the difficulty in maintaining Lara's requirement. The company's filmography names three of the Martinican director Guy Deslauriers' recent films (*Aliker*, 2007; *Biguine*, 2003; *Passage du milieu*, 1999). The company supports films from "creole cultures," but the office is located in Paris. The producer, Y. Ho-You-Fat-Deslauriers, writes on his website:

> Kreol Productions proposes to explore, by all artistic means possible, but principally through cinematography, the complex reality of creole cultures and their unevenly emerging, mosaic-like or composite, identities.[16]

Having a production unit in France allows for more immediate access to governmental funds available through the CNC and to draw on the expertise of a wider range of film professionals. Even Christian Lara's production company Christian Lara's Guadeloupe Film Compagnie, Caraïbe Films Compagnie, managed by Guadeloupe Film Compagnie, is located in Paris.[17]

These considerations influenced my decision to modify Lara's guidelines for this study. I therefore propose the following criteria definition of a French Caribbean film in this study:

- The film's director was born or has lived at length in Haiti, Guadeloupe, or Martinique.
- The film's central character(s) was born and/or raised in Haiti, Guadeloupe or Martinique. On the other hand, the other actors in the film may be of any nationality.
- A portion of the film's setting is shot in these three locales. In other words, filming includes, but is not necessarily limited to these three islands.

An additional difference between Lara's definition and my own is the obligatory use of Creole. Requiring the use of Creole in film has the potential to hinder the distribution and diffusion of French Caribbean films. Consequently, for the sake of limiting any obstacles to distribution, I do not support any conditions on language. However, as production grows, distribution improves, and additional critical work is completed, future alterations to these parameters can be made.

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16 "Kreol Productions se propose d'explorer par toutes les voies artistiques possibles, mais principalement cinématographiques, la réalité complexe des cultures créoles et de leurs émergences identitaires inédites, souvent mosaïques ou composites."
http://www.kreolproductions.com/accueil.html

17 http://www.unifrance.org/annuaires/personne/30573/christian-lara
115, avenue de la République 94300 Vincennes France Téléphone : +33 1.43.28.09.02

B. The Organization of Haitian, Guadeloupan and Martinican Films in a Single Study

The French West Indies refers to Caribbean islands that maintain ongoing ties as territories or *départements d'outre-mer* of the French state. Generally, but not always translated into French as *les Antilles*, the French West Indies includes Guadeloupe (and the two adjacent islands Marie-Galante and La Désirade), Martinique, Saint Martin and Saint-Barthélemy. The term, French (or Francophone) Caribbean, on the other hand, is decidedly more ambiguous. It is not a political categorization, but a cultural and historical one. This grouping includes various combinations of the aforementioned islands, as well as other Caribbean lands such as Haiti, Saint Croix, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, The Grenadines, Tobago and Dominica. At some point during their history, each of these islands experienced a relationship with France that subsequently left traces in modern-day local language and culture. As a result, the categorization of French Caribbean is open to include all of these islands. However, including all of these islands is impractical for this study. It is more productive to focus on a limited number of islands who share a similar level of cinematic production. Therefore, for this study, French Caribbean cinema refers to films from Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Martinique.

The three islands share a similar early history. Christopher Columbus landed on the island now known as Haiti in 1492 during his first voyage to the Caribbean (Dash 2). Although he reported the existence of Guadeloupe and Martinique during his second voyage in 1493, he reportedly did not set foot on either of these two islands until 1502. By the mid-seventeenth century, Native Amerindians were completely overtaken by French settlers in these three islands. As French settlers gradually established plantations, importing African slaves for their operation, France benefited from complete control over the growth and trade of sugar, the most desirable tropical product in these islands. Over the course of the eighteenth century, "Europe's insatiable appetite for sugar" made these islands the most profitable of France's colonial possessions (Dash 3). To carry out the labor-intensive production of sugar, the slave population had grown exponentially by the end of the eighteenth century: 85,461 in Guadeloupe and 83,416 in Martinique by 1788; and 480,000 in Haiti by 1791 (Moitt 156-157; Tomich 17).

The belief that the loss of France's North American territories was more than compensated by her continued control over the French Caribbean demonstrates how

profitable these islands had become as part of the French colonial apparatus. As Haitian historian Philippe Girard explains:

> When France lost the Seven Year War (known as the French and Indian war in the United States) in 1763, she lost virtually all of her North American possessions…But, French philosophers such as Voltaire reasoned, they had saved what mattered most: Guadeloupe and Martinique. Saint-Domingue, because of its size, was the greatest and most profitable of all the sugar islands (Girard 19).

With the onset of the Haitian Revolution in 1791, however, the history of these three islands most clearly diverges.

The Haitian Revolution lasted the following thirteen years. Although Haiti emerged as an independent nation in 1804, it remains the most impoverished country in the Western hemisphere. As has been pointed out, this state of affairs is linked to a poisonous cocktail of historical and contemporary events: the depletion of natural resources by colonial powers, corruption and violence under the post-revolutionary leadership, a refusal to embrace agricultural or industrial ventures that would lead to economies of scale (especially at first in the southern part of the island), the exodus of promising, educated members of the population, and poor land management leading to massive deforestation and pollution.

The last two hundred years have been far different in the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Neither of these islands ever succeeded in rousing a similarly successful revolution. France abolished slavery in 1848, along with the rest of France's colonial empire. In 1946, years before sub-Saharan African and other territories under French control achieved their independence, these two islands became French *départements d'outre-mer*, a state-like status that grants the residents of these islands French citizenship and allows each island to send locally-elected representatives to the French Senate and the National Assembly. France also continues to provide Martinique and Guadeloupe with sufficient funds to provide an array of cultural programs, social security, and unemployment benefits and to finance infrastructure such as the airport, roads, hospitals, government offices, and schools. The French government is also the largest employer on the island, paying its civil servants (*fonctionnaires*) wages forty percent higher than their metropolitan equivalents. Whereas the majority of their Haitian

neighbors continue to rely on a range of international sources of aid for the most basic of services, this constant influx of French governmental funds provides a more comfortable level of existence for most Antilleans.

However, France cannot be deemed a faultless benefactor. There is serious controversy in Martinique and Guadeloupe over the allocation of state money, the amount of metropolitan control accompanying financial assistance, and the underlying motivation for France's involvement in island affairs. Resentment against France caused by recent economic distress peaked in Guadeloupe in February 2009.[18] The demonstrations, rioting, and intermittent strikes are evidence of ongoing angst over France's political role and economic responsibilities in the Antilles.

Even though the history of these islands diverges most substantially after the Haitian Revolution, Haitian, Martinican and Guadeloupan cultures remain linked. First, even though Martinican and Guadeloupan slaves never succeeded in gaining independence through rebellion and Aimé Césaire did not pursue this path during the independence movements in French colonial territories in the twentieth century (as will be discussed in Chapter two and four), the Haitian Revolution remains a widely inspirational event and ideological model in black Caribbean history. Second, the inhabitants of these islands all employ the French language in diplomacy, in literature, and significant to this study, in cinema. Third, although the type and pervasiveness of Creole varies, a documented Creole language that derived from the confrontation of varying linguistic phenomena during slavery continues to exist. Fourth, well-regarded residents of these islands maintain an active dialogue that references slavery, history, and their impression of shared configurations of identity.

The Haitian Jean-Price Mars is the acknowledged leader of the earliest conceptualization of identity, *noirisme*, which influenced the American black power movement and *Négritude* (Girard 87). Because of its more widespread and lasting impact, though, the French Caribbean cultural dialogue is best explained through *Négritude*. Invented by Aimé Césaire, it was his collaboration in Paris with future

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[18] Accessed 4 November 2009
New York Times
"Strike in Guadeloupe escalates into rioting"
17 February 2009
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/17/world/europe/17iht-france.4.20259662.html

Senegalese President Léopold Senghor and French Guianan poet Léon Damas that propelled the popularity of this term across what Paul Gilroy calls the *Black Atlantic*. Because "Négritude positioned itself as a metanarrative with claims of a universal black identity and a single cultural heritage rooted in Africa" this term eventually came to define an entire movement that resonated with Afro-Caribbeans in Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti (Lewis, p.70). Evidence of the continued impact of *Négritude* can be seen in the work of Haiti's most famous female director, Elsie Haas. Her most famous film to date, *La ronde des vodù: en hommage au peuple haïtien* (Voodoo dance: a tribute to the people of Haiti, 1990), addresses *Négritude* in the Haitian context. Years after its invention, after experiencing both reverence and criticism, the term *Négritude* surfaces in Haitian in this film. The term *Négritude* has transcended both time and distance to become a shared concept in the quest of self-definition in the French Antilles and Haiti.

Additional interrelated creative endeavors undertaken by writers and intellectuals from these islands demonstrate the growth of their cultural dialogue. Césaire's literary career offers as a prime example of this dialogue. As his literary career expanded from poetry to include history and theatre, he wrote a book on Toussaint L'Ouverture (*Toussaint L'Ouverture: La Révolution Française et Le Problème Colonial*) in 1961 followed by two plays which take place in Haiti: *La tragédie du roi Christophe* (*The Tragedy of King Christopher*, 1963) and *La Tempête* (1969), a rewriting of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Joining the playwriting endeavor of reinterpreting the major figures of the Haitian Revolution, Edouard Glissant, another Martinican intellectual, wrote a play on Toussaint L'Ouverture entitled *Monsieur Toussaint* (1961). These works confirm the profound interest of these Antillean intellectuals in Haitian history.[19] Even more relevant to this study and the evidence of a shared cultural repertoire between the islands is the fact that an unnamed group of workshop participants at the Fort-de-France cultural organization SERMAC (Service Municipal d'Action Cultuelle) founded by Césaire produced two films in the 1980's similarly entitled *Monsieur Toussaint* and *Une Tempête* (Silou 45). The production of these plays and films further substantiates how Haitian history and the accompanying political struggle for self-determination is entrenched in Antillean culture.

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[19] Discussed again in chapters two and four.

Créolité, a movement initiated in the 1980's by Martinicans Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, emphasizes the relationship between identity and language, favoring Creole as "the initial means of communication of our deep self, or collecitive unconscious, of our common genius, and it remains the river of our alluvial Creoleness (Khyar 15)."[20] Similar to the Creolists, who valorize the use of Creole in literature, Christian Lara's 1982 categorization of Antillean cinema requires the use of Creole in filmmaking in order for it to be considered an Antillean film. Discussing this stipulation again in 1991, Lara maintains his original claims based on the idea that: "the Antillean spectator can only see her/himself in her/his language" (Cham 281). In several of the films to be examined, code switching between French and Creole occurs frequently, reinforcing the cultural relationship developed as a result of the emphasis in all three islands on language as a cultural marker.[21]

Critical theorists and historians who analyze Haitian, Guadeloupan and Martinican culture together also substantiate the shared cultural repertoire among these islands. By examining Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti, critics corroborate and strengthen this cultural relationship. Patrick Chamoiseau, co-author of the text, *Lettres créoles: tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature: Haïti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane, 1635-1975* (*Creole Literature: Antillean and Continentale Links in Literature: Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane 1635-1975*, 1991) for instance, includes Creole literature from Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyana, a French territory located in South America, in this text. Other critical works that analyze Haitian, Guadeloupan, and Martinican literature and film include: Suzanne Rinne and Joelle Vitiello's 1997 text *Elles écrivent des Antilles (Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique) (Women write from/about the Antilles (Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique)*; Michael Richardson's 1996 text *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*; and Lieve Spaas' 2000 text *The Francophone Film* whose chapter entitled "North American and the Caribbean" discusses films from Quebec, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Haiti. Each of these works reinforces the existence of an open, active dialogue regarding shared cultural concerns.

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[20] "véhicule original de notre moi profond, de notre inconscient collectif, de notre génie populaire, cette langue demeure la rivière de notre créolité alluviale"

[21] See Supplemental Data 1 for further discussion of additional French Caribbean cultural movements.

II. CONTEXT: MEMORY IN FRANCE AND IN THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN

In the early 1980s, a wave of books, television series, films, and media outlets began fueling support and discussion for the remembrance of the Holocaust. Studying this phenomenon in Western European and American history, Columbia Professor Andreas Huyssen notes in his book, *Present pasts: urban palimpsests and the politics of memory*, that discourses on memory, which had begun in the 1960's following decolonization, were:

> Energized [in the 1980s] primarily by the ever-broadening debate about the Holocaust (triggered by the TV series *Holocaust* and, somewhat later, by the testimony movement), as well as by a whole series of politically loaded and widely covered fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries relating to the history of the Third Reich (14).

This accelerating movement, as Huyssen labels it, has come to define a major shift in views of history and memory in Western societies. Tying this movement to broader societal trends, film scholar Carolyn Jess-Cooks characterizes the widespread interest in memory as a "characteristic of postmodernity" because "the act of looking back at the past became a dominant part of Western society and was heightened by changes that reflected 'endings' of various kinds" (44 Jess-Cooks).

Pierre Nora's seven volume text, *Lieux de mémoire* (Places of memory) exemplifies this pervasive movement to remember. In his work, published during this same era in French history, Nora synthesized French history in non-canonical fashion. As opposed to offering a chronological account of French history, his more than sixty contributors approach history from the notion of "place" or "site." They systematically take an inventory of places (loosely interpreted) where French national memory is incarnated and which, "by the effort of men or the labor of centuries, these [sites] have remained as the most striking symbols: festivals, emblems, monuments, and commemorations, but also tributes, dictionaries, and museums" (Nora vii).[22] Each of the *lieux-carrefours* (place-intersections) represents "particular, fragmented, local, and

[22] "par la volonté des hommes ou le travail des siècles, en sont resté comme les plus éclatantes symboles: fêtes, emblèmes, monuments et commémorations, mais aussi éloges, dictionnaires et musées."

cultural memories" that have a historiographic, ethnographic, psychological, and even political and literary dimension (Ricoeur 91).[23]

Despite the ambitious nature of Nora's project, it has been rightfully criticized for sacrificing the colonial question.[24] As Pascale Blanchard states, "In the essential and foundational work that *Lieux de mémoire* represents, and despite the explanations put forth by their editor, one can therefore only conclude that the 'colonial part' of French history is minimal, almost forgotten" (Blanchard 15).[25] As a result of the cultural amnesia exhibited in this enormous text, Dominic Thomas asks "whether this work accurately reflects the collective memory of those people for whom the Hexagon represents *home*, a fact that simultaneously compelled individuals and groups to acknowledge and recognize that memory is now also elsewhere" (Thomas 2).[26] If sites of memory exist in places outside of Nora's useful, but flawed paradigm, where might one begin to retrieve and examine them?

Upon receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992, St. Lucian-born author, Derek Walcott, said this in his address to the Swedish Academy:

> All the Antilles, every island, is an effort of memory; every mind, every racial biography, culminating in amnesia and fog. Pieces of sunlight through the fog and sudden rainbows, *arcs-en-ciel*. That is the effort, the labour of the Antillean imagination, rebuilding its gods from bamboo frames, phase by phase (Walcott 37).

Out of the clouded, buried, or elided events of the past, traces of memory emerge from the Antillean imagination to repair and restore shared history. This is what Walcott calls an effort of memory, the work undertaken by the Antillean people to rebuild their clouded, forgotten, or elided past. As a pervasive, ongoing effort, it constitutes a cultural movement that coincides with a growing interest in memory in places outside of Western

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[23] By selecting less than obvious "lieux-carrefours", such as the Encyclopedia *Larousse* and the French national anthem, Nora offers a sophisticated, fluid and interrelated view of history while implicity demonstrating his claim that "La matière de France est inépuisable" (viii).

[24] This project, it could be argued, is also evidence of what Bulgarian born French philosopher Tzvetan Todorov calls the "cult of memory," or the European obsession with the past (Todorov 159).

[25] "Dans le travail essential et fondateur que représentent les *Lieux de mémoire*, et malgré les explications avancées par leur maitre d'œuvre, on ne peut donc que constater que la 'part coloniale' de l'histoire de la France est minorée, presque oubliée."

[26] I will discuss the term "collective memory" in the third section.

Europe. It is in the context of this effort that one locates French Caribbean sites of memory.

At no prior period in Guadeloupan, Martinican, and Haitian history has the effort of memory been more vigorous and readily observable. In Guadeloupe and Martinique, numerous examples of this movement surfaced in 1998 in conjunction with the commemoration of the abolition of slavery.[27] On the occasion of this 150th anniversary, Guadeloupans coordinated a year-long passing of a torch meant to symbolize the runaway slave, or maroon. Such a lengthy, widespread effort on their part proves an island-wide awareness of the past as embodied by the maroon: a subversive figure that represents resistance to slavery from its adoption on the islands. A course for a race was established in Guadeloupe in which "the flame of liberty in honor of the *nèg mawon inconnu* (the unknown fugitive slave)" was passed from runner to runner for one year from the spring of 1997 to the spring of 1998 (Reinhardt 8). Not only in cinema, then, but in other cultural endeavors like literature and this commemoration, French Caribbeans have adopted the figure of the maroon to assert their ancestors' role in the end of slavery, revisit the past, and valorize the non-dominant culture.

Moveover, Martinicans and Guadeloupans also organized "countless colloquiums [*sic*]" and constructed a number of new memorials to pay tribute to their ancestors (Reinhardt 127, 139). These memorials include the building of a large historical marker entitled *Mémorial de l'Anse Caffard* in Diamant, Martinique. This memorial, designed by Laurent Valère, is comprised of fifteen white cement statues of human form "arranged in a triangle on a cliff overhanging the ocean to symbolize the triangular [slave] trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas" (Reinhardt). On the Boulevard des Héros in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, three statues were erected, each one meant to represent a popular hero of the 1802 revolt: Ignace, Delgrès and Mulâtresse Solitude. A mural, painted in 1998 by Guadeloupan high school students, depicts Ignace and Delgrès again, as well as "images from Africa, from the middle passage, from the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and from the abolition of slavery among others" (Reinhardt 152).

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[27] See Supplemental Data for poster. Les centres des archives outre-mer. http://caom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/sdx/ulysse/notice?n=1&id=FR%20CAOM%209Fi525&qid=sdx_q3&p=1

Located in front of the Baimbridge High School in Point-à-Pitre, the presence of this mural familiarizes the younger generation with Guadeloupan history on a daily basis.

More than ten years after the painting of this mural, events related to the commemoration continue in Pointe-à-Pitre. For instance, from May to October 2009 the *Musée Schoelcher* (Victor Schoelcher Museum) features an exhibit that directly references Nora's study.[28] The exhibit, entitled *Lieux de mémoires* (Places of Memory by photographer Philippe Monges), consists of numerous sweeping black and white photographs of locations along the slave trade: the Atlantic Ocean, Ghana's slave trade forts, the French ports of Nantes and Le Havre, and the ruins of Martinican and Guadeloupan *Habitations* or sugar plantations, for example. The photographs capture these places of memory as they are today. Unlike an archival collection, depicting actual slaves or a *Habitation* as it once was, this exhibit does not simply cast a backward gaze. It is instead focused on the relationship between past and present. The photographs are contemporary visions of historic places, many of which appear far different than they once were, even benign in certain cases. All together, however, these photographs infuse the superficially benign with meaning. A photo of the Atlantic Ocean, for instance, makes a far greater statement when placed in a specific, purposeful order. The exhibit thereby confirms that history can lose its impact without due consideration, even memory can fade without poignant reminders. When forced to see the significance of everyday places, however, memory becomes grounded in daily life.

In addition to the significance of these exhibitions, murals, and memorials, Reinhardt cogently formulates a further consequential aspect of this entire commemoration and related events. Over the course of the celebration in metropolitan France, emphasis was placed on its role in the abolition of slavery. As Reinhardt explains, "the year 1848 became a moment of victory for the French, the victory of humanitarian ideology over a horrific system of human exploitation" (Reinhardt 127). Yet, the French Caribbean commemoration did not revolve around French humanitarianism. On the other hand, the colloquia, the memorials, the passing of the torch in the French Caribbean are "contrapuntal to the overpowering narrative of the

[28] http://www.cg971.fr/actu/visite_guidee/index_evenement.htm
Author's visit, Monday August 17th, 2009.

French abolitionist movement led by Victor Schoelcher" (Reinhardt 127). As Foucault convincingly argued in his work (*Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1972; *Discipline and Punish*, 1977) institutionalized ways of thinking, or discourses, which emerge at the same time represent the concerns of a particular culture at a particular time. Discourses regarding history, slavery, memory and popular heroes represent "these discourses, a whole constellation of convictions and images" that comprise the contemporary cultural concerns of French Caribbeans (Foucault 234). Consequently, through this commemoration, French Caribbeans succeed in writing "a history that embodies their own unique social and geographic reality" (Reinhardt 152).

This commemoration demonstrates the massive task of rewriting history presently at work in Guadeloupe and Martinique. As is often stated in regards to oppressed cultures, official discourse is at times controlled and as a result an erasure of the dominated people's history takes place and is substituted by the dominant power's narrative. A reason for this, French philosopher Tzvetan Todorov suggests, is that "The totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century," which certainly includes colonial France, "sought to achieve total control of memory" (113). Although it is a highly difficult and controversial undertaking to determine the extent of this control of memory and erasure of historical narratives, astonishing evidence of it permeates the French Caribbean. Reinhardt details how at the *Musée du Rhum* (Rum Museum) as of 2006, the *Distillery Reimonenq*, the *Habitation La Grivelière* (La Grivelière Plantation), and the *Habitation Clément* (Clement Plantation) in Guadeloupe, the brochures available about these historical sites make no mention of slavery, the existence of which lay at the core of their operation or economic impact. At the Rum Museum, Reinhardt recounts that "the word slavery is absent from all displays and slaves are referred to as 'laborers'" (131). Instead of acknowledging the key role of slaves and factory workers at these sites or even in the economy at large as the *Ecomusée* (Ecomuseum), *Musée d'histoire* (History Museum), and *Maison de la Canne* (Sugarcane Museum) in Martinique, the brochures and displays of these four places exude instead an idyllic nostalgia for the past, to the point of exhibiting manipulative falsehoods. Such a contrast in the representation of the past demonstrates both the exclusion of foundational events from the past and the necessary task at hand to amend historical accounts.

In the case of Haiti, efforts of memory have been consistently blocked by chronic political upheaval and economic distress. Nevertheless, recent scholarship by Michael D. Largey magnifies the connection between memory and music. In his work, *Vodou Nation: Haitian art music and cultural nationalism*, Haitian music gains traction as an effort of memory at various points throughout the twentieth century. An early instance of music as an effort of memory occurred during the 1915-1934 U.S. occupation of Haiti. During this time, Haitian military band director Occide Jeanty's (1860-1936) commemorated the "Haitian Revolution through musical composition" (Largey 61). According to Largey, Jeanty's compositions were extremely popular and given their content, clearly represent how music, shaped by African rhythms and instruments, can function as an effort of memory. A more modern example of the connection between memory and music also took place during the same decade as the Martinican and Guadeloupan celebration of the anniversary of the end of slavery. During the 1990's, Haitian roots music and culture exploded in the Haitian community, both on the island and amongst the Diaspora. A break in oppressive practices occurred after the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship, providing the necessary context for this music to spring up and gain popularity. Gage Averill attributes this popularity to its close relationship with contemporary political movements. He rules that Haitian roots music and culture "is a musical corollary to populist political movements (178)." One such populist political movement associated with Roots music and culture that took place during this time was "a revived Haitian nationalism" (McAlister 199). This revival of Haitian nationalism was also a product of the times and likely due to a confluence of factors such as the increased media coverage on Haiti, a freer exchange of ideas, hope in changes to come, and transnational travel including returns from exile. In conjunction with this populist movement, Roots music and the associated culture forwarded the connection of Haitians to their past, thereby representing an unmistakable effort of memory in Haitian culture. Roots music was therefore one of the various movements in the French Caribbean community that cumulatively demonstrates the intensified trend of connecting past to present.

Yet another facet of this cultural movement currently at work in the French Caribbean context is cinema. The narrative content of the five films analyzed in

Chapters three and four corresponds to the ongoing effort of memory explicitly at work in the commemoration. These films feature subject matter such as popular heroes, historical figures, monuments, literature, and music from the inexhaustible text of Guadeloupe, Martinique and Haiti as a way of contributing to the ongoing identitary quest, of performing identity as Antillean or Creole, of addressing political concerns, of amending local cultural memory to include certain versions of historical events, and of putting forward the richness of these cultures through film. For example, both of the following films directed by Christian Lara, *Sucre Amer* (1997) and *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne* (2005) depict the popular hero, Ignace, who participated in a rebellion against the French after Napoleon reinstituted slavery in Guadeloupe. Charles Najman's film, *Royal Bonbon* (2002) also involves the depiction of a historic figure of Haiti's past, King Henri Christophe and Raoul Peck's film *L'homme sur les quais* (1992) is set in the context of the Duvalier regime. Lastly, in Euzhan Palcy's documentary on Aimé Césaire, *Une Voix Pour l'Histoire*, interviews and historical footage demonstrate a true effort of memory that is meant to forge a more accurate depiction of history. These films question and reinterpret historical figures, landscapes, and events, while also demonstrating the agency of individuals in a non-monolithic retelling of the past. This post-colonial endeavor, begun and continuing in innumerable places and amongst countless cultures, harkens back to Pierre Nora's term *lieux-carrefours* (or sites of memory) discussed previously. Nora's project shares a subtle relationship with the films and the commemoration: they are both branches of the practice of remembering, be it within academic or social parameters. In the final assessment, Najman, Peck, Lara and Palcy's films manifest the very same political and cultural preoccupation of the aforementioned current events: a desire to produce uniquely French Caribbean sites of memory.

III. THE TRAJECTORY OF THE PROJECT: CHAPTER ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter charts the history of Haitian cinema, and the second provides this historical overview for Martinican and Guadeloupan cinema. Both chapters begin with the arrival of cinema on the islands and continue with a survey of production, film content, funding sources, channels of distribution and diffusion. In these two chapters on development of French Caribbean

Cinema, manifold questions arise. For instance, what is the nature of the financial climate in the French Caribbean film industry? Where and how do filmmakers attract funding? In terms of a film's diffusion and distribution, through what channels does a film circulate? What film festivals are shaping and encouraging film production? What factors prevent these films from being widely seen?

My primary objective in these two chapters is to relate this development of cinema to the specific historical, political and cultural context of the islands in question. I argue that the development of French Caribbean Cinema did not and does not occur in a vacuum. Consequently, its development clearly depends on and is influenced by historical matters, such as the Haitian Revolution and tradition of failed leadership in Haiti and the enduring, albeit problematic, connections to France and its rich, cinematic tradition in Martinique and Guadeloupe; by political matters, such as sources of funding and distribution and diffusion opportunities; and by cultural matters, such as literary or intellectual production, the impact of other cinemas, and local, regional, and international film festivals. My findings ultimately suggest a correlation between France's historical presence in the islands and a discernable corresponding influence on the development of French Caribbean cinema.

Once the emergence and development of the industry has been provided, I examine five films over the course of chapter three and four. All five films exhibit a strong preoccupation with the past. As the title of my dissertation indicates, it is immediately clear that memory is at the core of these works dating from the early nineties to the present. As a result, the analysis can be aptly characterized as a study of memory. Yet, what exactly is meant by memory in the context of a film analysis?

Although it is obvious to most, memory is not synonymous with history. It differentiates itself in two key ways. Describing one major difference between memory and history, Michael Lambek writes in the book *Regimes of Memory*:

> History is memory inscribed, codified, authorized; memory is history embodied, imagined, enacted, enlivened. Memory provides an agile, existential, indeterminate practice that draws on and supports history even as it offsets the weight of history's powerful claims (Michael Lambek 212).

In this citation, Lambek clarifies that memory is an active, multidimensional process that involves drawing on historical events, reimagining them and counteracting a single dominant narrative of the past.

Paul Grainge takes this distinction between history and memory one step further. His definition clarifies that memory involves more than the process of reinterpreting the past. His focus is more on where this reinterpretation surfaces. He reorients the discussion of memory toward the present, writing:

> While akin to the province of history, with it disposition towards 'knowing' and interpreting the past, memory suggests a more dialogic relationship between the temporal constituencies of 'now'and 'then'; it draws attention to the activations and eruptions of the past as they are experienced in and constituted by the present (Grainge 1).

Grainge emphasizes that memory refers to how the past is activated and appears in the present. Another film scholar, Paul Storey, summarizes this idea even more succinctly, saying "To study memory, therefore, is not to study the past, but the past as it exists in the present (a past-present dialectic) (Storey 103). Using each of these three assessments of memory, in the context of this film analysis memory refers to the process by which history is reconfigured by a filmmaker and integrated into a film in order to draw attention to the aspects of the past and how the past exists in the present.[29]

This definition serves as the starting point for the analysis. Before discussing each film, I first provide a synopsis of the recorded historical facts that provide the basis for the film. This section is necessary because, before determining how history is reimagined onscreen, one must acknowledge the historical background of the film. In Najman's film, for instance, his central character believes himself to be the long dead King Henri Christophe, a Haitian ruler who rose to power following the Haitian

[29] In French Caribbean literature, Guadeloupan author Daniel Maximin by use of an extensive compilation of methods to refer to memory in his novel *L'isolé Soleil*. Maximin refers to music of past eras, emphasizes the role of the oral tradition, and is a master of vocabulary, word play, and double meanings to communicate meaning and link his characters to past events. These literary techniques, in combination with a narrative structure that layers the past and the present to demonstrate their mutual relevance, reveal the extent to which Maximin's novel is driven by memory. Maximin thereby relates to my project because, like the filmmakers, his work serves an example of how the past is reimagined and integrated into the present.

Revolution. Hence, the study of memory involves summarizing the events of the Haitian Revolution and the details of this historical figure's actual reign.

Yet, Najman does not represent history to the letter. Instead, he extracts certain facts from history to foreground in his film. To refer back to the definition of memory in this analysis, how is history reconfigured by the filmmaker? In *Royal Bonbon*, for instance, what new elements does Najman add to Henri Christophe's story? Briefly, what exactly is being remembered in the film? To answer these questions, I examine the choices that Najman makes in the process of reimagining or manipulating history in his film. This section of the analysis involves an examination of various filmic choices present in the film. Filmic choices that will be covered include the narrative structure (the editing, ellipses, anachronisms, temporality), the *mise-en-scène* (mood, lighting, sound, dominant colors, shots), the casting (local, non-professional), and character representation (clothing, behavior, dialogue). These choices will consistently demonstrate that, at the core of this film, there is an unequivocal preoccupation with the past. Moreover, this preoccupation is not only apparent in Najman's film. The other films to be analyzed in Chapters four and five, *L'homme sur les quais* (Raoul Peck, 1992) *Sucre Amer* (Christian Lara, 1997), *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne* (Christian Lara, 2005), and Euzhan Palcy's *Une Voix Pour l'Histoire* (1994), will undergo a similar analysis and exhibit the same preoccupation with the past, be it slavery, resistance, independence, colonialism, exile, violence, and/or the relationship between France and the islands.

In the process of analyzing the numerous filmic choices that prove this preoccupation with the past, the final and perhaps most important question will be addressed. For what purpose do the filmmakers call attention to aspects of the past? This question is inspired by Grainge's consideration that: "texts of memory…invoke the past in specific ways and for specific ends" (Grainge 1). In this simple statement, it becomes clear that similar to all sites of memory, they invoke the past "for specific ends." But what are these ends? To find an answer, I draw on the following summation about memory in film. Storey surmises that "it is the play of the past in the present which makes memory, and appeals to memory, always potentially political" (Storey 104). Invoking the past in film is a political gesture because of the fact that it involves explicit

and revealing choices on the part of the filmmaker about what parts of the past are relevant to the present. That is to say, films encompass political beliefs because they allow for the past to be read and experienced anew in a manner of the director's choosing. Therefore, the process and presence of memory reveals the political position of the filmmaker, a key component of the contemporary French Caribbean cultural climate. The set of choices made by a filmmaker condense and highlight his or her political views as well those of society. For instance, films underline the flaws of government, serve as insightful reminders of the islands' troubles, emphasize forms of resistance, and offer a pathway to change. Through an artistic, critical, and emotional creation, films have the potential to heal the wounds caused by painful past, manufacture political viewpoints, and become sites of political production and negotiation.

My contribution in this project is therefore to trace the development of French Caribbean cinema, connect this development to the context, thoroughly analyze a set of French Caribbean films to uncover the role of memory in these films, thereby proving that they are politically charged cultural creations meant to revisit the French Caribbean colonial past, promote French Caribbean culture, and negotiate the role of these islands in the twenty-first century. From these multiple vantage points, this intellectual interrogation of French Caribbean film proves itself to be a necessary and consequential site of post-colonial and Francophone visual culture scholarship.

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SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 1: CULTURAL MOVEMENTS IN THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN

Long after Haitian independence in 1803 and the abolition of slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1848, the ramifications of slavery remain ever-present motifs in French Caribbean culture. The first major French Caribbean cultural movements to attempt to come to terms with the impact of slavery and racism were *Indigénisme* (alternately called *le mouvement indigène*, *le mouvement folklorique*, or the ethnological movement) which surfaced in Haiti following the American invasion of Port-au-Prince in 1915, and *Négritude*, which began in Martinique with the 1935 appearance of the term in the journal *L'Etudiant Noir* (The Black Student).

As musicologist Michael Largrey explains, *Indigénisme* "was fundamentally concerned with the issues of race. Specifically, indigènistes refuted the racialist theories of black inferiority that had been in vogue on the European continent since J.A. Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-55)" (Largey 41). *Négritude* is commonly referred to as movement that encourages the valorization of black identity, but is very difficult to define cursorily because it has gone through various changes and interpretations over time. *Négritude* differs from *Indigénisme* in various ways, one primarily being the fact that it has been the subject of more contemporary scrutiny. This is due to the renown of co-founders of the *L'Etudiant Noir*: Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor and Léon Damas.

Both Senghor and Césaire independently defined *Négritude* in the mid-twentieth century and alternately received criticism for seeming to propose an essentialist racial solidarity.[30] As a result of the apparent contradiction between Césaire's poetic vision and later political decisions, *Négritude* fell out of favor beginning in the 1970's. Criticism of *Négritude* spurred new thinking about French Caribbean identity. In the 1970's and 80's, a growing literary tradition, in combination with the continued pursuit to problematize French Caribbean identity, simultaneously gave rise to other configurations of identity

[30] Presently, scholars are in the process of reassessing both of their interpretations of Negritude. See Gary Wilder *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005

like *Créolité*, *Antillanité*, and *créolisation* and to the creative works of Edouard Glissant, Damas, Patrick Chamoiseau, Maryse Condé, Raphael Confiant, Daniel Maximin and others.

Meanwhile, Haitians were embracing a movement of their own: *Kilti libète* or Freedom Culture. Haitian historians Claudine Michel and Patrick Bellegarde Smith explains that Freedom Culture "emerged outside of the country and purported to employ culture as a weapon to combat the social conditions of Haiti, the Duvalier dictatorship in particular" (57 Michel and Bellegarde-Smith). Repression by the Duvalier regime forced the movement outside of Haiti to develop in the Haitian diaspora (58 Michel and Bellegarde-Smith). Although *Kilti libète* was not a literary movement like *Créolité*, it also focused on "the use and promotion of Creole" (58 Michel and Bellegarde Smith). The shared objective of *Indigénisme*, *Négritude*, *Créolité*, and *Kilti libète* movements can therefore be defined as a desire to promote, define, and celebrate French Caribbean identity.

CHAPTER 1: Development of Haitian Cinema

In this chapter, the political, economic, and social history of Haiti is evoked alongside the development of Haitian film, proving the intimate link between this film industry and its context. Indeed, the extent the triumphs and tragedies of Haitian history have shaped the development of the film industry and the preoccupations of its emerging filmmakers cannot be overstressed. The first section of this chapter provides a very brief colonial history of Haiti. This background is indispensable because of the fact that contemporary film professionals continue to engage with this foundational era. Subsequently, the chapter outlines the development of Haitian cinema from 1899 to the present. The majority of the earliest information on Haitian cinema originates from historical documents recently made available through the University of Florida Latin American Library as well as findings provided by two previous studies. Articles from various newspapers, journals, and websites supplement the study of more current stages in development.

I. COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

The mountainous island of Quisqueya, now divided between the nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, was inhabited by the Arawak and Caribs at the time of Christopher Columbus' arrival in 1492. The lands were then a tropical paradise, densely forested, and rich in rare woods like "acajou, campeachy, and Brazil wood" (Coupeau 3). After Columbus landed, however, the island attracted buccaneers, farmers, royal cronies, and others wishing to profit from the island's resources. According to historian Steeve Coupeau, as settlement increased, the island became a colonial economy, and as such, it "catered to the interest of metropolitan Spain and France" (Coupeau 7). Consequently, the island's natural environment was slowly taken over in order to produce crops such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, cocao, and indigo.

Yet, the arrival of foreigners and the production of these crops had disastrous consequences. During the next fourteen years, the estimated population of a million Amerindians fell to 60,000, prompting European settlers to seek manual labor from faraway Africa. Approximately 33,000 slaves began arriving every year, resulting in the

arrival of some 860,000 African between 1681 and 1791 (Coupeau 15-16, 19). Forced labor in present-day Haiti gave rise to various forms of resistance over time, from the flight and fight of Indian chiefs such as Hatuey and Cacique Kaonabo, to mulattos like Vincent Ogé, and most notably to the leaders of the Haitian Revolution.

This revolution, the only successful slave revolution in the Americas, was instigated by a ceremony led by a magician named Boukman during the night of August 22, 1791. Boukman organized a ceremony that "anointed a political movement that had reached maturity" (Coupeau 22). Haitians then banded together to fight in a complex battle of alternating enemies – British, Spanish, and French. Within two years, the Creole Toussaint L'Ouverture had risen in the ranks and taken over the reins of the Revolution. Although Toussaint was captured in 1803, dying in a prison in the Jura Mountains a year later, his general, the notoriously violent Jean-Jacques Dessalines made a final push for independence, beating the French at the battle of Vertières. On January 1, 1804, Haiti became an independent nation.

During the revolution, nearly all the white inhabitants had either escaped or were killed. Dessalines effectively "sealed the country off from outside contacts in the two years after independence" and "forbade whites from ever again owning property or land there" (Coupeau 39). He allowed land to be divided among slaves into small plots that has arguably led to a psychological association with substinence farming and freedom (Coupeau 38). Enforced isolationism and attachment to substinence farming has had a lasting impact on Haiti, generating unforeseen political and economic problems well into the twentieth century, as we will see in the coming sections. Dessalines made a series of unpopular choices in his ruling of Haiti. His "demand for freedom for black people and his rejection of white domination – made him a target for those Haitian elites who pursued their own continued prosperity at the expense of the Haitian poor" (Largey 73). , Dessalines died by dismemberment during an ambush in 1806 (Trouillot 60).

After Dessalines' murder, Henri Christophe ruled northern Haiti for nine years. While the mulatto General Alexandre Pétion held the South, Henri Christophe permitted foreign trade, established an educational system, and built several forts and castles, including the Citadelle Lafferiere, a World Heritage site, and Palais Sans Souci (Coupeau 48-49). His decision to maintain coerced labor caused rebellions all over Henri

Christophe's territory, however. Thus, Coupeau summarizes that "in spite of his many accomplishments, King Henri Christophe could not win the sympathy of his subjects because he ruled with an iron fist. He was disowned by all sectors, including his close collaborators (Coupeau 49)." He reportedly died by his own hand in 1820 (Largey 73).

After Henri Christophe's suicide, Jean-Pierre Boyer took control until 1843. Boyer unified the country and attained official recognition for Haiti by the U.S. and France. However, he agreed to pay an indemnity to France for this recognition. This indemnity cost the country dearly. It took nearly a century for Haiti to pay France the agreed to sum of 150 million gold francs (Coupeau 53). Meanwhile, the remainder of the nineteenth century "was marked by significant state instability" (Coupeau 61). The continued trend of a predatory Haitian state, according to Coupeau, translated into a political free-for all: "the political process degenerated into a simple competition to grab public assets" (Coupeau 61). At the time of the arrival of cinema in Haiti, political unrest and economic woes strangled the Haitian way of life.

II. 1899-1914

A mere four years after the invention of filmmaking by Louis and Auguste Lumière, representatives of the brothers had begun arriving in former and current French colonial territories to show their popular reels. A report archived at the Cinémathèque Française, mysteriously marked *Confidentiel* and only available for supervised consultation, discloses that the first public film projection in Haiti by such a representative occurred on December 14th, 1899 (Phéline 3). The Haitian newspaper, *Le Nouvelliste*, which first began printing and selling four-page dailies in 1898, verifies this report.[31] In an anonymous and very brief article, the author heralds the arrival of cinema in Haiti: "It's on tonight! The first projection of Lumière Cinematography, at Petit-Seminaire, 7pm. Here is the first series of 200 that Mr. Filippi will screen" (3).[32] The representative of the

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[31] Although J. Michael Dash rightly calls this newspaper "thin" and "bland" printing "6,000 copies in a country whose population is estimated at more than seven million (Dash, *Culture and Customs of Haiti*, 82)," it nevertheless contains invaluable information about the history of Haitian cinema.

[32] "C'est pour ce soir! La première répresentation du *Cinématographique Lumière*, au Petit-Seminaire à 7 heures. Voici la 1ère série des 200 que doit presenter Mr. Filippi."
Digital scans of *Le Nouvelliste* daily newspaper are available through University of Florida libraries: http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/UFDC/?c=dloc&b=UF00000081
Accessed May 6, 2008.

Lumière brothers, Mr. Filippi, offered a private projection at the French Consulate followed by a public projection at another location, the Petit Seminaire. Describing the event orchestrated by Filippi, Lafontant-Médard writes:

> Approximately five hundred people attended the showing of the first series of the two hundred shots which made up Filippi's collection of animated scenes. Twenty-four shorts were shown and, upon request of the viewers, shown again. Following are the most popular ones: *La Place du Vieux Port de Marseille; La Partie de l'Ecarte; La Chasse des Cuirasiers; Le Carnival à Nice; Le Bain à Milan; Le Crépage de Chignon; Le Faux Cul-de-Jatte* (Lafontant-Médard 63).

These titles underscore the fact that representatives like Mr. Filippi controlled precisely what images reached the attendees. The Frenchness of these titles and the location of the projections also illustrate the fact that the historical relationship between Haiti and France clearly had an impact on the introduction of film to Haiti.

The importance of this representative of the Lumière brothers extends beyond his introduction of film to the Haitian public. According to film historian Lafontant-Médard, Filippi also showed footage of some of his travels in Latin America and the Caribbean islands, an occurrence which indicates that Filippi was a trained cameraman. The author of the "confidential" report also noted that the day after the projections coincides with the very first short film shot on the island: *The Last Fire of 15 December 1899 in Port-au-Prince* (alternately entitled, depending on the source, *L'Incendie de la Place Pétion* and *dernier incendie de la Place Pétion*) (Lafontant-Médard 65). Regrettably, however, the report does not credit the director of the film of the fire or state exactly where any of Filippi's footage is archived.

Corresponding to historical accounts of turn of the century Port-au-Prince, fires were far from an anomaly in Port-au-Prince. West Indian historian Bonham Richardson explains that the repeated threat of fire was enhanced because of the inability to control the smallest hazard from becoming wildly out of control. Whether the cause was arson or accident, the shanty towns in the capital city were particularly at risk.[33] Succinctly put, "by the early twentieth century, Port-au-Prince was a run-down capital plagued by

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Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are mine.

[33] See Bonham C. Rirchardson. ***Igniting the Caribbean's Past: Fire in British West Indian History*** by Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

incessant fires, epidemics, and revolutions" (Girard 74). This contextual information reveals that Filippi (or other unknown camaramen) captured a relatively common occurrence in the capital. This film begins a dominant trend that characterizes the history of Haitian cinema: from this point on the tumultuous Haitian environment becomes an enduring actor in Haitian film.

In the January 3rd, 1900, edition of Le Nouvelliste, an article announces Filippi's upcoming trip to Kingston, Jamaica, and a projection at the *Cercle de Port-au-Prince* location (3). This article also brings to light the beginning of a cinematic relationship among Caribbean islands. The following day, a short write-up reveals that Filippi's showing enjoyed its usual success. With such success, it is unsurprising that the January 6th edition of the newspaper, details how a particular film, or *tableau* as it is referred to, "will be represented as many times as the public would like" (2).[34]

Curiously, however, Filippi's last projection took place on January 7th, before his departure to New York and then Europe, where he planned to "take part in the Great Exposition in Paris with the *Cinémicrophonographe*, the new invention of the cinematograph and the phonograph combined" (my italics 2).[35] The writer also remarks that "We believe that Mr. Filippi has handed over his cinematographique equipment to a company, in which case there may yet be another *last* screening" (2).[36]

The two following articles in this edition define, in more scientific language, the inventions of *cinématographe* and *cinémicrophonographe*. This scientific article begins by asking "What is the cinematographe?" (2).[37] The tone of the article reveals that the author already considers this question terribly *passé.* In retrospect, such an approach is slightly ironic given that, in the study of film, this debate continues for decades, departing from its more scientific roots to become increasibly abstract and complex.

The day after his last showing was described in *Le Nouvelliste*, on January 9, 1900, a brief article listed those persons who have recently left Haiti: "Departures. Yesterday at 1pm, the Dutch steamer 'Prins Wilhelm III' left for New York with the

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[34] "sera répresenté autant de fois que le public l'aura pour agréable."
[35] "prendre part à la Grande Exposition de Paris avec le *Cinémicrophonographe*, la nouvelle invention du 'cinématographe et du phonographe combinés."
[36] "Nous croyons savoir que Mr. Filippi ayant cédé son appareil cinématographique à une compagnie, il se peut [que] nous ayons encore une *dernière* répresentation."
[37] "Qu'est-ce le cinématographe?"

follow passangers aboard: MM. Normil Sambour, Giuseppe, and Dom. Filippi, Mrs. Humoblt" (3).[38] The second name on the list is Giuseppe Filippi. In all likelihood Giuseppe Filippi is the same Filippi to have brought cinema to Haiti. Additionally, he appears to have traveled with a relative, Dominique Filippi. The knowledge of Filippi's first name has fruitful consequences.

According to *The Oxford History of World Cinema* the Lumière brothers invention was brought to Italy and made its first appearance there at "the Roman photographic atelier *Le Leure* on 13 March, 1896" (Nowell-Smith 217). Although Filippi's first name is not given in Lafontant-Médard's account, he may be one of the same four future Italian cameramen (Giuseppe Filippi) named in this account. Hence, he would have been been exposed to cinema at this atelier and subsequently involved in Italian distribution efforts of the Lumière brothers' material. If this was indeed the case, it would certainly be logical that his training would have permitted him to continue such efforts abroad. Furthermore, Giuseppe Filippi would have been adequately trained to film his new environment, substantiating the notion that Filippi participated in the making of the first film shot in Haiti and perhaps the other footage mentioned by Lafontant-Médard. Most interesting to consider is the idea that Filippi, an Italian cameraman with a pivotal role in the history of Haitian cinema, may have been responsible for a second trend that dominated Haitian cinema for years to come: Haiti filmed primarily and consistently by foreigners. Indeed, even after affordable digital cameras arrive in Haiti allowing the art of filmmaking to be accessible to more Haitians, foreign filmmakers still maintain a strong presence in the industry.

Although the author does not name the company from which Filippi received his equipment in the January 7th edition, on January 15th it is explained "MM. Greco & Co. gave their last cinematographique representation" to a "full house – perfection execution – total success."[39] One can surmise, therefore, that the Greco Company took possession of Fillipi's camera and projection system. The company does not stay much longer in the capital than Filippi, however. After discussing the company's organized projection, the

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[38]"Départ. Hier à 1 heuere, a quitté pour New York, le steamer hollandaise 'Prins Wilhem III' avec les passagers suivants: MM. Normil Sambour, Giuseppe et Dom. Filippi, Mme Homblot."

[39] "MM. Greco & Co. ont donné leur dernière représentation cinématographique" to a "sale pleine comme un oeuf - exécution parfaite, - succès complet."

author of *Le Nouvelliste* report then wishes MM. Greco & Co. success in their upcoming departure on the boat *Nippes* "to travel the Coast"(3).[40] A light-hearted poem in this same edition unravels the mystery of this ambiguous voyage along the unnamed coast.

Juxtaposed with various political updates on elections or candidates, unsolved deaths, reports of gun fire, lost keys and fine Bordeaux wine, a person by the name of Nilaup devised a poem during the turn of the century editions of *Le Nouvelliste* to accompany the news of the day. In the January 16th edition, Nilaup's poem, *Les "Cinématagraphistes*," appeared.

Cinematographically,
I will tell you all about it,
First the subjects, then the reason
which encourages me to rhyme
Cinematographically!

My subjects are indeed the three
Most dissimilar men they be
If you say they are not bright,
Stick a needle in your eye

One is large and round – tremendous;
The second is quite sweet;
The third, brown-haired and social;
And all together they are a sight!

I hope my quill…ographe
Has described them well
Maurice HARGOUS, photographer
DAUFESNE, the valliant rabbit
GRECO, the dark-haired Italian!

The reason, now – oh my!
I will tell you, without delay
As one should on this fine day

Farewell! Take your leave, brilliant artists
Who have charmed all of us!..Set off
To cheer our sad lands;
Rewards will come your way!

Your spectacle is magnifiscent;
Your pictures? Pleasing to the eyes!
And you have the unique girft
Of being such an affable trio!

You will have, in all our towns,
The very same happiness found here:
Fathers, mothers, daughters, sons
Will not miss dare to miss the show

You shall be a great success!
And we dearly hope
You find treasures along the way,
- Cinematographically…

Nilaup" (2). [41]

[40] "pour faire la Côte."
[41] See Supplemental Data 1 for original French version.

The poem's laudatory tone and the playful use of the word *cinématographe* suggest that Haitians in Port-au-Prince responded very positively to Filippi's visit. Indeed, the implicit message of the poem is that the capital city was completely enraptured with the foreign team and the new invention.

Moreover, the poem simultaneously paints a quaint picture of the members of the Greco Company while elucidating their travel plans. Maurice Hargous, the photographer, is described as "chubby, wonderful."[42] Hargous' expertise makes him the likely candidate for filming any of the images of Haiti taken during their tour of the island. The poet does not specifiy Daufesne's occupation besides being an industrious animal, a rather enigmatic remark. Again, the likely Italian influence remains present after Filippi's departure: "GRECO, brown-haired son of Italy!"[43] With different responsibilities, the poet's impression is that the three manage to work very well together. The sixth and eighth stanzas state the trio's plans to project films in the villages and cities along the Haitian coast: "in all our towns."[44]

Overall, the poem provides unique insight into this historical occasion, painting a lively picture of the screenings and the men who made them possible. It is indeed remarkable to reflect on the image of these three foreigners offering the Haitian public possibly composed of individuals who had heard nothing of the invention or its popularity in the capital a chance to experience cinema for the very first time. Perhaps Jean-Marc Césaire's present-day venture, *Cinéwoulé*, an itinerant cinema project in Guadeloupe to be discussed in Chapter two, has roots in the Italian company's scheme.

From May 2nd through the 9th of 1902, more than two years after Filippi and the Greco Company's departure, cinema screenings in Port-au-Prince again become a topic in the *Le Nouvelliste*. For "fifty centimes" individuals could attend showings at the Museum of Petit-Seminaire, theatres and other venues.[45] The two films, Perraulet's fable *Le Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood) and *L'Ascension de N.S. Jesus Christ* are mentioned more than once as crowd pleasers. Although the article cites neither the

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[42] "joufflu, formidable."
[43] "GRECO, brun fils d'Italie!"
[44] "dans toutes nos villes1"
[45] "cinquante centimes"

release dates nor the directors of these films, in all likelihood, Georges Méliès directed the first in 1901 Georges Hatot and Louis Lumière directed the second in 1898. This second wave of screenings is shortlived. On May 5th of 1902, an anonymous author writes: "the owners of the Cinematographe will only have a few more screenings" because of an imminent departure (2).[46] The organizers of the screenings are not disclosed. The fact that the writer speaks of the organizers in plural suggest the possibility that the screenings are a result of a return visit from the Greco Company.

Filippi's stay in Port-au-Prince and the Greco Company's travels elsewhere in Haiti signify a foundational moment in Haitian filmmaking history. These organized screenings mark the first time in which Haitians had the opportunity to be exposed to popular foreign films. Moreoever, during the course of at least Filippi's visit, Haiti (and Haitians most likely as well) became the subject of at least one film. As mentioned, the two trends initiated by these visitors are that the films consisted of substantially foreign content, and filmmaking is undertaken primarily by foreigners. Indeed, for the first half of the twentieth century, Haitians appear to remain primarily passive consumers of foreign films.

By 1907, Lafontant-Médard reports that the Grand-Hôtel de Pétionville in Port-au-Prince was offering regularly scheduled projections. Seven years later, the *Théâtre Parisiana*, founded by Madame Muffat Taldy, also began showing films (Phéline 3; Lafontant-Médard 66). An unknown network of film distribution had apparently been established in Haiti because Lafontant-Médard claims that new footage arrived frequently enough for these theatres to stay in business. At this early date, footage included "*Edouard VII et Son Escorte*, *Voyage du Roi d'Angleterre à Paris* and *Guerre Russo-Japonaise*" (Lafontant-Médard 66). Although Lafontant-Médard does not provide the directors and dates of these films, the first title corresponds to another Méliès title from1902 that involved "a re-enactment using actors of the recent coronation of Britain's King Edward VII."[47] The second title is similar to a 1922 Belgian film documenting the

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[46] "les propriétaires du Cinematographe pensent ne devoir plus que quelques representations encore." http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/UFDC/UFDC.aspx?c=dloc&m=hd2X&i=49035&vo=22&vp=1152,1328

[47] *Edouard VII et Son Escorte* (Méliès, 1902), "http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0000387/ Accessed November 18, 2008.
Voyage du Roi d'Angleterre à Paris (1922, Documentary, director unknown)
Guerre Russo-Japonaise (Lucien Nonguet, 1904), Pathé Frères Company

visit of the King of England, George V at the time. The last title likely refers to a long series of Lucien Nonguet's short films portraying events in the war between Russia and Japan. Given the titles, film exposed local theatre-goers to international events and colonial powers.

In 1915, Mrs. Taldy "founded Ciné-Variétés in 1916 with André Chevalier as partner. Their theatre was later (1919) transferred to what is now Ciné Paramount" (Lafontant-Médard, p. 66). The partnership, however, ended in 1924. Lafontant-Médard also indicates that "…Mr. Henri Arounoux's 'Casino-Cinema' tour of Cap-Haitien, Jérémie, Gonaives, Port-de-Paix" occurred in 1916. From these details, we can presume that at least two theatres were available during the American occupation of Haiti from 1915-1934. Two movies projected during this tour were *La Danse Héroïque* and *La Comtesse Noire*" (Lafontant-Médard 68).[48] René Leprince and Ferdinand Zecca co-directed films bearing these same titles, released in 1914 and 1913 respectively. According to International Movie Database, Leprince was a prolific film professional, acting in and directing dozens of films in early 1900's.[49] The former title involves the story of "a famous danser, Gaby des Roses, travels to America for an exposition on the transatlantic carrier, Jupiter. One evening, a fire starts onboard."[50]

Unlike the first showings by Filippi, however, "the spectators tended to be guests at the Petion-Ville Grand Hotel and vacationers in Pétion-Ville" (Lafontant-Médard, p.66). That is to say, from 1899 - 1915, the composition of viewers altered. Screenings were less accessible to the peasant and working class. This shift is logical given that in the early 1900's, Haiti continued to be a highly stratified society with "an illiterate, distrustful peasant majority; a numerically tiny elite divided by rivalry based on color; and the absence of anything like a middle class to exert a moderating or stabilizing influence on this precarious situation" (Dash 10). The shifting audience composition

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[48] *La Danse Héroïque* (René Leprince & Ferdinand Zecca, 1914), based on the novel by Pierre Sales. Pathé Frères Company
La Comtesse Noire (René Leprince & Ferdinand Zecca, 1913), Pathé Frères Company.
[49] http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0503415/
[50]"une célèbre danseuse, Gaby des Roses, se rend en Amérique pour une tournée à bord du transatlantique Jupiter. Un soir, le feu prend dans la cale."
http://www.cinematheque.fr/fr/nosactivites/projections/cycles-cinema/cycle/manifestation/V1863-danse-heroique-titanic.htm
Accessed November 19, 2008

therefore reflects the social hierarchy in Haiti at the time. In fact, the connection between the development of cinema and the social environment becomes increasingly pronounced during the rest of the twentieth century.

III. 1915-1934

J. Michael Dash summarizes that "by the turn of the century, Haiti had become a land of small-scale peasant tillage with an external trade that was appropriated for the exclusive use of a tiny elite" (Dash, p.11). The in-fighting amongst this elite and high-powered military figures resulted in a fractious political environment. Leading up to the American occupation, Dash explains that "Between 1900 and 1915, after a hundred or so years of independence, Haiti faced a succession of incompetent short-term presidents. Between 1911 and 1915, a rapid succession of revolts managed to place six presidents in office" (Dash 11). The volatile political conflicts culminated in the assasination of the Haitian president. Inaugurated on March 4, 1915, the new president of Haiti, Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam was decided to "secure his presidency" by rounding up two hundred hostages from Port-au-Prince's wealthier families. He then ordered they be executed if they attempted to contest his authority. When "a small group of revolutionaries marched on the presidential palace," the prison guards killed 167 of the hostages. The families clamored for revenge; a mob then kidnapped and killed the president (76-77).

From the American viewpoint, the chaos compelled the country to pursue a military presence. American policymakers believed that, "if the best families of the capital took to dismembering the president in open daylight, Haiti had become truly ungovernable." Haitian historian Philippe Girard explains that following the invasion, various Haitian polticians have contested this American agenda, inferring an imperialist motive behind their actions. Girard argues, however, that America had a strategic rather than an economic interest in Haiti. Because of its weak state on the eve of World War I, Woodrow Wilson intended "to invade Haiti before [Germany] did" (78).

The U.S. Navy took control of the Haitian capital on July 28th, 1915. At first, Haitians did not react violently to the U.S. involvement. This pacifism did not last, however. The U.S. government proceeded to make a number of regrettable decisions that

eventually incited Haitian resistance. For one, the U.S. military reintroduced the *corvée* in 1916:

> The *corvée* was a provision of an 1863 Haitian law that called on peasants to help maintain local roads by paying a tax or, alternatively, working for free as a construction worker…The law left the peasants little choice. They could theoretically pay the tax; or they could work. But nobody had any money; so all were forced to work. To limit discontent, workers were to be treated well, fed, and entertained. The system was initially ruled a success. Highways jumped from 4 miles in 1915 to 470 in 1918…The potential for abuse, however, was enormous…The whites, it seemed, had brought slavery back with them (Girard 81).

This citation explains not only what the *corvée* was, but why it was such a poor choice on the part of the Americans. Following the Haitian Revolution, General Jean-Jacques Dessalines remained so enraged with the white inhabitants of Haiti, he decimated the remainder of this group. His violent nature left an imprint on Haitian history: whites represented the imminent return of slavery and the Americans appeared to fulfill this preconception. Failing to truly acknowledge the impact of this decision to reintroduce the *corvée*, the Americans alienated themselves from the people they had the intention of aiding and protecting.

Consequently, Girard describes how the Haitian "Charles Masséna Péralte…organized a resistance movement using popular discontent with the *corvée* as the main rallying cry" (81). The corvée was eventually abolished in October 1918, but Péralte and his followers continued to retaliate against the American troops and Haitian *genderarmerie* until his death in 1919. The Americans were racist – towards all Haitians, even the wealthier mulattos. This, in combination with the *corvée* and an anti-Voodoo campaign, led to revolt from 1918-1920. The Americans suffered other setbacks in their mission because of the 1918-1919 *cacao* uprising, for instance (Girard 83).

On the other hand, during the American occupation, Haiti experienced nineteen years without a revolution. Girard contends that the country was not exploited economically, because American officials rejected:

> investments by the Sinclair Oil Corporation and the United Fruit Company because these U.S. companies expected economic concessions deemed to onerous to the Haitian government. U.S. authorities even refused to enforce special privileges that previous Haitian presidents had granted to the Haitian-American Sugar Company (Girard 84).

Moreoever, the lack of corruption also bolstered Haiti's credibility abroad. Custom fees, which in the past had paid for presidential privileges and "financed revolutions" were instead used for "public works and sanitation facilities" (Girard 84). Towards the end of the occupation, the Americans had managed to build "210 bridges and 1,000 miles of all-weather roads" (Girard 84). Additionally infrastructural improvements included the modernization of ports, the introduction of lighthouses, the appearance of nine major airfields, the repair of telephone lines, the construction of a new presidential palace (which blew up in 1912), the establishment of the first radio station and eleven modern hospitals, and some degree of available running water (Girard 84). Girard judges that the result of these improvements was "nothing short of spectacular" (84). In sum, the U.S. government made unfortunate decisions that reinforced the Haitian impression of foreign interveners, even though they managed to pour money from Haitian taxes into desperately needed infrastructure and public works projects (Girard 84-85).

During this dynamic, albeit controversial period, the Haitian film industry experienced notable development. First of all, Haiti was being filmed. According to Arnold Antonin, "moving images from the period of the US occupation from 1915-1934, showing the actions of the marines and official ceremonies…health care, agriculture, or scenes from social life, particularly Carnival" are available at the Library of Congress and at Pathé Ciné (*Small Axe* 88). Second, films were being shown. Lafontant-Médard reports that "the first news magazines ('Ciné Variété Journal') were screened at the Ciné-Variété on December 26, 1925. Among the 'new' features were: *Carnival Celebrations*, *Children's Dance in Port-au-Prince*, *the Mariana Tennis Tournament*, and footage of selected Haitian cities" (Lafontant-Médard 70). Simultaneously, the two theatres established in the 1910's, the Parisiana and the Ciné-Variétés "were competing for a larger share of the viewing audience" (Lafontant-Médard 71). This competition is

exemplified in their decision to show the three following films in tandem: *Mondragore, Orphelins de la Tempête, Douze Round d'un Furieux Combat*.[52]

In addition to the screening of both locally filmed material and (apparently) French features, the U.S. government projected propaganda films during the entire occupation. According to Lafontant-Médard, the U.S. Department of Sanitation was a leading participant in this effort. Though it is now impossible to judge the ideological impact of these films, it is nonetheless true that concrete changes in Haitian media instrastructure took place concurrently with the U.S. presence. To explain, towards the end of the occupation, at least four theatres were constructed, one of which was owned by a well-known American company. On October 1, 1933, a new theatre named Ciné Eden, located in Cap Haitian, opened its doors. Within a year, the building of two others in Port-au-Prince is announced in *Le Nouvelliste* on May 23. Finally, the successful Paramount Company opened a theatre and screened its first film on May 2, 1934 (Lafontant-Médard 74).

Adolph Zukor founded Paramount Pictures in 1912 and in order "to achieve the broadest possible distribution of its films, Hollywood-based Paramount Pictures constructed a grand movie palace in practically every major city in [the U.S.], many erected between 1926 and 1928."[53] Along with Metro-Goldwyn and Universal Studios, Paramount "sought to expand their markets beyond the U.S. border, to establish distribution all over the world" (Hamed and Brazier 265). A brief history of this expansion documents the construction of a Paramount theatre in Haiti:

> The First World War offered a crucial opening. While other national cinemas were constrained, the leading Hollywood companies moved to make the world their market… By the mid-1920's, Hollywood dominated not only the major English-speaking markets of Great Britiain, Canada, and Australia, but most of continental Europe except for Germany and the Soviet Union, and had successfully expanded into South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. This crippaled the arrival of rival studio systems, except in isolated cases (Nowell-Smith 48-50).

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[52] The night of a strike by Haitian students against the U.S. Occupation, Parisiana screened the later film (72). I have not been able to locate the release dates or directors of these films.
[53] Accessed June 3, 2008 : http://www.theparamount.com/about/history.asp

The Paramount Company thereby exploited weakened markets, building theatres across the world. The construction of these theatres in Haiti is significant given the political context. In 1934, President Roosevelt and the Haitian President Stenio Vincent met twice to negotiate the departure of American forces. The footage of Vincent's trip to Washington D.C. made its way back to Haitian theatres in three different cities: Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haitian and Jérémie. And, when President Roosevelt visited Cap-Haitian in July of 1934, this meeting was also captured on film then shown at the Paramount theatre (Lafontant-Médard 78).[54] Meanwhile, a major technological advancement in cinema reached Haiti: the talking picture.

Given the American ownership of the Paramount theatre, its appearance in Haiti may have indeed set the stage for the future long-term influx of American films.[55] Consider the fact that the early twentieth century U.S. presence signals the arrival of the first known American-made films in Haiti, and, as the history of cinema henceforth demonstrates, the two seemingly greatest numbers of films distributed in Haiti come from French sources first, with dubbed American films tailing at a close second. As of yet, however, Haitians do not appear to have had the financial or technical means to shoot and/or distribute their own films.

IV. 1935-1966

Following the departure of U.S. troops, the Haitian film industry experienced notable development. The Rex theatre opened in October 1935. It was "built by the Société Haitienne des Spectacles (Haitian Entertainment Corp.) under the leadership of Mr. Daniel Brun and managed by Mrs. Taldy until 1951" (Lafontant-Médard 77). The establishment of this company is noteworthy because it may have been the first of local distribution company in existence. Moreover, such a maneuver suggests an attempt to assert control over the Haitian market. The theater had twelve-hundred seats, a considerable size even by today's standards. It also began its operation quite ambitiously by screening a rather extensive list of films: "in its first week of operation, the new theater featured the following movies: *La Bataille* (*The Battle*), *La Robe Rouge* (*The Red*

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[54] Paramount Co. history.

[55] At the time of writing, I have not yet been able to match a list of films widely circulated by the Paramount with films available in Haitian theatres.

Dress), *Gai Divorce* (*The Gay Divorcee*), *Banque Nemo* (*Bank Nemo*)" (Lafontant-Médard 77).[56] These four titles replicate the pattern of films screened in Haiti during the first part of the twentieth century: three are French productions, and one, *The Gay Divorcee*, is an Oscar-winning American film starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The release dates of these films, ranging from 1933-1934, also uphold another trend in the development of Haitian cinema. The length of time between a film's release date in its country or origin and its release in Haiti was not tremendously long. This indicates that, although Haitian theatres relied of foreign films, they were at least relatively recently made.

Unfortunately, the forced stability experienced during the American occupation was not long-lasting. Throughout the twentieth century, Haitians immigrated to the Dominican Republic to labor in cane fields. In 1937, the Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo, ordered the genocide of these workers. In total, some twenty-five thousand Haitians were killed (Girard 81). The following year, President Vincent Steno declared himself dictator of Haiti, repeating a tactic attempted by Haitian leadership throughout its history. Meanwhile, the largely uneducated populace was unable to sustain the scope of repairs and improvements made during the occupation (Girard 81-82). In all likelihood, the Haitian film industry suffered from the tumultuous political environment and faltering basic services, like electricity, running water and telephone lines.

Fortunately, however, the efforts of Ricardo Widmaïer in the early 1950's produced results in the development of Haitian cinema. This "radio and cinema pioneer" was "responsible for directing and projecting news features at the Paramount cinema" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88). Most unusual and encouraging about Widmaïer was the fact that "he had his laboratory in Port-au-Prince where he developed his 16mm films in black and white and color" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88). Hence, his personal initiative and equipment enabled him to produce news features "on diverse subjects until François Duvalier took power in 1957" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88). Widmaïer also collaborated with Edouard Guilbaud on the film *Mais moi je suis belle* (1962, discussed later) and

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[56]IMDB and Encyclo-cine searches suggest these release dates and directors for the following films :
La Bataille (Nicolas Farkas & Viktor Tourjanksy, 1933) – France/Great Britain
La Roge Rouge (Jean de Marguenat, 1933) - France
The Gay Divorcee (Mark Sandrich,1934) – USA
La Banque Nemo (Marguerite Viel, 1934) – France/Germany

"numerous reportages on the political and sporting events that were thought to be the most important" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88).

Towards the end of the 1950's, the political environment in Haiti caused the island to become a notoriously perilous place. Haiti had seen the rise and rall of three different leaders following Vincent (Elie Lescot, Dumarsais Estimé, and Paul Magloire) contributing to the "mind-numbing complexity of Haiti's political life" due to the "dizzying rapidity" of leadership changes (Girard 6). In the interim, the island was not immune to other crises, namely natural disasters. Hurricane Hazel struck Haiti in 1954 causing substantial damage. Immediately thereafter, Cuban director Gustavo Maynulet arrived to film the devastation (Lafontant-Médard 80). His arrival signals the continuance of a discernable trend in the Haitian film industry: the arrival of outsiders compelled to film Haitian calamities.[57]

Even though such filming on the part of foreigners occurred, the screening of any foreign or domestic film was subject to government scrutiny. If a film was thought to "express subversive ideas," it risked being withdrawan from theatres (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88). For instance, Luis Buñuel's film *La Fièvre monte à El Pao* (*Republic of Sin*, 1959) was quickly prohibited from being screened (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88). Buñuel, born on February 22, 1900 in Spain, made a name for himself by directing a series of surrealist films. *La Fièvre*, a French-Mexican production, is one of Buñuel's more obscure works and has been criticized for "an increasing degree of abstraction from physical reality" (Harcourt 12). Regardless, the rebellion at the end of the film and Buñuel's reputation as an avant-garde filmmaker both perhaps contributed to its speedy censorship in Haiti. As we will see in later discussion, the strict censorship in place meant that "very often, Westerns and martial art films were the only choices offered to the public" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88).

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[57]For instance: *Haiti Dreams of Democracy* (Jonathan Demme & Jo Menell, 1988); *Disappearance of TiSoeur: Haiti after Duvalier* (Harriet Hirshorn, 1997); *A Work in Progress: Human Rights in Haiti* (A United Nations documentary); *Haiti: Harvest of Hope* (Kevin Pina, 199?); *Haiti: Killing the Dream* (Babeth, Katherine Kean, and Hart Perry, 2001); *Aristide and the Endless Revolution* (Nicolas Rossier, 2005); *Failing Haiti* (Rod Paul, 2005); *When I am Misery, I Sing* (Juliana Ruhfus, 2005); *Once There Was a Country: Revisiting Haiti* (Kimberly Green, 2008); *Haiti: Killing the Dream* (Rudi Stern, 1992); *Legacy of the Spirits* (Karen Kramer, 1985); *Breaking Leaves* (Karen Kramer, 1998); *Udenrigskorrespondenten* (*Haiti Express*, Jorgen Leth, 1983); *Haiti. Uden titel* (*Haiti Untitled,* Jorgen Leth, 1996); *Haiti dans tous nos rêves* (Jean-Daniel Lafond, 1995) [on Martinique : *La Manière Nègre ou Aimé Césaire Chemin Faisiant* (Jean-Daniel Lafond, 1991]; *Le Batey* (Yves Langlois, 1987).

Three years later after the hurricane, Haiti elected a new president: François Duvalier, referred to more regularly as Papa Doc. Before his election, his medical training put to use in a successful fight against yaws, a tropical disease similar to leprosy, enabled him to earn the trust, and the votes, of his countrymen. After his election, Papa Doc implemented a number of strategies to consolidate his power and remain in control of the country. First, he neutralized "all the institutions in civil society that could prove a threat to his regime" then, he created a "civilian militia, officially called the *Volontaires de la Securité Nationale* (Volunteers for National Security) but popularly known as the *Tonton Macoutes*, as a countervailing force to keep the army in check" (Dash 16).[58] The Creole expression refers to bogeymen who kidnap children and carry them away in their "macoute" or knapsack (Dash 16).[59] In direct contradiction to his early humanitarian efforts, Papa Doc became a "murderous tyrant" during the course of his fourteen-year regime (Girard 96).

Given the alarming political and social environment, the screening of the first feature film produced by a Haitian was a momentous occasion. Filming still remained a costly venture, making this film a doubly impressive feat. The screening took place on April 12th, 1962. The press corps at Radio Haiti viewed the ninety-minute documentary, *Mais Moi Je Suis Belle*, co-directed by Jean Dominique, Edouard Guilbaud, and Emmanuel Lafontant (Lafontant-Médard 81). Of the three directors:

> Jean Dominique occupies a towering position in Haitian cinema. He was the first one to draw our attention to the film narrative. As director of the Cine-Club, he always strove to promote good film taste among Haitian film spectators. His reviews of films playing in movie theaters were broadcast on the radio station and they constituted a guide to the quality of these films (Lafontant-Médard 81-82).

Jean Dominique also actively promoted one of the first Haitian fiction films in Creole, the medium-length *Map Pale Nèt* (1976) directed by Ralph Stines (Lafontant-Médard 82).[60]

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[58]My italics.

[59] I make mention of this force, not just because of its major historical significance but also because it appears in brutal fashion in Raoul Peck's film that will be discussed in Chapter three: *L'Homme Sur les Quais* (*Man on the Wharf*) (1992).

[60] Stines passed away in Port-au-Prince in August 25, 2007. The September 2007 Montreal International Haitian Fim Festival paid tribute to both Stines and Francois Latour (murdered in Port-au-Prince by his

Though these filmmakers had managed to shoot and release these films in the early 1960's, it was still a highly complicated affair to screen films in Haiti. Peter Glenville's film *The Comedians* is case in point. Based on Graham Greene's novel, the American company MGM released the star studded film in 1967. According to Katheline St. Ford's interview of Haitian expert Robert Corbett, Duvalier "distrusted everyone and nothing in the country was [done in] secret. He was most particularly sensitive after Graham Greene published his novel *The Comedians*. He intensely distrusted foreigners."[61] Duvalier manifested this deep distrust by banning the film for decades because it portrayed him as a "tyrannical maniac." [62] With this precedent of censorship in place, the Haitian filmmaking scene never flourished during Duvalier's regime. Consequently, throughout the 1960's, Haitians were left with a slim choice of innocuous commercial films from France or Italy (Antonin*, Small Axe* 88).

V. 1967-1990

Following Papa Doc's death in 1971, his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, continued the hereditary legacy as dictator of Haiti.[63] At eighteen years old, Bébé Doc, as he was called, became the youngest president in the world. The oppressive political system established Papa Doc and upheld by his son had a two-pronged effect on Haitian cinema. A columnist for the newspaper *Petit Samedi Soir* Dany Laferrière made the case that Haitians did not have the opportunity to witness intelligent filmmaking. In his January 1975 article, he "denounced the pitiful state of cinema in Haiti while revealing the methods by which the major distribution networks pressure movie theaters into purchasing the worst films to come out of the production factories. Rated as an unprofitable market, Haiti is flooded with pornographic (sex) and karate (muscle) movies" (Lafontant-Médard 85). Although Laferrière seems to suggest that Haitian

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kidnappers on May 22, 2007: http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/info_festival_en.html & http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/pdf/com_13juin2007_en.pdf

[61] *Ibid*

[62] http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/540.html
"Haitian creativity outlasted nation's tyranny"
By Katheline St. Fort, Miami-Herald, Sunday 29 June 2003

[63] Despite the optimism at the change in leadership, Bébé managed to "increase foreign aid while changing nothing of substance" (Girard 101). The *Tonton Macoutes* and torture chambers, for instance, remained as part of the "repressive architecture" established by Papa Doc (Girard 101). Also like his father before him, Bébé Doc engaged in a modern-day slave trade by selling Haitian cane cutters for $50 a piece to their Dominican neighbors (Girard 102).

theatres appear to be powerless and complicit agents in the circulation of undesirable foreign options, the distribution company responsible for the blockbuster, *Jaws*, chose to bring the film to Haiti. In the newly expanded Capitol theatre and its competitor, the Triomphe, Haitians had the opportunity to see the film in July, 1976 (Lafontant-Médard 86).

Another article, found in the April 1978 edition of the Port-au-Prince magazine, *Le Fil d'Ariane*, illustrates the infiltration of the Haitian market by pornography and other blockbusters.[64] In an anonymous editorial style article entitled "Pornos de Jour" or Porn of the Day, the author asks sarcastically, "I would like someone to explain to me the difference between *Salon Kitty*, *Who's warming up my wife's bed?*, *Bilitis*, and the porns played after 8pm" (25).[65] The writer's complaint concerns the poor quality of the films, the near-false advertising of the film's content, and lack of enforced age restrictions to keep these adolescents from seeing these films:

> Most of the time, these 'daily porns' do not even mention their NC-17 rating. And in any case, there is no enforced age restriction in place at the theatre entrance. Tons and tons of male and female adolescents attend these films, which I consider as affronts toward spectators. When I feel like watching a porn, I go to the cinema in the evening. Very rarely in any case, these films being perfectly indigent and exceedingly stupid. Here we are, all transformed into voyeurs often against our liking. I refuse to be duped when it comes to the merchandise. Because it is false advertising when an ad announces the film *Bilitis* in this way: 'A dream, a young girl, young love. A young girl amongst adults, the magic of an image. A love story dedicated to the young girls of today'…From the first image to the last, we see naked girls caressing each other (25).[66]

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[64] Ed. Nadine Magloire. Archived at the Benson Latin American Library.

[65] "J'aimerais que l'on m'explique la différence qu'il y a entre 'Salon Kitty', 'Qui chauffe le lit de ma femme?', 'Bilitis' et les pornos que l'on joue après 8h du soir."

[66] "La plupart du temps, ces 'pornos de jour' ne portent même pas la mention 'interdit au moins de 18 ans'. Et de toutes facons, il n'y a aucun contrôle à l'entrée du cinema. Des tas d'adolescents et d'adolescentes assistent à ces projections que je considère comme des aggressions envers les spectateurs. Quand j'ai envie de me taper un porno, j'y vais le soir. Fort rarement d'ailleurs, ces films étant d'une parfaite indigence et d'une grande bêtise…Nous voilà tous transformés en voyeurs souvent contre notre gré. Je refuse qu'on me trompe sur la merchandise. Car il y a tromperie sur la merchandise lorsque la publicité annonce ainsi le film 'Bilitis': 'Un rêve, une jeune fille, un amour d'adolescente. Une jeune fille parmi les adultes, la magie

After providing this list of complaints with the theatre, the writer continues with a rather feminist critique of the films and society itself, leaving no one and nothing blameless when it comes to the showing of porn in Haiti:

> For a change, I would really like to see men [in porn]. When then will these phallocrates stop treating women like objects? When will women refuse this abject role? Our young people are saturated with idiotic films, parents have renounced their duty as educators, teachers are powerless. What beautiful humanity awaits us! On top of this, there are theatres specializing in porn. May the Capitole theatre own up to its 'vocation' for once. Anyone who does not wish to watch a porn will know that this is a theatre to avoid (25).[67]

In this passage, the writer overtly denounces the inappropriate settings used for the screening of lewd films. The passage is also rich in anectodotal evidence, providing a list of easily accessible films in Haiti during the 1970's.

In addition to this article, the journal *Le Fil d'Ariane* contains a record of revealing information about the state of cinema in Haiti during the late 1970's. For instance, the magazine published various critical responses to various films related matters such as pornography, the work of Truffaut, and the contribution of French female directors.[68] The magazine also repeatedly included full-page advertisements for films being screened in Haiti at the time. A sample of such advertisements featured films such as *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen, 1977), *New York, New York* (Martin Scorsese, 1977), *Valentino* (Ken Russell, 1978), *Grease* (Randal Kleiser, 1978), *La Zizanie* (Claude Zidi, 1978), *La Chambre Verte* (Francois Truffaut, 1978), and *L'Ile des Adieux* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1979).[69] The advertisements are weighted more heavily toward American

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d'une image. Une histoire d'amour dédiée aux jeunes filles d'aujourd'hui'…De la première image à la dernière, nous voyons des filles à poils qui se caressent."

[67] "Pour changer, je voudrais bien voir des hommes. Quand donc ces phallocrates cesseront-ils de traiter les femmes comme des objets? Quand donc les femmes réfuseront-elles ce rôle abject? Nos jeunes sont saturés de film débiles, les parent ont renoncé à leur fonction d'éducateurs, les enseignants sont impuissants. Quelle belle humanité on nous prépare! Ailleurs, il y a des cinémas specialisés en pornos. Que le Capitole annonce une bonne fois sa 'vocation'. Les personnes qui ne souhaitent pas qu'on leur flanque du sexe à la face à longueur de films sauront que c'est un cinéma à éviter."

[68] Francois Truffaut ("Francois Truffaut Vingt Ans Après (Francois Truffaut Twenty Years Later") August-September edition of the magazine displayed yet another Triomphe ad for) (24) and an article on page 25 about "Le Cinéma Français au Féminin (French Film Directed by Women)" by Henri Agel.

[69] These advertisements run from March –June 1978

films, followed by French and Italian pictures. Overall, the critical responses and the advertisements highlight the influence of foreign films on the Haitian market.

In the midst of a dire social environment, along with the seemingly compromised Capitole Theatre and the prevalence of foreign film, a small number of Haitians still managed to shoot critically-minded documentaries during the 1970's. The oppressive context explains quite explicitly why several of these 1970's films are, according to Michael Dash, "very political" and "aimed at exposing the horrors of Duvalierism" (Dash 102). These documentaries include Ben Dupuy's *Haiti Enchainée* or Haiti in Chains (1974) and several films by Arnold Antonin, a Haitian filmmaker and activist born in Port-au-Prince, 1942. Antonin reports that Dupuy's hour long documentary "was released among foreign opposition" to the Duvalier regime (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).[71] The work "describes the country's social structures and gives an idea of the life of the Haitian population" (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).[72]

Antonin's four political films released during this era are: *Les Duvaliers au banc des accusés* or The Duvaliers Stand Accused (1973), *Ayiti, men chimen Libète* [in French and English: *Haïti: Le Chemin de la Liberté* or Haiti: The Road to Freedom (1975)], *Les Duvaliers Condamnés* or The Duvaliers Indicted (1975), and *Art Naif et Repression en Haïti* or Naïve Art and Repression in Haiti (1975); and Lucien Bonnet's documentary *Où Vas-Tu, Haiti* (1978).[73] The first of Antonin's films, *Les Duvaliers au banc des accusés*, was a short black and white film of twenty-five minutes presented by "an anti-Duvalier organization, 'L'Organisation Révolutionnaire 18 Mai'… to the first Russel Court on Latin America" (Lafontant-Médard 90). According to Antonin, his film had such an impact on the viewers that this same group, *l'Organisation Révolutonnaire*, went on to direct the second in the series, *Haïti: Le Chemin de la Liberté* (Antonin, "Haiti" 342). The film, Antonin reports, can be divided into five parts:

> A historic panorama that begins from Columbus' arrival and goes through François Duvalvier's acension to the presidency; Duvalier's presidency through the nomination of his son; the face of liberalization or Jean-Claude's term; the foundation of this dynasty and its ideological positions; an analysis of the

[71] "sort, dans l'opposition à l'étranger."
[72] "décrit les structures socials du pays et donne une idée de la vie de la population haitienne."
[73] At the time of writing, I have not been able to screen these films.

> opposition and the perspectives offered by the United Front of Anti-Duvalierists (Antonin, "Haiti" 342).[75]

According to Antonin, this film was screened in Brussels in 1975 and composed of archival material, stills, prints, and film shot in Haiti ranging from the interior of the country to the presidential palace, and interviews of political figures, in exile or not ("Haiti" 342). He claims that the international success of this film inspired a European television company to contribute funds toward *Art Naif et Répression en Haiti*, which allowed him to film in color. This film documented the American-driven art market in Haiti. At the time, Antonin reported that national and private collections in America and Europe purchased 150,000 Haitian paintings ("Haiti" 343). The film aimed to demonstrate the extent to which Haitian authorities allowed drastic exploitation of Haitian artists. The last film in the series that Antonin discusses, *Les Duvaliers Condamnés*, is significantly longer than its first counterpart. It is a forty minute television report which condemns the Duvalier regime (Antonin, "Haiti" 342).

As for Lucien Bonnet, he released his fifteen minute documentary, *Où Vas-Tu, Haiti*, in March of 1978 to an audience in Montreal. What can be gleaned from this release, and later based on the development of the Montreal International Haitian Film Festival in the 2000's, is the fact that Haitian films have an established audience in Canada. The obvious reason for this audience is the large Haitian diaspora residing there. Before this release, Antonin explains that Bonnet had worked in Haiti as an "operator of a private TV station and had filmed scenes of life in Haiti and official demonstrations before his departure in 1962" ("Haiti" 343).[76] Perhaps Antonin mentions these early scenes because Bonnet used some of these early images for his documentary. In any case, it explains how Bonnet trained as a filmmaker in the absence of well-known formal programs.

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[75] "Un panorama historique qui va de l'arrivée de Colomb à l'accession de François Duvalier à la présidence ; Le règne de Duvalier jusqu'à la nomination de son fils ;
La face de la libéralisation ou le règne de Jean-Claude ; Les bases de cette 'dynastie' et ses fondements idéologiques ; Une analyse de l'opposition et les perspectives qu'ouvre le Front Uni des anti-duvaliéristes de toutes les tendances."

[76] "opérateur d'une télévision privée et avait filmé des scènes de la vie haitienne et des manifestations officielles avant de partir en exil en 1962."

It is altogether remarkable that this series of documentaries exists. As Antonin explains, a law passed on April 28, 1969 against communist activities impeded the advancement of Haitian cinema. He writes that "The rigorous application of this law clearly explains why, that nearly a century after the Lumière brothers' discover, a national cinema in Haiti does not exist" ("Haiti" 342).[77] Yet, these works came at a price. Most if not all of these films were never shown in Haiti at the time: "Naturally, all of these films, as well as those produced and directed by Haitians who oppose the regime, could not be screened in Haiti" (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).[78] Even though these diasporic films were not screened in Haiti, the directors still faced dire consequences. His confrontational material explains why he had to film outside the scope of Haitian governmental control. He spent several years in exile in Europe and Venezuela, only returning to Haiti in 1986.[79] Antonin was truly a "pioneer of politically motivated cinema" while living abroad.[80]

Upon Antonin's return to Haiti in 1986, he founded the "Pétion Bolivar Center, a cultural center and a hub for political discussion" and has subsequently directed more than thirty films that have received numeorous awards including the Djibril Diop Mambety Prize at the 2002 Cannes film festival, and is the president of the *Association haitienne des cinéastes* (Association of Haitian filmmakers).[82] The fact that Antonin's career in filmmaking began under such challenging circumstances demonstrates not only

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[77] "L'application rigoureuse de cette loi explique évidemment fort bien que près d'un siècle après la découverte des frères Lumière, il n'existe pas vraiment de cinéma national en Haiti."

[78] "Naturellement tous ces films, ainsi que ceux produits et réalisés par des Haitiens qui s'opposent au régime, n'ont pas pu etre projetés sur les écrans à l'intérieur du pays."

[79] Charles Arthur, "Haiti – Cinema Revival," World Association for Christian Communication http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media_development/2005_1/haiti_cinema_revival

[80] Ibid.

82 "*Centre Pétion Bolivar*, un centre culturel et un haut lieu de réflexion politique."
The centre is named for Alexandre Pétion, ruler of southern Haiti following the Haitian Revolution, and Simon Bolivar or *El Libertador* (1743-1830), one of South America's most famous historical figures. In 1816, Bolivar travelled to Haiti to seek aid to resume fighting in the continent. Pétion furnished Bolivar with "4,000 muskets, 15,000 pounds of powder, flints, lead and - most telling weapon of revolution - a printing press be given to Bolivar" 82 Because of this aid, Bolivar was able to return to South America, resume fighting, and eventually attain independence for Venezuala, Bolivia, Panama, Ecuador, Columbia, and Peru from Spain.
Bolivar info: http://www.bolivarmo.com/history.htm; http://www.haiti-usa.org/historical/index.php?chapter=023
Info/contact with Centre: http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=structure&no=2502
http://www.ville-ge.ch/meg/promo.php?id=11b:
Antonin's article from Small Axe : http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/small_axe/v012/12.3.antonin.html

the importance of his contribution, but the manifestly strained relationship between the politics and film.

Further evidence of this strained relationship surfaces in an article by Charles Arthur containing an interview with Haitian filmmaker Richard Sénécal. Arthur surmises that:

> During the 1970s and 80s most Haitian films remained what Haitian director and producer, Richard Sénécal, described as 'intellectual films', ones inaccessible to the larger population. In part this was a consequence of the brutally repressive Duvalier dictatorship that forced many aspiring directors into exile. The dictatorship would not tolerate the few films made by those who stayed if they appealed to the masses.[83]

This citation reports Sénécal's opinion that the political films of the 1970s had little effect on the general population because so few were produced. He also implies the unfortunate likelihood that their intellectual content made them less accessible to the masses.

Unlike the documentaries discussed previously, the directors of the films *Map Pale Net* (Raphael Stines, 1976), *Olivia* (Bob Lemoine, 1977), and *Anita* (Rassoul Labuchin 1980) opted for a different genre: fictional works. Another distinguishing feature of both Stines' and Labuchin's films is the fact that they employ Haitian Creole throughout.[84] Labuchin wrote the screenplay for Stines' film, *Map Pale Nèt* which was first screened on September 4, 1976 at the Triomphe Theatre in Port-au-Prince. The twenty-five minute color picture is "une adaption en créole du mélodrame de Jean Cocteau, *Le Bel Indifférent* (an creole adaptation of Jean Cocteau's melodrama 'Le Bel Indifférent') (Antonin, "Haiti" 343). Produced by the company, Kumbit, the film featured Haitian theatre actors such as Maurice Maximilien, Jessie Alphones, and François Latour (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).

Lemoine released the second feature six months later on March 19, 1977. Antonin described the premiere as impressive and noted that two famous Haitian musicians, Herby Widmaier and Gérald Merceron, provided the music for the film. Ernest Bennet, a cacao exporter and foreign vehicle importer, produced the film. Attracting funding

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[83] Arthur
[84] Ibid

external to the film industry explains how this filmmaker, and perhaps others, succeeded in releasing a film. Lemoine also had a major technological advantage over fellow Haitian filmmakers. Antonin writes that Lemoine, "actor, radio commentator, photographer, director of commercials, received his film training on the job. He claims to be the only person to own a 35 mm camera in Haiti" (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).[85]

Despite the musical talent featured in the film, Antonin divulged that the film met with unfavorable criticism. The film recounts "the exodus of a peasant girl to the capital where she found work as a housekeeper. But, the film has a happy ending: she meets her prince charming who decides to move back with her to her home town" ("Haiti" 343).[86] The hopeful content did not spare criticism of the film's directing and editing. Antonin said that the film superficially treated the theme of urban immigration, took a forgiving position towards folklore and tourism, and abritrarily used French and Creole. Hence, "critics in Port-au-Prince severely attacked the film" (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).[87]

Fortunately, the third film of this grouping dealt with similar themes in a much more sophisticated manner. Four years later after the release of *Map Pale Net*, Labuchin had the opportunity to direct his own film in Haitian Creole. Given that the predominantly illiterate population in Haiti speaks Creole rather than fluent French, this film was able to reach and resonate with a wider Haitian public. In addition, the Haitian intellectual community also appreciated the film for this reason. Haitian intellectuals had begun encouraging the use of Creole in literature earlier than the Antillean Créolité movement and therefore had a vested interest in seeing this effort play out onscreen.[88]

In addition to this intelligent and inclusive decision, Antonin provides a convincing reason for its popularity. Labuchin made a crucial filmic choice of incorporating "different features that demonstrate the cultural richness of the country" ("Haiti" 343).[89] For instance, Labuchin intergrated Haitian music and dance. Antonin

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[85] "acteur, speaker à la radio, photographe, est un réalisateur de spots publicitaires, qui s'est formé sur le tas. Il déclare être le seul à posséder une caméra 35mm en Haiti."
[86] "l'exode d'une jeune fille de province vers la capitale où elle doit travailler comme bonne. Mais fin heureuse : elle rencontre un prince charmant, qui décide de retrouver avec elle au village natal."
[87] "la critique port-au-princienne attaque rudement le film."
[88] Labuchin's effort to reach the widest Haitian audience possible by directing films in Haitian Creole is reminiscent of Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene's earlier accomplishments in African cinema. The "Father of African Cinema" released his first Wolof film, *Mandabi*, in 1968.
[89] "des différents aspects de la richesse culturelle du pays."

makes the point that these choices "add a symbolic note while simultaneously emphasizing the issues that Rassoul Labuchin denounces" ("Haiti" 343).[90]

Aside from these filmic choices, relevant contextual details further engage the Haitian audience. For instance, changing demographics and poverty in an urban setting provide the backdrop for the most famous Haitian film to date. In the 1970's, the difficulties of an urban existence had become aggravated. Rural overpopulation had led to "a massive population transfer [which] took place as peasants fled their denuded hillsides to start a new life in the urban slums. In Port-au-Prince alone, slums such as *La Saline* and *Cité Soleil* soon numbered over one hundred thousand people each" (Girard 102). Of the roughly six million people living in Haiti in 1981, ninety percent remained illiterate ("Haiti" 342). Those working twelve-hour shifts as domestic servants earned the equivalent of one to two dollars a day (Antonin, "Haiti" 342). Described succinctly: "Anita was one of the first Haitian films to assert a cinematic language rooted in the recurring themes of Haitian culture: the rural exodus, domestic life, class relations and the significance of Voudou."[91]

Anita's most controversial content involves the *restavek* (meaning "to stay with") tradition, an exploitive system in which poor children from rural areas become nothing more than slaves to wealthier families. In the film, a fourteen year old girl named Anita becomes the housekeeper for a woman, Madame Baptiste, and her daughter of the same age, Choupette. As Antonin explains, Madame Baptiste is not particularly wealthy as she works a works as a "food vendor at the largest company in the country, Reynold's Mining, located at Miagoana bauxite mine."[92] Nevertheless, Madame Baptiste treats Anita with a rough hand. Even though Choupette stands up for their housekeeper, she has a nervous breakdown that causes the film to transition into more surreal imagery:

> Bombarded by a thousand unanswerable questions, Choupette falls victim to a nervous breakdown. During her crisis, she has a vision of grimacing masks that represent the powerful figures in Haitian politics. One can see how Choupette

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[90] "ajoute une note symbolique mettant ainsi en relief les réalités dénoncées par Rassoul Labuchin."
[91] Charles Arthur, "Haiti – Cinema Revival," World Association for Christian Communication http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media_development/2005_1/haiti_cinema_revival
[92] "vendeuse de nourriture à la porte de la plus grande entreprise étrangère du pays, la Reynold's Mining qui exploite la bauxite à Miagoana."

> might symbolize Haiti in a state of crisis. Reality intertwines with dreams; reality mingles with the marvelous ("Haiti" 344).[93]

Antonin argues that this metaphor for Haiti has provocative implications. He claims that the film critiques an "ailing society" whilst carefully suggesting solution: "if the imperialist powers to which Haiti is entrusted is the root of its problems, if the Voudou priest and gods cannot provide a remedy, it is the responsibility of Haitians to take charge of their destiny" ("Haiti" 345).[94]

Even today, the condition of the *restavek* persists. Historians Hamed and Brazier explain "many women enter the labor market at an early age; about 10 percent of girls aged between five and nine and 33 percent aged between ten and 14 can be considered economically active" (Hamed and Brazier 265). Exposing the evils of the *restavek* tradition caused so much controversy that its uncensored premiere was considered a victory. Describing the premiere of the historic film, Lafontant-Médard writes:

> *Anita* was thus shown uncensored to the press corps on 12 September 1980 at the Triomphe, a victory for the intellectual and progressive forces against government-sponsored censorship. In the evening of September 12, *Anita* premiered in Miragoâne where the movie was shot (Lafontant-Médard 90).

This initial uncensored and successful entry into the market was "thanks to the distribution it received from the Ciné-Club Point-de-Vue, which was founded at the same time but which unfortunately did not last long" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 89). Despite the film being a hit, "it was quickly withdrawn from commercial circulation because of the crackdown on freedom of expression that same year" (Dash 92). In fact, the Triomphe theatre cancelled its showings after fifteen days (Lafontant-Médard). It remained as a feature "at the French Institute of Haiti until December 1980. After this date, *Anita* disappeared from the commercial sector (Lafontant-Médard 90). As a result of the film's divisive nature, Labuchin "was forced to seek exile in Mexico, where he spent a year, and, after a brief return to Haiti during which he was imprisoned, he was exiled to

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[93] "Assaillie de toutes parts par mille questions auxquelles elle ne trouve aucune réponse, Choupette sombre un jour dans une crise nerveuse au cours de laquelle elle recoit la vision de masques grimacants symbolisant les puissants de la politique haitienne. On voit que Choupette peut symboliser Haiti en crise et la réalité se marie au rêve comme le réalisme au merveilleux."

[94] "une société malade… si la tutelle impérialiste est à la racine des maux, si le prêtre Vaudou et les dieux ne peuvent pas apporter de remèdes, c'est aux hommes à prendre leur destin en main."

France" (Dash 92-3). Labuchin's precarious existence following the release of his film certainly warns of the dangers of filmmaking in Haiti during this era.

Another film released in 1980 also spoke to the political issues of the time. Still in exile in Venezuala, Antonin directed a forty-minute film entitled, *Un Tonton Macoute peut-il être un poète ?* (Antonin, "Haiti" 344). He dedicated his film to "cultural figures from Haiti who remain victims of the repressive efforts of the Duvaliers" ("Haiti" 344).[95] Following this film, Antonin started work on a feature length film entitled *La Mort d'un Zombie*, neither of which I have yet obtained for viewing.

Similar to the regime's decision to use a law against communist activities to repress filmmaking in the island, the government enacted yet another law with the same objective. All of the negative attention to the pornography industry discussed previously indirectly permitted this setback to the Haitian film industry. The law of May 9, 1979 allowed "censoreship on all theatrical and cinematographic production under the official pretext of the the fight againt pornography" (Antonin, "Haiti" 342).[96] As a result, even though Haitians filmed a series of politically assertive films, what was being shown in theatres was of an entirely different caliber. Antonin reports that at this time, "the genres of films most frequently shown are catastrophes and action movies, some porns, italian melodramas and a few of those comedies and detective movies that French cinema is producing so much" ("Haiti" 343).[97] This passage could not more clearly highlight the continued the constrast between what films Haitians directors made and what theatres actually offered to local audiences.

Another complicating issue in the cinematic landscape of the 1960's and 1970's was the fact that foreign filmmakers outnumbered their local Haitian counterparts. Cuban filmmakers constituted the strongest presence of these foreign artists. Proximity, training, funding, and attractive material explain this phenonenon. According to Antonin:

> The Cuban Institute of Art and Industry assured several productions in Haiti. Tomas Gutierrez Alea directed *Cumbite* in 1964 (a 35 mm, 83 minute, black and

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[95] "personalités haitiennes du monde culturel victimes de la répression des Duvalier père et fils."
[96] "l'existence de la censure sur toute production théâtrale et cinématographique, sous le prétexte officiel de la lutte contre la pornographie."
[97]" Les genres les plus fréquemment projetés sont les films catastrophes, les films de violence, quelques pornos, les mélos italiens et quelque-unes de ces comédies et films policiers dont le cinéma francais d'aujourd'hui est si prodigue. "

white film). The film is based on Jacques Roumain's novel *Gouverneurs de la Rosée*) ("Haiti" 343).[98]

The novel, completed one month before Roumain's death, remains one of the most famous works of Haitian literature. Early in the story, the protagonist, Manuel, returns to Haiti after toiling for years on cane fields in Cuba. Manuel's native village is devasted by drought, so he attempts to find and provide water to the community. Manuel represents "a master of the dew" as the person to whom his village has entrusted all water-related matters.[99] Roumain also equates the title with a Haitian "General Assembly…a great big coumbite of farmers" that will band together as a single force to overcome poverty (Roumain 106). Such marxist-themed material may well explain the Cuban interest in the adapting the novel.

In addition to funding the film *Coumbite*, the ICAIC also supported two films released in the 1970's: Humberto Solas' *Simparele* (1974) and Manuel Octavio Gomez's *El Cielo y la Tierra* (1979). The famous Haitian singer, Martha-Jean-Claude, starred in both the films.[100] Antonin explains that the first was not the success among Haitians that *Coumbite* had been: "If Tomas Gutierrez Alea's film was met with great success by Haitians, they hardly appreciated the naïve folkloric content of Solas' work" ("Haiti" 343).[101] However, the second featured a familiar theme: "l'immigration haitienne dans la province orientale de Cuba (Haitian immigration in the western region of Cuba)" (Antonin, "Haiti" 343). Hence, over the fifiteen year period from 1964 to 1979, Cuban filmmakers filmed at least three known films in Haiti. Yet, Cubans were not the only active filmmakers in Haiti at the time.

The French director, Maurice Failevic, also remade the novel *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (*Masters of the Dew*, 1944) into yet another film in 1974. Even a Belgian priest

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[98] "*L'Institut Cubain de l'Art et de l'Industrie Cinématographique* (ICAIC) a assuré de son côté plusieurs productions liées à Haiti. Ainsi, Tomas Gutierrez Alea a réalisé *Cumbite* dès 1964 (35 mm, 83 mn, noir et blanc) à partir du roman de Jacques Roumain 'Gouverneurs de la Rosée.'"

[99] http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ile.en.ile/paroles/roumain_gouverneurs.html
The novel was translated by Langston Hughes and has also been adopted for theatrical performance in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere.

[100] Martha Jean-Claude's professional career began with performances at the Rex Theatre in 1942. She fled to Cuba in 1952, returning to Haiti for concerts and music festivals such as the 1995 roots festival "Bouyon Raisin." In 2001, Jean-Claude died at the age of 82 in Havana. Her funeral was attended by Haitian President René Préval. (Averill 209; http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/534.html).

[101] "Si le film de Tomas Gutierrez Alea connut un grand succès parmi les Haitiens, ceux-ci n'apprécièrent guère, par contre le folklore naif de l'œuvre de Solas."

turned director, Omer d'Hoe shot a documentary in Haiti: *Haiti, Perle des Antilles*. Antonin indicates that this film "showed the constrast between the misery of the people and wealth of the bourgeoisy" ("Haiti" 343).[102] And finally, the Dominican Republican organization Instituto Dominicano de Cine y Television set its short fictional film *Via Crucis* in Haiti. This film also treated another humanitarian issue: the slave-like treatment of Haitian worker on Dominican Republican cane fields (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).

In the interim, two disastrous occurrences helped to dismantle Duvalier's control over the nation: extermination of Haiti's native pig population and massive deforestation.[103] In a conciliatory gesture, Bébé Doc decided to invite Pope John Paul II to Haiti in 1983. Upon the Pope's arrival, he immediately delivered a speech broadcast live in Creole instead of attending a banquet thrown in his honor. In his speech, he "attacked the oppression and misery that were Haitians's daily bread and "then told them something they never forgot: *fok sa chanj!* (Things have got to change here!)" (105). The Pope's visit brought about a level of activisim that effectively undermined Bébé Doc's power. The call for social change encouraged the spread of the grassroots movement, *Ti Legliz* (Little Church), which played "a leading role in the riots that broke out in 1984" (Dash 20). Attempting to repress the demonstrations, four children were shot in November 1985 (Dash 21). Three years after the Pope's visit, the dictator and his family fled to the U.S. (Dash 22).

During these volatile times near the end of the Duvalier regime, key developments in the film industry began taking place. First, the filmmaker Arnold Antonin wrote a book on Haitian cinema whilst living in exile. In 1983, he published *Matériel pour une préhistoire du cinéma haïtien* (*Material for a prehistory of Haitian cinema*) in Caracas, Venezuala. Second, Maxence Elisé a French citizen and prominent Antillean film distributor "appeared on the Haitian cinema market."[104] The company

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[102] "montrant le constraste entre la misère du peuple et la richesse des bourgeois."

[103] The former incident prompted British filmmaker Leah Gordan to document the catastrophe in the film, *A Pig's Tale* (1997). This film is part of the the trend of foreign filmmakers coming to Haiti to document disaster.

[104]"apparaît sur le marché haïtien du cinema"
Accessed : June 4, 2008
www.cinemasfrancophones.org/upload/cinema_en_haiti.doc

distributed French and dubbed American films, furthering the permeation of the Haitian market by foreign films. Hence, responsibility for these film options belongs to more parties than the government alone. Elisé managed the company *le Groupe de l'Impérial* which operated what Antonin called an "ultra-modern cinema" containing three screening rooms in Port-au-Prince.[105]

Aside from Elisé, another company *Groupe du Capitol* operated at least one theatre.[106] However, this company's criteria for films were more narrow than those of Elisé. According to Antonin, Jacques "has selection criteria that have earned him a reputation for great severity. He does not even want to be given works by the Marx Brothers!" (Antonin, "Haiti" 343).[107] With public and private restrictions in place on film viewing, Haitians could still access classic films at the *l'Institut Culturel Français*. Antonin cites the work of French directors Marcel Carné and Jean Renoir [most famous for *Les Enfants du paradis* (1945) and *La Grande Illusion* (1937), respectively] as examples of screened films.

The most promising development in this restricted, still colonially-influenced film context, was the invention of lower cost video cameras. These cameras represented the possibility of finally evening the industry's playing field. Speaking about the arrival of the video camera in Haiti, "Antonin claims that the digital camera has transformed filmmaking in Haiti in recent decades."[108] He has stated specifically:

> The difficulties of creating and producing images in Haiti's social and economic conditions seem to be resolved with the arrival of lighter media, in particular video. In effect, numerous independent producers – alongside television, which continues to produce ver little – make films on video, fictional films, or documentaries in numbers that greatly exceed the number of proper cinematographic productions (Antonin, *Small Axe* 90).

"Le Cinema En Haiti" By Arnold Antonin Joël Lorquet

105 "cinéma ultra-moderne."

Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 "a des critères de sélection qui lui ont valu une renommée de grande sévérité. Il ne veut même pas qu'on passe les œuvres des Marx Brothers! "

108 http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/540.html

Filmmaker Richard Sénécal reiterated this fact, telling Miami Herald reporter Katheline St. Fort: "Before there were no financial means to produce movies in Haiti. Film was expensive in itself and you had to have it developed in a lab overseas."[109] At long last Haitians could benefit from an opportune intersection of their financial capabilities with the technology available to make films.

One of the first filmmakers to take advantage of video technology was Raynald Delerme. He informed St. Fort that he returned to Haiti in 1985 after having studied film abroad. He then collaborated with "the late comedian Theodore Beaubrun for the successful, shot-on-video *Founerailles* (The Funeral)."[110] Since then, Delerme has worked with Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé to produce and direct "many full-length video features that have been shown in the cinemas of Port-au-Prince and the main provincial towns, with great success" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 91). Bien-Aimé, born January 24, 1959, in Port-au-Prince, has now directed multiple films that can be found in the filmography.[111]

Elsie Haas, the most famous female Haitian filmmaker, also emerged on the scene in the mid-1980's. According to an interview with CSM magazine, Haas has "more than twenty films under her belt." [112] Born in Port-au-Prince the youngest of five children, the filmmaker grew up in Africa and Europe. Describing her professional path leading up to and following the production of these films, Haas informed CSM magazine in 2006 that:

> It's been thirty years (oh yes, I'm not that young anymore) since I've been working in the field of Art and Communication. I have done paintings and Fine Arts. I did many plays with professionals from Martinique and Gouadeloupe. Since I have always interested in making films, I took courses on the subject at

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[109] http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/541.html
New generation of Haitian filmmakers are making a scene
By Katheline St. Fort, Miaimi-Herald, Sunday 29 June 2003http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/540.html

[110] http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/540.html

[111] http://homepage.mac.com/rdelerme/Personal22.html
See Table A.

[112]Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate or compile a filmography representing all twenty of her films. Several of them are however have been cited in the filmmography. See Table A.
http://www.csmsmagazine.org/news.php?pg=20060531I107
Accessed March 18, 2008
Interview with filmmaker Elsie Haas by Dr. Ardain Isma
Wednesday May 31

> the university. For a while, I worked at Matin as a journalist, a daily socialist newspaper that lasted one or two years. Then I worked with some students in KIP, an association I founded. Now, I am the chief editor at Haiti-Tribune.[113]

At the time of the interview, Haas was employed by the *Haiti-Tribune* is a bi-weekly Paris based publication. Nevertheless, Haas still remains passionate about her earlier and ongoing occupation as a filmmaker. Haas says she was drawn to the audiovisual field rather than to literature, feeling film had a more urgent, relevant presence in Haiti.[114] Her work is reminiscent of Senegalese director Semebene Ousmane in his shift from author to director.

In addition, Haas surmised that an "inflation of writers and a deflation of readers" led to a discouraging trend in Haitian intellectual circles: "We have thousands examples of intellectuals, having seminars and colloquia, plunging into an everlasting labyrinth while wasting their time repeating the same things."[115] Through the medium of film, however, Haas believed could reach a broader audience and have a more resounding impact on this audience by discussing culture and politics in new ways: "At home, in Haiti, there is an irresistible attraction for monologue, which means that little room is left for dialogue and for great thinking born out of exchanging ideas."[116] To escape this propensity for monologue, Hass' began directing short fictional films. However, directing fictional films proved to be an uphill battle:

> I quickly realized that the stories and the characters were not going to the direction of the liking of western producers. It was in making productions like *Ya Bon Banania* that it became possible for me to make some money. So I had to turn to low-budget documentaries at a time (1986) where all my friends opted for fiction. Now they have all come around. [117]

Clearly, Haas' financial means shaped her choice of films. Over the course of the interview, Haas repeated the difficulty in obtaining funding.

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113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.

> Looking for money plays a pivotal role among the most terrible things one has to face. It brings stress, humiliation, frustration and anger because you often face people who express, at best, a token compliance and, at worse, total disregard to everything that portrays non-western cultures. [118]

Haas has been forced to compromise as a result of financial concerns. She had to choose material that enabled her to appeal to Western producers until she earned enough money to make the kind of films she wanted. Finally with some money of her own, she carved a niche for herself by choosing the content of her liking and presenting it in a less expensive format – the documentary.

In the mid-1980s, Haas filmed and released the two documentaries she is most known for: *La Ronde des Tap Tap* (1986) and *La Ronde des Voodoo* (1987). Dash succinctly describes the plot of the former work: it "examines urban society in Haiti thorugh the converted minivans and pickups that are called 'Tap Taps' and used for public transportation" (Dash 92). The style of the second film is quite distinct. The majority of the film consists of a collage of interviews. Although some of the interviews relate directly to voodoo, the content of the interviews often addresses other areas of Haitian culture such as the Creole language and the concept of *Négritude*. For instance, Haas incorporates interviews with a wide cross-section of Haitian society such as the Voodoo priest André Pierre, the economist Hervé Denis, the Catholic priest Père Sico, and unnamed individuals who tout their hopes for a "new Haiti."

Another prominent part of the film involves shots of the landscape and quotidian imagery. For instance, she frequently films the roadside through the window of a car or a packed bus. Both modes of transportation serve as low-budget tracking devices that enable Haas to present a substantial amount of footage of Port-au-Prince. This technique further connects her viewers to the existence of the disenfranched populace. In both the interviews and through this filming technique, Haas creates an inclusive diaologue that constrasts greatly with her impressions of the Haitian intellectual scene.

Moreoever, given the political context in Haiti at the time of the film's release, Haas' production of this film all the more impressive. In 1987, the government was in the midst of great upheaval. It approved a new constitution that forbade the participation

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[118] Ibid.

of Duvalierists in the election for the next ten years. Elections were set for November, but despite the positive changes, proponents of the old regime killed voters, causing the elections to be called off (Dash 23). It took five years and six governments to slightly quell the turbulent political environment.

VI. 1990-2004

The sixth government to gain control of Haiti since the end of the Duvalier era took power in 1990. Haitians elected the radio preacher, Jean-Betrand Aristide or Titid, to office. On the radio, Aristide had gained a following as a vocal critic of Bébé Doc. After a 1988 incident in his St. Bosco church, located in a Port-au-Prince slum, the preacher's popularity rose tremendously. While giving a sermon:

> a group of hit men, some of them armed with guns, others with machetes, surrounding the building, pelted the windows with rocks, then rushed in through the main door…A grisly scene ensued…Thirteen parishioners lay dead in a pool of blood; dozens more were wounded. The hit men set the church on fire and left…Despite the horrific nature of their crimes, the attackers were never threatened by the existing authorities (Girard 111).

The attention Aristide received as a result of the *Macoutes'* attack increased his popularity, helping him to win the presidency in 1990. After his election, Aristide immediately fired all senior Army officers and then replaced the Commander in Chief Hérard Abraham with General Raoul Cedras. Haitian historian Philippe Girard qualifies this move as "singularly unwise" because within months Cedras "staged a coup that ousted President Aristide and drove him into exile in Venezuela" (Girard 120-121, Dash 24).

On September 29, 1992, just two days after Aristide's return from a visit to the U.S. including a speech at the U.N, Cédras had taken over the presidential palace. Cédras agreed to let Aristide go in exile. Cédras then organized a military junta of which he was the head. The three military leaders hand-picked Joseph Nérette as the new president and Jean-Jacques Honorat as prime minister (Girard 124). During the Cédras regime, violence against Aristide supporters was rampant. Describing the grisly acts committed, Girard writes, "Instead of hiding the bodies of their victims, regime thugs disfigured and mutilated the corpses, then dumped them in the streets as a warning to would-be

opponents. Fearing for their lives, an estimated three hundred thousand Haitians associated with Aristide went into internal exile" (Girard 130). Three thousand of the thugs belonged to the "youth organization," the *Front Révolutionnaire Armé pour le Progrès d'Haiti* (FRAPH), a paramilitary force "designed to carry Cédras's worst crimes" (140). Because of the violent nature of the regime, the Organization of American States, the U.S. and the United Nations imposed trade embargos on Haiti, effectively crushing Haiti's already deplorable economy (Girard 131). For the next three years, Aristide lived in exile. He took up a comfortable residence in Georgetown, Washington, D.C., where he raised money and support from the North American Haitian diaspora and continued to lobby for the debilitating sanctions against Haiti.

Preceding Aristide's arrival in the U.S., the Haitian diaspora became a focal point in the Raoul Peck's first film, *Haitian Corner* (1988), included in the 1988 Berlin Film Festival (Watson 231). The film's protagonist, Haitian poet turned factory worker living in New York, "had been tortured by the Duvalier regime before choosing exile in New York" (Dash). Once in New York, the poet "meets the former soldier who tortured him back home."[119] Also set in New York, housing one of the highest Haitian populations in North America, Peck set his crime drama *Corps Plongé* (1999). This film's protagonist, Dimitri Sainvil, moves to New York until the political situation in Haiti stabilizes and the government offers him the position of Minister of Health. The content of these two films is clearly linked to the struggle undergone by thousands of Haitian's at the time: the difficulty of relocating, the challenge of the new environment, and the decision, by some, to return to Haiti with the hope of rebuilding the country. Such a diasporic experience is familiar to Peck, himself having lived lengthy periods abroad from a young age.

In spite of Peck's early accomplishments in filmmaking, the Haitian movie industry was far from immune to the violent upheaval caused by Cédras' rule in the early 1990's. Raphael Stines, for instance, directed the comedy, *Kraze Lanfè* (*Breaking Hell*), using video technology. Stines' film offers "a scathing portrayal of the regime of Francoise Duvalier's son, Jean-Claude."[120] Because the current leaders interpreted the film as an "indictment against them," the star of the film, Fenel Jesifra Valcourt, was

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[119] http://www.wehaitians.com/haitian%20low%20budget%20movies.html
Katheline St. Fort. "Reel Haiti." *Miami-Herald*. 28 June 2003.
[120] Ibid.

forced to go into hiding. Given these unfavorable repercussion, it appears that the majority of "moviemakers tended to steer away from political subjects."[121] Filmmakers instead produced "soapish, "sensational dramas like Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé's *Le Cap à la Une* (To the One), targeting the youth market."[122] In point of fact, the levity of Bien-Aimé's material has not hindered his success. Antonin testifies that "only the blockbuster *Titanic* (1998) had higher box office figures [than] the video *Cicatrices* (Scars) (1997), produed locally by Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé and shown in various cinema theaters in Haiti" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 92). The plot of the film, according to St. Fort, involves "a wealthy widow [who] finds love in a much-younger man, and becomes alienated from her son, who still treasures his father's memory."[123]

In 1994, then U.S. President Bill Clinton agreed to intervene and reinstate Aristide. Once reinstated, however, "Aristide publicly denied having ever implied that he favored a U.S. invasion" even though he had spent the last three years "asking for exactly this in his private conversations with U.S. officials" (148). Aristide spent the last year of his first term as president disbanding the army, minimizing the police, and campaigning rather infamously for retributions from France totaling some $21 billion dollars. Aristide based the preposterous figure on the indeminity Haiti had agreed to pay France for recognition as an independent country in 1825. Without implementing any real improvements to the economy, Haiti still relied on foreign aid to sustain the Haitian economy. Aid represented the most significant portion of the total Haitian GDP, which the World Bank estimated at about $2.5 billion in the mid-1990s" (Girard 169). Hence, after Aristide's election, he never fulfilled his early promises. He finished his term as president leaving Haiti in no better shape than when he took office.

When René Préval took office in 1996, it "marked the first transition from one democratically elected president to another in Haitian history" (170). The second legitimately elected president after Aristide attempted to privatize and ultimately revitalize some of Haitian industry, but Aristide and his supporters countered this effort by relying on the ingrained cultural belief that foreign imperialists would then destroy

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

and manipulate Haiti from within (Girard 172-173). From 1996 to 1997, Haitian director Raoul Peck served a "short-lived and controversial term as minister of culture in Haiti" (Dash 93) which he intimately recounts in his book, *Monsieur le Ministre…Jusqu'au bout de la patience* (1998). Peck's describes his tenure in this office as very disappointing. Clashing with his superiors in the new government, his lack of influence on the state of filmmaking led him to abruptly quit his post (Dash 93; Peck 17).

In 2001, Aristide took back the presidency and Reginald Lubin released his film, *La Peur D'Aimer* (*The Fear of Loving,* 2001). The film recounts a young Haitian woman's unplanned pregancy. Lubin shot the film with digital video technology, continuing the trend in Haiti to make use of lesser expensive methods of filmmaking. St. Fort reports that the film caused a "sensation" among the Haitian audience because of its "good cinematography and a strong script."[124] As discussed, with the advent of digitial technology in the 1980s, filmmakers could make higher quality pictures for a fraction of the cost. Video technology has also dramaticaly reduced production and post-production costs incurred by the use of film cameras and equipment. La Fleur Deny is yet another filmmaker similarly responsible for "raising the standard of low-budget Haitian films." His use of digital technology offers a valuable lesson for Haitian audiences: because of Deny "people saw they could actually do good quality films, and Haitian film was taken to a new level."[125]

Meanwhile, Aristide remained in office the next three years. Without any army or police force in place, however, Aristide was not able to carry out any type of social change.[126] Aristide also lost all incoming aid from the U.S. after "allowed irregularities in an election that gave him a clear legislative majority."[127] Even though Aristide still had the support of thousands, rebel forces captured town after town. In the face of open rebellion, he fled to Africa. For the next two years, the Haitian police and U.N.

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[124]Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Amy Wilentz, "Haiti's Man of the People Lost His Way"
New York Times, February 15, 1004
http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D04E7D8163DF936A25751C0A9629C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=2
[127] Ibid.

peacekeepers maintained order.[128] Préval returned to the executive office on May 14th, 2006. At his inauguration, twelve people prisoners were killed to prevent a riot.[129] The turmoil has not ended over the last three years of Préval's presidency. His economic plan includes a developing partnership with Venezuela. A vocal enemy of the U.S., Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has met with Préval and begun investing in Haiti's oil industry.

Capturing the erratic and painful transitional periods in the early 2000's, Raoul Peck filmed a trio of highly political documentaries: *Chère Catherine* (1999), *Le Profit et Rien d'autre ! (ou reflexions abusives sur la lutte des classes* (2001/2002), *Haïti, le silences des chiens* (2002/2004). Although Peck filmed a significant portion of these documentaries in Haiti, he frequently inserted brief scenes or shots filmed in a number of locations. In *Profit et Rien d'autre* for instance, Peck incorporates scenes of a New York city street market, and a London apartment in addition to the Haitian coastline and countryside. He also uses stock footage of the United Nations and of rioting and looting in the U.S. The incorporation of these various sites has the effect of tying Haiti's struggle to Western nations.

Despite the critical nature of these documentaries, Peck has remained active in the government. In 2008, Laurence Brandi, acting *Directeur de l'Audiovisuel Extérieur* (Director of Foreign Audiovisual) at the French *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) informed me Peck had served as the President of the entire commission of one of their major programs, *Funds Sud* (South Funds). The CNC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-finance and co-manage this interdepartmental scheme.[130]

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[128] Aristide supporters maintain the U.S. kidnapped Aristide to keep him from returning to power, although the facts prove otherwise. Compare Randall Robinson's *An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, from Revolution to the Kidnapping of the President* (NY: Basic Civitas Books 2007) with Philippe Girard's *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World hot spot* (New York: Palgrave 2005).

[129] "Haiti's capital was under tight security with about 4,500 Haitian police officers and United Nations peacekeepers perched on armored vehicles and patrolling the streets. Shortly before Mr. Préval took the oath, the police and troops fired tear gas to halt a riot at the overcrowded penitentiary. Prisoners said as many as 12 people were killed in the uprising, but officials said several inmates were only wounded"
New York Times :
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/15/world/americas/15haiti.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=preval+haiti&st=nyt&oref=slogin
May 15, 2006, "René Préval is Inaugurated as President in Uneasy Haiti"

[130] "Film France Guide 2008," p.34.
Updated yearly.
Available for download:

The CNC (funded by the Minister of Culture and Communication) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs allotted 2.4 million euros to the *Fonds Sud* in 2008 of which a film receives a sum on average of 110,000 euros, but no more than 152,000 euros.[131] Filmmakers from Haiti, Africa, Latin America, the Maghreb, the Middle East, Asia (apart from Korea, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan), other Caribbean Islands, Albania, the countries of former Yugoslavia and the new republics of Central Asia who have a project to be filmed outside of France are qualified to apply for this competitive French governmental support. [132] Since its creation in1984 until 2006, *Fonds Sud* has supported more than 350 films, twenty of which the organization aided in 2006. On average, it would seem that *Fonds Sud* supports roughly fifteen to twenty films per year. In light of Peck's term as Minister of Culture, his prominent role in the *Fonds Sud* program, and his consistent effort to produce politically-orientated material, Peck serves as a supreme example of how the Haitian culture and cinema remains deeply intertwined with the political scene.

Coinciding with these initiatives, foreign filmmakers continue to set their films on the island. They continue to find ample fodder for documentaries, producing successful works such as Jonathan Demme's *The Agronomist* (2002), Kevin Pina's *Haiti: We Must Kill the Bandits* (2007), and Amy Serrano's *The Sugar Babies* (2007).[133] Although foreign directors dominate the industry, it is no longer true that Haitian cinema was as undeveloped as it was in the 1990's.[134] The cumulative body of films directed by Haitians Arnold Antonin, Rassoul Labuchin, Elsie Haas, Raoul Peck, Charles Najman, Laurence Magloire, and Reginald Lubin provide firm evidence of development.

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http://www.filmfrance.net/v2/gb/home.cfm?choixmenu=guidepratique

131 Souad Houssein (Responsable *du projet "cinéma" dans la Direction de la langue francaise, de la diversité culturelle et Linguistique à l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* / Cinema Project Leader in the Division of French Language, Cultural Diversity and Linguistics at the International Organization of Francophone Countries) informed me over email that her organization also supports *Funds Sud*. Our telephone conversation led me to believe that she plays an active role in the yearly reception of over a hundred proposals destined for review by *Fonds Sud*. www.diplomatie.gouv.fr

132 Fonds Sud (South Funds available to African and Haiti filmmakers)
http://www.cnc.fr/Site/Template/T11.aspx?SELECTID=929&ID=534&t=2
Accessed January 17, 2008

133 Clips from Pina's film: http://www.haitiinformationproject.net/
A new Haitian documentary (currently in post-production) features the artist Wyclef Jean: *If I Was President* (Rebecca Chaiklin and Michael Skolnik, 2009)

134 "Haitian cinema is not very well developed" (Dash 90)

Secondly, two changes have significantly increased exposure to Haitian films: the screening of Haitian films in U.S. venues and the emergence of the distribution company *Communication Plus S.A.*

In the early 2000's, Haitian filmmakers encountered both the incessant challenges of filmmaking as well as two promising opportunities to increase exposure of their films. To begin with the negative features of the filmmaking landscape, the difficulty of obtaining funding remained a serious impediment. Haitian producer-screenwriter Mora Etienne, voiced the major concern of securing financial support to St. Fort:

> Etienne says it takes him up to three years to come up with the money for each of his projects. Unlike many governments, Haiti has no film commission to help the industry. By most accounts, while the period of government repressing the arts has long ended, there's still not much encouragement—financial or moral.[135]

With government support so tough to obtain, filmmakers attempted to entice investment from private sources, like banks and businesses. Regardless of their resourcefulness, Etienne pronounced that theses companies "rarely invest in films." If they happen to contribute to the production, they expect product placement to such a magnitude that the films seem more like "ensemble commercials" than movies.

Once the movie is made, additional problems arise, namely illegal copying and selling of films. Generally speaking, this is a rampant global problem, and in a country like Haiti, it is common sense that artists can not rely on an already instable government for protection. St. Fort quoted two films in particular that had fall prey to bootleggers, *Barikad*, *Millionnaire par Erreur*. The plot of the film involves "a dreamy young man [who] falls in love with his family's housekeeper, to the consternation of his parents, who want to keep class lines intact."[136] Sénécal told the reporter that as these films hit theaters, DVD and VHS versions can be found in Port-au-Prince.[137]

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135 http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/541.html
"New generation of Haitian filmmakers are making a scene"
By Katheline St. Fort, *Miaimi-Herald*, Sunday 29 June 2003
136 http://www.wehaitians.com/haitian%20low%20budget%20movies.html
St. Fort. "Reel Haiti." *Miami-Herald*. Saturday 28 June 2003
137 http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/541.html
"New generation of Haitian filmmakers are making a scene"
By Katheline St. Fort, *Miaimi-Herald*, Sunday 29 June 2003

On a much more positive note, North American venues began catering to a diasporic audience apparently quite eager for Haitian productions. By December of 2003, the North Miami Beach Performing Arts Center had premiered Smoyé Noisy's *Millionnaire par Erreur* (*Millionaire by Mistake*) (2002), the African-American Research Library in Fort Lauderdaile and Florida International University screened Mario Delatour's documentary *40 Ans Après* (*Forty Years Later*) (2002). According to a biography provided by *FOKAL* (*Fondation Connaissance et Liberté*, Open Society Institute Haiti"), Delatour was born in Venezuela to Haitian parents. He was subsequently raised in Port-au-Prince and received his B.A. from the Los Angeles film and television school, Columbia College.[139] In addition to this film, Delatour has worked with Charles Najman and Jonathan Demme and founded *Amistad Films* which "est destiné à apporter un soutien logistique, administratif et humain aux productions étrangères souhaitant travailler en Haïti et en République Dominicaine (brings logistical, administrative, and personnel support to foreign productions wishing to produce in Haiti and the Dominican Republic)."[140] This documentary, also shown during *FOKAL*'s "Month of the Documentary" program in February 2007, traces the life of Roussan Camille, a Haitian poet and diplomat.[141]

Besides the U.S. screening of Delatour's film, both Sunrise Intracoastal theater chain and the California Club theatre in North Miami-Dade presented Wilkenson Bruna's Haitian-American film *Wind of Desire*.[142] In spite of his skepticism, Mitch Dreier, a manager for the Sunrise chain, premiered the film, telling reporter St. Fort that the Haitian community responsed so well to the film that he screened it for almost a month.[143] It is estimated that 1.5 million Haitians reside in North America, particularly in Quebec and along the east coast of the U.S.[144] Hence, these venues are logical destinations for Haitian films.

In addition to the successful screenings in U.S. venues, another development took place to augment exposure of Haitian films: the company *Communication Plus S.A.*

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[139] http://www.fokal.org/pdf/mois-documentaire.pdf
[140] Ibid.
[141] http://www.fokal.org/actualites-a.htm
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] http://www.comminit.com/en/node/150806

emerged to distribute films across Haiti. Richard Sénécal told St. Fort that this distribution company has taken over an essential function in the industry, freeing up filmmakers from the time-consuming endeavor of "hauling their movies from theater to theater." Since they can avoid losing two years to distribute their own films, they now have the freedom to begin new projects. Like other advancements in the industry, there are both positive and negative effects of the system. Etienne informed St. Fort that he earns less money from his films than his distributors. Sénécal surmises that directors "lose some rights" because of the "new arrangement," but he maintains his initial point that "at least things are done quicker."[145]

VII. 2004 - PRESENT

The list of foreign documentary filmmaking in Haiti far outstrips such endeavors in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Nonetheless, local production contends with enormous challenges that generally do not arise in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Long-time Haitian resident and filmmaker, Charles Najman, comments, for example on the difficulty of filming without a reliable source of electrity in his director commentary included in the DVD version of his provocative film, *Royal Bonbon* (2002). Furthermore, the local governmental aid that Martinique and Guadeloupe have received because of the DRAC (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* – Regional Management of Cultural Affairs) has not materialized in Haiti in the same recognizably structured fashion.

Despite the inexhaustible list of obstacles, Haitian directors still manage to shoot and release a small number of films that ultimately contributed to the most successfully orchestrated film festival of this scale to have ever taken place in Haiti. Accounts of the Haitian film festival Jacmel provide evidence of encouraging changes in the Haitian film industry. On July 9th 2004, just months after Aristide's departure, Haiti launched an international film festival, "Festival Film Jakmel," which took place in the coastal town of Jacmel twenty-four miles southwest of Port-au-Prince.[147] Patrick Boucard, a Jacmel

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[145] Ibid.

[147] Charles Arthur, "Haiti – Cinema Revival," World Association for Christian Communication http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media_development/2005_1/haiti_cinema_revival Accessed 24 October 2008
Spellings of the city vary: Jacmel in English; Jakmel in Haitian Creole.
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/298921/Jacmel#tab=active~checked%2Citems~checked&title=Jacmel%20--%20Britannica%20Online%20Encyclopedia

native, and David Belle, a U.S. born Haitian resident, organized the festival, advertising on Jacmel's high street with banners written in Creole. A year before, Boucard had opened the Jacmel Art Centre "after years studying and working abroad."[148] Belle, on the other hand, like so many foreign directors before him, came to Haiti for the first time in 1993 to film a documentary about the Cédras regime. He subsequently moved to Haiti where he remains an active filmmaker.[149]

Turning attention toward more positive matters than the town's pollution ridden beaches and poverty stricken families, this landmark event combined film screenings with concerts, educational programs, panel discussions, exhibitions and celebrations. The 2004 festival screened eighty-five films (some more than once) from thirty countries at six different venues - all free of charge and open to the public.[150] Organizers encouraged collaboration between the more than twenty directors in attendance, some "traveling from as far as France and Spain, as well as Cuba, Jamaica and the United States."[151] Certain directors even contributed to local film education initiatives by hosting "workshops on various aspects of film-making (*sic*)."[152]

Over the course of the ten day-festival, the organizers screened several Haitian films. They showed Labuchin's *Anita* (1980), as well as more recent works like Charles Najman's documentary *Madame Nerval* (1999) about the Voodoo priestess from Jacmel, and Laurence Magloire's *La Vi Ka Bel Pou Tout Moun* (Life Can Be Beautiful for Everyone) (2004). Both Najman and Magloire have multiple films to their credit. *La Vi* consists of "a compilation of testimonies of the stigma experienced by those trying to live a full life with HIV/AIDS."[153] Magloire worked with Anne Lescot on two other films, the short *Lè loa voye rele'm* (2001) and the full-length documentary *Des Hommes et des*

Accessed 23 October 2008
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] http://www.filmfestivals.com/servlet/JSCRun?obj=Fliche&CfgPath=ffs&Cfg=search.cfg&id=4486 Accessed October 31, 2007
[151] Charles Arthur, "Haiti – Cinema Revival," World Association for Christian Communication http://www.wacc.org.uk/wacc/publications/media_development/2005_1/haiti_cinema_revival Accessed 24 October 2008
[152] Ibid.
[153] Arthur, "Haiti."

Dieux (*Of Men and Gods,* 2002).[154] In the latter film, the directors interview several gay or bisexual Haitian men and make the case that Haitians trace homosexuality to the caprice of a voodoo figure. The film depicts the comradery of the men, as well as their central participation in voodoo ceremonies. In the film, Haitian voodoo serves a dual function in regards to homosexuality: it serves as an explanatory device for the sexual orientation of these men and it provides them with a role and means of acceptance in their community.

In Arthur's description of the event, he also takes note of three feature films shown at the festival: Antonin's first feature *Piwoli and the Gangster* (2002), "satirical comedy…with a script written by Gary Victor, one of Haiti's most prominent novelists" and Richard Sénécal's two "very popular" feature length romances *Barikad* (2002) (edited on Apple's Final Cut Pro) and *I Love You Anne* (2003).[155] The film *Barikad* addresses a similar theme to that of *Anita*: the trials of a household laborer.[156] Anna Wardenburg-Ferdinand of the *Haitian Times* wrote that the female protoganist in *Barikad*, Odenie (played by Fabienne Colas), replaces a wealthy family's ill maid and then falls in love with the eldest son, Thierry (Tibert Handy).[157] In the film, like many French Caribbean works, "the actors switch between French and Creole, French used mostly in talking to their parents at the breakfast table."[158] The code-switching is logical in light of the fact that the main characters belong to different social classes. The "taboo subject" appealed to Haitian audiences: "At the 2 p.m. showing of Barikad at the Imperial Theater on Delmas 19, moviegoers laughed and empathized with characters."[159]

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[154]Trailer: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x30lt4_lwa-yo-voye-relem-haiti
Translation for the title ot yet obtained.
http://www.fokal.org/pdf/mois-documentaire.pdf
[155] Katheline St. Fort, "New generation of Haitian Filmmakers are making a scene," *Miami-Herald*, 29 June 2003.
http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/541.html
Accessed 24 October 2008
[156] *Anita*, dir. Rassoul Labuchin, 1980.
[157] Anna Wardenburg-Ferdinand, "'Barikad' explores hidden love in Haitian society," *Haitian Times,* 4 December 2002.
http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/530.html
Accessed 24 October 2008
[158] Wardenburg-Ferdinand, "Barikad."
[159] Ibid.

Arthur reports that the Jacmel festival cost some $125,000. Boucard provided part of the funds, which speaks volumes about his personal wealth; the average Haitian currently subsists on an income of one to two dollars a day.[160] To ensure that the films remained free to the public, they also received funding from "corporate sponsors, foundations and friends."[161] Boucard and Belle's desire for accessibility had an outstanding effect on participation. Some 3,500 people attended on a daily basis, coming from Port-au-Prince and surrounding villages. Boucard, and Belle, went so far as to commission "two taxis to drive into the surrounding countryside to bring people into town."[162]

A group of teenagers from the village of Cayes-Jamel benefited from this altruistic offer. A New York based photojournalist Tequila Minsky recounted to Arthur that "the two films about HIV/AIDS were viewed by an audience that included a group of 20 teenagers who were brought in from the remote fishing village of Cayes-Jacmel…an hour's drive along the coastal road to the east of Jacmel."[163] This scenario of teenagers viewing films about HIV/AIDs has very positive potential repercussions. HIV/AIDS education is of paramount importance in Haiti with "more than 200,000 boys and girls have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS; yet, only 20 percent of young people know how to protect themselves against the virus."[164]

Another positive outcome of the festival comes from the first-time exposure of films to numerous Haitians in attendance. Arthur deduced that this festival provided many Haitians with their first film viewing experience. By the end of the festival, the organizers had projected countless socially-pertinent films, several directed by Haitians, in a city whose only cinema reportedly closed several years prior to viewers who had perhaps never even seen a single film before. Commending these accomplishments, Antonin, as head of the Association of Haitian filmmakers "issued a special communiqué to commend the Jacmel Festival for being an important incentive to the local film

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[160] Arthur, "Haiti."
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164]Chris Brazier and Amir Hamed, *The World Guide: Global Reference, Country by Country* (Oxford :New Internationalist Publications, 2007), 265.

industry."[165] In a similar ongoing effort to expose Haitians to filmmaking, Antonin runs the *Centre Pétion Bolivar* discussed previously, which along with the organization *FOKAL* (*Fondation Connaissance et Liberté*, Open Society Institute Haiti"), supports film events and cultural debates. For instance, *FOKAL* sponsored UNESCO's "Traveling Caribbean Film Showcase" from May 3 – May 11, 2007 and the Month of the Documentary, February 2007. [166] Both organizations also provide subsidies for select Haitian film projectors.[167]

Presently, finding prospective financiers remains a formidable obstacle for Haitian filmmakers. With Haitian government unlikely, as Sénécal indicated, to finance any projects save those which propound governmentally advantageous messages, Haitian filmmakers may apply for funds from *Fonds Sud* (South Funds). The CNC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-finance and co-manage this interdepartmental scheme.[168] The CNC (funded by the Minister of Culture and Communication) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs allotted 2.4 million euros to the *Fonds Sud* in 2008 of which a film receives a sum on average of 110,000 euros, but no more than 152,000 euros.[169] A central objective of *Fonds Sud* is to facilitate the distribution of the funded films in their home countries and in France. Haitan filmmakers qualify for this aid and can also apply to their other programs: financial aid for the rewriting of a script with a professional screenwriter, which awards up to 7,600 euros to assist in this project; and funding to finish a film, a 46,000 euros maximum.[170]

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[165] Arthur, "Haiti."
[166] Katheline St. Fort, "Haitian creativity outlasted nation's tyranny," *Miami-Herald,* 29 June 2003, http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/540.html
Accessed 24 October 2008
http://www.fokal.org/actualites-a.htm
[167] http://www.fokal.org/programmes-a.htm#arts
[168] Centre National Cinématographique, *Film France*, (Place : Publisher, Year), 34.
http://www.cnc.fr/Site/Template/T11.aspx?SELECTID=929&ID=534&t=2
Accessed 25 October 2008
[169] www.diplomatie.gouv.fr
Souad Houssein (Responsable *du projet "cinéma" dans la Direction de la langue francaise, de la diversité culturelle et Linguistique à l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* / Cinema Project Leader in the Division of French Language, Cultural Diversity and Linguistics at the International Organization of Francophone Countries), email to the author, 15 January 2008.
She also informed me that her organization supports *Funds Sud* and led me to believe that she plays an active role in the yearly reception of over a hundred proposals destined for review by *Fonds Sud*.
[170] Ibid.

Greatly assisting another aspect of the development of Haitian cinema is the company *Loisirs S.A*. Previously known as *Maxence Elisé*, the French Caribbean company initially "allowed the Haitian public access to hit films produced in France and to French versions of American films" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88). Now, the company controls "the distribution and operation of Haitian cinema and owns most of the country's theaters, notably the three largest – the Impérial (5 theaters), the Capitol (4 theaters, the Rex Theater – and the Paramount" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 88-89). Despite their monopolistic control, they actively promote Haitian films. Consequently, Antonin credits them for putting Haitian fictional films and documentaries "on the big screen" (Antonin, *Small Axe* 89). Because of this exposure, there is the potential for greater box office returns, leading to increased production of higher quality films. Hence, truly encouraging change is certainly at work.

VIII. INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS

The year 2004 also marked the start of the Montreal International Haitian Film Festival (MIHFF). According to a press release, "the Fabienne Colas Foundation [FCF], a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Haitian Cinema, Art and Culture both nationally and internationally" established the MIHFF to promote "independent author's films and seeks to inspire people from all walks of life."[173] Other goals of the MIHFF include raising awareness and giving "Quebeckers of Haitian origin the opportunity to reconnect with their roots and other Quebeckers a chance to discover an emerging cinema. It may also help the media gain a better understanding of the Haitian reality and to maybe depict a less apocalyptic image of Haiti in its reports."[174] The continued support for the festival accentuates a growing movement in Haitian cinema: diasporic and foreign audiences have a demonstrable and unrelenting appetite for Haitian films.

In accordance with the festival's objectives, organizers chose six films for the second round of the festival in December 2005. Over 3,000 people attended, which encouraged the continuance of the event over the past two years. Each year, organizers have increased the number of films shown. At the third annual festival in 2007,

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[173] http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/pdf/com_12mai2008_en.pdf
Accessed 25 October 2008
[174] Ibid.

organizers offered the choice of eleven Haitian films as well as ten films from Canada, eight from the U.S., three from France, one from Brazil, and one from Cuba. The films ran from four minutes to feature length, spanning genres from animation to "fictumentary" as in the case of Canadian filmmaker Judith Leconte's *La Perte* (*The Loss*, 2006). Two world premieres also took place: the Haitian film, *Le Chauffeur* (*The Chauffeur*, Jean-Claude Bourjolly, 2007) and the American film, *Woodshed* (Ella Turenne, 2007. The following titles reveal a discernible interest in Haitian children's affairs, continuing the legacy begun with *Anita*: *Enfants en Danger* (*Children in Danger*, Arnold Antonin, 2006); *Les Enfants du Sucre* (*The Sugar Babies*, Amy Serrano, 2007); and *Les Enfants Esclaves* (*Children of Shadows*, Karen Kramer, 2001).[175]

The major awards of the 2007 festival went to Antonin for his feature film, *Le Président a-t-il le SIDA*? (*Does the President have AIDS?*, 2006), the American Bill Haney for his documentary, *Le Prix du Sucre* (*The Price of Sugar*, 2007), and to Canadian Martine Chartrand for her short, *Ame Noire* **(***Black Soul*, 2000). Besides the FCF, Radio-Canada and Reseau Liberté contributed to the modest monetary prizes ($300-$1000).[176] This year, the voodoo themed festival has grown, taking place in both Montreal, September 17-21, and Quebec City, from September 21-28.[177] Antonin again received special mention for his documentary, *Jacques Roumain, la passion d'un pays*. The $2000 prize awarded for the Best Fiction Feature Film went to Jean-Alix Holmand for *L'Obsession*.[178] The FCF has also launched a secondary program that promotes Haitian culture and cinema. In July of 2007 and 2008, they held a one-night event entitled "Haiti On Fire" that involved an outdoor screening of two films as well as a folk dancing, performances, and Haitian cuisine.[179]

In 2009, the structure of the festival underwent a major change. According to a late-summer press release by the organizers, it is henceforth to be hosted by the Montreal International Black Film Festival. Despite cross-over events such as the opening

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[175] http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/pdf/dp_spotlight12sept06.pdf
Accessed 25 October 2008
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] http://www.festivalf »Filmhaitien.com/pdf/com_13juin2007_en.pdf
Accessed 25 October 2008

screening of Martinican actor and first-time filmmaker Lucien Jean-Baptiste's film set in France *La Première Etoile* (2008), the MIHFF retained its original mission by organizing specifically Haitian-related events, such as the tribute to Dany Laferrière, "the great Haitian writer who has seen many of his works adapted for the big screen."[180]

Although the MIHFF is the most extensive festival of its kind, other festivals and film series across the U.S. and Caribbean incorporate Haitian films regularly in their programs.[181] The 16th Annual African Diaspora Film Festival in New York City, the African Diaspora Cine Club at the Teacher's College of Columbia University, and the Trinidiad and Tobago Film Festival all screened Haitian films this year.[182] This level exposure and interest offers convincing proof that Haitian cinema has a solid international and diasporic following.

IX. CONCLUSION

The drastic upheaval and death toll caused by the January 12, 2010 earthquake raises the question, what hope does Haitian cinema have to develop when catastrophe continues to strike at every turn? When foreign reporters and aid workers were still largely unable to reach the devastated city of Jacmel, students of the Ciné Institute facility, the only center of its kind in Haiti, took to the streets with the school's equipment to begin filming the damage and heroism of local residents:[183] According to Benjanmin Fernandez of *Le Monde*, this impromptu Haitian media outlet organized itself as the center of communication and reporting, "transmitting images and testimony that facilitied contact between the city and the outside world. This center also assisted in making contact between families and authorities."[184] Within less than two weeks, the students expanded their mission: "five camera crews from the school began, on January

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[180] Press Release: "The Montreal International Haitian Film Festival Five Years and Still Going Strong!" http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/pdf/com_9sept2009_en.pdf
Accessed 7 February 2010.
[181] That I have found.
[182] http://www.trinidadandtobagofilmfestival.com/films.asp
http://www.nyadff.org/films_list3.html
http://sankofa12.wordpress.com/2008/03/27/tc-african-diaspora-cine-club/
[183] http://www.cineinstitute.com/news/2010/02/01/stories-of-heroes-by-vadim-janvier/
Accessed 7 February 2010.
[184] Ibid.
"c'est elle qui transmet les images et les témoignages qui permettent de garder contact entre la ville et l'extérieur. C'est elle qui a permis de contacter les familles et les autorités."

20th, cameras on their shoulders, toward neighboring towns, where the state of affairs is practically almost unknown."[185] The inspiring response of the Ciné Institute's students reinforces the message that the Haitian film industry took hold and will continue to develop even in the face of destruction and tragedy. These students are a testimony to the strength and ability of Haitians to document and rebuild, using film as an essential means to do so.

[185] Ibid.
"cinq équipes de reporters de l'école sont parties, le 20 janvier, caméra à l'épaule, vers les villes voisines, dont la situation demeure jusque-là inconnue."

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SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 1: *LES CINEMATOGRAPHISTES* POEM

"Cinématographiqument,
Je vais vous présenter la chose:
D'abord les sujets, puis la cause
Qui veut que je vienne rimant
Cinématographiquement!..

Mes sujets sont bien les trios têtes
Les plus dissemblables qu'il soit.
Si vous les prenez pour trios bètes,
Dans l'oeil vous vous f…ourez le doigt.

L'un est grand, joufflu, formidable;
Le second est tout mignonnet;
Le troisième est un brun sortable;
Et tous en choeur font leur effet!

J'espère ma plume…ographe
Vous a suffisamment dépeint:
Maurice HARGOUS le photographe;
DAUFESNE, le vaillant lapin;
Et GRECO, brun fils d'Italie!..

Le cause, à present? ---Et! Parbleu,
Je vais la dire, sans folie,
Comme il convient sous un ciel bleu.

Adieu! Partez, brilliants artistes
Qui nous avez charmés!...Allez
Egayer nos provinces tristes;
Vous en serez recompensés!...

Votre spectacle est magnifique;
Vos tableaux? le régal des yeux!
Et vous avez le don unique
D'être un trio gracieux!

Vous aurez dans toutes nos villes,
Le même bonheur que chez nous:
Papas, mamans, garçons et filles
Seront exacts au rendez-vous.

Du succès vous serez les hôtes!
Et nous souhaitons ardemment
Que de foin d'emplissent vos bottes,
-Cinématographiquement…

Nilaup." (2)

CHAPTER 2: Development of Martinican and Guadeloupan Cinema

The beautifully rugged terrain of Guadeloupe, a French overseas department, is comprised of five islands of various sizes. The topography of the single island of Martinique, on the other hand, is dominated by the volcano Mont Pélée, which erupted in 1902 killing all but a single resident of the former capital of Saint-Pierre. In addition to the contrasting landscape, both islands are the birthplace of different famed residents. Maryse Condé, Simone Schwartz-Bart, and Daniel Maximin hail from Guadeloupe, Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Edouard Glissant were all born in Martinique. From topography to residents, variations exist between these neighboring islands. Yet, for every area of difference, Martinique and Guadeloupe share an enormous amount in common in regards to their history, culture, and political environment. The development of their respective film industries is no exception, making a joint, consolidated study of this subject more logical and efficient.

This chapter begins with the colonial history of Martinique and Guadeloupe, followed by the arrival of cinema in these islands. Documentation of this arrival is available through primary source material from the University of Florida.[186] The richness of these archives makes it possible to document this early development, providing facts and details heretofore unexamined. Similar to the chapter on the Haitian cinema, I will spend the majority of the chapter discussing the development of film in relation to the context. Tying cinema to its context provides a much deeper understanding of how the Martinican and Guadeloupan the film industries developed. Towards the end of the study, I evaluate major changes in the industry such as recently allotted funding from government sources like the DRAC (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* – Regional Management of Cultural Affairs) and the CNC (*Centre National Cinématographique* – National Cinematographic Center), as well as a number of

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[186] Various holdings from this university indicate that turn-of-the-century Antillean newspapers appear to have been quite prevalent: Le Courrier de la Guadeloupe (1881-1885, 1887-1908); La Vérité Journal Republican (Guadeloupe, 1890-1906); *La Democratie* (Guadeloupe, 1900-1906); *L'Avenir* (Guadeloupe, 1907-1912); *Le Nouvelliste* (Guadeloupe, 1907-1927, 1929-1930, 1947-1972) ; *Les Antilles* (Martinique, 1872-1901); *Les Colonies* (Martinique, 1881-1902). (Available at Archives in Martinique : Les colonies 1885-1902 ; Les Antilles 1882-1901 http://www2.cg972.fr/arch/html/pagecoll.htm)

pioneering local and regional cultural initiatives. This growth shines a light on the recent developments that are presently transforming the Antillean film industry.

I. COLONIAL HISTORY

On his second voyage in 1493, Christopher Columbus introduced sugar cane to the New World. Labor and technology were desperately needed to harvest the cane, extract its juice, and create a standardized product. To satisfy the former need, colonizers first relied on the enforced labor of Native Amerindians. Deplorable treatment of the local population led to a rapid deterioration of their numbers. Murder, disease, and malnutrition ravaged the local population. At the time of Columbus' arrival, 200,000-300,000 Amerindians lived in Hispaniola (the island that is now divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic). By 1514, however, only 14,000 natives had survived the onset of colonization.

Due to the rapidly declining number of natives, the King of Spain initiated the Caribbean slave trade in 1501. Seventeen African slaves living in Spain who had been converted to Catholicism were brought to Hispaniola in 1505. However, according to Caribbean historian Eric Williams "there were simply not enough Negro slaves born in the power of Christian Spaniards" (42). Consequently, the Spanish Government turned its attention directly to Africa to alleviate the demand for labor.

By 1552, Williams reports that African slaves "were being imported into Hispaniola at the rate of two thousand a year" (42-43). Indeed, for the duration of the colonial period, which varied slightly by island, the slave trade continued relentlessly in the Caribbean. As a response to the growing number of slaves and freed people of color or *affranchis*, French king Louis XIV devised a new systematic legal arrangement, the *Edit Touchant la Police des Isles de l'Amérique Francaise*, better known as the *Code Noir*. Issued in March 1685, the *Code Noir* outlined a long series of rights, restrictions, and punishments regulating matters pertaining to slavery (Heinl 22-23). However, over time the *Code Noir* underwent a series of modifications that ultimately undid its more "liberal provisions" (Heinl 31). The changes culminated "in 1771 with Louis XV's 'Instructions to Administrators,' a series of decrees had created what amounted to a separate code of restrictions, repressions, special disabilities – and therefore humiliations

– applying to the *homme de couleur*" (Heinl 31).[187] These new provisions meant that it had become much more difficult for a master to free any of the thousands of slaves in the French Antilles in the late seventheenth century (Williams 106, Heinl 31).[188]

TABLE 1: SLAVE POPULATIONS OF THE FRENCH ANTILLES, 1664 -1838

Martinique		Guadeloupe		Guiana		Saint-Domingue	
1664	2,700	1671	4,300	1695	1,000	1681	2,000
1686	11,100	1700	6,700	1698	1,400	1739	117,400
1696	15,000	1710	9,700	1707	1,400	1754	172,000
1700	14,600	1715	13,300	1716	2,500	1764	206,000
1736	55,700	1720	17,200	1740	4,700	1777	240,000
1751	65,900	1753	40,400	1765	5,700	1779	249,100
1770	71,100	1772	78,000	1789	10,700	1789	452,000
1790	84,000	1816	81,700	1814	12,100	1791	480,000
1831	86,300	1831	97,300	1831	19,100		
1838	76,500	1838	93,300	1838	15,800		

Source: Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 78. Reprinted: Bernard Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles, 1635 – 1848* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002), 25.

The amendments to the *Code Noir* also stipulated that an *affranchi* could no longer marry a European, had to serve three years in the militia, could be legally drafted at any time thereafter, and had to pay the *corvée* (a French feudal tax). The *Code Noir* also ensured that an *affranchi* "could not hold public office or even pursue the professions" and "had to be off the streets by 9:00 P.M." (Heinl 31).

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[187] The French expression "homme de couleur" means "man of color" in English.

[188] Williams: 1779 13, 261 whites Guad and 32,650 whites SD
177. 6 11, 619 whites M

As these increasingly severe directives were carried out in the French Caribbean, France recurrently battled with Great Britain. Although the two world powers resolved the Seven Years War in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris, in which France relinquished Canada for continued control of Martinique and Guadeloupe, the tumultuous relationship between France and Britain continued throughout the rest of the eighteenth century (Thackery & Findling 24).[189] France again went to war with Great Britain in 1793, a turn of events which led the English to seize Martinique in 1794. This re-occupation prevented the decision to abolish slavery, proposed by the newly created French National Convention, to ever take effect in Martinique. On the other hand, Guadeloupans were living "in a state of quasi-freedom" because French commissioner Victor Hugues had enlisted freed Guadeloupans in his successful fight against the British (Moitt 127). Soon thereafter, however, Napoleon took control of France and began implementing measures to reinstitute slavery in the islands. Napoleon sent General Antoine Richepanse to Guadeloupe in 1802 in order to "reassert the First Consul" and on May 20th of that year, Napoleon officially restored slavery and the slave trade in Martinique, Tobago, Saint Lucia and the Ile de France (Heinl 100). Within a month, Richepanse ensured that the same was true in Guadeloupe. As a result of Napoleon's catastrophic decision, enslaved Guadeloupan population, under the leadership of a Louis Delgrès, "a mixed-race colonel born in Martinique" launched their own revolt (Moitt 128).[190] It ended in defeat, as did a subsequent uprising twenty years later in Martinique (Williams 326). In contrast to Haiti, therefore, neither Martinican nor Guadeloupan slaves ever managed to rout the French colonizers.[191]

Even with the abolition of slavery nearly half a century later in 1848 and the dramatically declining sugar industry, thousands of former slaves still labored on plantations. According to historian Nicolas Armand, the French government instituted a repressive legal system "to force respect for the 'organization of work' and 'to fight

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[189] Frank W. Thackerey and John E. Findling. *Events that Changed Great Britain Since 1689.* Westport, Conn. Greenwood Publishing Group (2002).
[190] I elaborate on Delgrès' contribution in Chapter four, Christian Lara section.
[191] Martinique 1776: 11,619 whites ; 77,268 slaves ; 2,892 free blacks
Guadeloupe 1776: 13, 261 whites ; 85, 327 slaves
Haiti 1779 : 32,650 whites ; 249,098 slaves (6.5 :1 ; 6.4 :1 ; 7.5 :1Williams 106)

against vagabondage'" (11).[192] A decree signed by Louis Napoléon on February 13, 1852, for instance, required that all inhabitants from the age of twelve upwards must be able to prove that they were engaged in a "productive activity" (Armand 9).[193] Consequently, emancipated slaves in the French West Indies "did not desert the plantation" (Williams 335). And, to continue to supplement the workforce, African "immigrants" continued to arrive in the islands: 30,000 Africans reached Martinique between 1853 and 1870 (Armand 13).

The persistence of racism and brutal work conditions even after emancipation prompted yet another major revolt in the Antilles. Sparked by the imprisonment of a young black farmer, Léopold Lubin, for retaliating against his white assailant, Augier de Maintenon, the population torched fifty plantations and took over fifteen communes in September, 1870 (Armand 21-22). Current Governor Menche de Loisne sent his troops to stifle the destruction. Aside from several deaths and injuries, the Governor killed the revolt's leaders and imprisoned nearly five hundred other insurgents at the Desaix fort (Nicolas 3).

Compounding the difficulty of this long and still violent transitional period, Martinique suffered the consequences of two major natural disasters. In June of 1890, a fire destroyed much of Fort-de-France. Even though fire was a recurring motif in West Indian history, newspapers across the Caribbean noted the particularly calamitous effects of this particular fire (Richardson 64). Many more thousands of Martinicans were killed just over a decade later when Montagne Pélée erupted on May 1902. The volcano looming over the landscape of the island's longtime capital in Saint-Pierre spewed ash for weeks, warning the residents to evacuate. Very few did, and when the volcano finally erupted, only one man survived in the entire town. The island's capital relocated to Fort-de-France, where, to this day, it remains Martinique's largest city and the seat of government.

II. 1895-1903

With an understanding of the colonial history, it is now possible to more fully understand and assess the advent of film in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Prior to this

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192192"pour faire respecter cette 'organisation du travail' et 'lutter contre le vagabondage.'"
193"activité productive"

project, such information had not been identified and made public. In 1988, for instance, film scholar Osange Silou confessed that the date of the first public projection in Martinique and Guadeloupe was simply unknown (Silou 26). Furthermore, Silou states, the earliest films shot and shown on the island have never been recuperated. However, primary source material in the form of colonial newspapers amends Silou's quondam assessment. In 1894, the Lumière brothers patented a mechanical apparatus by the name of the *cinématographe*. The brothers used the device to conduct their first private screening on March 22, 1895. Within two weeks, word of the invention of the *cinématographe* had spread to Guadeloupe. In an article from the Guadeloupan newspaper *Le Courrier de la Guadeloupe* entitled "Photography of Thoughts,"[194] an anonymous contributor writes:

> One can no longer predict where the progress of photography will end. After the Roentgen rays, the cinematographe, and other inventions, here comes the photography of thoughts![195]

Knowledge of the Lumière brothers' invention of cinema therefore reached the islands in lightening speed at the time. However, the logistics of screening films outside of Europe translated into a much longer delay. It took another six years for the *cinématographe* to reach Guadeloupe.

On November 24, 1901, nearly two years after the Italian Giuseppe Filippi introduced to Haiti, a man bearing the very same name arrived in Guadeloupe to project a series of film reels. Without forensic proof, we may never be able to establish with absolute certainty that it was the same Giuseppe Filippi who carried his projector and reels from one Caribbean island to the next over a period of years. Yet, the compelling circumstantial evidence such as time period, unique occupation, European training, and circulating reputation implied in the newspaper columns offer more than enough convincing signs that the M. Filippi in the Haitian newspaper *Le Nouveliste* is the very same man warmly welcomed in the Guadeloupan papers *La Vérité* and *Le Courrier de la Guadeloupe*:

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[194]"La photographie de la pensée"

[195] 4 April 1895 p.2 No.30 17th Year.
"On ne peut plus prévoir où s'arrêtront les progrès de la photographie. Après les rayons Roentgen, le cinématographe et autres prodiges, voici la photographie de la pensée!"

> Mr. Joseph Filippi, recently arrived from Martinique, proposes to offer quite soon at the Pu-baic of Pointe-à-Pitre various recreational cinematographique events. He will begin the screenings next week, if he has completed the preparations by then. We thank Mr. Filippie for coming to stay in our city. Here, our citizens, deprived of all distraction, can enjoy the well-operated cinematographe that was so successfully received by the residents of our sister island.[196]

The implications of this article are quite astonishing: first, news of the discovery of film took relatively little time to reach a rather remote location; second, Filippi managed to travel and maintain his equipment over time in these circumstances; third, that in spite of the fact that the reels are irretrievable, at least the arrival of cinema and the reels projected in these islands can henceforth be discussed with certainty.

Over the next few months, the screenings were the talk of the town. Filippi immediately implemented a screening schedule that was reported in the *Le Courrier*. According to a November 29th article, the first screening was set to occur on Saturday evening, November 30th, 1901. Henceforth, Filippi planned four screenings per week "with an always varied program on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday."[197] The anonymous author explains that the nightly program will begin at eight p.m. and lasts approximately an hour and a half to two hours. The screenings will take place at the theater on Turenne Road, in the Tardif neighborhood.[198] Entry cost three francs for a "première" seat, 2 francs for "second" seats. The article also announces reduced price screenings for children.

The following week, *Le Courier* ran an extensive article applauding the initial screenings and providing an encyclopedic description of the mechanical components of the *cinématographe*. After deeming the screenings on Saturday and Sunday "the greatest

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196 24 November 1901 p. 1 13th year No. 47 "Le Cinématographe"
"M. Filippi Joseph, récemment arrivé de la Martinique, se propose d'offrir bientôt au Pu-baic[196] De la Pointe-à-Pitre des soirées récréatives de cinématographe. Il commencera ses séances dès la semaine prochaine, s'il achève d'ici là ses installations. Nous remercions M. Filippi d'être venu pour quelque temps, s'installer dans notre ville où nos concitoyens, sevrés de toute distraction, pourront se récréer au moyen de son cinématographe dont le jeu, nous dit-on, savamment exécuté par M. FIlippi, a obtenu beaucoup de succès de nos concitoyens de l'Ile Sœur."

197"avec un programme toujour varié le samedi, le dimanche, le mardi, et le jeudi." "Le Cinématographe", Fri Nov 29 Year 22 No. 96 P.1.

198"terrain."

and most legitimate success," the author then transitions to define the invention.[199] In more evocative than scientific terms, the author calls the *cinématographe* "the painting of movement, of all movements, that it caputures in flight and renews at whim on the canvas for the pleasure of our eyes, without omitting on single detail."[200] As part of the description, this long segment of the article subtly offers information regarding the content of Filippi's films. The author writes that the invention allows the audience to:

> Attend the swarming of the crowd in a street or city square, a military demonstration, the slow or quick scudding a ship on the sea, the gushing or flowing of water, the movement of waves blown about by the wind, the charging of a cavalry, its difficult equestrian training; in short, all the possible scenes of life in movement.[201]

Hence, the author of this article provides clues as to the content of Filippi's films and the variation of the subject material shown to the Guadeloupan audiences. Although the images projected could vary enormously based on their somewhat generic content, the very next sentence implies the origins of these scenes:

> In the blink of an eye, the cinematographe makes us visit Paris, London, and Melbourne. It transports us from one hemisphere to the other and at every place it shows us things and men in the middle of activity, taken from real life.[202]

While it is not explicitly stated, it appears that Filippi screened the Lumières' footage that they had gathered across Europe sharing their invention. To further substantiate content of the projections, another newspaper entitled *La Vérité* also makes mention of Filippi's arrival and screenings.

On December 8, 1901, the Guadeloupan newspaper *La Vérité* featured a story that supports the accounts about the content of the films given in *Le Courrier*. Reiterating and expanding on the subject matter of these films, the anonymous contributor writes:

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[199]"le plus grand et le plus légitime success."

[200]"la *peinture du mouvement*, de tous les mouvements, qu'il saisit au vol et qu'il renouvelle à volonté sur une toile pour le plaisir de nos yeux, sans omettre un seul detail." 3 Dec. 1901"Le Cinématographe."

[201]"assister au grouillement de la foule dans une rue ou sur une place, au défilé d'un régiment, au glissement lent ou rapide d'une barque sur la mer, au jaillissement de l'eau en embruns, à son écoulement, au bouleversement des vagues agitées par le vent, à une charge de cavalerie, à des exercices difficiles d'équitation, enfin à toutes les scènes possible de la vie en mouvement."

[202]"En clin d'œil il nous fait visiter Paris, Londres, Melbourne, nous transporte d'un hémisphère à l'autre et partout nous montre les choses et les hommes en pleine activité, saisis sur le vif."

> Whether it be scenes of the world and everything in it, images of famous wars, customs from the days of Antiquity or the life of Christ; or it be an old Roman or President Felix Faure, soldiers engaged in military training, the charge of the cavaly, a dispute amongst women, or a cock fight; or if it is Milan, Paris, London, or Melbourne that appears onscreen, our attention is always drawn, never giving way to lassitude or indifference.[203]

In this passage, the mention of the "combat de coqs" implies the possibility that Filippi screened regionally made films to Martinican and Guadeloupan audiences. As reported in the Haitian section, filmmaking occurred in Haiti, giving way to the possibility that these films may have been shown in other islands. Popular accounts of the early history of filmmaking synthesized by Osange Silou also suggest that this occurred:

> the collective memory makes mention of Antillean representatives of the Lumière brothers who criss-crossed the two islands, filming scenes of daily life, sketch comedies performed by the people and cultural or general interest gatherings, such as the arrival of ships from France, the inauguration or departure of governors, and cock fights (Silou 26).[204]

In conjunction with the content of the two articles from *Le Courrier* and *La Vérité*, Silou's account demonstrated that there was an interest in filming native customs as well as screening privileged Western-themed material to local audiences.

Moreoever, during my August 21, 2009 interview with Jean-Marc Césaire in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, he indicated that he possessed copies of some of these rare films that Silou describes. Though I did not have an opportunity to screen any of these films, he informed me that his personal collection included early twentieth-century short films shot by Guadeloupans. Where these amateur directors obtained their equipment and training, he could not say.

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[203]"Le Cinématographe" p. 4 Vol 49 13th year. "Que ce soient les scènes de la création, les tableaux des guerres célèbres, des mœurs de l'antiquité et de la vie du Christ ; que ce soit un vieux Romain ou Félix Faure, des soldats faisant de l'exercice, une charge de cavalerie, un combat de femmes ou un combat de coqs ; que ce soit Milan, Paris, Londres ou Melbourne qui apparaissent sur la toile, l'intérêt va toujours grandissant et ne laisse pas place ni à la lassitude ni à l'indifférence."

[204]"la mémoire collective fait mention d'adeptes antillais des frères Lumière qui sillonnaient les deux isles, fixant sur pellicule des scènes de la vie quotidienne, des saynètes jouées par la population et les manifestations culturelles ou d'intérêt général, telles que l'arrivée des navires en provenance de la métropole, les prises de fonction et les départs des gouverneurs jusqu'aux combats de coqs."

Out of all this invaluable information, the article from *Le Courrier* features a unique choice of words that invites further consideration. The author's language conveys a great deal about his or her impressions of the device. Rather than interpreting it as soley a mechanism in which the audience passively absorbs the material projected on screen, the author the expression "fait visiter" which attributes the *cinématographe* with the power to transport the audience to the sites recorded in the films. Such an expression connotes a sense of forced disclocation. The author thereby insinuates that the allure of cinema is this displacement of oneself from the site of viewing to the site recorded. One can speculate that, for certain Martinicans, cinema served as a desirable escape for their island to the lands and events projected onscreen.

For the colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, the cultural referents of choice were historically French and in the case of the available films these articles both show that Western lands continued to figure as the principal subjects. The language of the article reveals how the *cinématographe* could be used to reinforce this assymetrical relationship. The author writes that the *cinématographe* has an intellectual and instructive side: "the intellectual and instructive side of these screenings does not escape anyone."[205] Given the content of the films, this "puissant moyen d'instruction (powerful instructional tool)" has a convincing application for colonial audiences. The author projects its future use as a way to "transform the teaching of history."[206] Even at this early date, the author recognized the use of the *cinématographe* on the service of a specific agenda: to create their desired representation of the past. In brief, the contributor recognizes the power of the device, its instructional applications, and the images privileged in the films. Considered from a postcolonial perspective, the article foreshadows how films can serve as a powerful method of establishing cultural and ideological control over a colonial empire.

The subsequent articles in *Le Courrier* revert to accounts of the more logistical side of the screenings. For instance, the December 6, 1901 article reported that, unlike the success of the first screenings, Filippi encountered technical difficulties on his third

[205]"Le côté intellectuel, instructif des représentations dont nous parlons ne saurait échapper à personne."
[206]"transformer l'enseignement de l'histoire."

and fourth try. During the third screening, the lighting suffered intermittent disruptions. As for the fourth screening, the author writes that it was a complete disaster:

> The device did not work at all. The public that came in droves was forced to leave. We understand their frustration, but deplore the mayhem that ensued. One must think more about the reputation of Guadeloupe.[207]

Next, the author pleads directly with Filippi to not become discouraged and repair the apparatus. However, the author takes a different approach when addressing the public. Scolding the audience, he writes:

> And whatever happens, we hope that the audience as a whole will always be indulgent and reasonable, breaking with dubious traditions and the vestiges of a poorly educated past. If progress is to be more than an empty word, it must be shown in the behavior of the audience during public events.[208]

Besides uncovering further details in the history of cinema in Guadeloupe, this cold reprimand is highly revelatory of the broader historical context. The author's criticism of suspicious traditions and the holdovers of an uneducated past constitute a string of euphemisms for more racially inflected stereotypes of Guadeloupan behavior: the unruly natives who require a firm hand, who must follow the colonizer's lead if they are ever to be respectable citizens. The article is a clear example of the type of rhetoric employed during the course of the France's *mission civilisatrice*, or civilizing mission.

Additional film screenings and the accompanying technical problems continue to take place throughout the month of January. Various delays occurred, depending of how the machine functioned on any given day. In late January for instance, a reporter writes that Filippi waits on the arrival of certain chemicals that enable the device to work. Front page Jan 17 1902. Similar to his stay in Haiti, Filippi travels from Point-à-Pitre, located on the southwestern corner of Grande-Terre, to Basse-Terre, the name of the adjoining

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[207]" les appareils n'ayant pu fonctionner un seul instant. Le public était venu nombreux, il a dû se retirer. Nous comprenons sa déception, mais nous déplorons pour le bon renom de la Guadeloupe (on n'y réfléchit jamais assez) certain tumulte qui a eu lieu."

[208]"Et quoiqu'il arrive nous espérons que le public, dans son ensemble, se montrera toujours indulgent et raisonnable, rompant avec des traditions d'un goût plus que douteux, vestiges d'un passé sans instruction suffisante. Si le progrès n'est pas un vain mot, il doit se traduire par de la *tenue* dans les réunions publiques!"

western portion of the island that primarily comprise Guadeloupe.[209] On February 18, 1902, an article in *Le Courrier* provided an account of his successful sojourn in Basse-Terre:

> Residents of Basse-Terre arrived in great numbers each night at the Champ D'Arbaud for the varied and captivating program offered to satisfy their curioisty. The fortunate residents of Camp-Jacomb pulled themselves away from the niceties of home to enjoy the marvelous works of art created by the association of the Electricity fairy and the Photography magician.[210]

One anecdote offered later in this article demonstrates the local enthusiasm for Filippi's screenings. Hoping to offer a private screening to his staff and students, Reverend Girard, *Supérieur du Collège*, organized an event that ultimately drew a crowd larger than the public screenings: some six hundred people attended. At this screening, the writer reports that films shown included "the master pieces of the 1900 Exposition and two series of animated films."[211]

Not long after his visit to Basse-Terre, Filippi leaves Guadeloupe. He communicates his departure in his very own article featured in the February 28th edition of *Le Courrier*, "Goodbye and thanks."[212] He thanks the entire island for their hospitiality. Even in his words of appreciation, the colonial context remains ever-present:

> If my voyage among you had the objective of making this invention known (which above all honors your great Motherland) to those who have never left their native land, I must confess that will be a more interesting result than elsewhere : my life in you Antillean colonial family will enable me to refute any prejudice that others have said about your island and which ever so slightly and undeservedly obscures its good reputation. If, one day, under the blue Italian skies, my beautiful and dear homeland, anyone speaks to me about my

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[209] Guadeloupe also refers to the combination of islands – Grande-Terre and Basse-Terre (adjoined), as well as Marie-Galante and La Désirade.

[210] "Les Basse-Terriens se pressent en foule, chaque soir, au Champ d'Arbaud pour les spectacles si variés et si captivants offerts à leur curiosité. Les heureux habitants de Camp-Jaconb eux-mêmes s'arrachent quelques heures aux douceurs du home, afin de jouir ces œuvres d'art merveilleuses créées par l'association de la fée Electricité avec la magicienne Photographie."

[211] 18 February 1902: "Le Cinématographe à la Basse-Terre." "les chefs-d'œuvre de l'Exposition de 1900 et deux séries de tableaux animés"

[212] "Adieu et remerciements."

impressions of this trip, I will know exactly what to say about your charming island.[213]

In this passage, Filippi directly references the colonial relationship between Guadeloupe and France. His awareness of foreign prejudice against Guadeloupe is evidence of the condescending attitude and racial bias ingrained in European discourse and ideology toward its colonial territories. That France is interpreted as Guadeloupe's motherland by a European outsider further demonstrates the strength of this disproportionate colonial influence.

Following these revelatory comments, Filippi offers his appreciation to several parties involved in the screenings. He thanks the mayors of the cities, the "valiant" police force who kept order at the screening locations in Pointe-à-Pitre and Basse-Terre, and the police commissioners who assigned their officers to these locations. Filippi's gratitude to these particular individuals invites speculation about the popularity of the screenings. One rational explanation for the close involvement of the mayors and police force is that the popularity of the screenings was so immense that they necessitated some degree of crowd control.[214] With these final words, "Joseph Filippi Director of the Compagnie d'Art" bids farewell to Guadeloupe.[215]

Although Filippi's *séjour* in the Antilles suggests that the history of early cinema mirrors that of Haiti, there is no similar data about films being shot in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Filmmaker Jérome Kanapa credits director Méliès, employed by the Gaumont Company, with the first known film about Martinique, *Martinique île aux fleurs* (1903). Méliès had never visited the island, however, nor had he arranged for the film to be shot on location. Instead, "Méliès reconstituted the bay Saint Pierre and the eruption of Mont Pelée in his bathtub" (Kanapa 9).[216] Kanapa argues that Méliès' talent pardons

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[213]28 February 1902:"Si mon voyage parmi vous a eu pour but de faire connaître une invention, (qui honore surtout votre grande patrie) à ceux qui n'ont jamais quitté le sol natal, je dois vous avouer qu'il aura un résultat plus intéressant par ailleurs : ma vie [dans] votre famille coloniale antillaise me permettra de démentir quelque préjugé que l'on fait planer sur votre pays et qui voile un petit peu sa bonne réputation, ce qu'il ne mérite guère ; si, un jour, sous le ciel azuré d'Italie, ma belle et chère patrie, l'on me parle de mes impressions de voyage, je saurai franchement dire mon opinion sur votre charmante Ile."

[214] The earlier article regarding the malfunctioning *cinématographe* supports the conjecture that the crowds became difficult in such circumstances.

[215]"Joseph Filippi Directeur de la Compagnie d'Art"

[216]"Méliès a reconstituté dans sa baignoire la baie de St-Pierre et l'éruption de la Montagne Pelée."

his slightly "reckless" admission into this category (Kanapa 9).[217] Kanapa's generous assessment is best understood as an attempt to attribute the Antilles with history of a film industry when an active, reflective one has yet to be determined. The next section will show how for more than half of the twentieth century the islands continued to be the passive recipients of foreign films and the site of foreign filmmaking.

III. 1903-1967

Following Filippi's sojourn in Martinique and Guadeloupe, film scholar Lieve Spass indicates that early cinema in these islands "was used principaly as a colonial tool, a means to 'educate' people into accepting the values of colonizers and to show them the great country of France" (Spaas 116). These colonial films reached the general population through "the priest and the teacher" who showed "reels and reels of French film introducing Caribbean children to winter sports, Versailles, the Eiffel tower and Lourdes" (Silou 25, Spaas 116). Screenings of colonial film eventually gave way to the trend of foreign filmmakers shooting their pictures in the Antilles. Howard Hawks filmed on location in Martinique whilst directing the Ernest Hemingway classic *To have and have not* (1944) starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. In the film, Bogart plays a reluctant hero, helping the French Resistance smuggle a couple into Vichy-controlled Martinique.

Once World War II ended, pressure was mounting in the political arena to formally decide the future of the legal relationship between France and her colonies. In Martinique and Guadeloupe, the powerful *békés*, or land-owning white residents preferred independence from France, desiring to freely operate the plantation system to their financial benefit. To improve their lot, the vast majority of the population favored status as a French department, believing that assimilation would afford them the protection of a distant, benevolent nation. On one hand, departmental status, granted in 1946, ensured Martinican and Guadeloupan residents the right to French citizenship and to representation at the Senate and the National Assembly. On the other hand, departmental status also signified the continuance of France's authority over economic and political matters in the islands.

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[217]"abusive."

The legacy of this decision has had a long-term impact on the political movements in the islands, giving rise to stronger independence movements especially after African territories such as Senegal, Camaroon, and the Ivory Coast gained their independence from France. Beginning in the late 1950's, the French Caribbean entered a particularly volatile political period. Summarizing a series of politically-inspired riots and demonstrations, Boukman writes:

> It all started up again again on the eve of the 1960s: in December 1959, for example, the capital of Martinique, Fort-de-France is the site of violent working-class riots for three days complete with barricades and fires. The police shoot and kill three. Numerous people are wounded and arrested. In 1960, twenty-six civil servants from the Antilles and Guyana are forced into exile for anti-colonialist opinions. Again in 1960, a shoot-out leads to the death of one demonstrator in Martinique. Meanwhile, in Paris, the Antillo-Guyanan Front for Independence, that was created three months earlier, disbands. In 1963, three trials, again in Martinique, leads to the imprisonment of eight militants from the Organization of Young Anticolonialists. In 1967, ten die and dozens more are injured in Guadeloupe following a demonstration against racism and unemployment (Boukman *Antilles* 95).[218]

This lengthy citation stresses the politically charged atmostphere of the time. In regards to the development of the French Caribbean film industry, in all probablilty this political climate affected film production.

Although the picturesque setting of Martinique was central to the documentary film, *Les Antilles, vieilles provinces francaises* (1961), the film production on location by French Caribbeans took several more years to develop:

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[218]"Tout a (re)commencé au seuil des années soixante: en décembre 1959, par exemple, la capitale de la Martinique, Fort-de-France, est le siège, trois jours durant, de violentes émeutes populaires avec barricades, incendies. Les forces de police tirent : trois morts, nombreux blessés, nombreuses arrestations. C'est en 1960 encore que vingt-six fonctionnaires des Antilles et de Guyane sont expulsés de leur pays pour opinions anticolonialistes. En 1960 toujours, une fusillade contre des grévistes fait un mort à la Martinique tandis qu'à Paris est dissous le Front antillo-guyanais pour l'autonomie créé trois mois plut tôt. En 1963, trois procès, encore à la Martinique, de l'Organisation de la jeunesse anticolonialiste dont huit militants sont emprisonnés. En 1967, dix morts et des dizaines de blessés en Guadeloupe lors d'une manifestaion contre le racisme et le chomâge."

> With the exception of Cuba and perhaps Puerto Rico and Venezuela, filmmaking in the Caribbean by Caribbean people is primarily a phenomenon of the 1980's and beyond, even though the decade of the 1970's witnessed the appearance of a handful of films from Jamaica, Haiti, and Guadeloupe (Cham 1).

The following section will explain in great detail this great turning point in French Caribbean cinema, and identify, when, how, and under what circumstances this "handful" of productions came into being.[219]

IV. 1968-1982

In 1968, twenty-nine year old director Christian Lara presented his thirty-minute film *Lorsque l'herbe* at the yearly film festival in Carthage (Silou 39). Driven by a self-professed love of Guadeloupe and the lack of "commercial Antillean cinema," Lara's film "pleads for a return to the land and criticizes the mechanization of labor" (Cham 180; Spass 117). Although Silou claims that this film marks the birth of French Caribbean cinema, Albertine Itela notes that "the actors and the content are not Antillean."[220] Even though Lara's film was made outside of the Antilles and is not a French Caribbean film per se, it is still undeniably relevant to the history of French Caribbean and the diasporic experience. According to Itela, from 1950 to 1972, 117,500 Antilleans immigrated to France. Given the presence of Antilleans in France, it makes sense that Lara was not only French Caribbean director to film there. Consistent with the obvious trend in immigration in the 1960's, a number of additional directors shot films in

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[219] Meanwhile, in France, the cinematic movement of the New Wave had peaked. I have not found any evidence that this movement impacted Antillean filmmaking, but perhaps it did influence those making films of the French diasporic experience in France.

[220] http://www.rfo.fr/article38.html – "Le cinema antillais", 13 mars 2005, Albertine Itela ; Silou, *Le Cinéma dans les Antillais françaises*, 13.
"les acteurs et la thématique ne sont pas antillais"
In the introduction, I established a definition of French Caribbean cinema as films whose:

- Director was born or has lived at length in Haiti, Guadeloupe, or Martinique.
- Central character(s) was born and/or raised in Haiti, Guadeloupe or Martinique. On the other hand, the other actors in the film may be of any nationality.
- Setting is at least partially shot in one or more of these three locales. In other words, filming includes, but is not necessarily limited to these three islands.

Although Itela inadvertently highlights the discrepancy between Lara's film and my proposed definition for a French Caribbean film, this revelation does not take away from the fact that the film is connected to a major French Caribbean issue: immigration.

France. Guadeloupan Jacques Ferly directed, *Chronique d'un retour* in 1971, a twenty minute film in black and white which "describes the disillusionment of an Antillean immigrant who decides to return home but never reaches his goal."[221] In 1972, Gabriel Glissant released the thirty minute sixteen milimiter color film, *Le Pion* (The Pawn), which also tells of "the uprooting of an Antillean newly arrived in Paris."[222] Guadeloupan director Michel Traoré also tackled the same themes in his film, *Mizik, rez-de-chaussée Neg*. Traoré directed this short film after graduating from the French film school *Institut des hautes Etudes Cinématographiques* (Spaas 117). According to Spaas, the title is Creole for:

> Music on the Negro's groundfloor actually referring to the the notorious *chambre de bonne*, a minuscule attic room, usually found on the sixth floor of buildings without a lift. The film depicts the nostalgia of a Caribbean immigrant in Paris who, after a hard day's work, returns to his room which he has transformed into a piece of the homeland under a Parisian roof. Other exiles join him there and together they listen to the 'mizik' from their own country that they identify with (Silou 117).

This passage proves that Traoré definitely belongs to a series of Antillean directors in France that incorporated the same theme in their short films: the plight of the Antillean immigrant in Paris. Meanwhile, Lara went on to direct seven more films set in France before shooting one in the Antilles: *Les Infidèles* (*The Adultress*) (1972); *Un Amour de Sable* (1977); *Bouches en Folie* (1977); *Déchainement charnel* (*Make Love With Me*) (1978).

Whereas African filmmakers attracted notice "in the early 1960's, at the height of the process of decolonization," film production by Antilleans in the French Caribbean did not really proliferate until the mid-1970's (Forsdick and Murphy 239). Some of the first Antillean films credit their production to an organization established in 1975 by Aimé Césaire. The SERMAC ((Municipal Service of Cultural Action) constituted the first

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[221]Ibid.
"décrit la désillusion d'un immigré antillais décidé à retourner chez lui mais qui n'arrivera pas au bout de son rêve."
[222]Ibid.
"le déracinement d'un Antillais fraîchement débarqué à Paris."

entity of its kind in the Antilles: an organization committed to training and funding a variety of artistic endeavors, including film.[223] Within two years, Martinican films such as *Dérive ou la femme jardin* (1977) and *Hors des jours étrangers* (1978) had been produced in the SERMAC's guided audiovisual workshop, the *Atelier Audiovisuel*.[224] Cham writes that the film *Dérive ou la femme jardin* was an adaptation of a René Depestre poem and the film *Hors des Jours* dealt "with fraud in legislative elctions and the disastrous consequences of the existing colonial status" (Cham 21).

Then in 1979, Lara shot his feature length work in the Antilles, *Coco la fleur, candidat*. As Lara began his filmmaking enterprises in Guadeloupe, so too did fellow Guadeloupan Jérome Kanapa. In the very first article of the newly relaunched Martinican Communist Party Review, *Action*, Kanapa reports on the topic of French Caribbean cinema.[225] In his article from this Communist journal, "Le cinéma antillais ou le début de la quête (Antillean cinema or the beginning of the pursuit)," he discusses two of his own recent films, *Toute les Joséphines ne sont pas impératrices* (1977) and *En l'autre bord* (1978). The first, he writes, was financed "by democratic Martinican municipalities" (9).[226] In terms of its content, Kanapa writes that the film:

> Recounts the daily life of an agricultural laborer in the banana fields of the island. The strong personality of the character, Joséphine, enabled the film to have an important impact and distribution both in the Antilles and in France amongst immigrants. The film was selected for several film events (9).[227]

As the passage indicates, the second film also managed to reach audiences in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and several foreign countries. Even though these details are somewhat vague, Kanapa does clarify that the film was shown minimally in France but still repeatedly chosen to for entry in international film festivals (9).

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223 http://www.fortdefrance.fr/default.asp?cont=6&param=1560&ft=
Accessed 5 February 2008

224 Ibid.

225 Fort-de-France, Martinique Numéro 1 1979 Société d'Imprimerie Martiniquaise
Review founded in 1963 (5), terminated in 1971, and reappared in 1980.
The First article in the reestablished review is (6-10), Jérome Kanapa.

226"par les munipalités démocratiques martiniquaises."

227 "est le témoignage d'une ouvrière agricole dans la banane sur la vie quotidienne de l'ile. La forte personnalité du personage: Joséphine, a permis au film d'avoir un impact et une diffusion importante tant sur place qu'en métrople dans l'émigration. Le film a été sélectionné pour plusieurs manifestations cinématographique."

Although Kanapa's films did not reach enormous audiences, he remained positive in the article about the films' content and the direction of the industry. In a long and well-articulated segment from 1979, he described the recent surge in the younger generation's interest in Antillean cultural identity and foreign affairs and then related these trends to cinema:

> Over the last several years and especially since the increasing threat of expatriation for political and economic reasons, the younger generations are laying claim to their own cultural identity by researching their history, their past, their traditions, and by the appearance of a multitude of artistic works deeply connected to the reality of these islands. The rebirth of creole amongst the youth is one of the most obvious signs (6).[228]

During the course of this extensive Communist journal article Boukman takes note of the many ways in which Antillean culture was shifting in the late 1970s. In Antillean culture, he sees encouraging change taking place, not to mention a deeper awareness of outside cultural movements. Cinema is at the heart of this change, offering Antilleans an opportunity to criticize colonialism and develop a cultural identity:

> In the face of pressure from France and politics, aware of the liberation movements in the American continent, and more specifically in Caribbean islands like Cuba, cogniscent of the development of the struggles amongst black African and African-Americans, and mindful of the idea Negritude, the Antilles and Guyana have become countries with a vibrant culture. If Antillean music is in vogue today, it's because it rediscovered its popular roots. Cinema is not unaffected by this movement. Today, it is one of the prosecution's witnesses of French colonialism and therefore one of the instruments in the development of national and cultural identity. Whether it be militant or commercial cinema, the

[228]"Depuis quelques années et principalement avec la menace grandissante d'expatriation pour raisons économiques-politiques, les jeunes générations revendiquent une identité culturelle propre à travers la recherche de leur histoire, de leur passé, leurs traditions, mais aussi à travers l'éclosion d'une multitude d'oeuvres artistiques profondément installées dans la réalité des pays. La renaissance du créole dans la jeunesse en est l'un des signes les plus évidents. "

> content of the films and the new changes in the industry demonstrate the important place cinema has come to occupy over the last five years (6).[229]

In this passage, Boukman is truly ahead of his time. His language reflects an understanding of what cinema represents over the long term to Antillean culture as well as the reactionary and divisive social context during this time.

With a rising sense of marginalization, independence forces in Martinique and Guadeloupe eventually resorted to violence. The New York Times reported that terrorist bombings at a radio station and the Guadeloupean airport occurred during French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing's eight-day visit to Martinique and Guadeloupe in late December, 1980.[230] Then, on January 2, 1981, a separatist group took responsibility for a setting fire to the Justice Building in Fort-de-France. Although no one was reportedly injured, eleven individuals "including members of two left-wing or pro-independence groups, had been detained for questioning."[231] The Martinican Independentist Movement (MIM) also began gaining some minor headway in their attempts to draw attention to the 1981 French presidential elections:

> In Martinique this boycott [of the 1981 presidential elections] was urged by all three of the local independence parties: the Martinican Independence Movement (or MIM for *Mouvement Independentiste Martiniquais*); the Socialist Revolutionary Group (GRS, *Groupe Révolutionaire Socialiste*), the Workers' Combat (CO, or *Combat Ouvrier*) (Miles 66).

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[229]"Face à la pression de la métropole, face à la pression politique, sensible aux mouvements de libération des pays du continent américain et plus particulièrement des îles caraibes comme Cuba, sensible au development des luttes des noirs d'Afrique, des noirs américains et l'idée de la Négritude, les pays antillo-guyanais sont devenus des pays de culture vivante. Si la musique antillaise connait aujourd'hui une vogue importante, c'est bien parce qu'elle a retrouvé des raciness populaires. Le cinéma n'est pas resté en dehors de ce mouvement. Aujourd'hui, il est l'un des témoins à charge du colonialisme français, il est l'un des instruments du développement de l'identité culturelle et nationale. Cinéma militant ou commercial, a en cinq ans pris une place importante tant par son contenu que par le bouleversement que représente la prise en charge de sa propre image trop longtemps niée."

[230]http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9904E6D7163BF930A35752C0A967948260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=print
January 3, 1981
"Fire Set by Arsonists Damages Martinique Government Building"
Fort-de-France, Martinique, Jan. 2 (AP)

[231] Ibid.

Even though the tactic of the boycott failed and President Mitterrand won the election in 1981, "the accession to power of a socialist government in Paris nevertheless speeded up significant changes in the social and cultural life in Guadeloupe, Guiana and Martinique" (Miles 69). The changes referred to involve the socialist government's decision to enact a package of decentralization policies in 1982 that gave local government greater control over local policy decisions (Miles 69). Ironically, this action "effectively marginalized the pro-independence forces" in the Antilles (Miles 69). In response to these changes, the MIM declared that Martinique remained "colonized politically, exploited economically, dominated culturally and occupied militarily" (Miles 73). MIM's counterparts in Guadeloupe responded more violently to these changes. Members of these forces attempted to set off an estimated fifty bomb explosions from 1983 to 1985 (Miles 74).

Despite the ongoing turbulence, Benjamin Jules-Rosette released his film *Bourg la folie* in 1982.[232] According to Prudent Lambert-Félix, an *Antilla* magazine contributor, this adaption of a Roland Brival novel was highly anticipated by the Martinican public. It had been produced and directed by a Martinican, shot entirely in Martinique, and its distribution was entirely Antillean (23). He writes that the publicity campaign for the film put together "large advertisements and articles in the newspaper *France-Antilles* as well as numerous posters in Fort-de-France, and various commentaries on radio and television" (32).[233] The campaign became so involved that the Mayor of Morne-Rouge notified authorities about possible personal risk:

> The press' 'favorable predisposition for the film (so rare in the case of 'local products') suddenly transformed into a veritable flood of propoagnda when the Mayor of Morne-Rouge, Mr. Nestoret, alerted the police about the slander he'd been subjected to received. He made this complaint without even having seen the film or read the book! (Lambert-Félix 32).[234]

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[232] As is the case with most of the films mentioned, this film is not available at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. I am continuing to pursue ways to obtain these films from their production companies, if they are still in business.

[233] "Rouge le Bourg, - Morne la Folie, - Tristes Cendres du Cinema Martiniquais" by Lambert-Félix Prudent p. 32-33
"de placards et d'articles dans 'Frances-Antilles', d'affiches nombrilistes sur les murs de Fort-de-France, et de commentaires divers à la radio-télévision."

[234]"Cette 'prédisposition favorable' de la presse (si rare à l'endroit d'un 'produit local') venant soudain à se transformer en véritable matraquage de propagande lorsque le Maire du Morne-Rouge, M. Nestoret a alerté

Mr. Nestoret's epithets about the film were unsurprising: the film pitted the robin-hood character Thomas against "Mr. Nestoré, crooked and lecherous small town Mayor, at the whim of a white master who controls all the local sailors and fisherman (Ponnamah 31).[235]

Unfortunately, all the hype did not shield the film from Lambert-Félix's scathing critique. The writer continues his article with an outline of the film's numerous flaws. First, Lambert-Félix complains of the poor screening he attended at the Olympia theatre. He writes there was a second-long gap between the image and the sound. He finds this error inexcusable, especially since the Elisée Company (operating a consistent monopoly on Antillean distribution) controlled the film's distribution. Although singer Gratien Midonnet sang some of his "most beautiful songs" for the soundtrack, Lambert-Félix was displeased with the film's new ending.[236] Jules-Rosette replaced the book's grim conclusion with a happy ending. In addition, Lambert-Félix writes that several of the characters changed color over the course of the film as the materials used in the production of the film were apparently lacking. The journalist also notes that the film depicted "a large black man wearing a belt odorned in flowers and shells, a red loin cloth flapping in the breeze, and a deadly axe" (Lambert-Félix 33).[237] These elements struck Lambert-Félix as overdone and exotic. He also disapproved of the director's use of creole and the appearance of a repeated leitmotiv of the carnival in Martinican films such as *Coco la fleur, candidat*. In sum, Lambert-Félix thought that Martinican directors, including Jules-Rosette, could produce much better film, even with the modest funds given to them by Elisée (Lambert-Félix 33).

Michel Ponnamah, another contributor, affirmed Lambert-Félix's criticism of *Bourg la folie* and *Coco la fleur, candidat*. Ponnamah's criticism is less technical and

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la justice en raison des risques de diffamation qu'il subordonnait, ceci bien sûr sans avoir vu le film, sans avoir lu le livre!"

[235] 1982 Antilla articles : 24: 15 Aug 1982: 31
"Cinéma Antillais: Bourg-La Folie (Benjamin Jules Rosette) " by Michel Ponnamah
"Monsieur Nestoré, Maire d'une petite Commune, politicien véreux et salace à la solde d'une maitre blanc qui tient sous sa dominations les marins-pêcheurs de la localité."

[236]"plus belles chansons."

[237]"un grand nègre roukoué à la ceinture de fleurs et de coquillages, au pagne rouge flottant au vent, et à la hache meurtrière."

more thematic. Ponnamah takes issue with both films because Jules-Rosette and Lara co-opted literary themes that are then ineffectively depicted in their films:

> Our directors should draw inspiration for their films outside of the realm of stereotypical themes that are thought of as being the only valued signifiers of our collective feelings. Themes such as magic, the mystic of the earth, the charistmatic hero, the messianism, the vile politician, etc… have already made their mark in literature and theatre. One finds these themes again in Antillean cinema in *Coco Lafleur* and the recent *Bourg la Folie*.[238]

According to Ponnamah, the danger of relying on these themes is that they presume or assert too much about Antillean culture. Additionaly, the films fail because they are overly didactic:

> Directors should stop competing with the great Antillean authors who, in the wake of these storytellers, wanted to create an old mythic land, imagining themselves to be the guardian as of the keys to our collective consciousness and our popular heroes. Perhaps they should employ unambiguous cinematic techniques and relegate their fables to a simple story without any didactic pretentions).[239]

Ponnamah makes his point quite strongly: *Coco la fleur, candidat* and *Bourg la folie* are seriously flawed because of their lack of originality and presumptuous content.

As disappointing as these Martinican films may have been to the local critics, more positive happenings were underfoot. Aimé Césaire was making substantial headway in his efforts to increase government investment in the audiovisual industry. In Chapter

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238 1982 Antilla articles: 24: 15 Aug 1982: 31
"A propos du Cinéma de Fiction Antillais: Tout art naissant présente un certain nombre d'insuffisances esthétiques. A propos du jeune cinéma antillais, un cinéphile formule son insatifisfaction " by Michel Ponnamah .
"Il faudrait aussi, que nos réalisateurs puisent la matière de leurs films hors du corpus de thèmes stéréotypés qui ont jadis fait fortune dans la littérature et au théatre et qui connotent comme étant les seuls signifiants valorisés par notre affectivité collective : Le magique, la mystique de la terre, le héros charismatique, le messianisme, le politicien véreux, etc…On retrouve tous ces thèmes dans le cinémas antillais depuis *Coco [la fleur]* jusqu'au tout dernier *Bourg la folie.*"

239 Ibid.
"Il faudrait qu'ils cessent de faire concurrence aux premiers romanciers antillais qui dans le sillage des conteurs ont voulu nous créer un arrière pays mythique ; s'estimant détenteurs des clés de notre inconscient collectif et de nos archétypes…Peut-être réduiraient-ils leur fable à une historie simple sans prétention didactique aucune, et formulée dans des énoncés cinématograhiques clairs."

four, I discuss an interview in which Euzhan Palcy reveals how Césaire supported her cinematic endeavors from very early in her career. With the founding of SERMAC and the intermittent aid given to Palcy, Césaire solidified a lasting precedent of allocating governmental funds for local Martinican cinematic production.[240]

V. 1983-1992

In the early 1980s, Antillean separatists continued to randomly terrorize island and metropolitan French residents. According to the May 30th, 1983 edition of the *New York Times*, separatists set off a series of bombs in public buildings in Guadeloupe, French Guiana, and Martinique.[241] The Saturday night and Monday morning bombs caused "extenstive property damage" and resulted in the death of one person. Coordinated attacks also occur in France, injuring three people in central Paris.[242]

Erratic attacks such as these did not stand in the way of developments in the film scene, however. As unstable as the political environment was, at the end of June 1983, the "Festival Antillais du Film Fantastique (Antillean Festival of Fanstastic Film)" took place. The eye-catching headline in *Antilla* magazine reveals the big winner of the festival: "*Evil Dead* Judged Best Film by Jury and Public."[243] The 1981 American fantasy horror flick directed by Sam Raimi just barely edged out *Cat People* (Paul Schrader, 1982), a different American thriller, for the festival's major award. Martinican director Michel Traoré served as president of a jury which, according to the article, rated "the screenplay, the *mise-en-scène*, the acting, the imagery, the music and the special effects of each film."[244] However disapproving Antillean critics had been of recent local films, American horror still attracted an audience in Martinique. This article highlights once again the infiltration and domination of American films in the Antillean market.

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[240] Guadeloupan filmmaker Tony Coco-Viloin informed me of this ongoing distribution of aid in Martinique during our August 19, 2009 interview in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

[241] http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F10D17F7345C0C738FDDAC0894DB484D81
"Bombs Rock Paris and 3 Caribbean Territories; Separtists Blamed" May 30, 1983, Monday
Late City Final Edition, Section 1, Page 2, Column 3, 615 words

[242] http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F10D17F7345C0C738FDDAC0894DB484D81
"Bombs Rock Paris and 3 Caribbean Territories; Separtists Blamed" May 30, 1983, Monday
Late City Final Edition, Section 1, Page 2, Column 3, 615 words

[243] 60: 30 June-7July 1983: 6 "Evil Dead Jugé Meilleur Film par le Jury et le Public."

[244] Ibid.
"le scénario, la mise en scène, l'interprétation, l'image, la musique, et les effets spéciaux de chaque film."

Against a rather chaotic backdrop of separatist bombings and American blockbusters, the next landmark event in French Caribbean film history also occurred this same year. Even now, no other French Caribbean film is as well-known or admired as Euzhan Palcy's film, *Rue Case-Nègres* (*Sugar Cane Alley*) (1983) for its dignified portrayal of life in the cane fields. Palcy best pinpoints the reasons for the film's tremendous success: "What did *Sugar Cane Alley* allow me to say? That we exist, that we have a culture. The film, because of its success, gave confidence back to patriots. The whole world is clamoring for the film, and Antilleans are proud of that" (Audé 86).[245] Arguably, the pride and confidence of the "patriots" that Palcy mentions reference political events transpiring in Martinique and Guadeloupe at the time of the film's release. Consequently, the release of Palcy's film coincides with the culmination of a series of politically and socially turbulent events. Palcy's language reflects the assertiveness of the time. During an interview, she boldly announced:

> I fight all the time, and have done so from a very young age. I would even say I'm an activist and feminist through and through, even if my beliefs differ from certain women who say they are the true feminists. How am I an activist? Wherever I am, if I witness an injustice, I get angry, I intervene…I fight as an Antillean woman (Audé 91).[246]

Her last statement in particular conveys a profoundly political tone and certainly resonates with the volatility of the time, demonstrating yet again the relationship between the progression of French Caribbean cinema and the political context.

Similar to Palcy's film, other films "emerged under difficult political and economic conditions" and began "marking what was figured to be the start of a sustained move toward a repositioning of the Caribbean in the civilization of cinema" (Cham 2). In essence, political transition, economic decline, and cultural change in the 1980's "mark

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[245]"Que m'a permis de dire *Rue Case-Nègres*? Que nous existons, que nous avons une culture. Le film, par son succès, a redonné confiance aux patriotes. Le monde entier réclame le film, les Antillais en sont fiers."

[246]Je milite tout le temps, et depuis mon plus jeune âge. Je dirais même que je suis militante et féministe jusqu'au bout des orteils, même si mes conceptions diffèrent de celles de certaines femmes qui se disent être les 'vraies.' Mes façons de militer? Quel que soit l'endroit où je me trouve, si j'assiste à une injustice, j'explose, j'interviens…Je milite en tant qu'Antillaise."

the context within which the fledgling practice of film production in the Caribbean emerged and is struggling to prosper" (Cham 2-3).

In 1988, the next substantial film-related venture in the Antilles took place. Fort-de-France hosted a regionally focused film festival, *Images Caraïbes ou Festival des Paradoxes* (Caribbean Images or Festival of Paradoxes) organized by Suzy Landeau.[247] She, too, received aid from the *Conseil régional de la Martinique*, local Martinican government. Although she does not quantify the amount receieved for the series, she does indicate it was not modest. A number of articles from the local journal, *Antilla*, provide crucial insight into the preparation and impact of the festival. Landeau tells *Antilla* that she worked on the project for two and half years in order to "view [films], to travel in the Caribbean."[248] During this extended organizational process, Landeau encountered various administrative obstacles, namely, communicating with festival participants, arranging transportation, exchanging materials via the postal service, and obtaining visas for the participants. Even though Landeau tried to reach "any and all people producing Caribbean footage," she confesses that she had the most difficulty in obtaining visas that would permit neighboring Caribbean residents to disembark and stay in Martinique.[249] It is unclear what governmental entity is responsible for these difficulties and why this was the case. However, the prejudice regarding Caribbean residents seriously exacerbated the logistal details of organizing the first festival in Martinique of this kind.

Towards the end of the article *Antilla* contributor Tony Delsham poses a critical question narrowing in on the influence of the Antillean film industry on the rest of the Caribbean region. He asks her, in light of her experience, what can she say about the influence of Antillean film in the Caribbean?[250] Landeau first responds by saying:

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[247] Tony Delsham, "Suzy Landau: Au Niveau de la Caraibe la Guadeloupe et la Martinique Sont Très Peu Connue ," *Antilla*, no. 293 (July 1988): 16.
Also see http://www.pancaribbean.com/banyan/archivedatabase.htm
An interview with Landeau conducted by "Caribbean Eye" about the festival exists on Betacam. Accessed 2 October 2008.
[248] Delsham, "Suzy Landeau," 17.
"J'ai travaillé sur ce projet depuis deux ans et demie et j'ai eu le temps de visionner, de voyager dans la Caraïbe."
[249] Delsham, "Suzy Landau," 16.
"nous avons fait appel à toutes personnes qui produisaient des images de la Caraïbe."
[250] Ibid., 17.

> The first fact to report is that, in the Caribbean, Martinique and Guadeloupe are not well-known. There are not any real exchanges, except perhaps in sport. And for most of the attendees, this is the first time they're discovering Martinique. For them, it's a different society and culture. They've heard people speak about Martinique, particularly through Césaire and Fanon, but aside from these great intellectuals, they don't really know Martinique.[251]

Well-informed and in a position to characterize the context of the Antillean film industry in the late eighties, Landeau acknowledges that, prior to this festival, Antillean film industry was still not influencing regional cinematic endeavors. The festival, however, challenged this bleak relationship with regional counterparts.

In spite of the many setbacks, the organizers still managed to attract cinema from Cuba, Venezuala, Curacao and elsewhere. As Guy Cabort-Mason points out in another article on the festival in *Antilla*, these are precisely the films habitually forgotten by local TV and the Circuit Elisé, the distribution company still known to be exerting a monopolistic hold on Antillean markets.[252] Landeau recognized the possible positive repercussions of the festival, claiming that, through the contact established with the visiting directors and producers, the event had produced a viable interest in the Antilles and its cinematographique productions: "In any case, all the directors or producers wish to make contacts in Martinique, hoping for real cooperation and production. Some of them leave with the desire to examine the possibility of filming here."[253]

The interest of fellow Caribbean film professionals in the Antilles, piqued by the festival, gave Landeau the impression that they left with the objective of pursuing film projects in these islands. Beyond her mere impressions, solid evidence of the regional impact of this festival surfaces just months after its occurence. On January 26, 1989, a

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"Après votre expérience, que pouvez-vous dire de notre image de marque dans la Caraïbe?"

[251] Ibid., 17.

"Le premier constat est que au niveau de la Caraïbe, la Martinique et la Guadeloupe sont très peu connues. Il n'y a pas d'échanges réels, sauf peut être au niveau sportif. Et pour la plupart des festivaliers c'est une première, ils découvrent la Martinique, pou eux c'est une société, une culture un peu différente. Ils ont entendu parler de la Martinique à travers Césaire et Fanon, mais à part ces deux grosses têtes, ils ne connaissent pas vraiment la Martinique."

[252]Guy Cabort-Masson, "Images Caraïbes ou Festival des Paradoxes," *Antilla*, no. 294 (July 1988): 30.

[253] Delsham, "Suzy Landau," 17.

" En tous cas tous réalisateurs ou producteurs ont envie de ces contacts avec la Martinique, one envie d'une réelle coopération et d'une co-production."

Haitian newspaper article featured an interview with up-and-coming Haitian director, Raoul Peck. At the end of the *Nouvelliste* interview about the success of his film *Haitian Corner* (1988), he concludes by saying:

> Haitian cinema should not isolate itself from the work that our Dominican, Puerto-Rican, Cuban and other Caribbean neighbors are doing in order to protect our pillaged and at the same time suffocating cultural specificity. The best thing to do is put our efforts together to first preserve a Caribbean, then Third-World cinema. During the *Images Caraïbes* festival in Martinique, they created a group in charge of promoting an organizational plan to establish the means for cinematographic production at the regional level. So, things are changing.[254]

As Peck points out, the festival created an opportunity for multilateral exchange through the viewing of other Caribbean films in Martinique and the awareness of Martinique as a filmmaking destination. Moreover, Landeau's remarks and this newfound exposure suggest that a film festival has the potential to serve as the impetus for change in an otherwise stagnant and relatively unknown industry.

Following Landeau's groundbreaking festival, a period of stagnation appears to have taken hold for the following four years. The next major film festival occurred in 1992, ultimately establishing a more lasting yearly event than Landeau's ambitious program. Soliciting funds over time from such sources as the French Ministry of Culture, the Prefect, the DRAC (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles*) and the Regional and General Councils of Guadeloupe, the first FEMI (*Festival International Cinéma et Femme de Guadeloupe)* took place. The FEMI is the first Antillean Francophone film festival to encourage the work of female directors in particular.[255] It has become an annual event that provides a forum for debate and a means to chronicle local production. Furthermore, over time, other cultural initiatives will join the FEMI in expanding the Antillean film industry.

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[254] Pradel Charles, "*Haitian Corner:* Un Nouveau Pas du CinémaHaitien." *Le Nouvelliste* (26 Januaray 1989): 2.
Awaiting return of article on Inter-library loan for my misplaced French version of the article.
[255] http://www.guadeloupe.fr/news.php?article=327
Accessed 23 October 2008

VI. 1992-PRESENT

The fact that, as of yet, few Francophone Caribbean films have been heavily distributed and widely viewed explains in part, why little is known about its history and development, its current production, and its future direction.[256] It is on the latter and most imminent matter that this last section focuses. As part of the larger project of assessing the relationship between the Francophone Caribbean and the contemporary world, this section to address how Francophone Caribbean filmmakers are presently impacting their field on a local, regional and international level.

In an effort to counter the two aforementioned shortcomings of Francophone Caribbean film - lack of widespread audience and minimal critical acclaim, the islands have begun to witness an increase in the number of cultural initiatives and collaborative ventures meant to promote, award, and encourage Francophone Caribbean cinema. The development cultural initiatives in Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti, followed by the recent regional and international events featuring Francophone Caribbean films are taking place. These concrete manifestations of the connections between the Francophone Caribbean film industry and the contemporary world demonstrate the rising potential for Francophone Caribbean filmmakers to gain exposure to a more substantial number of viewers and to influence the study and practice of filmmaking around the world. As a result, the cinematic landscape in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Haiti has begun to change in exciting and unprecedented ways.

Over the years, the FEMI has grown into an impressive collaborative event. The fourteenth edition in 2007, entitled "Francophone and Overseas Department Cinema," screened forty films during its annual end of January program.[257] In 2007 and 2008, organizers reportedly received 30,000 euros in aid from the regional governmental sources.[258] The 2007 program was therefore quite extensive, including, for instance, a roundtable entitled "Production, Coproduction, What partnerships are possible for the three Departments in the Central American Region (Martinique, Guadeloupe, French

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[256] See Meredith Wright, "Fugitive Filmmaking" in Adeline Koh and Frieda Ekotto, eds., *Rethinking Third Cinema* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2009).
[257] Ibid.
[258] http://www.cr-guadeloupe.fr/actualites/?ARB_N_ID=&ARB_N_MERE=&ARB_N_S=335&ART_N_ID=1845 Accessed 23 October 2008

Guiana)?" led by Jean Chaput, president of a Quebecois company for Development of Cultural Enterprises (*Société de développement des entreprises culturelles du Québec*); the Guadeloupan director Christian Grandman whose film *Tèt Grenné* was featured at FEMI; and, the outspoken Guadeloupan actor, Luc Saint-Eloi, who most recently played a starring role in Christian Lara's twin feature films *Sucre Amer* (1997) and *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne*(2005).[259] The festival also honored actress Darling Legitimus, best known for her role as Man Tine, José's grandmother, in *Rue Cases-Nègres.* Her grandson, Pascal Legitimus, even directed a film for this part of the festival, *Darling LEGITIMUS, ma Grand-Mère, notre Doudou* (Darling Legitimus, my grandmother, our darling.) [260]

The theme of the 2007 festival indicates that the forty films related to *Cinémas francophone et cinéma outre-mer* (Francophone and Overseas Cinema). The festival in 2008 shifted focus and was entitled, *La Grande Caraïbe: anglophone, francophone, hispanophone, créolophone* (Cinema of the Greater Caribbean: anglophone, francophone, hispanophone, and creolophone).[261] In 2008, organizers brought together over thirty local and foreign film professionals to screen films to some eight thousand spectators.[262] The 2009 festival, *Pleins Feux sur les Amériques* (Spotlight on the Americas), marked the event's sixteenth annual anniversary and, similar to previous years, took place in early Feburary "in the city of Le Lamentin and also in 15 cities of Guadeloupe."[263] Euzhan Palcy had a place of honor during the 2009 festival, during which debates about her work and special screenings of three of her films, *A Dry White Season* (1989), *Simeon* (1992), and *Ruby Bridges* (1998) were offered.[264] It was organized and funded by similar

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[259] *Sucre Amer*, dir. Christian Lara, 1997.
L'Epopée Guadeloupéenne, dir. Christian Lara, 2005.
[260] http://www.guadeloupe.fr/news.php?article=326
Accessed 29 October 2008.
Adhering to the acting tradition in his family, Pascal Legitimus's film career includes producing, directing and starring in the 2001 irreverant diasporic comedy, *Antilles Sur Seine*.
[261]http://www.lesilesdeguadeloupe.com/2/5-touristic-offer-detail/1249000369-1249000369-gb-actualites/1249001136-1-1-1-3-the-15th-edition-of-femi-guadeloupe-s-international-film-festival-will-be-held--from-january-24-to-february-02-2008--.htm
Accessed 14 October 2008
[262] Ibid.
[263] http://www.gensdelacaraibe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3424&Itemid=186
Accessed 2 March 2009
[264] http://www.lefemi.com/index-1.php?ir=pages/programme

sources that invested in its earlier events: the ICM (Images and Cultures of the World), the French Ministry of Overseas Departments, the DRAC, the Youth and Sports Regional Administration, the Women Rights Commission."[265]

Organizers of the 2010 festival invited Angela Bassett to be the guest of honor, but Euhzan Palcy once again had a prominent place. The same three films of her screened in 2009 were again offered in 2010. The 2010 FEMI bore a new theme "Antilles/Asia"and featured the strongest program of French Caribbean films to date.[266] Of the forty-five different films screened from January 29th through February 6th, eighteen shown are French Caribbean works:

1. Feature films: *Mamito* (Christian Lara, 1979); *Simeon* (Euhzan Palcy, 1992); *Aliker* (Guy Deslauriers, 2008); and *Tout est encore possible* (forecoming feature by Christian Lara).[267]
2. Documentaries: *L'Ami Fondamental* (Euzhan Palcy, 2007); *Carnaval, Mas & Group A Peau* (Boris Mérault, 2008); *Jacques Roumain* (Arnold Antonin, 2008); *Les Vies de Jenny* (Nathalie Glaudon, 2009); *La Sculpture* (documentary by Arnold Antonin, 2009); *Almendron, Mi Corazaon* (Steve and Stephanie James, 2009); *Urbana Ka* (documentary by Christian Grandman, 2009); and *L'Autre Josephine/J. Baker* (Philip Judith Gozlin, 2009).
3. Short fiction: *Negropolitans* (Gary Pierre-Victor, 2009); *Au nom du père* (Olivier Baudot Montezume, 2009); *Des pieds, mon pied* (Fabienne Kanor, 2009); *Guyane;* (Imanou Petit, 2009); *Lumières sur…* (Nathalie Glaudon, 2009); and *Retour du pays* (genre unclear, Franco-Guadeloupan co-production by Julien Dalle, 2009)

Accessed February 22, 2010.

[265] http://www.gensdelacaraibe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3424&Itemid=186
Accessed 17 October 2008

[266] "Antilles/Asie."
http://www.lefemi.com/programme.html

[267] Described in the program as: "Peut-on promouvoir un homme politique de la même façon qu'une lessive*? Film inédit, un coco Lafleur n°2, du rire à profusion, à voir absolument."*
http://www.lefemi.com/programme.html
Accessed 7 February 2010.

The program is striking evidence of the abundance of French Caribbean film production in 2009. In addition, Christian Lara's participation in the festival proves that he continues to be one of the most prolific filmmaker of the region. He screened his latest work during the festival, *Héritage Perdu* (Lost Heritage, 2009). Shot in Gabon and Cameroon and starring Luc Saint-Eloi (the same actor who played Delgrès in *Sucre Amer*), it bears a title and tagline that very obviously reflects his continued focus on French Caribben history in film discussed in Chapter four: "Pierre Mombin, Guadeloupan farmer, will he accept the heritage of his African ancestors?"[268]

According to the 2010 FEMI program, the same sponsors continued to help fund the festival.[269] Most significant in this list is the DRAC. The repeated mention of the DRAC's involvement is highly revelatory because, for all intents and purposes, the development of the DRAC has resulted in the notable recent advancements in the Guadeloupan audiovisual industry. The French Ministry of Culture and Communication created the first DRAC in 1977 to represent their interests on a regional level. The Guadeloupan office finally opened twelve years later.[270] Cooperation between the Guadeloupan DRAC, the French Minsitry of Overseas Departments, the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and the powerful and well-funded organization, the French CNC (*Centre National Cinématographique*), improved dramatically in the early 2000s, resulting in a comprehensive scheme to fund Guadeloupan films. The influx of funds in Guadeloupe brought about by this relatively recent collaboration between the CNC in France and the *Conseil Régional de Guadeloupe* (Regional Guadeloupan Government) strongly suggests an enhanced relationship between Francophone Caribbean filmmaking and the local and international communities.

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[268]http://www.caraibefilms.com/w/movies/?id=7
Accessed 7 February 2010.
"Pierre Mombin, un cultivateur Guadeloupéen, acceptera-t-il l'héritage de ses ancêtres africains?"
Also of note, a strange discrepancy in the program: Similar to the Montreal International Haitian Film Festival of 2009, Lucien Jean-Baptiste's *La Première Etoile* (2009) also appeared on the program. However, rather than its customary categorization as French film (by a Martinican director), it appears in the program as a Martinican film.
[269]http://www.lefemi.com/partenaires.html
Accessed 7 February 2010.
[270] http://www.culture.fr/sections/regions/domtom/guadeloupe/articles/article_10
Accessed 29 October 2008.

The germination for this enhanced relationship is due in no small part to Osange Silou, the Guadeloupan journalist who wrote the 1990 book on Antillean cinema discussed in the introduction to this study. In addition to this contribution, she spent the next decade fighting for increased governmental funding for Antillean films. In an interview with RFO, she indicates that she was the central organizer for establishing a governmental fund for films made in overseas French territories and departments:

> In this context, at the end of years of fighting, I worked to establish a fund created in 2002 to aid filming in overseas French territories and departments. This fund came from the French Overseas Ministry, the Ministry of Culture, and the National Center of Cinema. For example, Jean-Claude Flamand Barny's film *Nèg Mawon* received money from this fund. If you add private financing to this government funding, directors will find many more circuits of distribution. Directors will be more credible to TV channels and movie theatres.[271]

Silou's resolution to create fundamental changes in the amount of opportunity for Antillean cinema led to immediately beneficial results, helping to fund Jean-Claude Flamand Barny's excellent contemporary film *Nèg-Mawon* (2004), released in Antillean and French theaters, and still active on the U.S. film festival circuit.[272]

What is critical to observe in this new arrangement between governmental entities and Antillean filmmakers is that, previous to this cooperative venture, Antillean films competed against metropolitan French endeavors for funding. Concurrent with this ostensible disadvantage, Antillean proposals did not qualify for the CNC's interdepartmental scheme, *Fonds Sud* (South Funds), created in 1984.[273] Film professionals from all over the world (Africa, Latin America, the Maghreb, the Middle

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[271] http://www.rfo.fr/article103.html
"Dans ce contexte, et au bout de nombreuses années de bagarres, j'ai fait établir en 2002 un fond d'aide au tournage en Outre-mer. Cette aide provient du Ministère de l'Outre-mer, du Ministère de la culture et du Centre National du Cinéma. [Par] exemple, *Nég Mawon*, [le] film de Jean-Claude Flamand Barny en a bénéficié. Si vous ajouter à ces financements publics, un financement privé sur chaque film d'Outre-mer, les réalisateurs trouveront beaucoup plus de circuits de distribution. Ils seront crédibles pour les chaînes de télévision et les salles de cinéma."

[272] Flamand Barny's film premiered in the U.S. at the December 2006 African Diaspora Film Festival. http://www.rfo.fr/article103.html
According to the interview with the author, Flamand Barny will screen the film at a New Orleans film festival in April of 2009.

[273] http://www.cnc.fr/CNC_GALLERY_CONTENT/DOCUMENTS/UK/publications/FondsSud_uk.pdf Accessed 23 October 2008

East, various Asian countries, Albania, Central Asia, etc), even neighbors like Haiti, can apply for a number of programs directed by *Fonds Sud*, including the opportunity for generous production assistance averaging 110,000 euros.[274] Arguably, the organization and exclusivity of the CNC's substantial programs had left Antillean film professionals at a disadvantage.

Communicating directly with the audiovisual representative at the Guadeloupan office of the DRAC in the spring of 2008, I was given access to a number of internal documents that provide additional details to the new funding opportunities for French Overseas Departments like Guadeloupe and Martinique.[275] Elusive as to the reason why the Guadeloupan DRAC had pursued and obtained a seemingly tighter and more cohesive relationship with the CNC than its Martinican counterpart, Philippe Bon nevertheless shared the documents from 2000 and 2005. The first set of documents provides key insider knowledge about the consistently detectable trend of foreign films dominating the Antillean market:

> For instance, a study completed by the DRAC indicates that in 2000, 89 films were distributed in Guadeloupe. Of these 89 films, 75 were American (84% of the market), 11 were French (12%), 3 were of other nationalists (4%), and 8 were Avant-Garde/Experimental (9%) (Bon 2-3).[276]

At the turn of the twenty-first century, American films continue to overshadow all other categories of films in the Antillean market. These statistics reinforce Christian Lara's 2005 assessement of the Antillean film industry: "The Antillean market is too limited for a significant number of initiatives to develop and the risk for these films is that they might be released to a narrow audience."[277]

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[274] Will be discussed at more length in Haitian section.
http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/france-priorities_1/cinema_2/cinematographic-cooperation_9/production-support-funding_10/fonds-sud-cinema_11/index.html
Accessed 30 October 2008.

[275] Philippe Bon, phone conversation with the author, 6 March 2008.

[276] "A titre indicatif, l'ADRC faisait état, dans une synthèse des films diffusés en Guadeloupe, en 2000, des chiffres suivants : 89 films dont 75 films US (84%), 11 films français (12 %), 3 autres nationalités (4%), 8 Art et essai (9%)."

[277] http://www.rfo.fr/article38.html
"Le marché antillais est trop restreint pour qu'existe un nombre significatif d'initiatives et le risque serait de fonctionner en vase clos."

The second set of documents, as well as information from the CNC website, itemizes the arrangement made between the CNC and the DRAC in 2003 and 2005. Their colloboration culminated in a "Cinematographic and Audiovisual Convention of Development, 2007-2009" between the State, the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the Prefect of Guadeloupe, the DRAC, the CNC and the Regional Government of Guadeloupe.[278] This convention has at least two very important and positive effects. To begin, it benefits from the CNC's bureaucratic structure. In other words, the CNC coached the DRAC on selection procedures, allocations of funds, and shared responsibility in production through this arrangement. Guadeloupan director Tony Coco-Viloin states that, in a bureaucratic system with overlapping responsibilities and territorial issues, an additional benefit of the convention is that it clearly indicates what each party's role.[279] This, he believes, has led to greater efficiency in the allocation of funding. The convention outlines all of these areas and responsibilities in great detail. Second, the collaboration between these two organizations has resulted in the generation and synthesis of information on recent film production. The more such information becomes readily available, the easier it becomes to have a quantitative grasp on trends in Antillean filmmaking over time.

In regards to the financial breakdown of this arrangement, the convention stipulated that approximately one million euros of Regional Guadeloupan government, CNC, and DRAC funds have been committed on a yearly basis to Guadeloupan films and audiovisual professionals. Shorts, features, documentaries, screenplays, and writing grants are the primary recipient categories of these funds. On the CNC website, their exact contributions to twenty-six films Antillean from 2002-2006 are specified, including well-executed Guadeloupan films released by Jean-Claude Flamand Barny (100,000 € for his film *Nèg-Mawon*, 2004) and Guy Deslauriers (100,000 € for his film *Biguine*, 2004).[280]

In 2007, the "territorial collectivity" or Guadeloupan government, committed 820,600 euros to film production (87,600 euros from the DRAC and 733,000 euros from

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[278]See Supplemental Data 2.
[279] Interview with the author. Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.
[280] *Nèg*-Mawon, dir. Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 2004.
Biguine, dir. Guy Deslauriers, 2004.

the Regional government) and the CNC supplemented this budget with 224,000 euros. A wide range of shorts, feature films, documentaries and made-for-TV programs received part of this funding from 2006 through 2007. In total, forty-one films, including Jean-Claude Flamand Barny's work in progress *Le Mur du silence*, were given 3,000 to 400,000 €.[281] The budgets for 2008 through 2010 increased slightly. In 2008, the budget totaled 950,000 euros. In 2009, a total of 1,070,500 euros were allocated to funding filmmaking, but only 1,022,260 euros were spent (the Guadeloupan government contributed 867,400 and the CNC added 203,100). [282] In 2010, a total of 1,200,000 euros have been set aside for funding.[283] Presumably, the same approximate 80/20 breakdown between Guadeloupan government and the CNC will continue. In brief, these figures demonstrate that the DRAC is deeply entrenched in the mission to enhance and expand the film industry in Guadeloupe.

This mission is not immune to island politics, however. For instance, Victorin Lurel, the president of *Conseil Régional* of Guadeloupe and deputy to the French National Assembly appointed Coco-Viloin to head the *Bureau d'accueil de tournages de la region Guadeloupe* (Film Reception and Resource Office of Guadeloupe). The importance of his position, he believes, is that it rectifies a flaw of these collaborative governmental efforts. His expertise and connections as a director make him the single experienced film professional involved in the administration of the convention. He claims that there is no one else linking the administration to other film professionals. However, when Lurel's term ends in 2010, the new president will decide whether to maintain funding for this office. According to Coco-Viloin, funding therefore depends entirely on the political objectives of the deputy in office. If the development of cinema is not a priority, the office will close.[284]

Over the course of our conversation, Coco-Viloin also makes another claim concerning the role of politics in the development of the industry. He stated that politics

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[281] See Supplemental Data 4 for complete breakdowns.

[282] http://www.centreimages.fr/guide_GUADELOUPE.php
Accessed 30 October 2008.

[283] http://www.centreimages.fr/guide_GUADELOUPE.php
Updated and changed, accessed again 7 February 2010.

[284] As for himself, he admits to having to appease both the left and the right, calling himself "apolitical." Interview with the author. Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

have hindered the development of a convention between the *Conseil Régional* of Martinique and the CNC. Without the support of local government and the willingness to collaborate with this metropolitan French cinema powerhouse, he believes that no advancements will be made. In the interim, Coco-Viloin actively communicates with film professionals in Martinique. According to him, Martinican filmmakers can also receive funding from their local government but the amounts are unregulated and the process is convoluted. Coco-Viloin makes an effort to maintain contact with professionals from both islands because he wants to encourage partnerships, not competition. In a recent advertisement for Martinican bananas, Coco-Viloin reveals, all of the filming was completed in Guadeloupe. The tropical setting makes the islands attractive for filming, he says, but rather than compete for what they can both offer, he hopes continue to share resources and expertise in the coming years. [285]

Bon's documents indicate that a large part of the DRAC's financial contribution has been allocated to film festivals such as the FEMI, St.Barth's Annual Caribbean Film Festival, and the *Mois du Documentaire* (Month of the Documentary) in Martinique; as well as to educational programs such as *Passeurs d'images* (Purveyors of Images).[286] The CNC established the program *Passeurs d'images* in 1991 to improve access to films and audiovisual training to those who might not typically have this kind of exposure.[287] This media literacy program now partners with different organizations across France and Francophone nations to screen non-commercial films, cultivate discerning spectators, and offer training in animation and fiction film production. [288] In 2007, they received 38,000 € from the DRAC to help fund the program (Article Two, Convention 2007).[289]

Finally, Bon's materials provide an inventory of the cinematic infrasctructure in Guadeloupe. As of the early 2000's, the company Cinésogar operates two theatre complexes in Guadeloupe. The *Rex*, in Pointe-à-Pitre, is a four screen operation with a

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[285] Ibid.

[286] See Supplemental Data 3.
http://www.cg972.fr/site/html/page_document.php?id=853
Mois du film documentaire : Le documentaire Antillais

[287] http://www.passeursdimages.fr/presentation/index.html
Accessed 22 October 2008.

[288] http://www.passeursdimages.fr/regional/index.html
Accessed 26 October 2008

[289] See Supplemental Data 2-4 for CNC/DRAC documents and tables.

range of 354, 198, 192, and 94 seats depending on the room. A ticket to the *Rex* at that time cost seven euros. Also at this time, this complex offered four screening per day and per room on Monday and Tuesday and five screenings per day and per room from Wednesday to Sunday. As of 2007, the *D'Arbaud* theatre in Basse-Terre had two screens with 209 and 83 seats and shows two films per day, at a cost of six and a half euros, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and three films on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. In addition to two theatres, the *Majestic* and *l'Image et le son* which are closed to the public and two outdoor screens, or *cinéma en plein air,* at the MJC de Lorient and in Saint Barthélémy, five independent theatres also operate in Guadeloupe: *l'Image* (Casino du Gosier), 1 screen, 127 seats, 2-3 screenings/day; *Le Rancho* (Marie-Galante), 1 screen, 385 seats, 1 screening per day except Monday and Thursday; a screening room at *MJC de Sandy Ground* (Saint Martin), 1 screen, 400 seats, 1-4 screenings per day with 60-70 films per year on average; a screening room at the *Centre culturel Robert Loyson* (Moule); a screening room at the *Ciné-théâtre* (Lamentin) with 332 seats, 2-3 screenings per day with 60 films per year on average. Although the information on Martinique is less complete, a government agency in the capital city reported that in 2006 there were three cinemas (of which two are multi-room) in Fort-de-France. [290]

Although this inventory is quite precise, a part of Bon's report is also anecdotal. He includes his professional assessment about the movie-going habits of Guadeloupans, surmising that "Generally speaking, it is appropriate to note the very keen interest of the Guadeloupan public for cinema, and specifically for fiction whatever be the support) (Bon 5)."[291] He continues by stating that neither satellite nor cable have significantly reduced the popularity of films. Actually, Bon argues, there is enough demand to open more theaters to facilitate the screening of films besides fiction, such as documentaries and foreign films.

In light of the disparity between the supply of theaters and Guadeloupan demand, one particularly innovative mechanism has surfaced to rectify this matter. Besides screening films in traditional theatre venues, Aimé Césaire's grandson, Jean-Marc-

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[290] www.fortdefrance.fr/default.asp?cont=6param=693&ft=0
Accessed January 14, 2008

[291] "De manière générale, il convient de noter le très fort engouement du public en Guadeloupe pour le cinéma, et notamment pour la fiction quelque en soit le support."

Césaire, founded the organization Cinéwoulé in the late 1990's to provide additional opportunities for Guadeloupans to see films. Partnering with the DRAC, *Cinéwoulé*, has a similar set of goals as the program *Passeurs d'image* and its own unique history. According to Césaire, in 1995 he found it nearly impossible to rent films outside of Point-à-Pitre. To resolve this considerable obstacle, he began developing a program designed to screen films all over Guadeloupe. Over the coming years, he began showing the films he managed to rent, albeit on a sixteen millimiter projector from the only distributor willing to rent one to him, the Ministery of Foreign Affairs. His slogan became, "If you don't go to the movies, the movies will come to you!" [292]

In 1998, The Centre National Cinématographique (CNC) appointed Césaire director of an itinerant cinema program based on his work in progress. Over time, Jean-Marc Césaire has continued his grandfather's admirable legacy of grassroots involvement in the audiovisual field. Thanks to the financial assistance of the CNC and the DRAC, the logistics of these screenings has improved. Césaire organizes film screenings on the weekends and Tuesday nights across Guadeloupe from June to October.[293] Modest about this project and his role, he says that "I am above all a technician."[294]

As of the summer of 2009, he operates a forty-year old thirty-five millimeter camera, refusing to switch to a DVD player for convenience. In an interview with *La Grande Epoque*, Césaire discusses exactly how he circulates these films.[295] To conduct a screening, projects the films on a large, portable screen (15 meters wide, 10 meters high). A video of the inflating screen can be seen in the short introductory video on his website.[296] The funds also enable him to expose Guadeloupans to "a choice of auteur or independent films in which Guadeloupans recognize themselves and open themselves up

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[292]Suziloo, "Ciné Woulé – le cinéma au grandir," La Grande Epoque, 4 April 2008.
http://www.lagrandeepoque.com/LGE/content/view/3867/104/
Accessed 5 May 2008.
[293] Ibid.
[294] "je suis savant tout un technicien."
Interview with the author. Friday, August 21st, Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe. DRAC.
[295] Suziloo, "Ciné Woulé – le cinéma au grandir," La Grande Epoque, 4 April 2008.
http://www.lagrandeepoque.com/LGE/content/view/3867/104/
Accessed 5 May 2008.
[296] www.cinewoule.com
Accessed 5 May 2008

to other cultures."[297] For instance, on the program's website, Césaire states that he chooses non-commercial films by Latin-American, African-American, African, and minority directors living in the north. In 2009, he and his team of three interns oversaw fifty different screenings across the island during July and August in locations where no theatre exists.[298] His goal, he remarks, is "to screen high-quality films."[299] When the Rex-Arbaud theatre in Basse-Terre was screening *Hannah Montana* (Peter Chelsom, 2009) and *G.I. Joe* (Stephan Sommers, 2009), Césaire traveled to Saint Rose to screen *Aliker* (2009) to three hundred and fifty people, a film by Martinican Guy Deslauriers, written by Patrick Chamoiseau that recounts the 1934 assassination of Martinican journalist André Aliker.[300]

Césaire's organization also supports a number of other programs: he coordinates workshops which focus on special effects and screenwriting, supports the two major film festivals on the island [(the FEMI and the *Association Noire Toutes Couleurs* (All Colors Black Association), and works in elementary, middle, and high schools to promote filmmaking. Following this extensive summer project, Césaire organizes *ciné clubs* (or film clubs) in *médiathèques* (film libraries or non-commercial venues throughout the island) starting in November. Then, he participates in the annual *Mois du Documentaire* (Month of the Documentary) festival in November. In the spring, Césaire travels to St. Barth's to screen films at the April festival. On the festival's website, the organizers highlight Césaire's participation:

> In addition to our regular screening at A.J.O.E., Jean-Marc Cesaire, of Ciné Woulé, will be showing *Saint-Barthélemy, La Belle Et L'avion* as well as the documentary *Caribbean Divas* by Steve and Stéphanie James on the beach at Flamands.[301]

In our interview, Césaire spoke very highly of the St. Barth's film festival, praising its organization and unpretentious and productive atmosphere.

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[297] http://www.cinewoule.com/index.php?page=presentation
Accessed 5 May 2008.
[298]Interview with the author. Friday, August 21st, Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe. DRAC.
[299]Ibid.
"diffuser un cinéma de qualité."
[300] http://repeatingislands.com/2009/05/11/film-on-andre-aliker-penned-by-patrick-chamoiseau/
Accessed September 26, 2009.
[301] Accessed May 5, 2008. http://www.stbarthff.org/2008/welcome.html

Because of Césaire's dedication and increased collaboration between the DRAC and CNC, exceptional cinema programs have expanded in scope and effectiveness. These two organizations appear to fund the majority of Césaire's programs, but he also credits the *Délégation Interministérielle à la ville* (Interministerial Delegation to the city), the *Direction Départmentale de la Jeunesse et des Sports* (the Departmenal Office of Youth and Sports), and the cultural offices in the cities or areas that participate. These projects are shaping the cinematic landscape in Martinique and Guadeloupe while creating opportunities to reach larger audiences and attract critical attention. Over the coming years, Césaire wishes to enhance these programs, particularly *Ciné Woulé*. His hope is to attract 500,000 euros in funding to purchase "an air-conditioned inflatable theatre."[302] Instead of transporting the screen, he envisions himself and his team traveling with the entire theatre. This type of theatre, he told me, requires two days to set-up and one day to break-down and upon inflation is a self-contained room with chairs, lights, and the screen. His plans in the fall of 2009 include traveling to Brittany, France to see a theatre like this that is presently in use.[303]

Another gauge of the present state of Antillean cinema is available through on-line reports about the *Prix Hohoa*, a film prize launched in 2002 and awarded at the Cannes film festival for the best screenplay of a short film from the French overseas departments.[304] Multiple entities contribute to the *Prix Hohoa*: Silou's organization *Invariance Noire* pays for the winners' flight and accomodations with funds provided by the *Ministère de l'Outre-Mer* (French Overseas Ministry) and money from the winners' homeland.[305]

In a 2006 video on the RFO or *Radio France Outremer* (Overseas France Radio) television station website broad1cast in the French Antilles, the Guadeloupean journalist Osange Silou and co-organizer of this prize is interviewed. She explains that the

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[302]"une salle…climatisée et gonflable."

[303] Interview with the author. Friday, August 21st, Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe. DRAC.

[304] http://www.cineoutremer.com/article.php3?id_article=74, http://www.rfo.fr/infos/culture/entretien-osange-silou_194.html; http://www.gensdelacaraibe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3186&Itemid=186

[305] http://www.rfo.fr/article103.html ; "Entretien: Osange Silou;" by Timothy Mirthil
In an interview with Osange Silou, she describes her organization as follows: "Invariance noire, se présente comme un réseaux associatif qui gère une agence de presse (Invariance noire is a not-profit network that manages a press agency).

organization received fifty-six scripts. She explains the enthusaistic response for these submissions:

> I was very impressioned…in four years the competition has really galvanized people…people are not marginalized to the point one would have thought. They are living in the world, recording images and information about the world, absorbed by their era. And, the stories they are creating are of course good individual stories, but individual stories that interest the entire world.[306]

Two years later, the number of scripts had decreased from fifty-six to forty-six: twelve from Reunion, eleven from Guadeloupe, 10 from Martinique, four from Guyana, four from metropolitan France, three from French Polynesia, one from Mayotte, and one from New Caledonia.[307] The jury gathered on April 22, 2008 to choose two winners and two honorable mentions. The jury was led by Jacques Martial, along with ten audiovisual and film professionals. The winners received three thousand euros and a bronze sculpture by an artist from Burkina Faso.[308] Major winners of 2008 included Jeff Bourgade (*Le tambour de José*, France), William Cally (*Lozonlong*, Reunion), Nicolas Polixene (*Le temps des cendres*, France), and Jérôme Verdoia (*La gueule de bois*, Reunion).[309] Previous Antillean entrants include: Pierre Bulgare, Dominique Duport, Michaël Gamelamme, and Caroline Jules (Guadeloupe); Manu Petit, Nadia Charléry, Yann Chayia, Imanou Petit Guyane, Erika Dessart, and Wally S. Fall (Martinique).[310] Because of this endeavor, the winning screenwriters benefit from two incredible opportunities. First, the winners can network with world class film professionals during the festival. Second, RFO broadcasts the films made from these screenplays across their

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[306]http://www.rfo.fr/article38.html#
"J'étais très impressionée… en quatre ans le concours a suffisament mobilisé les gens…les gens ne sont pas marginalisés comme l'on pourrait le penser. Ils sont dans le monde, ils recoivent les images du monde, ils recoivent des informations du monde, ils sont dans leur époque et ce qu'ils projettent sont des histoires individuelles bien sur mais des histoires individuelles qui interessent le monde entier."

[307] http://www.cineoutremer.com/article.php3?id_article=97

[308] For a more extensive list of past winners and production, see: http://www.rfo.fr/article1361.html Accessed October 2008

[309] Accessed Oct. 14, 2008
Prix HOHOA dans le cadre de la semaine de la critique de Cannes
Écrit par Laurence Zaksas **08-05-2008**
Contact presse : Laurence Zaksas – tel : 01 55 22 74 78
http://www.gensdelacaraibe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3186&Itemid=186

[310] http://www.cineoutremer.com/article.php3?id_article=97
http://www.cineoutremer.com/article.php3?id_article=74

national and international network.[311] Ultimately, this cultural initiative demonstrates the determination of Antilleans to attact international attention to their industy, to award worthy production, and to help the industry grow.

As local initiatives have gained momentum, so too have more global efforts to provide opportunities for exposure and circulation of Antillean film. The first such festival is the St. Barths Film Festival, launched in 1996.[312] Requesting submissions that either have a Caribbean theme or are directed by Caribbean artists, the film festival focuses on regionally relevant material. Now an established annual event on the island's cultural calendar, the festival has put St. Barth on the map as a meeting place for Caribbean filmmakers in particular to come together to screen their films and discuss their work. As director Tony Coco-Viloin reveals, however, French Caribbean filmmakers especially value the opportunity to attend because they perceive it as a direct link to the U.S. film industry.[313]

As a sampling of the type of Caribbean Cinema screened during the festival, the twelfth annual St. Barth's film festival in April 2007 featured Haitian, Guadeloupan and Martinican films. For instance, Guadeloupan director Janluk "Slas" Stanislas submitted and screened one of his short films, *Lanmou a Bois (La Passion du Bois)*. Last year, another Guadeloupan director, Dominik Coco, presented his short, *15 Lanné Mizik*.[314] In fact, Guadeloupan films henceforth qualify for a special new award, *Le Prix de la Guadeloupe* (The Guadeloupan Prize). Paid for by the *Conseil Régional de la Guadeloupe*, this ingenious prize for the best short Guadeloupan film provides funding for the English subtitling of a film.[315] The St. Barth's festival also played host to the first ever "Traveling Caribbean Film Showcase," sponsored by UNESCO, the Cuban Institute of Art and Cinematography, and the Caribbean Community CARICOM. Launched just last year in February 2007, the showcase displayed selections of its program all across the

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[311] Ibid

[312] http://www.stbarthff.org/2007/welcome.html
Accessed 25 October 2008

[313] Interview with author, Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

[314] Ibid.

[315] http://www.stbarthff.org/2008/welcome.html
Accessed 25 October 2008

Caribbean over a twelve-week period.[316] Because of the St.Barth's festival and UNESCO sponsorsed program, Francophone Caribbean filmmakers are experiencing new opportunities to extend their influence to the regional level.

Regional opportunities for French Caribbean film are not limited to the St. Barth's film festival, however. In 1976, the *Alliance Française* of Jamaica established an annual Francophone Film Festival. The event lasts two weeks and is held at the *Alliance Française*, adjacent to the French Embassy in Kingston.[317] Assisting in the event are organizations such as the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communications (CARIMAC), the Audiovisual and Communication Department of the University of the West Indies (UWI), and Women in Film.[318] In 2007, participating filmmakers hailed from countries such as France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Senegal, and Haiti. The documentary *The Black Mozart* opened the 2007 festival. Working alongside his Guadeloupan wife and producer Stéphanie, Steven James, a Trinidadian director, premiered the Spanish version of the film in Cuba in 2006. Then, they showed the French version in Guadeloupe before the English debut in Jamaica. This film exemplifies the goals of this Francophone film festival. Sydney Bartley, the Jamaican director of culture in the Ministry of Culture, made these remarks at the opening of the 2007 festival:

> [This festival] allows us to understand the importance of film, because it allows us to see deep within our own psyche, within our own hearts, within the topography of our own minds. And in doing so we come to better understand who we are as a people, whether we are dispersed in various parts of the world, or whether we are still in distorted images of ourselves and trying to recapture what we might have lost along the way. Film allows us to recreate, recapture and rediscover and to even recollect the images.[319]

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[316] http://www.caricom.org/jsp/pressreleases/pres50_07.jsp
Accesed 25 October 2008
[317] http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/lifestyle/html/20081109T020000-0500_142327_OBS_NEW_FEATURE_FOR_FRANCOPHONE_FILM_FESTIVAL_.asp
[318] http://halleyjc.blog.lemonde.fr/2007/11/08/francophone-film-festival-de-la-jamaique-the-black-mozart-en-ouverture/
November 8, 2007
[319] http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/lifestyle/html/20081109T020000-0500_142327_OBS_NEW_FEATURE_FOR_FRANCOPHONE_FILM_FESTIVAL_.asp

Hence, those participating in and on the threshold of filmmaking recognize the power and purpose of Caribbean film. That is to say, film gives one an opportunity to make the ultimate decision of how one will be portrayed. In continued pursuit of this objective, festival organizers created a program for young aspiring filmmakers. In 2008, they began a Junior Film Competition, prior to which CARIMAC offered a series of free workshops to students and teachers on the art of filmmaking.[320]

Another way in which in the festival has evolved is through the incorporation of a specific theme. Organizers chose a key Caribbean theme for the sixth night of the 2008 festival, Negritude. The night's program, entitled *Negritude Night*, included the screening of the two films *Aimé Césaire: Au Rendez-vous de la Conquête (Where the Edges of Conquest Meet,* Euzhan Palcy, 1994) and *Léopold Sedar Senghor: Un Long Poème Rythmé (A Long Rhythmic Poem,* Beatrice Souté, 1996).[321] In sum, this theme and the youth program demonstrate how dynamism and direction of the festival, continuing to offer new opportunities to attend, interpret, and contribute to the Caribbean cinematic landscape.

Beyond the Caribbean, French Caribbean film has surfaced in international festivals. One particularly eminent opportunity is FESPACO (The Panafrican Film andTelevision Festival of Ouagadougou) which takes place in Burkina Faso. The festival is now forty years old and generally recognized as the largest African film festival in existence. The festival annually awards a *Prix Caraïbes* (Caribbean Prize), which went to Christian Grandman in 2003. Grandman is French-born filmmaker of Guadeloupan heritage. [322] A visit to Guadeloupe inspired him to begin the film *Tèt Grenné*. Receiving funding in 1999 from the *Fondation Hachette* (Hachette Foundation, part of the *Fondation Jean-Luc Lagardère*) for his screenplay, he set out to tell a story of a homeless family living in the outskirts of Pointe-à-Pitre.[323]

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[320] Ibid.
[321] http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20081130/ent/ent6.html
[322]http://archives.arte.tv/fr/archive_221962.html
Accessed 23 February 2009
[323] http://www.artepro.com/fr_fichiers/fichiers/01676234.pdf
Accessed 23 February 2009
Website expired: Describing his motivation to film in Guadeloupe, Grandman recounts:
J'observe et j'écoute énormément ce que les gens racontent sur ce pays et sur leur antillanité. Avec tous ces éléments, j'ai essayé d'ancrer le film dans une réalité antillaise (I observe and listen intently to what people

Thanks to the FESPACO award, Grandman received the opportunity to have his film distributed in Africa. In response to his selection for this big break, he exlaimed: "It's a secret dream to have this distribution opportunity. It's good, and important. I imagine the film in outdoor venues and that really pleases me!"[324] In addition to the screenings in Africa, the film was also aired in France on the Channel Arte in May 2002 as part of the series *Regards Noirs d'Afrique et des Antilles* (Black Perspectives from Africa and the Antilles).[325] The film also reached the Guadeloupan public. Screened in an outdoor venue in downtown Pointe-à-Pitre, Grandman described the event with unabashed enthusiasm:

> The film was very well received. The film was projected on a giant outdoor screen on a busy square in Pointe-à-Pitre, and it was fabulous: cars stopping, people watching the film from their car…It was marvelous.[326]

Grandman's case is an excellent illustration of the type of local, regional, and international opportunities for a motivated filmmaker. He drew on a number of sources to coordinate these international screenings, but in the end he managed to show his film to a wide array of audiences.

From the new partnership between the CNC and the DRAC to the transatlantic screenings of an emerging filmmaker, the Antillean film industry has clearly begun to benefit from a variety of impressive local, regional, and international opportunities. The scope and scale of the festivals and government support are evidence of rising activity and unrealized potential for the production of locally and universally engaging films. As Coco-Viloin optimistically states, the industry is presently becoming more structured and quickly evolving to transform the Antillean cinematic landscape.[327]

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say about this country and their Antillean identity. With all of these elements, I tried to anchor the film in the Antillean reality).

[324] "C'est un rêve, comme ça, secret, d'avoir ce prix de la distribution. C'est bien, c'est important. J'imagine le film dans les salles en plein air et ça me ravit."
http://archives.arte.tv/fr/archive_221962.html
Accessed February 23 2009

[325] Ibid.

[326] Ibid.
"Il a été extrêmement bien accueilli. Le film a été projeté sur un écran géant en plein air, sur une place animée de Pointe-à-Pitre, et c'était fabuleux : les voitures s'arrêtaient, les gens regardaient le film depuis leur voiture…C'était merveilleux."

[327] Interview with author, Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Régional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.

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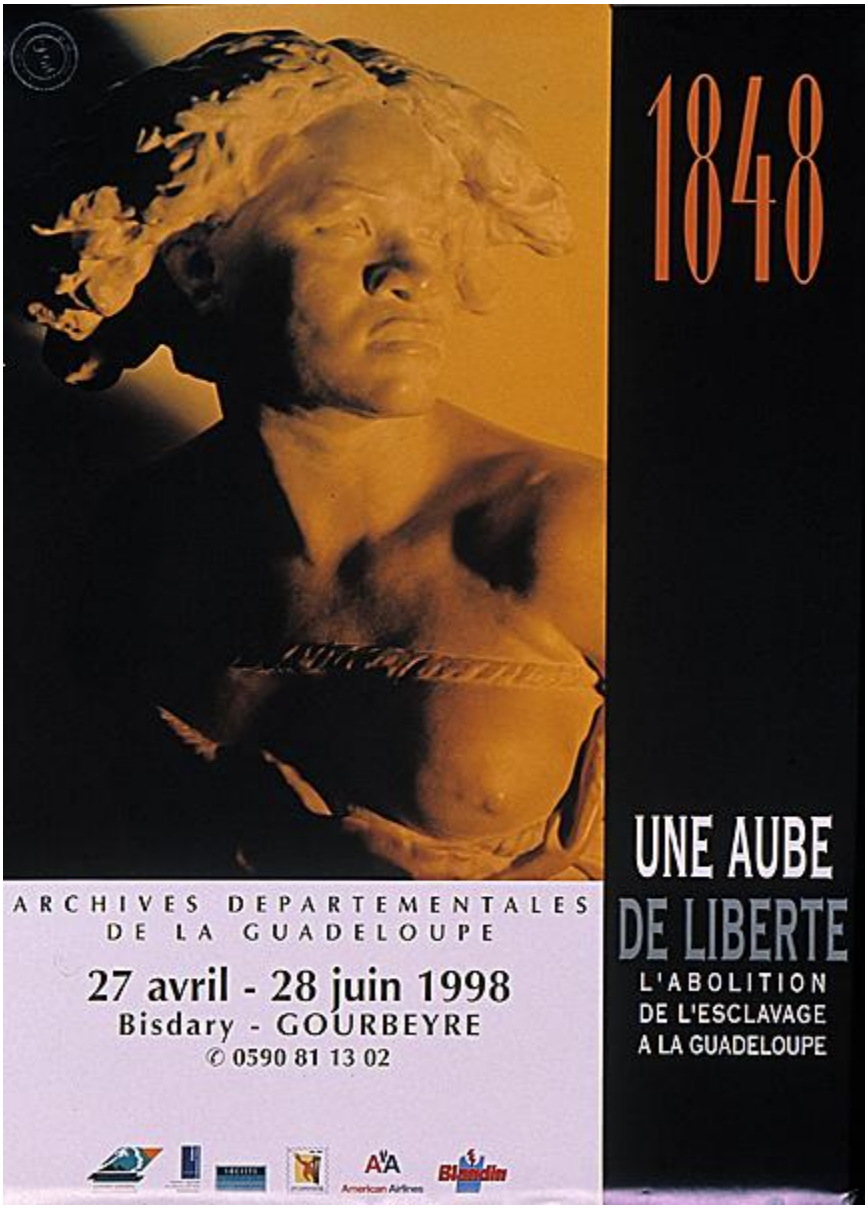
SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 1: DOCUMENTARY POSTER

http://caom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/sdx/ulysse/notice?n=1&id=FR%20CAOM%209Fi525&qid=sdx_q3&p=1



SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 2: CONVENTION

Convention between the CNC (Centre National Cinématographique) & the DRAC (Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles) of Guadeloupe

CONVENTION DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE ET AUDIOVISUEL

2007 – 2009

ENTRE

L'ETAT
(Ministère de la culture et de la communication
- Préfecture de Région Guadeloupe
- Direction régionale des affaires culturelles
de Guadeloupe)

LE CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINEMATOGRAPHIE

ET

LA REGION GUADELOUPE PRÉAMBULE

La présente convention triennale, établie entre l'État (Ministère de la culture et de la communication – Préfecture de Région de Guadeloupe - Direction régionale des affaires culturelles de Guadeloupe), le Centre national de la cinématographie et la Région Guadeloupe, succède à la convention signée le 2 décembre 2005 et portant sur la période 2005-2006.

Elle vise à préciser les conditions de partenariat entre les signataires, afin de coordonner et d'amplifier les soutiens apportés au cinéma et à l'audiovisuel dans le cadre régional.

L'ACTION DE LA RÉGION GUADELOUPE

La Région mène depuis plusieurs années une politique diversifiée dans le domaine du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel.

Elle intervient notamment dans le soutien à la création et production (écriture, développement, courts et longs métrages, documentaires, séries pour la télévision), la diffusion (festivals de cinéma, mois du documentaire, avant-premières), l'accompagnement des classes à option cinéma, le financement du

transport des lycéens vers les salles de cinéma et le soutien aux projets pédagogiques d'établissement (par exemple : résidence d'artiste d'un réalisateur pour la création et production d'un film avec des élèves de plusieurs lycées).

La volonté de la région de rendre lisible ses interventions l'a conduit en 2005 à la création d'un fonds de soutien au cinéma et à l'audiovisuel.

Sur la base d'un processus préalable de concertation engagé avec l'ensemble des professions de ce secteur en région (producteurs, auteurs-réalisateurs, techniciens, comédiens, prestataires techniques), la région s'est engagée dans un conventionnement avec l'Etat et le CNC en 2005, ce qui lui a permis de renforcer sa politique d'intervention. C'est ainsi que pour la période 2005-2006 neuf cent soixante treize mille quatre cent quatre vingt dix huit euro (973 498 €) dont : 861 998 € pour la création, la production et l'éducation à l'image, et 111 500 € hors convention ont été investis.

Forte de cette dynamique, la région entend poursuivre et consolider sa politique de soutien pour le développement de ce secteur d'activité. Elle prévoit en 2007 outre le dispositif d'aide à la création et à la production, la création du bureau d'accueil des tournages, la mise en place sur le territoire d'actions de formation à l'écriture et la préfiguration du programme d'inventaire et de conservation du patrimoine cinématographique et audiovisuel régional.

L'ACTION DE LA DRAC GUADELOUPE

La Direction régionale des affaires culturelles de Guadeloupe, qui a une compétence générale pour les secteurs du cinéma, de l'audiovisuel et du multimédia, mène une politique cinématographique et audiovisuelle, en concertation avec l'ensemble des collectivités territoriales et du milieu professionnel.

A ce titre, chaque année, elle soutient un certain nombre d'actions dans ce secteur tant en terme de développement culturel que d'aménagement du territoire, d'éducation artistique et d'accès du plus grand nombre aux œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles.

Elle intervient dans deux domaines en particulier :

- la diffusion culturelle, cinématographique et audiovisuelle, à travers son soutien à des : rencontres ; manifestations et festivals (FEMI, Festival du film caribéen de Saint Barthélémy, Mois du film documentaire) ; actions de diffusion, notamment dans le domaine du film art et essai ; actions associatives …

- l'éducation artistique et la formation, à travers : les opérations « Ecole au cinéma », « Collège au cinéma », Lycéens au cinéma » et « Passeurs d'images » dont la mise en œuvre est assurée par l'association Cinéwoulé ; le partenariat culturel des options cinéma – audiovisuel spécialisées dans les lycées de Sainte Rose et de Sainte Anne ; le pôle régional d'éducation artistique et de formation ; et d'autres initiatives …

Elle intervient également, dans la mesure de ses attributions et de ses moyens, en matière de conseil, de suivi et de valorisation des actions engagées en faveur du patrimoine cinématographique et audiovisuel.

L'ACTION DU CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINEMATOGRAPHIE

Le Centre national de la cinématographie, en relation étroite avec la DRAC, intervient en matière de :

- soutien à la création et à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles ;

- soutien à l'éducation artistique : le CNC propose de donner aux enfants et aux adolescents une véritable éducation artistique dans le domaine du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel. Il est à l'origine de dispositifs nationaux visant à donner aux élèves, de la maternelle à la terminale, une culture cinématographique par la fréquentation des œuvres et des créateurs. Quatre opérations ont ainsi vu le jour : Ecole et Cinéma, Collège au Cinéma, Lycéens au Cinéma et les « enseignements obligatoires cinéma et audiovisuel » des séries L des lycées. Elles sont fondées sur des principes identiques : la découverte des films dans les conditions du spectacle cinématographique, c'est-à-dire en salle de cinéma, la rencontre avec des professionnels et les métiers du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel et le travail pédagogique conduit par les enseignants et les partenaires culturels à partir de documents réalisés spécialement à leur intention. L'apport financier du CNC s'élève au total à plus 2 M€ par an (tirage des copies, conception et impression des documents pédagogiques, subvention aux associations nationales coordonatrices).

  La réussite de ces opérations repose sur un partenariat entre les Ministères chargés de la Culture et de la communication, de l'Education nationale et de l'Agriculture, les collectivités territoriales et les professionnels du cinéma.

- soutien à la diffusion cinématographique (par exemple, pour les rencontres et manifestations professionnelles d'intérêt national / international dans la région) ; soutien à l'exploitation cinématographique (soutien automatique à l'exploitation ; aide sélective à la modernisation/création des salles ; aide aux salles à programmation difficile ; soutien aux salles diffusant des films art et essai ; aide au tirage de copies) ; au total, le CNC consacre annuellement 80 M€ à l'aide aux salles de cinéma ; soutien à la distribution (soutien automatique ; aides sélectives) ;autres soutiens au cinéma (par exemple dans le domaine du patrimoine) et à l'audiovisuel. Vu le Code général des collectivités territoriales, notamment ses articles L1511-1 à L1511-7, L 2251-4, L 3232-4, L 4211-1 et R 1511-40 à R 1511-43 ;

Vu le Code de l'industrie cinématographique ;

Vu le décret n° 95-110 du 2 février 1995 modifié relatif au soutien financier à la production, à la préparation et à la distribution d'œuvres audiovisuelles ;

Vu le décret n° 98-35 du 14 janvier 1998 modifié relatif au soutien financier de l'industrie audiovisuelle ;

Vu le décret n° 98-750 du 24 août 1998 relatif au soutien financier à la diffusion de certaines œuvres cinématographiques en salles de spectacles cinématographiques et au soutien financier à la modernisation et à la création des établissements de spectacles cinématographiques ;

Vu le décret n° 99-130 du 24 février 1999 modifié relatif au soutien financier de l'industrie cinématographique ;

Vu le décret n° 2002-568 du 22 avril 2002 portant définition et classement des établissements de spectacles cinématographiques d'art et d'essai ;

Vu le décret du 24 juin 2005 portant nomination de la directrice générale du Centre national de la cinématographie ;

Vu la décision du 18 octobre 2005 de la Directrice générale du CNC portant délégation de signature modifiée par les décisions des 24 février, 24 mars, 6 juin et 26 juillet 2006 ;

Vu la délibération n° CR/07-1980 du 4 décembre 2007 du Conseil régional régissant les aides à la création et à la production cinématographique et audiovisuelle, notamment son règlement, et autorisant son Président à signer la présente convention ;

Considérant la communication du 26 septembre 2001 de la Commission au Conseil, au Parlement européen, au Comité économique et social et au Comité des Régions concernant certains aspects juridiques liés aux œuvres cinématographiques et autres œuvres audiovisuelles ;

Considérant la communication du 16 mars 2004 de la Commission au Conseil, au Parlement européen, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des Régions sur le suivi de la communication de la Commission sur certains aspects juridiques liés aux œuvres cinématographiques et autres œuvres audiovisuelles du 26 septembre 2001 ;

Considérant la décision du 22 mars 2006 de la Commission européenne concernant l'aide d'État NN 84/2004 et N95/2004 et relative aux régimes d'aide au cinéma et à l'audiovisuel ;

Considérant la circulaire n° 249240 du 3 mai 2002 du Ministre de la culture et de la communication relative aux aides à la production cinématographique et audiovisuelle ;

Considérant la circulaire NOR/LDL/B/04/10074/C du 10 septembre 2004 du Ministre de l'Intérieur (Direction générale des collectivités territoriales) relative à l'entrée en application de la loi n° 2004-809 du 13 août 2004 relative aux libertés et responsabilités locales ;

Considérant la circulaire NOR/MCT/B/06/00060/C du 3 juillet 2006 du Ministre de l'intérieur et de l'aménagement du territoire relative à la mise en œuvre de la loi du 13 août 2004 relative aux libertés et responsabilités locales en ce qui concerne les interventions économiques des collectivités territoriales et de leurs groupements ;

ENTRE

L'État, représenté par le Préfet de la Région Guadeloupe, Monsieur Emmanuel BERTHIER, ci-après désigné « l'État »,

Le Centre national de la cinématographie, représenté par sa Directrice générale, Madame Véronique CAYLA, ci-après désigné « le CNC »,

ET

La Région Guadeloupe, représentée par son Président, Monsieur Victorin LUREL, ci-après désignée « la Région »,

il est convenu ce qui suit :

ARTICLE 1 – Objet de la convention

La présente convention a pour objet le développement du secteur cinématographique et audiovisuel dans la Région pour la période 2007-2009. Les signataires s'engagent à mener une politique conjointe dans les domaines de la création et de la production d'œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles, de l'éducation artistique, de la diffusion culturelle et de l'exploitation cinématographique.

Compte tenu d'une part, des politiques communes aux signataires en faveur de la création artistique, de la promotion des identités régionales et de la diversité culturelle et d'autre part, des attentes manifestées par les professionnels du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel de la Guadeloupe en matière de soutien au développement individuel et sectoriel, une attention particulière sera consacrée au documentaire, au court métrage, à la captation de spectacle et aux œuvres de fiction audiovisuelles unitaires.

Par ailleurs, la Région et l'Etat (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Préfecture de Région - Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles) s'engagent, en fonction de leurs compétences et de leurs attributions respectives, à mettre en œuvre les moyens nécessaires à l'inventaire du patrimoine cinématographique et audiovisuel de la Guadeloupe, et à mobiliser les autres collectivités et structures en charge de la sauvegarde et de la conservation du patrimoine immatériel afin de mettre en place les plans et actions appropriés à la protection de ce patrimoine cinématographique et audiovisuel.

TITRE I : SOUTIEN A LA CREATION ET A LA PRODUCTION

ARTICLE 2 - Rappel du cadre juridique général

L'aide de la Région aux entreprises de production cinématographique et audiovisuelle s'inscrit dans le cadre général du régime d'aide notifié par le Gouvernement français et approuvé par la Commission européenne le 22 mars 2006. Les collectivités territoriales interviennent dans ce cadre, en complémentarité avec l'État et le CNC. La Région adopte les modalités générales du régime d'aide français pour ses propres interventions.

Il s'agit des aides aux œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles apportées par le CNC, accordées au titre d'un compte spécial du Trésor intitulé « Cinéma, audiovisuel et expression radiophonique locale », alimenté par des taxes perçues sur le prix des entrées au cinéma, sur les services de télévision, et sur la vente et la location des vidéogrammes. Leurs modalités d'attribution font l'objet des principaux textes suivants : le décret n° 98-35 du 14 janvier 1998 modifié relatif au soutien financier de l'industrie audiovisuelle ; le décret n° 95-110 du 2 février 1995 modifié relatif au soutien financier à la production, à la préparation et à la distribution d'œuvres audiovisuelles ; le décret n° 99-130 modifié du 24 février 1999 relatif au soutien financier de l'industrie cinématographique.

ARTICLE 3 – Fonds régional d'aide à la création et à la production

Dans le cadre de la présente convention conclue pour les années 2007- 2009, la Région gère un fonds régional d'aide à la création et à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles, selon les dispositions prévues aux articles 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 et 9 de la présente convention.

Ce fonds régional est destiné à favoriser l'utilisation des ressources du territoire en personnel et en industrie technique. Les projets retenus doivent avoir des retombées économiques induites et valoriser la diversité historique, géographique, sociale et culturelle de la Guadeloupe.

Les critères d'intervention financière sont les suivants :

- intérêt du projet pour la valorisation de la Guadeloupe, de sa culture ou de ses artistes,
- la qualité artistique,
- la localisation de tout ou partie du tournage de l'œuvre en Guadeloupe,
- la territorialisation d'une partie significative des dépenses,
- l'implication des ressources et compétences locales,
- la faisabilité technique et financière.

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire et de ses possibilités budgétaires, le CNC accompagnera financièrement l'effort de la Région par des apports dont les modalités sont détaillées dans les articles 4, 5, 6 et 7.

Le montant total des engagements financiers annuels du CNC envers la Région signataire de la convention au titre du fonds d'aide à la création et à la production ne peut excéder deux millions d'euros (2 000 000 €).

ARTICLE 4 - Aide à l'écriture, à la réécriture, au pilote ou à la maquette et au développement

La Région accorde un soutien sélectif à l'écriture ou à la réécriture et au développement d'œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles selon les modalités suivantes :

- l'aide à l'écriture s'adresse à tout réalisateur ou scénariste d'œuvre cinématographique ou audiovisuelle qui propose un projet en cours d'écriture présenté sous la forme d'un synopsis et

d’une note d’intention ou d’un projet de scénario (esquisse de scénario, synopsis et note d’intention) ;

- l’aide à la réécriture est destinée à des projets présentés sous la forme d’un scénario (continuité dialoguée) et pour lesquels un travail complémentaire d’écriture est nécessaire. L’aide à l’écriture et l’aide à la réécriture ne sont pas cumulables pour un même projet.
- l’aide au pilote ou à la maquette est destinée à donner les moyens à un producteur de trouver un diffuseur,
- l’aide au développement est destinée à participer aux frais de préparation et d’écriture, de démarches auprès des diffuseurs et des co-producteurs. Elle est accordée à une société de production cinématographique autorisée, à une société de production audiovisuelle ou à une association dont le siège social est en Guadeloupe et dont l’objet social a trait à la production cinématographique ou audiovisuelle.

- *Eligibilité*

Sont éligibles à ces aides de la Région les projets dont les intentions sont jugées par le comité de lecture comme présentant des garanties satisfaisantes au plan de la qualité artistique de l'œuvre ainsi que de sa faisabilité économique et technique.

- *Montants des aides*

Les montants des aides sont plafonnés de la façon suivante :

Pour les aides à l'écriture ou à la réécriture :

- de court métrage cinéma	3 000 €
- de long métrage cinéma	10 000 €
- de projet audiovisuel unitaire inférieur à 52’	3 000 €
- de projet audiovisuel unitaire supérieur ou égal à 52’	10 000 €
- de série de projets audiovisuels (2, 3, 4 X 52’ ou 5 x 26’)	15 000 €

Pour les aides au pilote ou à la maquette :

- série de projets audiovisuels (2, 3, 4 X 52’ ou 5 x 26’)	20 000 €

Pour les aides au développement :

- de court métrage cinéma	10 000 €
- de long métrage cinéma	30 000 €
- de projet audiovisuel unitaire inférieur à 52’	5 000 €
- de projet audiovisuel unitaire supérieur ou égal à 52 ‘	20 000 €
- de série de projets audiovisuels (2, 3, 4 X 52’ ou 5 x 26’)	30 000 €

La Région fixe le montant de chaque aide attribuée dans la limite de ces plafonds. Ces aides n'entraînent pas automatiquement l'attribution d'un soutien à la production si la demande en est faite ultérieurement.

- *Participation financière du CNC*

Sous réserve de la règle de l’annualité budgétaire et de ses possibilités budgétaires, le CNC accompagne financièrement l’effort prévisionnel de la Région par une subvention forfaitaire globale annuelle destinée à accroître l’intervention financière de la Région dans ce domaine. Après bilan annuel fourni par la Région, le montant de la participation du CNC est proratisé en fonction du montant effectivement engagé par la Région, sans pouvoir cependant excéder l’engagement prévisionnel.

ARTICLE 5 - Aide à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée

La Région accorde un soutien sélectif à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée appartenant au genre de la fiction.

- *Eligibilité*

Sont éligibles à ce soutien sélectif les œuvres cinématographiques d'une durée inférieure à 60 minutes, appartenant au genre de la fiction et dont la qualité d'écriture du scénario et, le cas échéant, la filmographie du réalisateur ainsi que la faisabilité technique et financière sont jugées par le comité de lecture comme présentant des garanties satisfaisantes de la qualité de l'œuvre.

Les projets doivent être présentés par une société de production cinématographique autorisée, une société de production audiovisuelle ou une association dont le siège social est en Guadeloupe et dont l'objet social a trait à la production cinématographique ou audiovisuelle.

La Région s'engage à prendre toutes les dispositions pour que les aides aux œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée bénéficient à l'emploi et soient subordonnées au respect de la législation sociale par le producteur.

- *Montants des aides*

Les montants des aides aux œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée sont plafonnés à : **20 000 €**

La Région fixe le montant de chaque aide attribuée dans la limite de ce plafond.

- *Participation financière du CNC*

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire et de ses possibilités budgétaires, le CNC accompagne l'effort de la Région par une subvention annuelle destinée à accroître l'intervention de la Région dans ce domaine.

L'engagement financier prévisionnel du CNC est calculé sur la base de 1 euro du CNC pour 2 euros engagés par la Région sur son budget propre.

Après bilan annuel fourni par la Région, le montant de la participation du CNC est proratisé en fonction du montant effectivement engagé par la Région, sans pouvoir cependant excéder l'engagement prévisionnel.

Seules les œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée présentées par une société de production et bénéficiant d'une aide votée par la Région d'un montant égal ou supérieur à quinze mille euros (15 000 €) sont comptabilisées pour le calcul de la participation effective du CNC.

L'engagement du CNC sur ce volet ne peut pas excéder deux cent mille euros (200 000 €) par an.

ARTICLE 6 - Aide à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de longue durée

La Région accorde un soutien sélectif à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de longue durée.

- *Eligibilité*

Sont éligibles les œuvres cinématographiques d'une durée de plus de 60 minutes, pour lesquelles la société de production déléguée bénéficie de l'agrément des investissements ou de l'agrément de production délivré

par le CNC, dont la qualité d'écriture du scénario, la filmographie du réalisateur et de la société de production ainsi que la faisabilité technique et financière sont jugées comme présentant des garanties satisfaisantes par le comité de lecture.

- *Montants des aides*

Ces aides prennent la forme de subventions.

Les montants unitaires des apports de la Région sont plafonnés comme suit : **200 000 €**

La Région fixe le montant de chaque aide attribuée dans la limite de ce plafond.

- *Participation financière du CNC*

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire et de ses possibilités budgétaires, et à la condition d'un minimum d'intervention annuelle de cent mille euros (100 000 €) de la part de la Région, le CNC accompagne l'effort de la Région par une subvention annuelle destinée à accroître son intervention dans ce domaine.

L'engagement financier prévisionnel du CNC est calculé sur la base de 1 euro du CNC pour 2 euros engagés par la Région sur son budget propre.

Après bilan annuel fourni par la Région, le montant de la participation effective du CNC est proratisé en fonction du montant effectivement engagé par la Région, sans pouvoir cependant excéder l'engagement prévisionnel.

Ne sont comptabilisées pour le calcul de la participation effective du CNC que les œuvres cinématographiques de longue durée pour lesquelles la société de production déléguée bénéficie de l'agrément des investissements ou de l'agrément de production délivré par le CNC et qui ont bénéficié d'une aide votée par la Région d'un montant égal ou supérieur à :

- cent mille euros (100 000 €) pour les œuvres cinématographiques de fiction et d'animation ; *ce plancher est abaissé à soixante-quinze mille euros (75 000 €) dans le cas où le projet bénéficie d'aides de plusieurs collectivités territoriales françaises pour un montant cumulé égal ou supérieur à cent cinquante mille euros (150 000 €)* ;
- cinquante mille euros (50 000 €) pour les œuvres cinématographiques documentaires.

L'engagement du CNC sur ce volet ne peut pas excéder un million d'euros (1 M€) par an.

ARTICLE 7 – Aide à la production d'œuvres audiovisuelles

La Région accorde un soutien sélectif à la production d'œuvres audiovisuelles (documentaires, captations et recréations de spectacles vivants, téléfilms et séries télévisées) destinées à une première diffusion télévisuelle, à l'exclusion des émissions de flux (émissions de plateau, retransmissions sportives ou évènementielles, magazines d'information ainsi que les films de commande).

- *Eligibilité*

Sont éligibles les œuvres audiovisuelles dont la qualité d'écriture du scénario, la filmographie du réalisateur et de la société de production ainsi que la faisabilité technique et financière sont jugées comme présentant des garanties satisfaisantes par le comité de lecture.

- *Montants des aides*

Ces aides prennent la forme de subventions.

Les montants unitaires des apports de la Région sont plafonnés comme suit :

- œuvres de fiction unitaires inférieures à 90' : 30 000 €
- œuvres de fiction unitaires supérieures ou égale 90' : 80 000 €
- série de fiction télévisée : (2, 3, 4 X 52', 5 x 26'ou autres) :150 000 €
- documentaires unitaires d'une durée minimum de 52 minutes : 30 000 €
- séries documentaires comportant au minimum 5 épisodes d'une durée minimum de 26 minutes : 45 000 €
- captation et recréation de spectacles : 30 000 €

La Région fixe le montant de chaque aide attribuée dans la limite de ce plafond.

- *Participation financière du CNC*

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire et de ses possibilités budgétaires, à la condition d'un minimum d'intervention annuelle de cent mille euros (100 000 €) de la part de la Région, le CNC accompagne l'effort de la Région par une subvention annuelle, versée à la Région, et destinée à accroître l'intervention de la Région dans ce domaine.

L'engagement financier prévisionnel du CNC est calculé sur la base de 1 euro du CNC pour 2 euros engagés par la Région sur son budget propre.

Après bilan annuel fourni par la Région, le montant de la participation effective du CNC est proratisé en fonction du montant effectivement engagé par la Région, sans pouvoir cependant excéder l'engagement prévisionnel.

Ne sont prises en compte pour le calcul de la participation effective du CNC que les œuvres suivantes :

- œuvres de fiction unitaires ou sous forme de séries ;
- œuvres d'animation unitaires ou sous forme de séries ;
- documentaires unitaires d'une durée minimum de 52 minutes ;
- séries documentaires comportant au minimum 5 épisodes d'une durée minimum de 26 minutes ;

En outre, les conditions suivantes doivent être réunies :

a) l'œuvre doit avoir obtenu l'autorisation préalable du CNC ;

b) dans le cas d'une coproduction, le bénéficiaire de l'aide de la Région doit être la société de production déléguée qui sollicite l'aide du compte de soutien à l'industrie des programmes audiovisuels (COSIP) du CNC ;

c) lorsqu'il s'agit d'une œuvre unitaire, cette dernière bénéficie d'une aide votée par la Région d'un montant égal ou supérieur à :

- soixante-quinze mille euros (75 000 €) pour les œuvres unitaires de fiction d'une durée égale ou supérieure à 90 minutes ; *ce plancher est abaissé à cinquante mille euros (50 000 €) dans le cas où l'œuvre bénéficie d'aides de plusieurs collectivités territoriales françaises pour un montant cumulé égal ou supérieur à cent mille euros (100 000 €)* ;
- vingt-cinq mille euros (25 000 €) pour les œuvres unitaires de fiction d'une durée inférieure à 90 minutes ;
- quinze mille euros (15 000 €) pour les œuvres documentaires unitaires d'une durée égale ou supérieure à 52 minutes.

La participation totale du CNC sur ce volet ne peut pas excéder un million d'euros (1 M€) par an.

ARTICLE 8 - Fonctionnement du fonds régional d'aide à la création et à la production

La Région s'engage à doter le fonds régional d'aide à la création et à la production mis en place pour les années 2007-2009 dans les conditions précitées des moyens humains et logistiques nécessaires pour assurer son bon fonctionnement, notamment en termes de transparence des procédures, d'instruction et de suivi des dossiers, de fonctionnement du comité de lecture et de délais de paiement aux bénéficiaires.

a) Transparence des procédures

Le règlement du fonds d'aide, les critères d'intervention de la Région et la procédure d'examen des projets sont communiqués aux demandeurs d'aides lors du retrait des dossiers. Ils donnent également lieu, par ailleurs, à une communication publique à l'intention des professionnels, sous les formes appropriées (site Internet, brochures explicatives, etc.).

b) Comité de lecture

Les projets candidats à l'obtention d'une aide sont soumis à l'examen d'un comité de lecture chargé d'examiner la qualité artistique des œuvres candidates à une aide de la Région, ainsi que leur faisabilité technique, économique et financière.

Un règlement intérieur du comité de lecture est établi et adopté par la Région, et communiqué aux professionnels par les moyens définis par la Région.

Le comité de lecture est composé majoritairement de professionnels du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel, nommés intuitu personae. Il fait l'objet d'un renouvellement régulier, sa composition est ouverte à des personnalités extérieures à la région.

Le comité de lecture ne peut se réunir valablement que si le quorum est atteint.

Un représentant de la direction régionale des affaires culturelles assiste de plein droit aux travaux de la commission et reçoit la documentation au même titre que les autres membres.

Préalablement à chaque réunion du comité de lecture, les membres disposent d'un délai minimum d'un mois pour étudier les dossiers.

La Région s'engage à organiser un nombre suffisant de réunions du comité de lecture, de telle sorte que les décisions d'attribution des aides interviennent dans des délais compatibles avec le financement et la réalisation des projets.

Si un membre du comité est impliqué dans un projet proposé en commission, que ce soit en tant que producteur, auteur, réalisateur, collaborateur artistique ou technique, prestataire technique, distributeur ou diffuseur, il ne peut pas prendre part aux délibérations concernant ce projet.

Les propositions du comité permettent à la collectivité d'assurer une réelle sélectivité dans les décisions d'attributions des aides.

Tous les membres du comité de lecture s'engagent à assurer la confidentialité des délibérations.

Les réunions du comité de lecture font l'objet d'un procès-verbal qui est communiqué à tous les membres et mis à disposition du CNC et de la Direction régionale des affaires culturelles.

Sur la base des avis émis par le comité de lecture, les projets sont ensuite examinés par la Région qui prend les décisions finales d'attribution des aides. Ces décisions sont communiquées au CNC et à la Direction régionale des affaires culturelles dans un délai maximum d'un mois.

c) Suivi des dossiers

La Région s'engage à mettre en œuvre un dispositif efficace d'information des demandeurs et des bénéficiaires des aides, leur permettant de connaître l'évolution de leur dossier (du stade de la prise en compte de la demande d'aide à son versement, le cas échéant).

d) Convention

Une convention liant la Région et le bénéficiaire précise les modalités, les conditions et l'échéancier des versements de l'aide, et fixe les obligations du bénéficiaire.

Le modèle de convention est communiqué par la Région à la Direction régionale des affaires culturelles et au CNC.

ARTICLE 9 - Evaluation du fonds régional d'aide à la création et à la production

A l'issue de chaque année, les parties s'engagent à évaluer les résultats et les modalités de fonctionnement du fonds régional d'aide à la création et à la production, en prenant notamment en compte les points de vue des professionnels du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel.

Cette évaluation est fondée à la fois sur des critères artistiques et sur l'efficacité des procédures administratives mises en œuvre (transparence, déontologie…).

En cas de constat de non-respect par la Région des engagements qu'elle souscrit dans le cadre de l'article 8 de la présente convention, le CNC peut être conduit à remettre en cause son intervention financière.

ARTICLE 10 – Accueil des tournages et soutien à la Commission régionale du film

Afin de faciliter l'accueil des tournages dans la région et d'inciter les professionnels à y tourner, la Région, avec l'aide du CNC, crée un bureau d'accueil des tournages qui adhérera à la charte et au réseau national des commissions du film animé par la Commission Nationale du Film France.

La mission du bureau d'accueil des tournages a été confiée par la Région, en accord avec l'État et le CNC, à la direction de la culture et de la formation artistique du Conseil régional qui lui apporte à cet effet les moyens humains et organisationnels requis.

Dans la période 2007-2009, la Région apportera son soutien financier à la structuration, au fonctionnement et aux activités du bureau d'accueil des tournages et se réserve la possibilité d'une évolution juridique et administrative du statut du bureau d'accueil en adéquation avec les conditions de développement du secteur cinématographique et audiovisuel régional.

Pour son démarrage, notamment pour la constitution des outils de travail nécessaires, la Commission régionale du film de Guadeloupe bénéficiera du soutien du CNC. Ce soutien est limité à trois années.

TITRE II : SOUTIEN A L'EDUCATION ARTISTIQUE ET A LA DIFFUSION CULTURELLE

ARTICLE 11 – Dispositif régional "Lycéens au cinéma"

La Région et l'État, en coordination avec le CNC, décident de prolonger leur partenariat pour développer le dispositif régional *Lycéens au cinéma*. Dans cette perspective, ils recherchent la coopération des autres services ministériels déconcentrés concernés (Education nationale, Agriculture).

L'opération *Lycéens au cinéma* est mise en œuvre dans le cadre du protocole interministériel du 4 décembre 2006 signé par les ministres chargés de la culture et de la communication, de l'Education nationale et de l'Agriculture et de la pêche et le CNC, représenté par sa directrice générale.

Au plan national, le CNC prend en charge financièrement le tirage des copies neuves et la conception des documents pédagogiques des films du dispositif.

Lycéens au cinéma propose aux élèves et aux apprentis des lycées d'enseignement général, professionnel et agricole, publics et privés, et des centres de formation des apprentis de découvrir dans les salles de cinéma, en temps scolaire, un cinéma de qualité privilégiant la diversité culturelle et artistique, et de se constituer, grâce au travail pédagogique de sensibilisation artistique conduit par les enseignants et les partenaires culturels, les bases d'une culture cinématographique. L'ensemble des établissements de la région est concerné par l'opération qui se déroule dans un cadre d'exploitation cinématographique commerciale.

Le dispositif de base comporte la représentation dans les salles de cinéma de 3 à 6 films par an, (dont au moins la moitié sont choisis dans la liste nationale proposée par le CNC), durant le temps scolaire. Les films sont accompagnés de documents pédagogiques destinés aux enseignants et aux élèves.

Dans ce cadre, les partenaires de *Lycéens au cinéma* ambitionnent :

- d'éveiller la curiosité du public concerné par la découverte d'œuvres cinématographiques projetées en salle dans leur version d'origine ;
- de permettre aux élèves d'acquérir, d'enrichir et de diversifier leur culture cinématographique et de développer le plus largement possible leur regard et leur sens critique face à l'image ;
- de favoriser sur l'ensemble du territoire l'accès du plus grand nombre d'élèves à la culture cinématographique ;
- de permettre aux enseignants d'intégrer la culture cinématographique au sein de leur enseignement notamment en leur proposant des prolongements pédagogiques et des formations sur les œuvres présentées ;
- de participer au développement d'une pratique culturelle de qualité en favorisant le développement de liens réguliers entre les jeunes et les cinémas.

Un dispositif d'accompagnement est mis en œuvre, notamment :

- avec les partenaires culturels des lycées disposant d'enseignements de spécialité ;
- des rencontres avec des professionnels du cinéma et des critiques ;
- le développement de partenariats entre salles de cinéma et lycées ;
- la sensibilisation aux métiers du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel ;
- la programmation de films ayant un lien avec la région ;
- la proposition de formations spécifiques à l'intention des exploitants des salles de cinéma qui

participent au dispositif.

La mise en œuvre et la coordination de cette opération seront confiées par la Région à une structure choisie conjointement avec l'Etat (DRAC) et le CNC, dans le cadre d'un appel à projets pour les années 2008 et 2009.

La mise en œuvre et la coordination de l'opération pour l'année 2007 est confiée à l'association Cinéwoulé, qui est chargée jusqu'à présent de mettre en œuvre l'opération sur l'ensemble du territoire régional.
Un comité de pilotage du dispositif, comprenant les représentants des différents partenaires de l'opération, est mis en place. Il définit les grands objectifs de cette politique. Il choisit les films proposés et les actions d'accompagnement, sur proposition du coordinateur régional de l'opération. Il procède à l'évaluation de l'opération à partir des documents de bilan fournis par le coordinateur régional.

Le comité de pilotage est composé :

- d'un représentant de la DRAC ;
- d'un représentant du conseil régional ;
- d'un représentant de l'association des maires ;
- d'un représentant de la politique de la Ville ;
- d'un représentant du rectorat ;
- d'un représentant de la DRAF ;
- le cas échéant d'un représentant du pôle régional d'éducation artistique et de formation au cinéma et à l'audiovisuel ;
- de représentants des exploitants locaux ;
- de représentants de la coordination régionale.

En tant que de besoin, des enseignants, d'autres acteurs locaux ainsi que des représentants d'autres dispositifs peuvent y être associés.

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire, dans la période 2007-2009, la Région et l'État cofinancent le dispositif régional *Lycéens au cinéma*, chaque partenaire versant directement sa participation annuelle à la structure chargée de la coordination de cette opération.

Une convention tripartite entre les partenaires financiers et la structure retenue suite à l'appel à projets, établie sur la base d'un programme d'actions, sera signée pour deux ans. Un cahier des charges de l'opération, annexé à la convention, définit les objectifs et les modalités du dispositif, le rôle de la coordination régionale, le rôle et la composition du comité de pilotage ainsi que le mode de financement de l'opération.

ARTICLE 12 – « Passeurs d'images »

La Région et l'État (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Préfecture de Région - Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles), en coordination avec le CNC, décident de prolonger leur partenariat pour soutenir le développement de l'opération régionale « Passeurs d'images » (anciennement « Un été au ciné / Cinéville »].

- *Modalités de l'opération*

« Passeurs d'images » s'adresse en priorité aux publics jeunes et aux jeunes adultes ayant des difficultés d'accès aux pratiques cinématographiques, dans un environnement « hors temps scolaire ». Le dispositif

s'articule autour de plusieurs types d'action : incitation à la fréquentation cinématographique, séances spéciales, ateliers de pratique artistique, séances de cinéma en plein air. En fonction des projets et des réseaux, certaines actions peuvent être ouvertes à leur famille, ainsi qu'aux publics privés d'accès aux pratiques culturelles : les personnes hospitalisées ou en maisons de retraite, les personnes incarcérées en milieu ouvert ou fermé, les porteurs de handicaps, les adultes en difficulté sociale…

Les actions menées dans la cadre de « Passeurs d'images » visent à :

- Proposer une offre cinématographique différente de celle relayée habituellement par les médias et les industries culturelles ;
- Aider le public à mieux se situer vis-à-vis de l'image (cinéma, télévision, médias, jeux vidéos,…) dans son environnement personnel ;
- Contribuer à la formation et à la qualification des partenaires relais sur le terrain ;
- Créer et développer du lien social au sein des territoires où se déroulent les actions ;
- Promouvoir les projets destinés à faire apparaître la diversité culturelle de la société afin de lutter contre les discriminations sociales et culturelles.

- Protocole d'accord

Les modalités de l'opération ont été définies par le " protocole d'accord relatif au programme un été au ciné / cinéville " signé le 3 juillet 2001 par le Ministère de la culture et de la communication (Délégation au développement et à l'action territoriale), le CNC, le Ministère délégué à la ville (Délégation interministérielle à la ville), le Ministère de la jeunesse et des sports (direction de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire), et le Fonds d'action sociale pour les travailleurs immigrés et leurs familles.

Ce protocole d'accord devrait être prochainement réactualisé avec la nouvelle appellation « Passeurs d'images ».

- Comité de pilotage

Un comité de pilotage du dispositif « Lycéens au cinéma » a également compétence pour cette opération. Il définit les grands objectifs de cette politique. Il assure notamment la responsabilité des actions d'accompagnement et du choix des films proposés par le coordinateur régional de l'opération. Il procède à l'évaluation de l'opération à partir des documents de bilan fournis par le coordinateur régional.

- Mise en œuvre et coordination

La mise en œuvre et la coordination de cette opération seront confiées par l'Etat (DRAC) et la Région à une structure choisie conjointement, dans le cadre d'un appel à projets pour la coordination du dispositif.

La coordination de l'opération pour les années 2008 à 2009 sera confiée à la structure qui sera chargée de mettre en œuvre cette opération dans la région suite à l'appel à projets.
La mise en œuvre et la coordination de l'opération pour l'année 2007 est confiée à l'association Cinéwoulé, qui est chargée jusqu'à présent de l'opération sur l'ensemble du territoire régional.
Sa mission, définie dans le protocole d'accord un été au ciné / cinéville de 2001, consiste à aider et soutenir la mise en place de projets locaux, à proposer des actions de formations et à assurer le lien entre les porteurs de projets locaux et la coordination nationale.

La coordination nationale anime et développe le réseau, élabore des outils ressources, met en place des actions de formation et de sensibilisation pour les relais, assure la diffusion et la promotion, nationales et internationales, des travaux réalisés.

- Financement

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire, dans la période 2007 à 2009, la Région et l'Etat cofinancent le dispositif régional « Passeurs d'images », chaque partenaire versant directement sa participation annuelle à la structure chargée de la mise en œuvre et de la coordination de cette opération.

Une convention tripartite entre les partenaires financiers (Région et DRAC) et la structure retenue suite à l'appel à projets, établie sur la base d'un programme d'actions, sera signée pour deux ans.

ARTICLE 13 – Autres actions de diffusion culturelle

La Région et l'État (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Préfecture de Région - Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles), en coordination avec le CNC, décident de mettre en commun leurs moyens afin de soutenir, de façon plus cohérente et significative, les manifestations cinématographiques et audiovisuelles en Guadeloupe.

- *Critères d'évaluation*

Ils ont pour but de permettre une meilleure appréciation commune du travail des festivals existants et de guider l'élaboration de nouvelles demandes en vue d'une éventuelle reconduction ou réévaluation des moyens qui leur sont dévolus.

On prendra notamment en considération :

- la qualité et la diversité de la programmation et des actions d'animation (importance de la programmation, diversité des genres, formats, supports, provenance géographique, place faite aux jeunes auteurs guadeloupéens et caribéens ainsi qu'aux œuvres du patrimoine, organisation de débats) ;
- la contribution à la promotion des œuvres de création les plus exigeantes ;
- la dimension professionnelle de la manifestation (présence de professionnels de la Guadeloupe et de la France hexagonale, de la Caraïbe et du monde, mise en place d'instruments favorisant les échanges entre eux, présence d'un marché, de lieux de visionnement et de rencontres, organisation de colloques ou d'ateliers, contribution à la circulation des œuvres par des prix, couverture presse ou achat par des distributeurs ou des diffuseurs) ;
- l'envergure de la manifestation (régionale, nationale, internationale) ;
- la contribution à la démocratisation culturelle (avec notamment des politiques tarifaires et des actions en faveur de publics spécifiques) ;
- la contribution à la vie culturelle et sociale grâce aux actions menées en partenariat avec les acteurs culturels, éducatifs et sociaux locaux pendant la manifestation ou à l'année ;
- la contribution à l'aménagement du territoire grâce à l'implantation de la manifestation ou d'actions délocalisées dans des zones peu dotées en équipements ou en évènements culturels ;
- la compétence et le niveau de professionnalisation de l'équipe organisatrice.

Au titre du soutien à la permanence et de la diversité de l'offre cinématographique en salle (art et essai, cinématographies du monde, œuvres du patrimoine, etc.) une attention particulière sera portée à la nouvelle association pour la promotion et la diffusion du cinéma art et essai en Guadeloupe qui regroupe les principaux acteurs de l'exploitation cinématographique indépendante de la région, et aux actions qu'elle entend mener dès 2007 en relation avec l'A.D.R.C. (agence de développement régional du cinéma).

- *Financement*

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire, dans la période 2007 à 2009, la Région et l'État cofinancent des actions de diffusion culturelle, chaque partenaire versant directement sa participation aux structures chargées de la mise en œuvre et de la coordination de ces actions.

ARTICLE 14 – Actions de formation professionnelle relatives aux métiers de la diffusion culturelle, aux métiers de l'accueil des tournages, de la création et de la production

La Région et l'Etat (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication – Préfecture de Région – Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles), en coordination avec le CNC, décident de mettre en commun leurs moyens afin de soutenir la formation professionnelle et continue, et par conséquent, toutes action d'information, de sensibilisation, d'initiation et de formation destinée aux professionnels du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel ainsi qu'aux enseignants, animateurs, bibliothécaires, documentalistes et autres professionnels de l'éducation et de la médiation.

- *Modalités et mise en œuvre*

Dès 2007, un recueil assorti d'une analyse des besoins en formation sera diligenté auprès d'un organisme de formation habilité en vue de l'élaboration d'un plan ou d'un programme de formation correspondant au plus près à la demande professionnelle et aux exigences relatives au développement du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel en Guadeloupe.

Les actions de formation, de courte ou de longue durée, devront concerner en priorité, les acteurs impliqués dans l'élaboration, la mise en œuvre, le suivi ou l'évaluation de projets se rapportant aux actions encouragées dans le champ de la présente convention.

Les publics considérés comme prioritaires sont les suivants :

- auteurs, réalisateurs, techniciens, producteurs et autres professionnels du cinéma, de l'audiovisuel (vidéo, TV) et des nouveaux supports de diffusion (Internet, téléphonie mobile, etc.) ;
- enseignants et formateurs spécialisés ou non ;
- animateurs et éducateurs socioculturels ;
- personnels des médiathèques, des centres d'information et de documentation, des cyberbases et des centres culturels multimédias.

- *Financement*

Sous réserve de la règle de l'annualité budgétaire, dans la période 2007 à 2009 la Région et l'État (Direction régionale des affaires culturelles) cofinancent les actions de formation professionnelle relatives à la diffusion culturelle, chaque partenaire versant directement sa participation à la structure ou aux structures chargée(s) de la mise en œuvre de ces actions.

TITRE III : SOUTIEN A L'EXPLOITATION CINEMATOGRAPHIQUE

ARTICLE 15 – Aide aux établissements de spectacles cinématographiques

L'établissement de spectacle cinématographique constitue un équipement culturel et social qui contribue à l'aménagement culturel du territoire. Le maintien d'un parc de salles diversifié, permettant de garantir le pluralisme de l'offre cinématographique, est l'un des objectifs de la politique menée en faveur du cinéma. Compte tenu de cet objectif commun, la Région, l'Etat et le CNC conviennent de mettre en œuvre des outils de coopération pour favoriser le développement de l'activité des établissements cinématographiques situés dans la région.

Les actions menées par la Région

La Région entend, avec si possible le concours de fonds européens concernés, soutenir de façon directe ou indirecte, l'aménagement, la rénovation et/ou l'équipement de salles de cinéma et autres lieux culturels et artistiques intégrant la diffusion régulière d'œuvres cinématographiques et audiovisuelles dans leur programmation annuelle.

Pour ses dispositifs de soutien en faveur des établissements de spectacles cinématographiques, la Région s'engage à ne pas mettre en place de critères discriminants en fonction du statut des établissements (privés, publics ou en gestion associative) et veille à l'équilibre concurrentiel entre les différentes formes d'exploitation.

Les actions menées par la DRAC

La Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles est chargée de l'instruction des dossiers de demandes d'autorisation relatives à l'implantation des multiplexes et du rapport de ces dossiers auprès de la Commission Départementale d'Equipement Cinématographique (CDEC). Elle apporte une expertise technique aux différentes commissions du CNC compétentes en matière de soutien sélectif à l'exploitation et dans le cadre de la délivrance des autorisations d'exercice délivrées aux organisateurs de spectacles cinématographiques.

Les actions menées par le CNC

Le dispositif de soutien financier du CNC en faveur de l'exploitation cinématographique comprend des aides automatiques et des aides sélectives. Ces dernières sont constituées d'un soutien à l'investissement et d'un soutien au fonctionnement.

a) Le soutien sélectif à l'investissement

Les aides sont accordées pour la création et la modernisation des salles de cinéma, prioritairement dans les zones insuffisamment équipées, en particulier dans les secteurs ruraux et dans la périphérie des grandes villes, et au profit d'un parc de salles spécifiquement art et essai. Elles visent à assurer une meilleure desserte cinématographique du territoire, à améliorer l'aménagement des salles et à restructurer le parc des villes moyennes.

Les projets sont examinés en fonction des critères suivants :

- l'intérêt cinématographique ;
- le marché potentiel ;
- l'utilité sociale et le rôle dans la desserte du territoire ;
- la qualité de l'aménagement ;

- le rapport entre le montant des investissements et les enjeux du projet ;
- les conditions de l'équilibre financier de l'équipement ;
- la qualité de l'animation et des orientations culturelles ;
- la situation concurrentielle sur la commune ou la zone d'implantation.

b) Le classement art et essai :

La proportion de séances réalisées avec des films recommandés art et essai entraîne un classement art et essai des salles et une subvention. Cette procédure prend également en compte les actions d'animation des salles, les politiques envers les jeunes publics, la diffusion du court métrage…

Concertation entre les signataires de la présente convention

Les parties s'engagent à s'informer mutuellement du soutien (aides directes, aides indirectes) qu'elles apportent aux salles de cinéma et des orientations qu'elles définissent pour mener leur politique en faveur de l'exploitation cinématographique.

En ce qui concerne plus précisément le soutien à l'investissement et au fonctionnement, et dans le respect des procédures de chacun des partenaires, les parties conviennent

- de se tenir mutuellement informées de leurs critères d'intervention ;

- de tenir mutuellement informées des projets de création et des projets de modernisation des salles et de veiller à la cohérence de leurs interventions respectives ; des réunions de coordination pourront être organisées entre les services compétents des Régions, de la DRAC et du CNC.

Après un examen approfondi du parc de salles existant dans la Région et des projets à venir, la Région et le CNC pourront convenir de soutenir ensemble des projets répondant à des objectifs communs d'aménagement cinématographique.

TITRE IV – MODALITES DE MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA CONVENTION

ARTICLE 16 – DUREE, EVALUATION ET RENOUVELLEMENT DE LA CONVENTION

La présente convention est conclue pour les années 2007 à 2009.

Une évaluation sera mise en œuvre à deux niveaux dans les conditions suivantes :

- évaluation annuelle intervenant un mois avant la fin de chaque année civile ;
- évaluation finale établie trois mois avant l'échéance de la convention.

Chaque disposition de la convention sera évaluée. Des dispositions nouvelles pourront être proposées par chaque signataire à l'occasion de l'évaluation annuelle et donner lieu à amendement de la présente convention sous forme d'avenants.

Afin de mener à bien ces évaluations et d'assurer le suivi de la convention, un comité de pilotage, co-présidé par l'État et par la Région, est établi, composé comme suit :

- le Président du Conseil régional, ou son représentant ;
- le Préfet de région, ou son représentant ;
- le Directeur général du CNC, ou son représentant.

ARTICLE 17 - DISPOSITIONS FINANCIERES

Les dispositions financières font l'objet d'un avenant financier d'application annuel, établi dans le respect des procédures et des échéances respectives liées à l'élaboration du budget de chacun des partenaires.

Les partenaires signataires de la présente convention veilleront à ce que l'octroi et la liquidation des aides soient subordonnées à la régularité de la situation des bénéficiaires au regard de leurs obligations sociales et fiscales.

ARTICLE 18 – ACTIONS DE COMMUNICATION

Les actions de communication relatives aux opérations prévues par la présente convention devront mentionner la participation de l'État, du CNC et de la Région.

Dans les conventions passées avec les bénéficiaires des aides, la Région veillera à ce que le générique des œuvres aidées dans le cadre des dispositifs prévus aux articles 5 à 7 de la présente comporte la mention « avec le soutien de la Région Guadeloupe, en partenariat avec le CNC ».

ARTICLE 19 – RESILIATION

En cas de non respect, par l'une ou l'autre des parties, des engagements réciproques inscrits dans la présente convention, celle-ci pourra être résiliée de plein droit et avant son expiration, par l'une ou l'autre partie à l'expiration d'un délai d'un mois suivant l'envoi d'une lettre recommandée avec accusé de réception valant mise en demeure.

ARTICLE 20 – REGLEMENT DES DIFFERENDS

En cas de survenance d'un différend entre les parties, celles-ci s'engagent à se réunir, aux fins de conciliation, dans les 30 jours qui suivent l'exposé du différend, lequel aura été porté par l'une des parties à la connaissance des autres au moyen d'une lettre recommandée avec accusé de réception.

En cas d'échec de la conciliation prévue ci-dessus, débouchant sur un litige entre les parties, celles-ci conviennent de porter l'affaire devant le Tribunal administratif de Basse-Terre.
La présente convention est signée à Basse-Terre

en six exemplaires originaux, le …….

Pour la Région Guadeloupe, le Président du Conseil Régional	Pour l'État, le Préfet de la Région Guadeloupe
Victorin LUREL	Emmanuel BERTHIER

Pour le Centre national
de la cinématographie,
la Directrice générale

Véronique CAYLA

Le Chef de mission de Contrôle Général
auprès du Centre national
de la cinématographie

Marie-Françoise RIVET

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 3: INTERNAL GUADELOUPAN GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY PHILIPPE BON, DRAC

ATTENTION : CECI EST UN DOCUMENT INTERNE A L'ADMINISTRATION ET NE DOUT PAS ETRE REPRODUIT NI EN PARTIE NI EN TOTALITIE SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT. IL DOIT SERVIR UNIQUEMENT AT DES FINS D'ETUDE OU EVENTUELLEMENT PEDAGOGIQUES

19 JUIN 2007

NOTE SUR L'EXPLOITATION DES SALLES DE CINEMA EN GUADELOUPE

Philippe Bon
Conseiller spectacle vivant, cinéma et audiovisuel
DRAC Guadeloupe (MCC)

La présente note doit être considérée comme un réactualisation des données disponibles en juin 2005 et qui avait déjà fait l'objet d'une communication auprès du C.N.C.
Force est de constater, qu'à l'exception de Médiagestion (circuit Elizé) et du Ciné-théâtre du Moule, et encore pour partie (Cf documents 1-2-3 en annexe), il est très difficile d'obtenir des renseignements précis et fiables des gérants de salles sur la fréquentation ainsi que sur la structure économique et financière de l'exploitation cinématographique.
En conséquence, l'identification des conséquences de l'introduction de la TSA* en Guadeloupe ne peut pas être effectuée avec une grande précision. Quoiqu'il en soit, à l'exception du groupe Elizé, la position des salles est globalement favorable à la perception de la TVA. Il n'y a pas, à ma connaissance de position publique des élus à ce sujet.
En ce qui concerne le secteur non-commercial, la fréquentation des salles reste davantage tributaire de la capacité d'animation et de médiation auprès des publics (qui demeure un vrai enjeu de développement) que du coût du billet, abordable par le public jeune en particulier et qui reste largement inférieur au coût moyen d'un spectacle (25 €-30€).

* TSA : taxe spéciale additionnelle Cf www.cnc.fr

1) Situation de l'exploitation des salles

Les salles de cinéma se répartissent entre les 2 salles de la société Cinésogar et 5 salles indépendantes.

- Cinésogar :

- le **Rex** (Pointe-à-Pitre) : 4 salles de 354, 198, 192 et 94 fauteuils. Nombre de séances par jour / semaine : 3 séances/salle (lundi/mardi), 5 séances/salle (mercredi au dimanche) . Tarifs : 7 €
- le **D'arbaud** (Basse-terre) : 2 salles de 209 et 83 fauteuils. Nombre de séances par jour / semaine : 2 séances/j (lundi/mardi/jeudi/vendredi), 3 séances/j (mercredi/samedi/ dimanche). Tarifs : 6,50€/5€ (- de 13 ans et + de 60 ans)

- Salles indépendantes :

  - **l'Image** (Casino du Gosier) : 1 salles de 127 fauteuils. 2/3 séances/j. Tarifs : 7 €. 6 € (- de 12 ans). 5 € (groupe).

  - Le **Rancho** (Marie-Galante) : 385 fauteuils ; 1 séance/j sauf le lundi et le jeudi. 7€ /5€
    Salle privée

  - La salle de la **MJC de Sandy Ground** (Saint Martin) : 394 fauteuils ; nombre de séances par jour / semaine : 1 séance/j (du mardi au dimanche), 6 €.
    Salle municipale

  - La salle du **Centre culturel Robert Loyson** (le Moule) : 1 salle de 400 fauteuils. 4 séances (mercredi), 1 séance (jeudi), 1 séance (vendredi), 3 séances/j (samedi et dimanche).Tarifs : 6€/3€ (- 12 ans)/4€ (-26 ans)
    60 ou 70 films/an en moyenne.
    Régie municipale directe
    Personnel : un intermittent et trois techniciens de projection(fonctionnaires)

  - Le **Ciné-théâtre** (Lamentin) : 1 salle de 332 fauteuils. Nombre de séances par jour / semaine : 2 séances/j (mardi/jeudi/vendredi), 3séances/j (mercredi/samedi/dimanche), 12 séances/s. Tarifs : 6 €/4,50€ (étudiant)/4 € (CE, - de 12 ans)/2,50 € (séance scolaire)
    60 films/an, en moyenne.
    Régie municipale avec régie d'avances et recettes

Les salles du **Majestic** (Capesterre Belle-eau) (250 sièges) et de **l'Image et le son** (Saint François) (100 sièges) sont fermées à l'accueil du public.

Pour faire bonne mesure, il conviendrait d' ajouter à ces salles, le **cinéma en plein air** (court de tennis, MJC de Lorient, Saint Barthélémy) ainsi que le **cinéma itinérant** de **Cinéwoulé**, dont le directeur, Jean-Marc Césaire, est le coordonnateur régional de Un été au ciné, Cinéville et Ecole, Collège et Lycée au cinéma qui s'est porté récemment acquéreur de la gestion du Vernou Palace, ancienne salle de cinéma située dans un quartier résidentiel des hauteurs de Petit Bourg et propriété municipale.

Enfin, certains établissements de diffusion artistique comme l'Artchipel, scène nationale, ou le Centre des arts s'associent régulièrement aux manifestations cinématographiques ou diffusent, en toute autonomie, des films de cinéma ou des vidéos dans le cadre de leur propre programmation.

Une offre cinématographique encore limitée…

EN QUELQUES ANNEES, LA DIVERSITE CINEMATOGRAPHQUE S'EST APPAUVRIE DE FACON SIGNIFICATIVE. ELLE REPOSE DESORMAIS PRINCIPALEMENT SUR LA PROGRAMMATION DES FESTIVALS OU MANIFESTATION APPARENTES (FEMI, FILM CARIBBEAN DE SAINT BARTH, MOIS DU FILM DOCUMENTAIRE, UN ETE AU CINE / CINEVILLE, OU ENCORE ECOLE, COLLEGE ET LYCEE AU CINEMA).

A titre indicatif, l'ADRC faisait état, dans une synthèse des films diffusés en Guadeloupe, en 2000, des chiffres suivants :
89 films dont 75 films US (84%), 11 films français (12 %), 3 autres nationalités (4%), 8 Art et essai (9%).
Parmi les films hors USA les plus porteurs non diffusés (ayant réalisé plus de 300 000 spectateurs en métropole), 19 films français appartenant à cette catégorie n'ont pas été diffusés, dont 10 ayant réalisé plus de 500 000 entrées en métropole, ainsi que 8 films d'autres nationalités hors usa, dont 4 ayant réalisé plus de 500 000 entrées.

Nous ne disposons pas de chiffre fiable concernant la fréquentation des salles. Cependant, il est possible d'avancer que **le taux de remplissage par séance n'excède guère, en moyenne, 30%.**
En l'absence d'une politique d'animation, qui commence tout juste d'être mise en place au Lamentin comme au Moule, quelque soit le niveau de fréquentation des premières séances, **la rotation des films est extrêmement rapide** (1 semaine en moyenne, soit 3 ou 4 journées de présence en salle).

Mais un environnement favorable

La plupart de ces salles sont situées dans un environnement urbain présentant les conditions requises à leur fréquentation y compris à des heures tardives. On peut penser que la mise en place prochaine d'un réseau structuré de transport en commun sur l'ensemble du territoire destiné à améliorer considérablement la desserte des communes pourrait avoir des conséquences favorables sur la fréquentation des salles.

Un regroupement des salles pour une offre cinématographique élargie

Plusieurs salles indépendantes s'étaient regroupées en 2001 dans le cadre d'une Union guadeloupéenne des cinémas indépendants de façon à mieux coordonner et diversifier la diffusion des films de catégorie « grand public » et « art et essai », et à assurer le développement de leurs activités. Un partenariat avait été esquissé avec l'ADRC (diffusion de 4 films en 2003).
Suite à la défection du gérant du Majestic et aux difficultés d'ordre interne rencontrées par certains adhérents, cette union n'avait pas fait long feu. Toutefois, la volonté d'œuvrer collectivement pour une amélioration de l'offre cinématographique étant restée intacte, les responsables des salles du Lamentin, du Moule et de Marie-Galante ainsi que Cinéwoulé ont récemment créé une nouvelle association, l'APCAG (association pour le développement du cinéma art et essai en Guadeloupe) afin d'établir une nouvelle entente de programmation en liaison, de nouveau, avec l'ADRC.

2) Les freins au développement de l'offre cinématographique

2.1 Le monopole du circuit Elisé (Médiagestion) dans la distribution de films

En Guadeloupe, tout comme en Martinique et en Guyane, la distribution de films est assurée par la société Filmdis, dont le siège social est installé à Fort de France et le gérant est Jean-Max Elizé. Cette société est relayée en Guadeloupe par la société Cinésogar, liée à Filmdis par une convention conférant à cette dernière une fonction de sous-distributeur pour les îles de l'archipel guadeloupéen.
Selon l'article 10 de cette convention, « la société Cinésogar est mandatée par Filmdis pour assurer physiquement le fonctionnement du dépôt, le dédouanement des films et la location aux exploitants des communes. Pour le compte de la société Filmdis, la société Cinésogar assurera la programmation des exploitants indépendants, établira les factures correspondant à la fourniture des films et des affiches et les encaissera. En rémunération de ce service, Filmdis reversera 7% des sommes encaissées au titre des locations de films pour le territoire où s'effectue la distribution. »

Concernant la distribution de films aux salles indépendantes, la rémunération est effectuée soit au *pourcentage* des recettes réalisées par l'exploitant, soit au *forfait*.
Pour quelques salles, Cinésogar conclue avec l'exploitant un contrat qui stipule que la rémunération du distributeur est proportionnelle au volume des recettes réalisées par l'exploitant. Afin de maximiser ses recettes, la société distributrice programme ses films et les attribue aux salles en fonction du niveau de recettes attendues de chaque salle, avec moyens de contrôle à l'appui. L'ordre de passage des films doit se faire en fonction de la qualité des établissements , tout en tenant compte de leur localisation et de la capacité des salles pondérée par le nombre de séances. Il s'y ajoute une contribution aux frais de lancement, égale à 5% de la recette-guichet pour les salles de premier rang qui assurent l'économie générale de l'activité et bénéficient, sauf exception, de la première exclusivité (ex D'Arbaud).
Pour les autres salles, des contrats à forfait sont établis comportant la fourniture de 1 ou 2 films loués à la semaine. Aucun suivi ni contrôle n'est exercé et l'exploitant (association ou personne physique) utilise le film comme il l'entend.

De fait, les sociétés Filmdis et Cinésogar s'avèrent les distributeurs exclusifs des films en Guadeloupe, situation constatée par différentes missions administratives du CNC ainsi que du médiateur du cinéma.

Les conséquences sur l'exploitation indépendante sont les suivantes :

- diffusion de films à succès entre un mois et 3 mois voire plus après leur première diffusion à Pointe-à-Pitre et à Basse-terre,
- Impossibilité d'accès aux autres films et cinématographies,
- Très grande difficulté à établir une programmation propre (choix des films, gestion des horaires, etc.)
- Tarification uniforme et sans cohérence avec une stratégie de développement autonome.

La note ci-jointe du nouveau directeur de Médiagestion (nom de la société de gestion du circuit Elizé), Daniel Robin ne traduit pas un changement d'esprit en profondeur du groupe. Pourtant, quelques « signaux » laisseraient entrevoir une certaine forme d'écoute « bienveillante » à l'égard des salles communales, d'autant que le groupe ne cache pas son intention d'implanter à terme un multiplexe dans l'agglomération urbaine de Pointe-à-Pitre.

2.2 Des formes de concurrence déloyale

La concurrence déloyale est exercée, de façon récurrente et quasi-institutionnalisée de trois façons :

- Location par les vidéo-clubs de vidéos importées de façon illicite du Canada ou des Etats-Unis et proposés à la clientèle (en location ou en vente) avant ou dans le même temps que la première sortie de films commerciaux en salle. Des kiosques à journaux ou encore des station-services assurent également la commercialisation de vidéos dans les mêmes conditions.
- Projection moyennant rémunération de films piratés sur Internet (DivX) ou loués en vidéo-clubs à l'occasion de séances publiques (cercle privé ou même sur la place publique) en l'absence évidemment de toute autorisation).
- Diffusion publique, et en l'absence d'autorisation) de vidéos projetées par des sociétés de prestations de services, au titre du « ciné club » et avec l'accord tacite d'organismes culturels (MJC ou OMC) financés par les mairies.

De manière générale, il convient de noter le très fort engouement du public en Guadeloupe pour le cinéma, et notamment pour la fiction quelque en soit le support. Ni le développement quantitatif et qualitatif sans précédent de l'offre d'images par satellite ou par câble n'ont réussi véritablement à diminuer de façon significative la fréquentation des salles de cinéma. Au contraire, une demande importante, relayée notamment par le

secteur associatif, s'exprime régulièrement en faveur d'une ouverture de la diffusion en salle ou dans des lieux à caractère public d'autres cinématographies (documentaires, art et essai, cinémas du monde). Cette demande correspond tout autant à l'expression d'une exigence d'ordre intellectuel et culturel qu'à la recherche de la convivialité et du lien social que favorise l'acte de voir des films en salle.

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 4: GUADELOUPE DRAC FILM FUNDING, 2007

AVENANT FINANCIER

DE L'EXERCICE BUDGETAIRE 2007

A LA CONVENTION DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE ET AUDIOVISUEL

2007- 2009

ENTRE

L'ETAT
(Ministère de la culture et de la communication
- Préfecture de Région de Guadeloupe -
- Direction régionale des affaires culturelles
de Guadeloupe)

LE CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINEMATOGRAPHIE

ET

LA REGION GUADELOUPE

Vu la loi n°2006-1666 du 21 décembre 2006 portant loi de finances pour 2007 ;

Vu le décret n°2006-1669 du 22 décembre 2006 portant répartition des crédits et découverts autorisés par la loi n° 2006-1666 du 21 décembre 2006 portant loi de finances pour 2007 ;

Vu le décret du 24 juin 2005 portant nomination de la Directrice générale du Centre national de la cinématographie ;

Vu la décision n° 8-424 du 18 octobre 2005 de la Directrice générale du Centre national de la cinématographie portant délégation de signature ;

Vu le budget du Centre national de la cinématographie pour 2007 ;

Vu le budget primitif 2007 de la Région Guadeloupe autorisant le Président à signer le présent avenant ;

ENTRE

L'État, représenté par le Préfet de la Région Guadeloupe, Monsieur Emmanuel BERTHIER, ci-après désigné « l'État »,

Le Centre national de la cinématographie, représenté par sa Directrice générale, Madame Véronique CAYLA, ci-après désigné « le CNC »,

ET

La Région Guadeloupe, représentée par son Président, Monsieur Victorin LUREL, ci-après désignée « la Région »,

En application de la convention de développement cinématographique et audiovisuel pour la période 2007-2009, signée entre l'Etat, le Centre national de la cinématographie et la Région Guadeloupe en date du …….., et singulièrement de l'article 17 relatif aux dispositions financières, il est convenu ce qui suit :

ARTICLE 1 - PARTICIPATIONS FINANCIERES DES PARTENAIRES

La participation totale de chacun des signataires de la convention à la mise en œuvre des axes prioritaires contractuels pour l'année 2007 s'établit comme suit :

Région Guadeloupe	**733 000 €**
Etat (Préfecture de Région - DRAC Guadeloupe)	**87 600 €**
CNC	**224 000 €**

ARTICLE 2 - TABLEAU FINANCIER RECAPITULATIF

ACTIONS	ETAT DRAC GUADELOUPE	CNC	REGION GUADELOUPE	TOTAL
Titre I –Article 4 **Aide à l'écriture et au développement**	**-**	**14 000 €**	**128 000 €**	**142 000 €**
Titre I –Article 5 **Aide à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée**	**-**	**10 000 €**	**20 000 €**	**30 000 €**
Titre I - Article 6 **Aide à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de longue durée**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Titre I – Article 7 **Aide à la production d'œuvres audiovisuelles**	**-**	**200 000 €**	**400 000 €**	**600 000 €**
Titre I –Article 10 **Accueil des tournages et soutien à la Commission régionale du film**	**-**	**-**	**15 000 €**	**15 000 €**
Titre II - Article 11 **LYCÉENS AU CINÉMA**	**8 600 €**	**310 000 €** **(pour mémoire) ***	**40 000 €**	**48 600 €**
Titre II - Article 12 **Passeurs d'images**	**38 000 €**	**240 000 €** **(pour mémoire) ****	**10 000 €**	**48 000 €**
Titre II - Article 13 **Autres actions de diffusion culturelle**	**26 000 €**	**-**	**100 000 €**	**126 000 €**

Titre II - Article 14 **Formation professionnelle**	**10 000 €**	**-**	**20 000 €**	**30 000 €**
Titre III - Article 15 **Aide aux salles de cinéma**	**5 000 €**	**-**	**-**	**5 000 €**
TOTAUX	**87 600 €**	**224 000 €**	**733 000 €**	**1 044 600 €**

* Au plan national, le CNC prend en charge financièrement le tirage des copies neuves et la conception des documents pédagogiques des films du dispositif « *Lycéens au cinéma* ».

** Au plan national, le CNC soutient l'association coordinatrice de l'opération « *Passeurs d'images* ».

ARTICLE 3 - SUBVENTIONS DE LA DRAC DE GUADELOUPE

Les subventions de la DRAC de Guadeloupe, d'un montant global de **87 600 €,** sont imputées de la manière suivante :

- Lycéens au cinéma : **8 600 €** (programme 224 action 2/31)
- Passeurs d'images : **38 000 €** (programme 224 action 2-31/103)
- Aide aux festivals de cinéma : **26 000 €** (programme 131 action 4-75)
- Formation professionnelle: **10 000 €** (programme 224 action1/27)
- Aide aux salles : **5 000 €** (programme 131 action 4-75 et 6/53)

ARTICLE 4 : SUBVENTIONS DU CNC

Les subventions du CNC, d'un montant global de **224 000 €**, seront versées en deux fois à l'ordre de monsieur le payeur régional de la Guadeloupe sur le compte suivant : 1j330000000, Code banque 45159, Code guichet 00002, Clé 01 soit **112 000 €** à la signature de la présente convention et **112 000 €** suite à l'évaluation annuelle des actions engagées.

Ces subventions sont imputées comme suit :

d) Titre I - Article 4
« Aide à l'écriture et au développement » sur le budget du CNC, compte 6577, code d'intervention D2385 :

7 000 € à la signature,
7 000 € après bilan, au prorata de l'investissement total annuel effectivement réalisé par la Région.

e) Titre I - Article 5
« Aide à la production d'œuvres cinématographiques de courte durée » sur le budget du CNC, compte 6577, code d'intervention D2385 :

5 000 € à la signature,
5 000 € après bilan, au prorata de l'investissement total annuel effectivement réalisé par la Région.

f) Titre I - Article 7
« Aide à la production d'œuvres audiovisuelles » sur le budget du CNC, compte 6578, code d'intervention D2585 :

100 000 € à la signature,

100 000 € après bilan, et au plus tard le 31 décembre 2009, au prorata de l'investissement total annuel effectivement réalisé par la Région et après vérification que les œuvres aidés ont obtenu l'autorisation préalable délivré par le CNC.

L'ordonnateur de la dépense est la Directrice Générale du CNC, et le comptable assignataire, l'Agent de la comptabilité générale du CNC.

ARTICLE 5 - SUBVENTIONS DU CONSEIL REGIONAL DE GUADELOUPE

Les subventions de la région Guadeloupe, d'un montant global de **733 000 €** seront attribuées par la commission permanente et versées dans le cadre d'une convention liant le bénéficiaire et le conseil régional. Cette convention précisera les conditions et l' ou (les) échéances (s) du versement des différentes aides ainsi que les obligations du bénéficiaire.

Le Président du conseil régional, le directeur général des services et le payeur régional sont chargés, chacun en ce qui le concerne de l'exécution des délibérations prises dans le cadre de la convention de développement cinématographique et audiovisuel 2007 – 2009 entre l'Etat, le CNC et la région Guadeloupe. Celles-ci seront publiées au recueil des actes administratifs de la région Guadeloupe.

ARTICLE 6 - CLAUSE DE REVERSEMENT

S'il apparaît que les engagements des contractants ne sont pas tenus en tout ou partie dans les mêmes délais, chaque partie pourra demander le reversement du montant de sa contribution aux opérations qui n'auraient pas été réalisées.

Le présent avenant ne pourra en aucun cas être opposé aux présents signataires par les personnes morales, ou leurs représentants cités à la présente, celui-ci ne valant engagement qu'entre les signataires.

Le présent avenant est signé à Basse-Terre

en six exemplaires originaux, le …….

Pour la Région Guadeloupe, le Président du Conseil Régional	Pour l'État, le Préfet de la Région Guadeloupe
Victorin LUREL	Emmanuel BERTHIER
Pour le Centre national de la cinématographie, la Directrice générale	Le Chef de mission de Contrôle Général auprès du Centre national de la cinématographie
Véronique CAYLA	Marie-Françoise RIVET

CHAPTER 3: Analysis of Haitian Films

I. WHY CHARLES NAJMAN & RAOUL PECK?

Charles Najman and Raoul Peck represent the promise and potential of Haitian cinema. Although their personal and professional backgrounds are quite different, which I will discuss in their respective sections of this chapter, they have made a considerable contribution to Haitian art and filmmaking by demonstrating an unquestioned commitment to Haiti and producing groundbreaking work. Peck's film *L'homme sur les quais* was the first Haitian film to be distributed in the U.S and Najman's *Royal Bonbon* is the first Haitian feature film ever have shot entirely in Haiti.[328] Moreover, Peck and Najman's films share a number of unique and notable characteristics. Their particular choice of film techniques are interwoven in a distinctly Haitian plotline that serves to foreground the island's history and cultural imagination. Their knowledge of this landscape and context are apparent given the ever-present references to Haitian culture and history, such as the Haitian Revolution, allusions or portrayals of Haitian political figures, civil unrest as a result of absolute rule, unrelenting poverty, opposition to Western control, and reliance on and respect for Voodoo traditions. In sum, the narrative structure, filmic choices, cultural and historical references of each film offer informative, thought-provoking, and poetic readings of the island's history, people, and current state of affairs.

II. CHARLES NAJMAN

Charles Najman is not Haitian. He was born in France in 1956 to parents of Jewish descent. After completing his studies in philosophy and anthropology, he began his career as a writer.[329] Najman directed his first documentary *Taxicomanies* (*Drug-addictions*) in 1987. The following year, he traveled to Haiti to write a report on the bicentennial of the Haitian Revolution for the newspaper *Le Monde*.[330] Based on his own remarks, it is fair to say that from this point onwards, Najman has felt an intimate connection with the island:

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[328] In fact, Najman claims on the director's commentar y of th e DVD version of *Royal Bonbon* that it is the first.
[329] http://www.filmsenbretagne.com/medias/telechargements/desirs_de_films/Najman.pdf
[330] Interview with Emmanuelle Blanchet available on two different websites :
http://www.cinespikfrench.com/najman.htm
http://oasisproductions7.com/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=25

> I discovered a fascinating country, as much for its culture – full of voodoo rituals, the particular beliefs of its people, its relationship to the world, to life, to death - as for its history.[331]

This quote is crucial in understanding Najman's connection to this project as a result of his fascination with Haitian culture and history. Perhaps the most concrete example of Najman's cultural and historical education about Haiti came in the form of music. Najman reports that, during this first visit in 1986, he witnessed the birth of the *rasin* musical movement:

> When I first came to Haiti, it was during this movement. This musical movement had enormous political implications because it began just after the fall of Duvalier. For the younger generation, this movement was a kind of return to Voodoo.[332]

As Najman explains, the movement began to surface after the end of the Duvalier era. Those participating in this movement were the *paysans*, which can refer to the poor peasant class. Hence, its onset was significant because this class was previously too weak in the face of Duvalier's repressive measures to openly communicate their political beliefs. To emphasize their joint mission and beliefs, Najman observes two commonalities in this music. First, the musicians played for themselves, not as part of groups or in a competitive setting. "I was struck by groups of peasants that play music, not as part of musical groups or even local competitions, but who play for themselves."[333] Second, Najman believes that the music "is clearly almost always related to Voodoo."[334]

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331 "J'ai découvert là un pays fascinant, tant par sa culture imprégnée de rituels vaudous, l'imaginaire de son peuple, son rapport au monde, à la vie, à la mort, que par son histoire."
Interview by Emmanuelle Blanchet
http://oasisproductions7.com/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=25

332 "Quand je suis arrivé les premières fois en Haïti c'était la naissance de ce mouvement. Il s'agissait d'un mouvement musical qui avait une grande résonance politique, puisqu'il était né juste après la chute de **Duvalier**. Ce mouvement était pour la jeune génération une espèce de ressourcement au vaudou."
(http://www.musiquehaitienne.fr/introduction/entretien-charles-najman/
" L'entretien avec Charles Najman."
La Musique Haitianne
May 2003
Accessed 11 August 2009

333 "J'ai été frappé par ces groupes de paysans qui jouent, qui ne sont pas des ensembles musicaux, qui ne feront pas de tournées, même locales, mais qui jouent pour eux."
Ibid.

334 "C'est évidemment presque toujours lié au vaudou, mais c'est là où l'on se rend compte que le vaudou." He continues by saying, "d'un point de vue musical, ne correspond pas simplement à des rituels et à des musiques de percussions et de transe."
Ibid.

Najman's impression of this music demonstrates his understanding of the multilateral connections between Voodoo, music, the poor, and the channeling of political expression all come to play a significant role in *Royal Bonbon*.

Before filming *Royal Bonbon* in 2002, Najman was a prolific filmmaker, often focusing on Haitian subject matter. His frequent returns to Haiti enabled him to "prepare and make documentary films."[335] These films include: the short fictional film *Coup de chaleur* (Heatstroke, 1989), and the two documentaries *Les frères parents* (1991) and *Le serment du Bois Caïman* (1991).[336] In 1993, Najman finished another documentary filmed in Haiti entitled *Revenants* (*Ghosts*) which won him critical acclaim: *le Prix Arts et Culture* (the Arts and Culture Award) at the 1993 Angers Film Festival.[337] The film *Revenants*, as well as the second in the series on Chagall, were both broadcast on Canal Plus in 1998.[338] Najman then went on to direct *La Mémoire est-elle soluble dans l'eau?* (Memory, is it soluble in water?) (1995), first prize winner at the 1997 Tübingen International Film Festival, and *Les Illuminations de Madame Nerval* (The Illuminations of Madame Nerval) (2000), which won first prize at the Kalamata International Film Festival in Greece. Besides filming in Haiti, Najman has worked in the Haitian music industry and even written on Haitian subject matter, *Haiti, Dieu seul me voit*.[339]

With all this experience, Najman continued to spend more time in Haiti while directing *Royal Bonbon* (2002). This film occupies a critical place in Najman's filmography because, to him, it "represents very much my entire relationship with Haiti."[340] Explaining why this is so, Najman states:

> This film is in effect at the same time very close and very different from me. It is a very '*Haitian*' film. Some people are very surprised to see me and expect to meet a black

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[335]"préparer et faire des films documentaires."
Ibid.
[336] I have not been able to determine where these two movies were filmed.
[337] http://www.telefilm.gc.ca/data/production/prod_900.asp?lang=en&
[338] Ibid.
[339] http://www.musiquehaitienne.fr/introduction/entretien-charles-najman/
"L'entretien avec Charles Najman"
La Musique Haitianne
May 2003
Accessed 11 August 2009
[340]"représente bien tout mon rapport avec Haïti."
Ibid.

director. But, on the other hand, I find that the film resembles me and it is for that reason, as well that I wanted to discreetly introduce, not necessarily '*Western*' elements, but elements close to my culture. It's a rather disconcerting film because I purposefully try to break the few expectations that one could have, but still insert them by other means.[341]

As Najman states, *Royal Bonbon* represents his relationship with Haiti because the film expresses all that he knows about Haiti, while still incorporating certain of his own personal cultural affiliations. Even though his feature is shaped by various cultural influences, this does not diminish the fact that *Royal Bonbon* is a Haitian film, under the rubric of French Caribbean cinema, cast and filmed on location by a foreign director who purposefully engages with local history and memory.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & ARTISTIC CONTEXT OF *ROYAL BONBON* (CHARLES NAJMAN, 2002)

> There is Christophe's greatness behind the ridicule. And this is why Christophe is great, in spite of his methods, in spite of his ridiculous aspects (he is a parvenu). There is behind this a sort of tragic grandeur. There is something promethean. This does not mean I am a Christophe fan or that I take him as a model. Through him I try to understand the attitude of a man who rises from slavery, who is haunted by the necessity of building a nation, and who gets lost in there.
>
> *Aimé Césaire*[342]

In this film Najman revisits a very important episode of Haitian history, the rise and fall of Henry Christophe: "Originally from Grenada, Christophe participated as a French mercenary in the Battle of Savannah, helping the emergent United States win its independence from

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341 "Le film est en effet à la fois très près et très loin de moi. C'est un film très *'haïtien*,' certains sont même très étonnés de me voir, s'attendant à rencontrer un *'noir*.' Mais d'un autre côté je trouve que ça me ressemble, c'est pour cela aussi que j'ai voulu introduire discrètement des éléments pas forcément *'occidentaux.'* mais proches de ma culture. C'est un film assez déroutant puisque volontairement j'essaie de briser les quelques repères que l'on pourrait avoir, mais en tout cas de les réintroduire par une autre voie."
Ibid

342 See "It is through poetry that one copes with solitude: An Interview with Aimé Césaire" by Charles H. Rowell, *Callaloo* 3.4 (2008): 995.

Britain" (Largey 72). He rose to power in northern Haiti following the death of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines in the early nineteenth century. He declared himself President of Haiti in 1807, then King in 1811. His legacy as a leader remains controversial due to his extravagant building and lifestyle. For instance, he constructed "an elaborate mansion that he named Palais Sans Souci and a mountaintop fortress called La Citadelle Laferrière" (Largey 72). He is also criticized for his emulation of European customs and, most detrimental to his popularity, his decision to reinstate forced labor. Toward the end his reign, Henri Christophe became known a truly despotic leader. He remained king the next nine years until committing suicide on October 8, 1820 at Sans Souci (Trouillot 60). This tragic historical character has inspired several important writers and dramatists such as Aimé Césaire in his play *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* (*The Tragedy of King Christophe*, 1963).[343] *Royal Bonbon* is Najman's rendering of this tragic moment of Haitian history during which Haiti, instead of becoming the Republic that Toussaint L'Ouverture and his followers fought for, began a series of governments which fell consistently into the hands of a range of ineffectual, often brutal dictators.

How does Najman reinterpret and reconfigure this historical episode? What events and individuals does he stage? What techniques does he deploy? What messages does he convey? What significance can we attribute to this film? Najman does not simply reconstruct the Haitian Revolution onscreen. Instead, he extracts and modifies certain facts, tracing the journey of a vagabond as he ascends to the ruins of Henri Christophe's palace, reigns briefly, and perishes mysteriously. In an interview with journalist Emmanuelle Blanchet, Najman makes his double objective explicit: "I told myself that by telling this story, I would have the opportunity to make a contemporary film while still recalling the glorious history of the country."

IV. ANALYSIS OF *ROYAL BONBON* (CHARLES NAJMAN, 2002)

A. Narrative Structure

1. Plot Structure and Content

Najman structures the events of the plot, centered on a goal-oriented protagonist, in causal chronological fashion. As a result, the film follows the most common stages of film plot structure: the set-up or initial presentation of characters and conflict, the development of the plot

[343] See Supplemental Data 1 for information on important literary and artistic references to Henri Christophe and the Haitian Revolution.

complications are added to the plot, and the conflict resolution.[344] Instead of retelling the life of Henri Christophe, Najman invents a character named Chacha.[345] He is a madman and vagrant who, in his lunacy, believes himself to be the reincarnated King Henri Christophe. He lives a life similar to Henri Christophe's in that he proclaims himself king, and with his followers (beggars and children) establishes court in the ruins of Henri Christophe's palace, Palais San Souci. Similar to Chistophe, his life is cut tragically short (most likely by also committing suicide). In the film, then, by staging paupers and tramps, Najman transposes Christophe's life into a tragic farce.

The first stage of the plot consists of three different sequences in which Najman introduces the majority of the main characters. He first presents Chacha, wearing a crown strung with cheap trinkets and trash, as he pushes a dilapidated wheelbarrow along a street in Cap-Haitien, the city that bore the actual king's name during his reign. The wheelbarrow bears a striking quote which provides a major clue about the vagrant's adopted identity. According to Najman, the words painted on Najman's wheelbarrow are those of the real king: "I will be reborn from my ashes."[346] Najman continues to film Chacha as he makes his way through the market where a group of young children mock him tirelessly. In the directory commentary included on the special features option of the DVD version of the film, Najman reveals that he chose to film this market scene because it was there he met the person who inspired his character.[347] Ostracized by the poor children of the neighborhood, Chacha clearly belongs to lowest tier of Haitian society. The camera continues to follow Chacha as he begins yelling out the 1st through 14th Stations of the Cross (which I will return to in section D).

Even at this initial stage in the narrative, numerous distinctions between Najman's film and recorded history are apparent. The film is set in modern-day, not during the actual reign of Henri Chistophe. Also, Chacha believes he is king but is not. Instead of being seen as a leader, he is wildly berated in the market. These differences, set into motion by Chacha's delusions of grandeur, immediately draw attention to his pitiable, absurd existence and the unrelenting cycle of failed leadership in Haitian history that began during the actual Henri Christophe's reign.

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[344] http://www.cinematheque.bc.ca/education/pdfs/f_h_guide03.pdf
Accessed16 November 2009
P. 3
[345] It is plausible that Chacha is a creolized version of Christophe and/or refers to bodily excrement.
[346] "Je renais de mes cendres."
[347] "un fou qui se prend pour le roi Christophe."

In the next major sequence of the plot, Najman introduces three additional characters that will play a significant role in the progression of the film. None of these characters are directly related to Haitian history at the time of the Revolution. Rather, they are three different archetypes present in contemporary Haitian society: the poor, homeless child, Timothée; a voodoo priest, Romaine; and the city prostitute, Elvire. The introduction of Romaine and Timothée occur as Romaine lays the young boy down to sleep in the backroom of a run-down bar.[348] When he wakes, Romaine bathes him in a basin surrounded by candles, touching him with two birds and spitting on his standing body. In what appears to be a voodoo ceremony, Timothée pleads while clutching a stick, "I want to find my father." It is this quest that eventually leads Timothée to Chacha.

In the third major sequence of the first stage of the film, Najman shoots Elvire as she lies in bed beckoning a spirit in prayer. Meanwhile, Chacha stands in a dark bar room naming brands of alcohol, "Conzano, Martin Rossi, Ricard, Barbancourt, Marie-Brizard…" In Chacha's recitation of these alcohols, he hints at the French presence in Haiti, in both language and its unaffordable foreign imports. Yet, this recitation is also a kind of meaningless, absurd incantation. A shot of a madman, itinerant and poor, who idles in peripheral spaces. In the next scene, Najman captures Chacha hovering his hands over Elvire's body, violating her sleep without touching her. When she wakes, she calls him a crazy fool. As Timothée looks upon them through the shutters, Elvire bathes Chacha with his crown still resting on his head. In the basin, Chacha appears as child-like as Timothée, demonstrating his vulnerability and his mental deficiencies. By promising her great bounty and a palace and calling her his queen, it is clear that Chacha's grandiose project to become king is already well-developed. Ironically, the words of the madman announce what will actually transpire later in the film.

The second stage of the plot structure commences with Chacha and Timothée's pilgrimage to from the squalor of Cap-Haitien to the imagined utopia of Palais Sans Souci. They walk side by side on a dirt road surrounded by fields and tropical vegetation. Chacha informs Timothée that he will learn the history of these places once he is able to read, a clear message about Chacha's fascination with Haitian history. Once Chacha reaches the ruins of this eroded glory, he looks up at the sky and grins. Seeing his long-awaited seat of power, he says in Creole, "my palace…my work." The palace overwhelms the hill it occupies, stretching grayish white

[348] According to general knowledge, cross-dressing is not uncommon amongst voodoo clergy.

stone across a green plain. The ruins are uninhabited and unkempt, yet they retain a formidable presence. Chacha then bows at the foot of a statue of a white woman's bust. Calling it a tradition, Chacha kisses and gropes the statue of his "queen."

In the next episode, an elderly man named Valentin is introduced. Valentin, who will become Chacha's principal courtier, takes up residence in the majestic ruins with Chacha and Timothée. At this point, the local elderly residents of the nearby town, Milou, adopt him as their king.[349] Sitting upon a hand-crafted wooden throne, Chacha names his courtiers in Césairian fashion. That is to say, he assigns similar names and titles in a scene unmistakably similar to one in Césaire's *Tragédie du Roi Christophe.* For instance, Chacha calls different individuals "Countess Pointed Hat," "Duchesse Flashy Goods," "Duke Sweet Pepper," and "Duke Big Laugh." Having assigned these flamboyant titles and been paraded through town as the new king, he then listens to the local residents and newly named courtiers as they recount their grievances to him.

The superficial joy that the residents receive from their new titles quickly fades when Chacha does not bring about any noticeable change. He squanders his opportunity in a series of poor choices. First, in a bizarre scene, Chacha weighs his subjects and then pronounces a completely exaggerated amount. Chacha's tone is accusatory, acting as though the residents are gluttonous. What his actions do, however, is disregard their misery. Then, he proclaims coconuts as the new currency. And, when he whips an old man in front of Timothée, he exposes his cruelty and his actions allude to the real King Henri Christophe's reinstitution of forced labor. Another incident of Chacha's neglect and mistreatment occurs when he returns from an outing in the woods with Valentin, he catches them celebrating in the ruins and accuses them of wasting his resources. These incidents underline the moral decay originating from his new position and foreshadow his eventual fall from power.

Chacha's poor leadership reaches its peak when he chooses a queen amongst a group of women brought to the ruins. Lined up for inspection, he leers at each one, finally selecting Elvire, the prostitute from Cap-Haitien. Asserting his dominance through this selection, Chacha engages in this selfish, adolescent, and disquieting behavior as king. Significantly, his choice of queen results in the coupling of two lower-class Haitians. From the bottom rungs of Cap-Haitien society, the beggar and prostitute undergo a radical change in status to become king and queen.

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[349] Najman also said that he cast a deranged local poet for the part of Chacha.

After the ascent to what seems to be glory and triumph as the newly adopted king, Chacha's cruelty and lack of awareness precipitate the end of his monarchy. In third and final stage of the film, it is clear that Chacha has alienated himself from his local followers. He gathers his courtiers, but instead speaking to the elderly group, he faces a room full of farm animals. Valentin informs Chacha that "everyone has left!"[350] Because of his poor leadership, the town of Milou has abandoned him. Donkeys, mules, a cow, a horse, and a goat replace his human subjects. As Chacha address them, the animals, in unanticipated anthropomorphic fashion, follow Chacha as he steps off his throne and leaves the room.[351]

Subsequently, Najman introduces a very significant character of Haitian and Caribbean history, namely the maroon, in the person of Nibu and his followers. While Chacha falls to his ruin, Nibu gathers a group of disguised maroons in the tropical forest, replicating the accounts of maroons as runaway slaves living in secrecy and isolation.[352] He announces a plan to overthrow the king in light of his failure to execute the promised improvements. In his dialogue with the other maroons he alludes to Makandal, the most famous of all maroons. As Catherine Reinhardt noted in her account of Makandal, this maroon slave garnered legendary status because of his proclaimed immortality. Nibu recalls this immortality during his meeting with the other disguised maroons. Journalist Isabelle Potel writes that this meeting has a specific historical referent: "Najman, steering a course between ethnology and fiction, is making reference to the revolt that started in the Bois Cayman (Alligator Woods) on Aug. 14, 1791, which led to the abolition of slavery and later to Haiti's independence in 1804."[353] Nibu explains to his followers who Makandal was, but his version of Makandal's death differs slightly from the historical account. Nibu tells them that Makandal turned into a butterfly (not a fly) to escape death: "They tied Makandal to the stake and set fire to it. But Makandal would not die. He became a butterfly and was liberated from the flames. Ever since, every generation awaits his return."[354] In referring to Makandal in these circumstances, Nibu is portrayed as the contemporary incarnation of the historic slave. At the end of the film, it becomes evident that the man behind Nibu's

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[350] "Tout le monde est parti!"

[351] Najman notes in the director commentary that the animals acted voluntarily and were not coached to follow Chacha from the room.

[352] See Supplemental Data 2 for information and helpful references on maroons.

[353] http://www.worldpress.org/europe/0302artsliberation.htm
Isabelle Potel, "*Royal Bonbon* – Entranced and Entrancing." *Libération.* 2 January 2002.
http://www.worldpress.org/europe/0302artsliberation.htm

[354] See Supplemental Data 2 for an account of Makandal's death.

disguise is in fact a voodoo practitioner named Romaine, part of Henri Christophe's circle of acquaintances from Port-au-Prince.

Later, shirtless and bearing torches, the maroons arrive at the ruins. However, Najman never depicts them storming the palace. Instead, he stages Chacha fighting alone in a candle-lit, barren room. During this bizarre, tragic, and other-worldly battle, Chacha calls on his troops, knights and guards to help fend off a troop of imaginary combatants in a theatrical sword fight. Najman reveals on his director commentary that he instructed Chacha to act *as if* he were fighting an entire army. He yells for help, moving quickly and defensively about the ruins, but no one actually fights him or comes to his aid. Following a common film technique of intensifying music during battle scenes, the Haitian Rara music becomes louder as the king's fighting becomes more ardent.[355]

Chacha then takes his wheelbarrow out to the statue he addressed upon his arrival at the ruins. Najman describes Chacha's interaction with the statue as a Shakespearian monologue. Chacha caresses the statue and a blood red tear falls from its cheek. As a result of this interaction, a critical transformation suddenly takes place. The idiot-beggar becomes a man who has suddenly found clarity through his rediscovery of the queen and the shedding of this tear.[356] Elvire appears and as she holds Chacha's head in her lap, he confesses, "My queen, life has condemned me to be a slave. I've pushed my old wheelbarrow all my life. All my life, I believed in my dream. But now I look, the kingdom is not of this world." This acknowledgement echoes the Bible verse John 18:36 when Jesus states, "My kingdom is not of this world." This intertextual reference could be interpreted to support a symbolic representation of Chacha as a Christ-like figure. Despite his failings, the self-proclaimed king was certainly looked to by the community as a savior for their afflictions. Chacha appears to have become lucid, perhaps finding a sense of peace about his purpose and a validation of his claim to be king.

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[355] The director accompanied this climactic scene with well-known Haitian music played during the Rara festival. According to Gage Averill, Rara is "a seasonal festival related to Vodou belief that takes place all over Haiti during Lent, when rara groups take to the streets for days of exhausting processions. Rara groups can form at other times of the year for political events, spontaneous celebrations, etc" (243). What makes this musical choice particularly meaningful is the fact that Rara is a long-standing traditional festival that "belongs to the so-called peasant classes and the urban poor" (McAlister 3). During the festival, "Rara processions walk for miles through local territory, attracting fans and singing new and old songs. Bands stop traffic for hours to play music and perform rituals for Afro-Haitian deities at crossroads, bridges, and cemetaries" (McAlister 3).

[356] Unlike stigmata in which wounds appear at the sites of Jesus Christ's crucifixion injuries, weeping statues (commonly attributed to statues of the Virgin Mary) have been claimed to shed tears of substances other than merely blood.

However, the king's unexpected clarity is short lived. Suddenly, a gunshot is fired, but Najman does not film Chacha's shooting or his death. However, the next and final series in the film is a massive funeral procession, indirectly communicating that Chacha's has died.

The events and attendance of the funeral reinforce the importance of Chacha's existence. The funeral first involves tying the king to his chair. Najman indicates in the director commentary that this relates to Voodoo. The dead are tied up so they cannot escape or fly away (as Makandal did for instance). Next, Valentin gives the king a cigarette. When Timothée says that the king is smoking the cigarette, Valentin agrees, but for an unexpected reason: "Yes, he smokes, because the dead are not dead." According to the anthropologist Karen McCarthy Brown, in Voodoo "the most immediate effect of death is the departure of the *nam* [animating force of the body], which is said to linger for a short period of time around the corpse or grave" (Brown 8).[357] This simple statement demonstrates yet again how Najman incorporates Haitian beliefs in the film. Here, reality is interpreted as a space in which life and death overlap.

Next, Timothée covers the body. Although the king's face is covered and his lips do not move, Najman uses voice-over to allow the king to communicate with Timothée. As Timothée looks at the dead king, Chacha's voice informs him that the living close the eyes of the dead and the dead open the eyes of living. This statement reinforces tangible connection between the living and the dead in the film, and by extension in Haitian culture. The living and the dead have a symbiotic relationship with divergent obligations. The voice-over reminds Timothée that what is lost to the physical world has a place in the metaphysical space. Death does not signify the end of the relationship between the two of them, but allows for the possibility of Chacha to exert a new, unexpected influence on Timothée's life from beyond the grave.

The mourning process is not limited to Timothée's experience with the king. Corresponding to Haitian custom, the funeral procession is sizeable. It includes the royal "bonbon," or group of child-guards that constituted Najman's imperial entourage, Valentin, the elderly courtiers, as well as the local town's large brass band. Najman also contrasts it with Timothée's final, private moments with Chacha. Under a dense fog, intimately filmed in a close-up, Timothée asks Baron Samedi, the voodoo figure of the dead, to protect his father: "you who guard the dead, protect my father. His spirit is underwater, in a kingdom where there is no

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[357] "Voodoo beliefs permeating the Haitian culture regard the body as a shell that breaks down at death while the *n'ame* (life-force) that sustained the living body returns to mingle with earth-energy. The soul, or *gros-bon-ange*, however, reaches the higher regions of cosmic energy after taking on a new form" (Putzi 242).

suffering." This prayer reveals that Timothée has discovered a father figure the dead man before him. Although he may not be Timothée's biological father, he represents a grander father figure in the context of Haitian history.

This final episode emphasizes the tragedy of Chacha's reign, the cyclical pattern of deplorable leadership, the strong connection of the Haitian poor to Haitian history, and the hope that Timothée represents. Although Chacha's dream of a kingdom met with disaster, Timothée's prayers were answered. With this resolution of the plot, Najman transformed the history of a long-dead Haitian king into an allegorical tale, "a kind of fable or poem" as he calls it, of a tragic ascension to a throne and the peace attainable through understanding of one's past.[358]

2. Nuances of the plot structure

Despite the causal order of the film chronology in *Royal Bonbon*, the events are not woven seamlessly together. Sequences of events are episodic and subject to unexplained gaps in time and space. These ellipses punctuate the plot from the start of the film. As Najman introduces the characters in the first stage of the film, a particularly noticeable ellipse occurs after Chacha enters a barren covered market. Having been ridiculed by the children and *marchandes* at the market, he stands alone in this dark space. The market resembles a bare stage: square in dimension with a black, barren floor enclosed on the three sides captured by the camera. The stage-like quality of this scene is dramatized by the dark color and low lighting of the room. In this scene the character seems to immediately reject any awareness of the audience by turning his back to the camera and walking into smoke and shadows. There is no indication as to where he is headed, except into a wall, nor are there any visual clues that if or how he disappears from this covered market. In the next frame, Chacha stands in a dark and cluttered room filled with cardboard boxes, his wheelbarrow, and a cot. No longer the subject of torment, he enters this stifling space to sift through his inner feelings. Chacha lowers a trunk and takes out various items such as magazines, a sword, and a picture of the real King Henri Christophe. His expression, at times gleeful and fascinated, underscores his connection to this modest catalogue of mementos. Given the nature of the items Chacha examines, Najman portrays the character journeying through time, depicted in the very act of remembering. Chacha is actively engaging with his memory and the history of Haiti, themes of crucial importance in this film.

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[358] "une sorte de fable, de poème."

To return to Chacha's transition between the dark warehouse to what appears to be a hidden back room, Najman leaves Chacha's movement completely unexplained. As a result, a crack surfaces in what would be realistic portrayal of the physical world. How much time has passed since Chacha left the covered market? Where did he go exactly? By what means did he arrive there? Does this room exist in the interior covered market, or have we transitioned to a different, metaphysical space? Additional ellipses occur when Chacha leaves the bar to enter Elvire's room, the gap in time that occurs from between Chacha's life in the city and his journey to the ruins of the palace, and the unexplained break between Chacha's emotional collapse in front of the statue and his funeral. These temporal disruptions do not alter the chronology of events, but complicate the narrative by creating, as Najman states, a "a very elastic relationship to time."[359]

The ellipses that cause the film's elastic relationship with time work to "shift [scenes] from dream to reality and from past to present."[360] While a flashback links the past to the present, ellipses create a different effect. They enable Najman to blur time and reality, allowing past, present, dream, and reality to intermingle sporadically in the narrative. The film becomes a means of representing a vision of contemporary Haiti that is fashioned by the interplay between time and reality. The fluctuation of time and reality is so apparent in the film that Najman defines it as a "waking dream of this man, this character who believes himself to be king."[361] As the waking dream of a delusional man, the film simulates the erratic memory and mental state of this individual.

Moreover, ellipses are not the only fissures that reinforce the film's characterization as a waking dream. For example, after Timothée and Chacha's arrival at the ruins, no clarification or explanation is given as to why the local residents accept Chacha as their king. He simply edits the film to cut from their arrival at the palace to the proclamation of a local woman that he is the "zombie king." Najman never resolves this aporia in the film. By leaving this gap in the logic, Najman demonstrates that attributing power and faith to a leader in this community has a spiritual dimension. In treating Chacha as their king, the residents accept his fantasy that his imagined identity is his true identity.

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[359] "un rapport très élastique au temps."
[360] "bascule du rêve à la réalité et du passé au présent." Again taken from Najman's director commentary.
[361] "un peu le rêve éveillé de cet homme, ce personnage qui se prend pour le roi."

Another disruption in the film chronology with a meaningful effect on the narrative is the presence of the maroons. These historical figures are anachronisms, assisting in the creation of a multi-layered temporality in the film. As I mentioned, they were more prevalent prior to the Haitian Revolution and sabotaged white farmers, not Haitian leaders.[362] Whereas recorded history has a single temporal dimension and aims for fluidity and completeness, Najman distances the narrative from recorded Haitian history by creating a film world that is constantly in a state of flux.

B. *Mise-en-scène*

The *mise-en-scène* of *Royal Bonbon,* composed of the lighting, sound, dominant colors, clothing, setting, and shots, comes together to convey a particular mood. Numerous scenes reveal Najman's vision of contemporary Haiti, how he differentiates his film from historical accounts of Henri Christophe's reign, as well as the film's unmitigated preoccupation with memory. At the start, Najman films his rag-wearing characters in the dark, depraved environment of Cap-Haitian. During the sequence prior to Timothée's ceremonial bath, for instance, the young boy wakes on a straw mattress in a building which was actual Haitian voodoo temple that Najman used as the center of the film's production. The straw mattress connotes Timothée's humble existence. Besides the mattress, there is a bureau covered with an abundance of voodoo paraphernalia. After visiting many temples and completing a documentary on Madame Nerval, a voodoo priestess, Najman explains in the director commentary that the room contains an "accumulation of all my impressions."[363] Hence, he scatters ornaments and embellishments on the dresser to accurately reflect the surroundings of an actual voodoo priest. Furthermore, additional aspects of the *mise-en-scène* contribute to the believability of this environment. The low-lighting and minimal, modest furnishings suggest a scarcity of electricity in the island as well as the lack of material possessions owned by most Haitians. In addition, the minimalist atmosphere ensures that the focus remains on the characters and their interaction, not on a historical reconstruction. It is as if Najman is saying that this impoverished landscape is the so-called kingdom that Henri Christophe built.

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[362] Najman explains that he was influenced by the Cuban author Alejo Carpentier who wrote the *Le Royaume de ce monde* (El Reino de esto mundo/The Kingdom of this world, 1949) who travelled to Haiti in 1943. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alejo_Carpentier

[363] "accumulation de toutes mes perceptions"

Following the ceremonial bath, Najman films a striking scene that takes place by the water. Timothée plays with a metal wheel and stick, junkyard toys that are useful props in underscoring his child poverty. In the background of the scene, several boats drift listlessly in the water. In the directory commentary, Najman accounts for this background, saying these broken down and corroding boats serve as a metaphor for the country of Haiti, "which persists in the immobility of time…a present that cannot evolve."[364] Like the boats, Haiti stagnates, drifting without purpose. Hence, the *mise-en-scène* works to explicitly communicate Najman's vision of Haiti. As this scene progresses, Chacha enters the frame, wandering the street. Using a traveling shot, Najman aims to capture the "errancy and delirium of this character."[365] After snatching a beer he refuses to pay for, Timothée hears Chacha yelling at Napoleon Bonaparte. Standing on an abandoned boat, he challenges Bonaparte to return to fight. Chacha holds a Haitian flag and according to Najman, cries out the same invocation emitted by the slaves.

In this scene, Chacha's actions evoke historical events towards the end of the Haitian Revolution. In 1801, Toussaint L'Ouverture crafted a constitution that declared the end of slavery and his role as governor for life. This action spurred Bonaparte to send French forces to Haiti. Bonaparte's brother-in-law Charles Leclerc led the troops and was instructed to quell the rebellion and reinstitute slavery. Haitians commanded by Jean-Jacques Dessalines finally defeated the French in 1803, at which point Dessalines proclaimed Haiti independent and named himself Emperor of Haiti (1804-1806).[366]

Given these facts, there are clearly inaccuracies in Chacha's behavior. For instance, Chacha threatens Bonaparte even though it was a relative who came to fight in Haiti. Also, Dessalines and L'Ouverture were more the dominant leaders during this epoch. Nevertheless, Chacha's actions demonstrate an awareness of the Haitian past and his continued attempt to align his words and actions with his imagined impressions of the actual king. Chacha's behavior is significant because it replays and manipulates historical references in order to intensify the tragic portrayal of contemporary Haitian reality. Chacha's impotent threats, delivered on the symbol of Haitian stagnation and decay reinforce his knowledge of the past and the dark, farcical nature of his character.

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[364] "qui vit dans l'immobilité du temps…un présent qui n'arrive pas à évoluer."
[365] "l'errance et le délire de ce personnage. "
[366] Dessalines ruled until 1806 when he was assassinated.

A later scene involving Elvire and Chacha further enhance the grim, despondency of Haitian reality. The prostitute Elvire wears a red dress and lies on her bed praying to the "Spirit." Najman explains that he attempts to portray her as if she were in a dream. He accomplishes this effect by filming her, half covered in shadow. Because only part of her face and body are illuminated, Najman makes her appear in the interstices of sleep and consciousness. At the moment she opens her eyes, Haitian troubadour music begins. Troubadour (or *twoubadou*) music is a "guitar-based song tradition that mixed in Haiti with indigenous song traditions (including tropical merengues) from Haitian cane-cutters who worked in Cuba during the sugar harvests in the early 1900's (Averil 39).[367] This moody and melodic soundtrack corresponds to the lamentable environment created by her profession and the bleaker colors surrounding her.

In contrast to the color of Elvire's dress, the room is dominated by tan, brown, and black. He incorporates lighting that is "totally different" than the light we imagine in the Caribbean. Instead of the bright lighting or colors like azure, gold, and emerald routinely chosen to evoke a tropical setting, Najman prefers low-lighting and lackluster shades of brown like the color of, in his words, "cardboard."[368] This type of lighting prevents the viewer from interpreting Caribbean islands in the same static, exoticized fashion. It strips away any stereotypical impression of the Caribbean, and instead emphasizes how present objects or places are eroded by time, calling attention to "splendor in decay…the wearing away of time…the deterioration of the present." This type of lighting appears throughout the film, but is particularly present in night at the ruins, in the room Chacha enters following the market scene, and in the courtyard used as the setting of the voodoo temple.

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[367] More information on troubadour music: "the typical instrumentation for these groups consisted of one or more guitars, a *tanbou* (barrel drum) played with the hands like a Cuban conga drum, a scraped or shaken idiophone (*graj,*or scraper, and often a large box-like lamellaphone (related to the Cuban *marimbula*) called a *malimba* or *maniba*. In Haiti, the *malinba* has three to five flat metal keys suspended over a sound hole in a wooden box, and it serves as the bass instrument in the ensemble. Banjos occasionally supplanted guitars. The names chosen by the Haitian groups – for example, Les Quatres Troubadours (c. 1930), Quarteto Jean Legros, or Trio Quisqueya – show their debt to the Cuban trios and quartets. The degree to which local song traditions hybridized with the Cuban guitar tradition is not widely recognized in Haiti. Because their music elided easily with rural styles of the *mereng* and because they are associated with peasant and lower-class musicians, they are often thought to be *natif natal,* or native born. They are grouped together with other secular, rural ensembles under the rubric *mizik tipik* (typical, i.e. traditional music) or *mizik anba tonèl* (music played under the arbors). Perhaps the most poetic name for this type of music and ensemble is *mizik grenn siwèl* ('nougat nut' music)" (Averaill 39-40).

[368] "papier carton."

Najman also employs a different lighting strategy in the film to divide certain stages of the film. As soon as Chacha and Timothée embark on their journey to the ruins, Najman films more consistently in broad daylight. This naturalistic lighting, allowing the blue sky, green grass, and expanse of the ruins to occupy the scene represent a visual transition from the poverty of the city to the beginning of Chacha's reign. The natural lighting is particularly apparent as Timothée flies his kite in an open courtyard of the ruins. Najman wanted the camera to follow Timothée closely in order to best "to show the space without doing so from a tourist or academic viewpoint." A tourist or academic shot of the historic site would likely be either a long-shot, perhaps from an aerial position, or a series of mid-shots. Instead of a generic historical account of these ruins that these aforementioned shots would convey, Najman's camera movement is less interrupted and more fluid, helping to build the connection between the boy and his environment. Najman's version is therefore more personal, aimed at capturing an actual lived experience with a place.

The overall environment in the ruins is, as I mentioned, characterized by a minimal number of objects. To foreground the characters and their interaction, Najman uses only a few choice items. Once Chacha establishes himself as king, he sits on a wooden throne in the center of an open room. Behind him, a large opening in the ruin wall, presumably once a window, opens to a view of trees and lush landscape below. The stone walls of the room frame the scene and a slanting rectangle of sunlight falls upon the floor. To Chacha's right sits Timothée, placed by the king to convey his importance in the new royal hierarchy. Besides the throne, the other inanimate items in the room are an antique record player and Timothée's *balance* or weighing scales. Each item has its purpose: the throne, a classic synecdoche representing royalty; the record player, soon to be seen as the local elderly residents/courtiers of Milou gather to dance in the ruins; and the weighing scales, symbol of government, law, and justice. With very few items in a carefully staged *mise-en-scène* Najman conveys the onset of Chacha's rule.

Najman films in the daytime using natural lighting, even when he films the courtiers dancing in a hall in the ruins. In what appears to be a celebration of Chacha's rule, pairs of residents engage in a formal dance. Najman defines this type of dance a "contre-dance," referring to certain dances and movements popular in the court of Louis XIV. Consequently, this scene recalls the fact that slaves observed their French masters at formal dances and were able to perform these same movements. Certain dances, Najman says, become integrated into voodoo

ceremonies that were then passed down through the generations. Hence, the *mise-en-scène* of this dance demonstrates Najman's point that these aged locals are reminders of the French aristocracy and voodoo heritage, living "conservators" of Haitian, African, and French memory.

The lighting strategy remains consistent until Chacha begins his fall from power. Najman signals the end of Chacha's reign in a nighttime episode just prior to the arrival of the maroons at the palace. Returning to the dark, low-lighting, and dismal colors of Cap-Haitian, Najman films Chacha as he lurks about in the torch-lit caverns of the ruins. Still delirious with the authority of his position, he yells out, "What happened here? There's no electricity in my kingdom!" Chacha has evidently lost touch with reality, holding on to preposterous expectations. After finding "the Royal Torchbearer," he stares into mirror and applies white powder to his face. In his lunacy, he says to himself "I'm split in two!" and laughs at his own humorless remark. Najman explains the significance of this scene: he notes that Baron Samedi, the voodoo god of the dead, "manifests himself in the white powder" because this powder is the first sign of death. Hence, the white powder shining on Chacha's face in a flickering light of the palace ruins not only adumbrates his death, but is a sign that Chacha somehow lucidly anticipates it. The arrival of the maroons is then only briefly shown. Wearing only khaki colored shorts and loose, large black masks to cover their heads and faces, they each carry a torch and march slowly and determinedly up a wooden walkway.

After Chacha's death, the funeral procession begins, accompanied by the music played by the local brass band. The group slowly sways side to side while they play and continue to make their way up a long dirt road. In a high angle extreme long shot in sharp focus, it is possible to see their clothing. Their attire immediately denotes the formality of the event and distinguishes the members from the average Haitian depicted in the film. Besides the elderly residents dressed in their best clothes to seek help from Chacha during his early reign, the band, in white shirts and black pants, is the most prim, proper, and well-coordinated of the characters.[369] Their musical arrangement reflects, once again, the community's acceptance of the king's adopted identity. Subsequent to the establishing shots of the marching band, Najman employs a wide angle shot to capture hoards of local children running across the grassy plane toward the ruins to convey. The scene conveys the great numbers of attendees of the funeral communicates, demonstrating the

[369] Najman reveals that this real local band actually composed music specifically for this part of the film, a song called *Un Adieu au Roi* (Goodbye to the King).

widespread impact of Chacha's reign on the local community and the beauty of the natural environment.

In an alternating sequence with the procession, Najman adjusts the colors and the shots to portray a far more intimate setting. Instead of such wide, sweeping shots, he employs close-ups and mid-shots to more appropriately display the central relationship of the film, the bond between Timothée and Chacha. The gray fog dominates the setting, creating a somber final moment in the film. Following Timothée's final exchange with Chacha, Timothée slowly leaves of his own accord, walking off into the mist.[370] The screen then grays out to the sound of the wind. The gray color is totally distinct from the browns, blacks, shadowy colors that dominated the scenes in Cap-Haitian and during Chacha's fall from power as well as the brighter, natural colors privileged in the scenes depicting Chacha's ascent and occupation of the throne. The gray-out conveys a sense of finality to the film. However, it is a new color scheme in the final that associates it neither with the dark, bleak moments of the film or the naturalistically filmed hopeful rise to power. Arguably, such a color is an ambivalent choice, a visual indication of Najman's awareness of the duality of the film: the dark farce of Chacha's reign and Timothée's promising new understanding.

C. Casting

Reminiscent of African filmmakers Sail Faye, Sembene Ousmane, and Djibril Mambéty and classic European filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein and Robert Bresson, Najman did not cast a single professional actor to perform in the film. In certain cases, use of non-professional actors in African cinema was a key aspect of the cinéma vérité technique employed in "direct cinema." Popularized in the 1960's, direct cinema is a manner of filming meant to more closely "reflect reality as opposed to distorting it in the fashion in which the medium has been used by foreign filmmakers against Africa" (Ukadike 50). Yet, why would Najman, a French filmmaker directing decades after direct cinema's initial popularization, take this particular approach?

Arguably, his reasons are the same as these earlier innovators: to help portray a more accurate reflection of Haitian reality, to find actors whose lives more closely resemble those of the characters, and to take advantage of the blank canvas that an unknown actor represents (as popular actors are often remembered for certain roles that influence perceptions of them

[370] According to Najman, he did not direct the boy to take the next action.

onscreen). Non-professional actors also have a spontaneous and graceless quality in their acting that results, in this case and in others, in a more powerful, more narrative-focused film. To play the lead role of Chacha, Najman cast a Haitian poet, Dominic Batraville, who had been previously undergone treatment for psychological problems. The young boy, Timothée, played by Verlus Delorme, is a real-life orphan searching for his father on and off screen. With such backgrounds, both individuals could incorporate their own lived experience into their performance. The actors playing Valentin and Romaine/Nibu are not film professionals either. Najman met Ambroise Thompson (Valentin) in 1988 when he offered his services as a tourist guide (despite there being few tourists at the time). Finally, Erol Josué (Romaine/Nibu) is a choreographer residing in France.

Furthermore, Najman did not hire any professional actors to play the individuals featured in the market scene and at the ruins. The casting of these individuals bears mentioning because it directly influences their performance and dialogue in these scenes. Najman relied on the directorial methodology employed by Jean-Luc Godard in which the director instructs the cast to react instantaneously to the present action.[371] Najman explains that he directed all of the individuals in these scenes to respond "in the moment," and therefore more naturally, and more impulsively to Chacha.[372] In the market, this type of interaction creates a raw, chaotic atmosphere. At the ruins, the result is similar. Performances are spontaneous, effortless, and unaffected.

As far as the dialogue is concerned, Najman did not provide any of the individuals at the market or ruins with a set script. At the ruins, for instance, when the elderly residents of Milou plead for help, they reveal their actual feelings regarding Chacha's arrival and present him with their real problems. One old man says that he recognizes Henri Christophe and is "so happy" to see him. Another senior states, "the toughest problem is the light. We live in the darkness. Our children can't study in the darkness…Give us light!" One of the final women to speak says she has no money to bury her daughter who died that morning. As Najman observed in filming these courtiers, they looked to Chacha for help *as he was a real king*, not an actor in a film. Because

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[371] Godard pioneered this stylistic choice in his New Wave films.[371] New Wave films from the mid-1950's to the mid-1960's often had an improvised quality because their script was reworked several times during filming or actors were merely given a sketch of the proposed action (Wiegand 91). In Godard's film, *A bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960) for instance, he "famously…made corrections to the script right up until the last line, whispering the lines to the actors" (Wiegand 67).

[372] "à l'instant même."

of their earnest and honest pleas, these residents demonstrate that their world view allows for a suspension of belief that enables them to place hope in Henri Christophe's return as a potential embodiment of change. This is a striking political gesture on their behalf because it reveals localized resistance to past difficulty and an effort to overcome their current problems.

By casting and directing real Haitians who plead for help with their daily struggles, Najman makes the point that Haiti is an impoverished country where people cannot satisfy their most basic needs. The complaints lodged by the residents underscore how little has improved in Haitian society since the Revolution and deflates any kind of conventional, stereotypical grand narrative of Haitian history, progress, and nationhood. Hence, casting clearly channels a major political viewpoint of the film.

D. The character representation

Every decision made in the direction and production of a film is deliberate; including the choices involved in character representation, namely, clothing, dialogue, repetitive or contradictory behavior, and shots. In the character representation of Timothée, for instance, his impoverished existence (tattered clothing, possession of little or no belongings, lack of family or comfortable home featured in the film) represent the life of the poor majority of the Haitian population, particularly the orphaned or solitary children who must fend for themselves at a young age.[373] Najman films groups of these children in the market of Cap-Haitien, those who follow and taunt Chacha, and the "Royal Bonbon," or Chacha's imperial entourage in the town of Milou. By focusing on a character that represents the struggle of these children, Najman advances an implicit commentary about Haitian society: many young Haitians are uneducated and alone, an unfortunate reality that is ultimately damaging to the country's future.

This is not the only message communicated by Najman through his representation of Timothée. His relationship with Romaine, his quiet acceptance of Valentin's remarks about Chacha's life beyond the grave, and his solitary prayer to Baron Samedi in the tenebrous light in

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[373] "Many parents send their children, including girls, to work in Port-au-Prince, where they sexually exploited and abused. According to U.N. reports, about 300,000 children work as unpaid or meagerly paid domestic servants in Haiti. Even though the minimum legal age for employment is 15, the labor code allows children as young as 12 to work in a domestic capacity" (240 Putzi). As discussed in Chapter 1, large numbers of Haitian children are sent by their parents to live with a wealthier family to be educated in Haitian cities. Many become "restavecs," or child slaves, to these families. As J. Michael Dash writes, "Slavery was abolished in 1793, then again in 1804, but the habit of employing children as household servants endured" (162). If the arrangements go awry, the child will be left homeless and abandoned in the city.

the dilapidated cemetery all underscore the centrality of voodoo ideology in his all-consuming search for his father. Furthermore, because Timothée represents the poor, his impoverishment and his desire for wish fulfillment inform the audience about what spirituality looks like in Haiti: how it is practiced, the figures involved in this practice, and how Haitians conceive of the spirit world and death. Timothée's spiritual journey is therefore emblematic of the resistant practice of voodoo.

Timothée is not the only character whose representation reveals the significance of this belief system amongst the peasant class. Romaine is the agent and facilitator of voodoo ideology. Najman indicates that he found inspiration for Romaine in a prominent figure in the history of voodoo: "Romaine the Prophetess," was a "a man, a great liberator…who dressed in women's clothing."[374] Consequently, in the scenes set in Cap-Haitian, Najman films Romaine in make-up, scarves, jewelry, and women's clothing as he conducts Timothée's ceremonial bath. Out of all the characters though, Valentin best verbally articulates voodoo ideology. It is not his appearance, but his words to Timothée during Chacha's burial that encapsulate certain principles of this ideology. Valentin reminds him that the dead are not truly dead and then later remarks that the dead open the eyes of the living. These tenets expressed by Valentin not only enable Timothée to come to terms with Chacha's death, but also work retroactively to explain why he and the other residents of Milou accepted Chacha as their king.

In fact, Chacha's entire journey, inspired by his strong conviction that he is king, is grounded in the resistant philosophies of the voodoo ideology. Voodoo, it is well known, consists of a blend of religious practices primarily of African, native Amerindian, and also of Catholic origins. Chacha's first religious references are Catholic, articulated during his meandering through the labyrinthine shantytown. In this scene, he yells out of the "1st through 14th stations of Jesus." In Catholicism, the Stations of the Cross is "a popular devotion consisting of appropriate meditations before each of the fourteen stages representing successive stages in the Passion of Our Lord."[375] By repeating this devotion at this particular juncture, Najman exposes the gravity of the character's current burdensome situation and low economic station, gives an indication of his future tragic role, and begins to construct the substantial

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[374] "Romaine la prophétesse. " "Un homme, un grand libérateur…qui s'habille en femme."
[375] http://www.diocesepb.org/prayers/stations/explanation.htm
Station one occurs when Jesus is condemned to death and then the devotion continues until station fourteen when Jesus is laid in the tomb.

presence of spirituality and resistance in the film that come across through the actions and words of Timothée, Romaine, and Valentin.[376]

Yet, the presence of this devotion in the film is not simply meant to emphasize Haiti's Catholic roots, but to demonstrate that the spirituality in Haiti consists of blended, oppositional practices. To explain, elements from various spiritual sources co-exist and represent a form of resistance against a singular, dominant spirituality. Voodoo is the perfect example of a practiced form of resistance, one, because it incorporates and defies certain elements of Catholic dogma, and two, because it was absolutely integral to the rebellious actions of enslaved Haitians. In fact, amongst Haitians, Voodoo is commonly believed to be the reason for which Haiti gained its independence when other Caribbean islands did not. Because of its historic significance, it acts as a reminder and symbol of the past even in contemporary practice.

Besides articulating voodoo ideology, the representation of Valentin also requires further examination. During the episodes in which Valentin accompanies or assists Chacha as he performs his rendering of royal behavior and duties, particularly in the wedding ceremony between Chacha and Elvire, Valentin overemphasizes the letter "r." In traditional French, the phonetic symbol for the sound produced by French speakers is [ʀ] (a uvular trial), but when Valentin conducts the ceremony he speaks using a louder, longer, more forceful version of this sound. Although it may first appears to be a parody of French aristocratic speech meant to draw attention to Chacha and the residents' emulation of archaic royal customs, Najman explains that he instructed Valentin to speak in this way as a means of reappropriating the [ʀ]. The implication of this instruction is that Najman perceives Haitian language as existing in a state of restriction or devaluation and that in manipulating language he can highlight and counter such limitations.

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[376]Najman may also be subtly expressing a parallel between Chacha and Christ, but this is only conjecture.
The reference to the Stations of the Cross has two notable implications. One, this devotion is commonly recited is times of great stress and humility. This hints at Roi Christophe's present and future difficulty in the film. Two, this reference alludes to the presence of Catholicism in Haiti. Even though strains of Catholicism remain active in Haiti, this religion is more appropriately considered in relation to the intricate belief system of voodoo. As anthropologist Karen McCarthy Brown explains:
"Although it can be argued that Catholicism has been Africanized in Vodou, and that this is a far truer statement than its reverse, this does not mean that the Catholic Church has no role in the life of the 85 to 90 percent of Haitians who serve the spirits. Pilgrimages to various churches and attendance at Mass are integrated into many complicated Vodou rituals. In addition, the church has taken over the major ceremonies of the life cycle" (Brown 12).

Valentin is also significant because he acts as the key member of the local town near the ruins. The residents of this town, including Valentin, share a common attribute in regards to their appearance. The clothing that they wear during the scene in which they present their grievances to Chacha and also when they dance in the ruins is, as I mentioned, their own best, yet relatively shabby attire. As a result, there is no layer of artistic interpretation obscuring or stylizing their appearance. Even Chacha, the supposed and temporary king, is adopted as a ruler despite his shoddy, unkempt appearance. Although Najman requested these non-professional actors to oblige him in this way, this approach brings a documentary quality to their representation. It is an intentional maneuver to portray these people as they are, how modestly they live, and, how, in their willingness to accommodate this directorial direction, seriously they participated in the filming.

In addition to their appearance, the behavior of these residents suggests a complete acceptance of Chacha as their king: they gather in numbers, parade him through town, plead their cases so intently, join in the dance at the ruins, and mark his death. Najman portrays their strong sense of community in this town and the complete acceptance of Chacha's claims. Furthermore, their adoption of the leader enables Najman to depict the role of the supernatural in Haitian culture. He carefully develops the idea that Haitians have a far less defined division between the living and the dead. Because of this porous relationship, the local residents presumably conceive of the natural world in such a way that it allows for the occurrence of unexplained visits from the dead.

The most complex aspect of character representation relates to the doubling of identities amongst all but one of his major characters. Only Timothée remains constant; his identity and quest never fluctuates with Chacha's rise to power. Najman represents Chacha, Romaine, and Elvire each as two distinct individuals. In the case of Chacha and Elvire, they begin the film as vagrant and prostitute and end the film as king and queen. Romaine's case is more extreme. He first enters the film as a voodoo prophetess and then becomes Nibu, the lead maroon charged with confronting Chacha. With this doubling of identities, Najman not only complicates character representation in the film, but also reinforces Valentin and Chacha's remarks that there is more to our earthly existence than first meets the eye.

E. Conclusion

As Najman has explicitly stated, his agenda was not to construct a historic film depicting the Haitian Revolution. In an interview with Isabelle Potel of France's *Libération*, he makes his objectives clearer:

> Haiti's relationship with its history is neurotic; its memory is haunted. This is what interests me—this memory in the skin, lodged in the body—not a historic retelling. And also a kind of communal, egalitarian, free, childlike utopia, which stands for something real here. History has remained frozen, confiscated by a narrow elite that drives around in air-conditioned cars.[377]

Rather than a historic retelling, Najman constructs a film that represents and is meant to speak to the haunted, local memory, not of the elite, but of the poor, egalitarian, communal class. The casting of locals provides the Haitian audiences with a sense of auto-ethnic satisfaction whereby they see themselves onscreen, as they dress and behave, practicing the belief system they espouse and expressing their current difficulties.

Yet, the dark side of this representation is that it also exposes the recurrent pattern of failed leadership, as well as the failure of the masses to choose their leaders wisely. That is to say, Najman's representation of the poor also advances an implicit criticism of their behavior. In the film, the residents of Milou unquestioningly adopt Chacha as their king. Although this development of the plot echoes historical accounts of Henri Christophe's reign, namely his emulation of European customs, his selfishness, and the reinstitution of forced labor, Chacha's status, his apparel, his wooden throne, and the assigning of bizarre titles remind the viewer that the entire group is participating in pathetic charade.[378] This fact is more obvious because the customs and royal accoutrements are far simpler, even farcical.

Furthermore, there is an obvious omission of an explanation as to why and how they agree to this startling change in their life. It is not merely an ellipse meant to convey the erratic mental state of Chacha or a silence grounded solely in their voodoo ideology. This omission represents something more crucial. It suggests that, out of hope and desperation, Haitians continue to look for future direction in whatever circumstances that arise. It also condemns their

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[377] http://www.worldpress.org/europe/0302artsliberation.htm
Isabelle Potel, "*Royal Bonbon* – Entranced and Entrancing." *Libération.* 2 January 2002.
Accessed 26 September 2009.

[378] Chacha's throne is a borrowed a wooden piece from a Haitian sculptor. Source: Director commentary.

blind acceptance of authority. Najman, in the above quote, hints at this judgment when he characterizes Haitian society as a communal, egalitarian, child-like utopia. By accepting Chacha as king, poor Haitians do not engage in, contest, or even discuss (onscreen) the absurdity of Chacha's claims. Because of their compliance with his claims, they become vulnerable to Chacha's later abuses of power. Instead of merely criticizing brutal Haitian leaders through the portrayal of Chacha, the film also acknowledges the responsibility of Haitians to support and elect superior candidates. This message underscores the fact that the responsibility of strong government falls not only on the leader, but on those who choose to instate and support the individual in charge. The political implication of this message is that Haitians have power and control in determining their fate.

Najman's representation is not entirely negative, however. His does focus on a set of protagonists, namely Timothée and Chacha, who, despite their imperfections, dare to defy their circumstances and pursue their dreams. Even though Chacha is not entirely successful, he is nevertheless a character who challenges disbelief and remains committed to his ascendancy to the throne regardless of the isolation and judgment it causes initially. Timothée leaves his solitary life in the city behind and finally attains his objective of finding a father figure. Their oppositional behavior and pursuits not only represent a strand of the composite practice of voodoo, but also pay homage to every Haitian in history that has risen above his/her circumstances.

In balancing these various aspects of Haitian reality, it becomes all the more apparent how creatively and thoughtfully Najman interprets the Haitian struggle. This struggle, he determines, fuels their strong desire to live in the imaginary. The bare, sad truth of this film is located in Najman's most astute, judicious statement of all: "in this country, where there is almost nothing left, people continue to live in the imaginary because all that remains for them is their memory, a starving memory."[379]

V. RAOUL PECK

Raoul Peck was born in 1953 to an agronomist father. At age eight, Peck's family was "forced to flee the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti."[380] His father moved them to Africa, where he

[379] "dans ce pays où il n'y a presque plus rien les gens continuent à vivre dans l'imaginaire parce que ce qui leur reste, c'est leur mémoire, et leur mémoire là est affamée."
[380] In a Mirror on Africa, a Hero Unfairly Tarnished" Alan Riding *The New York Times* June 24, 2001

"found work with the United Nations in the Congo in the early 1960's."[381] After such a childhood, it is no surprise to discover threads of violence, dictatorship, and exile in his later films. Peck's itinerant childhood gave way to an even more nomadic existence as a young adult:

> After I received my high school diploma, I went to Berlin at my father's insistence to study industrial engineering. I studied that for seven years, but I realized that it was not going to be my life, so I started a Ph.D. in development policy. At one time, I was accepted for a position at the United Nations Development Project in New York City, but after I had already arrived they stopped hiring for a while. So I drove a cab for eight months in New York, writing between fares, before finally returning to Berlin to study film (Taylor 240-241).

Moving from the Caribbean, to Africa and Europe, then to the United States, Peck had a tremendously varied educational and vocational path. He also continued to travel, returning "frequently to the Congo on vacation." [382] As a result of this diasporic existence, Dash rightly claims that "Raoul Peck himself embodies the new Haitian identity that links the diapsora with the nation" (Dash, p.93).

In the early nineties, Peck encountered both failure and success in his filmmaking endeavors. At this point in Peck's career, his project to adapt Russel Bank's novel *Continental Drift* starring Willem Dafoe "as a white American involved in an operation to smuggle Haitians across the Caribbean waters (Taylor 239) collapsed "after several years of development." [383] However, Peck did direct one of his most incisive feature films to date. The 1992 drama, *L'homme sur les quais* (*Man on the Wharf*) recounts the life of a young Haitian adolescent, Sarah, whose parents fall victims to Duvalier's paramilitary force. This film was so well-received that it became the first Haitian film to compete at the Cannes Film Festival and obtain a theatrical release in the U.S. [384]

Despite the good press, the film did not secure a lucrative distribution deal: "The film was seen, Peck insists, by all the major American distributors at Cannes, and passed over by all of them" (Taylor 239). Even without an American distributor, the film "was widely and

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http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9507E4DB1131F937A15755C0A9679C8B63

[381] Ibid.

[382] Ibid

[383] "Citizen of the World: A Conversation with Director Raoul Peck" by Aaron Krach http://www.indiewire.com/people/int_Peck_Raoul_990112.html

[384] Ibid

successfully screened in France and other European countries" (Taylor 239). The film debuted in New York City and Miami, but it "continues to go unlit [in the U.S], where its issues affect national policy and American lives" (Taylor 239). In the mid-1990's, Peck returned to Haiti on a semi-permanent basis. He accepted the position of Haitian Minister of Culture, but his term was shortlived. He chronicled this rather controversial venture in his book, *Monsieur le ministre…Jusqu'au bout de la patience* (*The Minister…To the brink of patience*), an autobiographical, at times stream of consciousness, reflection of his disappointing time in office.

After his resignation, Peck resumed his work as filmmaker. In 1999, he toured with the Margaret Mead Festival, internationally "recognized for bringing together under-recognized documentary filmmakers from around the world."[385] As part of the festival, Peck traveled to eleven different American cities, from Oregon to Washington D.C. After the festival, Peck went back to Europe. By the early 2000's, he was residing in Eastern Paris.[386] Over the last decade, Peck has received numerous accolades for his directorial skills. His achievements include "receiving France's coveted Order of Arts and Literature for his body of work, and nabbing the prestigious Paul Robeson Award for his 2000 movie *Lumumba*. America's well-known movie-channel and production entity HBO has even called on him to direct the Martin Scorsese-produced biopic of 19th century militant abolitionist John Brown." [387] In addition, Peck received the Diamond Lifetime Achievement Award at the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival at the Lincoln Center in June, 2001.

In view of all these awards, Peck is recognized as "the preeminent chronicler of Haiti's ordeal with tyranny" (Taylor 236). While navigating the inconsistencies of the film industry, Peck has managed to direct a collection of films that include some of the most the professional, cohesive, and intense examples of Haitian cinema in existence. Perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of his films, however, is their articulate expression of a political agenda. Two sets of Peck's films in particular demonstrate the seriousness with which Peck addresses and treats sensitive issues. The content of Peck's documentary, *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet* (1991) and

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[385] Ibid

[386]"In a Mirror on Africa, a Hero Unfairly Tarnished" Alan Riding *The New York Times* June 24, 2001
http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9507E4DB1131F937A15755C0A9679C8B63

[387]http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/541.html
New generation of Haitian filmmakers are making a scene
By Katheline St. Fort, Miaimi-Herald, Sunday 29 June 2003

his feature film, simply entitled *Lumumba* (2000) are particularly illustrative of his political orientation. (See Supplemental Data three for an-depth discussion of these films.)

In the span of time it required Peck to direct both of films on Lumumba, Peck also worked on a series of short documentaries.[388] These films are equally helpful in further defining Peck's political orientation. Peck's views are particularly present in his use of voice-over. The voice-over is not done by a hired professional, but by Peck himself. As a result, he repeatedly uses voice-over to express his political views. These views immediately surface at the beginning of *Profit et Rien d'autre* (2001) when Peck slowly and methodically utters these words: "I come from a country that theoretically does not exist. I come from a country where intellectual debate is a luxury and each passing day is a victory. I come from a country where history is a heavy burden and daily life no longer makes sense.[389] Peck hereby recognizes Haiti's inconsequential role in the global economy. (Although he does not criticize the global economy at this point, it is a subject that Peck discusses in short order.) This commentary also emphasizes the enormous strain of daily life in Haiti. Because of the difficulty of existing in this environment, it is not conducive to intellectual debate, something that Peck stresses implicitly through the content of his films. Instead, he observes, it is a place where history weighs heavily on the present.

Peck then continues to act as the "inquiring narrator" at the center of this documentary (O'Shaughnessy 172). However, he also pursues another method to convey his political views. He interviews "a range of expert witnesses" whose third-party opinion supports the claims provided through voice-over (O'Shaughnessy 172). For instance, he interviews several economists and an engineer at various locations who argue that capitalism is ruinous and only succeeds to the detriment of others, particularly the population of developing countries. Hence, Peck conveys the idea that because money is needed in the capitalist system to satisfy demand, Haitians cannot satisfy their needs. Rather than a targeted critique on foreign government per se, this film attacks the power and pervasiveness of capitalism. The voice-over and interviews combine to demonstrate Peck's preoccupation with the Haitian diaspora, the current political climate, and the failure of capitalism in Haiti.

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[388] A docudrama generally refrains from overt directorial commentary, a dominant characteristic of documentaries.
[389] "Je viens d'un pays qui théoriquement n'existe pas. Je viens d'un pays où le debat intellectuel est un luxe, chaque journee passée, une victoire. Je viens d'un pays dont l'histoire est un fardeau et dont le quotidien ne fait plus aucun sens"

Peck's preoccupation with complex, partisan topics is reinforced through the film's editing. He alternates between locations, interviewees, stock footage, and nameless individuals throughout the entire film. This montage is characteristic of a category of film that O'Shaughnessy calls the "counter-globalization documentary" (177). Peck's work corresponds to this type of documentary because like others of its kind, it:

> Can be put to use to restage a collision between actors and visions that no longer occupy the same space but can still be forced to collide when filmmakers imitate the mobility of transnational capital, when montage allows different international spaces and actors to be brought together and when voices of international counter-expertise become cinematic witnesses (177).

Characterizing Peck's documentaries as a site of forced collision between international spaces and actors underlines the fragmentary quality of the films. Such an intense, sporadic process of interviews and alternating international locations raises an important question. What is the effect of combining divisive content with this type of disjointed editing strategy? Does it affect the audience is a predictable manner? What type of rapport is Peck attempting to create with his audience? This editing strategy may first appear confusing to viewers. However, because Peck clearly sought out this strategy, an alternative conclusion must be considered. Instead of confusing viewers, might this type of filmic technique, in conjunction with his voice-over, have a different impact?

Although the art form and methodology differs between Peck's films and the plays by German playwright Bertolt Brecht, Peck's films nevertheless call to mind Brecht's technique of distanciation (*Verfremdung*). Brecht used direct address in his plays, a technique similar to voice-over in film. In *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, for instance, the protagonist Shen Te appeals to the gods/audience during the final trial scenes. Instead of confusing the audience, this technique was meant to produce the effect of distanciation: "Far from wishing to plunge spectators into a state of alienation, Brecht sought to challenge a condition of alienation through a theatre of empowering observation" (Mumford 62). Brecht believed that an emotional audience response such as "anger and irritation at injustice" to direct address, for instance, was socially productive and constituted "a vital component of a political theatre keen to nurture

problem-solving activists" (Mumford 63).[390] The goal of distanciation can be summarized as an attempt to ensure that audiences were not "abandoning themselves to the narrative and thereby missing the political content of the drama."[391]

Though the techniques differ, Peck's use of voice-over and onslaught of disjointed images similarly ensures that the audience does not miss the political content. His techniques force spectators to pay attention, to become aware of the film's political content, to create links between juxtaposed images, and to incite them into action.[392] Consequently, he achieves the same effect of distanciation, even if it is accomplished by alternate means than those pioneered by Brecht.

Compelling the spectator to take an active role defining and resolving the issues raised in this film has important implications in regards to the development of contemporary cinema. Although French film scholar Martin O'Shaughnessy mainly discusses recent political and class orientated French films, his argument applies perfectly to Peck's efforts in this documentary. As in Peck's film:

> Having no ready-made answers or overarching meanings to give us, the films nevertheless drive us urgently to engage with the real, asking us to search for answers and meanings that are lacking. This shift from a cinema that communicates an existing politics to one that pushes us towards a politics yet to be found also supposes a shift if in the relation between politics, film and spectator, from one might call a vertical mode, characterized by pedagogic transmission from a source of knowledge to a receiver, to a horizontal one whereby the spectator is asked to share actively in the production of a politics (O'Shaughnessy 23).

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[390] "However, because Brecht presented the questioning actor as a model for the spectator to identify with, he shifted the focus from (64) empathy *with the character* to a novel emphasis on empathy *with the socially critical* actor…Far from removing emotion, *Verfremdung* sets in motion a complex friction that can generate considerable emotional heat" (Mumford 65).

[391] Luxonline Glossary of film terms. "Brechtian. "
Accessed 16 September 2009.
http://www.luxonline.org.uk/education/glossary.html

[392] For example, nearly all of the juxtaposed scenes bear some relationship to his critique of capitalism. As a result, this technique encourages critical thinking on the part of the viewer who must create this meaningful link between these disjointed elements. In the end, the fragmented quality of the film does not overshadow the thematic relationship of this critique that connects all of these images to one another.

Such films create possibilities for dialogue and debate, even providing motivation for change. Peck abandons subtlety and effectively calls his audience to action, placing responsibility on all his viewers.

In addition to *Profit et rien d'autre*, Peck also directed the nineteen minute non-linear, politically charged documentary, *Chère Catherine*. This documentary is first presented as a visual accompaniment to an email. It begins as if Peck were sending an email to Catherine, an unknown recipient of his random thoughts. The words typed on the computer to Catherine are spoken out loud in voice-over by Peck. The film is different from *Profit ou rien d'autre* in two main ways. First, Peck juxtaposes seemingly unrelated scenes without providing any kind of commonly recognizable transition, taking O'Shaughnessy's earlier argument to a new level. Second, although Peck places himself as the central force of the documentary to ensure dissemination of his anti-capitalist message, the voice-over is also used to express even more personal opinions. In *Chère Catherine*, he is more intimately introspective. For instance, he integrates footage of an unnamed group of civil servants. Rather than concentrate on the role of these individuals, he instead discusses *his* short term as Haitian Minister of Culture. Shortly thereafter, his voice-over continues by lamenting: "It's difficult to transition from a marginal to a mainstream culture."[393] His despondent tone accompanies banal, government related images. Although these civil servants are meant to symbolize development, this series of remarks and images indicates that stagnation still characterizes Haitian government. This scene epitomizes the way in which Peck vocalizes his concerns. By consistently agitating for reform, Peck conveys his revisionist agenda, the defining characteristic of his political orientation.

VI. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *L'HOMME SUR LES QUAIS*

The history of the François "Papa Doc" Duvalier regime (1957-1971) serves as the backdrop for a fictional story representative of the traumatic events of this era. Duvalier, trained as a medical doctor, replaced Richard Magloire as president. Although he appeared unassuming, "always dressed in a conservative black suit and wearing bookish, thick-rimmed glasses," Duvalier ultimately became "a resilient dictator who ruled Haiti with an iron hand" (Juang 392).

Characterized by years of violence and hardship, the Duvalier dictatorship endured at length for two main reasons. To begin, the regime "enjoyed impunity because during the Cold

[393] "C'est difficile de passer d'une culture de marronnage à une culture de construction"

War security interests overrode American concerns about human rights violations" (Coupeau 95). As a result, "the U.S. government supported friendly dictators because such regimes were seen as bulwark against communism" (Coupeau 98).

In addition, Papa Doc survived because he "consolidated power by eliminating the faintest attempt at opposition" (Coupeau 96). His power derived from "a coercion network, made up of the Macoutes, the Haitian army, right-wing paramilitary groups, and rural magistrates" that all helped "to prevent civilian resistance to authoritarian rule and repress political opposition activity, while censoring or castigating any critique of the state. (Coupeau 95). Because of this coercion network, Papa Doc was able to undermine "the independence of the legislative and judicial branches of government" while still relying on prefects, offices of local government, to do his bidding. These prefects instilled terror…engaged in the physical elimination of actual or suspected opponents, summary arrests and incarceration without trials, abduction, secret torture, and selective and random murders" (Coupeau 99).

Although the regime was punctuated by rare periods of amnesty, thousands of Haitians fled the island. Educated estimates reveal that "an estimated 80 to 90 percent of Haiti's skilled citizens fled into exile to escape repression" (Juang 392). According to Linda Basch, large numbers of Haitians came to the United States:

> By the 1970s the Haitian migration to the United States had become significant, with 90,834 legal immigrants arriving between 1961 and 1980 and perhaps another 90,000 arriving without permanent resident status (Basch 157).

These numbers underline the turmoil of the Duvalier era and suggest lasting negative ramifications on Haitian economic development. How, then, does Peck portray this chaotic historical period? What facts and events does he foreground? And most importantly, why is this film significant?

VII. ANALYSIS OF *L'HOMME SUR LES QUAIS*

Although the major themes of this film (exile, violence, gender relations, trauma, resistance, and subversion) evoke the Duvalier era, Peck does not simply document the regime. Rather, the experience of the central protagonist, Sarah, evolves into a micro-history of life in 1960 during this dictatorship, a single invented strand within a verifiable fabric of pain and violence. Peck invents characters based on plausible living figures, such as Duvalier's henchmen the *Tonton Macoutes*, local policemen, families, and dissidents, who face an

imagined, but probable conflict as a result of the antagonistic nature of the regime.[394] What is being remembered, then, is a traumatic era featuring recognizable characters and familiar, violent, and recurrent confrontation. Through the actions and attitudes of the protagonists (Sarah, Camille, Elide, Sorel, and François) the film offers damning evidence against a ruthless dictator as well as a redemptive and empowering story of defiance and survival amongst victimized Haitians.

A. Narrative Structure

1. Plot Structure and Content

Whereas Najman's film followed a chronological development but was intermittently punctuated by ellipses and anachronistic elements, Peck's film does not consist of a linear progression of events. Instead, Peck's film operates on three different juxtaposed temporal levels. In their chronological order, the first level replays various events leading up to the death of young Sarah's father; the second, involving the majority of action in the film, reconstructs the events which take place from the death of Sarah's parents until Janvier's shooting; and the third and final temporal level refers to the indeterminate era in which an adult Sarah retrospectively narrates this traumatic period of her childhood.

Diagram 1.

	Film begins.	Film ends.
Temporal level (flashback) 1 (1959/60?):	……Flashbacks to young Sarah's life prior to her parents' death…….…..	
Temporal level 2 (flashback) (1960):	……Death of Sarah's parents….Events leading to Janvier's death….Janvier's death…	
Temporal level 3 (1993?):	Adult Sarah voice-over……...……...…Adult Sarah's voice-over	

As a result, the reconstruction of Sarah's memory is more complex than it might first appear. The film is not entirely one fluid chronological flashback, but is instead occasionally interrupted by other flashbacks involving her father, François, and her family before his death.[395] This interrupted chronology in the film mirrors Sarah's explanation of how her memory actually functions. In the second half of the film, her voice-over says, "Bits of memory recur sometimes. Their chronology gets mixed up in my head. No, it wasn't on my birthday. It happened on that small square in front of the hardware store." The narrative structure and voice-over enable Peck

[394] As discussed in Chapter 1, the *Tonton Macoutes*, formally known as the *Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale* (Volunteers for National Securty), was a paramilitary force created by Papa Doc in 1958.
[395] The details of the death or disappearance of Sarah's parents are never overtly explained. However, because adult Sarah never mentions their return, I presume they were killed.

to construct an argument through that memory is an uneven and painful undertaking. The occurrence of a memory, or bits of memory, his protagonist explains, is not an exact science. This implies a sense of powerlessness and a need for patience when relying on memory to fill in the blanks of a story. Through the film, memory is conceived of as a slow and erratic partner that is nevertheless indispensable in the search for justice, understanding, and self-preservation.

L'homme sur les quais begins almost immediately at the point in which the first and second temporal periods intersect: the death of Sarah's parents. First, Peck films a contextualizing scene, locating the film in a dusty, sun-scorched Haitian village. Adult Sarah begins narrating the film. After Najman depicts a man pulling a wheelbarrow along the street, the camera rises above the street and cuts to shoot the inside of the attic of an apartment. The room is very dark, and a young girl hidden in the shadows is singing and whispering short sayings. This scene depicts a completely different sphere of existence from the outdoor street. The singing and the recitation of these expressions connects this young girl to the voiceover from the beginning of the film. They are both Sarah, albeit at different ages.

As the scene progresses, the voice-over reveals that this primary flashback takes place in 1960, when Sarah was eight years old beginning with her parents' death. In addition to the specific indication of the decade, other elements such as the flag colors filmed outside her home, the repeated mention of Papa Doc, and the presence of the *macoutes* all emphasize that the film takes place during the Duvalier regime. To announce their imminent death, adult Sarah's voice-over states that her "world was already starting with a disaster." Immediately after adumbrating this tragedy, young Sarah crosses the perimeter of the dark, safe, cluttered indoor space in the attic to step out onto the balcony. Once outside, young Sarah has entered a space that was first captured through the overexposure as a bare and merciless place. Sarah is filmed from behind standing on the balcony. The camera remains in the attic and has not, up until this point, shown her face. This is a technique that prevents any direct contact or judgment with her facial expressions, and therefore, her emotional state.

In the next take, an establishing shot at a high angle shows a patchwork of courtyards. In the furthest courtyard, the sound and commotion below indicate that a man is being beaten. Sarah cries out, and Peck then uses a long shot to show her from below. This long shot and the sound of her yelling emphasize her distance from her father. Nonetheless, she presumably recognizes him and the other men in the courtyard below. When her father motions frantically

for her to stop yelling out, a man involved in the beating attacks him instead. Hence, Peck establishes an early division in the film. The home is a safe haven where tragedy and violence are only "bad dreams" as her grandmother Camille Desrouillères says. Outside of the home however, the violence is frighteningly real. The camera then cuts to capture Sarah's grandmother comforting her. Only when her grandmother soothes Sarah does Peck finally shoot Sarah's face from the front. By waiting to show her from the front in close-up, Peck compounds the dramatic effect of this moment, emphasizing her trauma as a foundational aspect of the film.

At this point, the film branches into the two part flashback that I mentioned. It alternates between the haunting events preceding her parents' death and the events transpiring after their death. Most of the film involves the latter flashback. For instance, following their death, Sarah and her sisters remain hidden for two years in a convent. By residing at a convent, Peck communicates the fact that this institution and these women were willing and able to protect victims of the Duvalier's paramilitary force. In addition, Sarah and her sisters could continue their French education, even it meant reading texts such as "The White Nuns."[396] During a raid on the convent, however, Monsieur Janvier discovers the girls. Janvier, head of the local band of *macoutes,* is an explosive character that the girls will eventually learn is responsible for their parents' death. After they are discovered, they go into hiding again, secretly residing at her grandmother's home and still believing that their parents have escaped to Venezuela. They remain cloistered in the attic where their aunt home-schools them until, coinciding with a national holiday, a general pardon is suddenly granted by the Haitian President. In spite of the pardon, Sarah's parents do not surface. Sarah and her sisters, however, come out of hiding. They begin assisting their grandmother in the operation of the family's clothing store located on the street level of their building.

Meanwhile, Janvier and his men closely watch all the town's citizens, particularly Sarah's family. Consequently, the sisters rarely leave the store. They avoid Janvier, but his menacing visits to the store, coupled with his wife's attempt to exploit their services, create a very tense environment.

As the second temporal level progresses, young Sarah continues to flash even further back to life with her parents (the first temporal level). These flashbacks enable her to slowly express her familial relationships as well as solve the mystery of her parents' death. For

[396] "Les Soeurs Blanches"

example, over the course of the film, Sarah recalls and reconstructs a very happy birthday with her family. However, she also flashes back to the events leading up to a more serious episode: the conflict between Sarah's father and Janvier. Sarah's father, François, is an honest policeman, but unfortunately, his official power wanes as Janvier's control of the town increases. In the midst of this transfer of power, the two men disagree over the punishment of a family friend, Sarah's godfather, who has expressed opposition to Duvalier. François agrees that Sorel (or Gracieux as he is known before his punishment) has to be reprimanded, but when Janvier heinously tortures him, François intervenes. Upon this intervention, Janvier and his men attack François. Although François' death is not explicitly shown, Sarah's final, more complete flashback to the event implies that he dies at Janvier's hands.[397] With François no longer in a place of authority, Janvier is free to dominate the populace to his liking, enforcing an evening curfew, burning property, and collecting bribes.

Sarah's reconstruction of the events (still temporal level one) also reveals that the town's local madman and cripple is the formerly the strong, articulate rebel at the center of the dispute between François and Janvier. Sorel's pitiful state following this dispute serves as an example to the township of the type of punishment inflicted on free-thinking individuals. He does, however, distract Janvier from searching the home of Sarah's grandmother when the sisters lived there in hiding. Moreover, Sorel protects Sarah from Janvier again during the climax of the film. The climax will be developed further in the following section because the nature of its editing requires further attention.

2. Editing and Shots

The climax is preceded by the arrest of Camille and the final flashback to Sorel's arrest. Camille's arrest occurs following the capture (and likely killing) of her older white, male friend who had wished to help Camille and her family escape from Haiti. After Janvier's men arrest her, the Sarah's voice-over comments that something had broken in her life and that she and her sisters prayed henceforth for to see their parents again and for protection of the grandmother from Duvalier. An ellipse occurs following the arrest, initially concealing the amount of time that Camille has spent in prison. The film resumes with Sarah leaning over the radio, listening

[397] It is unclear whether or not Sarah's parents merely went into hiding and are living safely in exile as her grandmother suggests, or if they were murdered by Janvier. Given that the narrator of the film, Sarah as a grown woman, does not mention their return by the end of the film, my opinion is that they were killed.

very casually to the announcement of Duvalier's meeting with Nelson Rockefeller, who visited Haiti and the Dominican Republic in July, 1969: "Mr. Rockefeller, accompanied by president Duvalier, was greatly acclaimed by the crowd gathered on the lawn. Also visiting, the French minister of development and cooperation…"[398] Despite Sarah's dismissive behavior, the presence of this diegetic radio clip has severe political implications. It is meant to criticize Western countries for bending to Duvalier's requests and to condemn Duvalier for the incongruity and hypocrisy of his political games, aimed at manipulating international opinion to improve his status, when, meanwhile, innocent Haitians suffer.

Once Peck has made his point with the inclusion of this clip, the sound continues in the background as Sarah asks her Aunt Elide if she is going out. Elide, sitting and facing a mirror, applies her make-up. Once again, Peck refrains from explicitly indicating the significance of an action, particularly innocuous behavior, until the plot progresses. In the next scenes, Elide walks hand-in-hand with Sarah to the police station. The editing of the action now reveals that the make-up is meant to enhance her appearance in front of Janvier and hints at her knowledge that a sexual favor may be required for the release of her mother. "Tell me what to do," she states in front of the station. Najman films her from a high angle as she makes this statement, emphasizing her weakness in front of Janvier. Janvier, on the other, hand is filmed at a low angle, aggrandizing his face and connoting his power. He later responds that other military officers want money, but "As for me, I'm rather the romantic type." As these words are spoken, Najman films all three characters in a mid-level shot. Furthermore, no cross-cutting is done as they speak to one another. As a result, Sarah's discomfort, Elide's ability to withstand pressure, and Janvier's forbidding intentions can all be seen in full. Elide offers money, but her willingness to sacrifice herself if necessary for her mother's release confirms her strength of character, as well as the emotional fortitude of the rest of the female Desrouillères family members in the film.

The final flashback to Sorel's arrest begins immediately after the strained interaction between Elide, Sarah, and Janvier. This episode is edited in such a way as to culminate with the

[398] The film is set in 1960 and since Sarah does not age substantially in the film, Rockefeller's visit appears to be an anachronism. Nonetheless, it is still relevant to take note of the fact that Duvalier notoriously schemed to stir U.S. fears about communist influence in Haiti:"Duvalier had a strategic relationship to communism, allowing communist organizing and propagandizing (and communist or former-communist advisors) early on in his regime if it served his purposes. The presence of communists was especially helpful as a card to be played with the Castro-fixated U.S. State Department. When it suited his purposes, Duvalier launched pogroms against the left to convince the United States that he was their ally in the fight against communism" (Averill 94).

conflict between François and Janvier, the traumatic incident that Sarah endured but has not yet been fully depicted. In this scene, Najman films François as he tells Janvier that Sorel's punishment has sufficed. At first, Janvier's face is shot in extreme close-up, then the camera cuts to François, also in extreme-close-up. The sustained use of this shot on these two rivals enhances their antagonism and the level of suspense. A shot of Sorel's bare behind and then of Janvier's wood baton indicate that Sorel's screams are a result of a vicious sexual assault. It is at this moment that Sarah's voice can be heard, and instead of editing in the vision of what she sees below that was given at the start of the film, the camera shows her father's point of view as he looks up to Sarah and motions for her to quiet down. The inclusion of this secondary viewpoint allows the events in this courtyard to be finally, and completely, given. Her memory is now wholly restored. When Sarah starts yelling, Janvier points the gun at Sarah, François intervenes, and Janvier's men take control of him. At last the memory is reconstructed by bits to be fully understood. Without explicitly filming her father being killed, Janvier's cruel expression and Sorel's closing eyes communicate François' death.

The filming of this scene reveals a great deal about Peck's method of storytelling. Instead of filming a particularly violent act, such as the assault on Sorel and the likely death of Sarah's father, he manipulates the editing of two related images to indicate what transpired. Instead of the violent act itself, Peck concentrates instead on its effect. The story, therefore, is far more violent than the film itself is. This cinematic choice prevents the viewing of violence without sacrificing the fact that it occurred. In this way, Peck can make a critique of violence without reproducing it through media. This decision refers back to Peck's subversion of Western thematics. Not only does this stop the dissemination of glorified violence, but it also displays Peck's savviness in the art of editing and storytelling.

The reconstruction of this memory relates to the narrative in two ways. First, the violence that is shown in the film generally arises in similar fashion: as subliminal bursts of memory in which Sarah unexpectedly and unintentionally witnesses distressing conflict caused by Janvier. Considered altogether, these scenes constitute a frightening montage of commonplace violence during the Duvalier regime. Furthermore, in direct relation to the next scene, this memory prompts Sarah to belt a gun around her waist. In other words, over the course of the film, Sarah has learned and internalized the prevalence of violence and the necessity for self-protection.

In this scene, Sarah and her friend again ride their bikes to the water's edge. In floating dresses, the two young girls unassumingly attract Janvier. Without showing him directly, Peck films his red jeep. As a result, it is indirectly understood that Janvier has tracked the girls down. They chant Sarah's rhyme while sitting on a rock as the waves rush toward them. Filmed from behind, Peck indicates that the girls are unaware of Janvier's arrival. When Janvier chases the two girls and attacks Sarah's friend, he pins her to the ground intending to rape her. At first, Sarah first runs away. Peck uses a long shot to show the actions of all three characters. On the far left, Janvier struggles with the young girl and on the far right of the image, Sarah returns and runs toward them, accompanied only be erratic screams and the sound of the ocean. Once Janvier has pinned her to the ground, Sarah rushes towards them. The camera then cuts to a midway shot of Sarah and Janvier when she points the gun at him. For the first time in the film, Janvier is portrayed in a weaker position. He is on his knees and therefore at a lower height than Sarah. Peck films Sarah from the front with the gun, but Janvier's face is not visible. His back is to the camera, giving Sarah's actions the priority in the shot. On her second attempt to pull the trigger, a shot fires and kills Janvier. The timing of the gun shot would make Sarah the likely killer.

In another brilliant reversal, however, the shot reveals otherwise. The camera pans left to film the girls leaving the scene, then pans right over Janvier's body, and further right still until Sorel is seen pointing his gun at Janvier. Peck makes no cuts during this sequence, drawing out the suspense. This shot finally reveals the true killer. Having Sorel kill Janvier is logical given that Sarah had played with her gun earlier in the film, pulling the trigger multiple times without actually firing a bullet. Sorel weeps at the sight of Janvier's dead body.

Up until this point, there has been no moral ambiguity in the film. Sarah and Sorel have been polar opposite of Janvier in terms of their morality. Yet, through Sorel's reaction to his violent act Peck makes the argument that all violence is morally questionable. Because Sorel is so distraught at having to seek recourse in violence, Peck conveys the message that violence, even that which is committed with the best of intentions, does not resolve the victim's trauma. Instead, as Peck indicates, his violence against Janvier is a self-destructive act. In this image, Peck makes a final allusion to his political critique of violence in Haiti and elsewhere in the world. As the scene continues, the camera does not rest on Sorel's weeping figure, but pans right without cutting until it reaches the ocean. The camera then stops to film the ocean. The editing

of this climax plays with what is seen and unseen, a technique that was apparent throughout the film given the two intertwined flashbacks. Peck's editing not only adds to the suspense of the ending, but also proves that it is not necessary to film violence in order for the shock of its impact to be understood.[399]

B. *Mise-en-Scène* and Cinematography

The opening sequence of *L'homme sur les quais* is less experimental and more straightforward than the beginning of Peck's documentaries. The screen is black and the credits, written in a simple white font, indicate that the film is a Haitian, French, and Canadian co-production. The moderate pace of the editing of the credits is accompanied by an uptempo Haitian Creole song, "Batèm Rat," performed by the group *Ensemble Aux Callebasses*. The pace of the editing and the simple background allow the music to become the central focus of this sequence. The brass instruments and lively beat correspond to the *compas* genre, a musical genre native to Haiti that reached the pinnacle of its popularity in the 1960's and 1970's, years during which President "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son "Bébé Doc" ruled Haiti.[400] As the film narrative will reveal, this time period corresponds to the setting of the film. Therefore, Peck's use of sound is the first filmic choice to begin the process of establishing the context.

Creole lyrics from the chorus, sung by Nemours Jean-Baptiste, are as follows: "Yo manje manman, yo manje Papa (They ate mom, they ate dad)."[401] The rather dire meaning of the lyrics is camouflaged by the rhythm and the choice of instruments. The song is then drowned out by a short scratchy aural clip of a speech in French:

> People from the Northwest, from the north of Artibonite, people from the southwest, people from the Great Cove, middle class from Port-au-Prince, intellectuals, masters of thought and art, professors, teachers, students, they have decided to ignore you. They have gone mad.

There are two significant pieces of information to address regarding these two clips. First, the juxtaposition of languages in these two clips is not startling. French remains an official language even though Haitian Creole is most widely spoken in the island. Accordingly, the song is in Creole and the speech in French. The use of these two languages in this initial segment

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[399] I return to this assessment in the following section.
[400] Alternately called *konpa*.
http://www.shakaitutu.com/2009/03
[401] http://sosyetekoukouy.org/tigout/Tigout_2008-05-07.pdf

announces the two linguistic registers present in the film, which I will discuss further in character representation.

Second, despite the difference in language, the two clips are connected by a single, ominous subject. They both cite the misbehavior of an unknown third person subject, "they." Without naming the culprit who has "eaten" various other people and gone mad, Peck subtly identifies the existence of a peculiar and menacing antagonist. Indeed, the loss of a mother and father figure to this antagonist foreshadows the central tragedy in the film: the death of the parents of the main character, Sarah. Hence, Peck uses the soundtrack, a key cinematic device, to warn of the plot content.

From the start of the film, memory plays an utterly essential role. The most basic, yet fundamental indication of how memory operates in this film is revealed through setting. Whereas Najman sets *Royal Bonbon* in present-day, interlacing the action of a madman's brief reign as a long-dead king with historical references, Peck's film, in contrast, takes place in the past and is wholly defined by the act of remembering. His grown-up protagonist, Sarah casts a retrospective gaze on her life during the Duvalier dictatorship to provide a testimony of her childhood experience and the death of her parents. She lucidly and intentionally engages with her memory, an interpretive act that lasts for the duration of the film. The film is therefore intensely involved in the process of revisiting the past and demonstrating that Sarah's vivid memories of her life during this era have endured.

Communicating the role of memory as well as enabling the recovery and understanding of the past is also accomplished through another cinematic technique: voice-over. As discussed, Peck employs voice-over quite liberally in his documentaries. Instead of his voice as is used in those films, however, this voice-over is the voice of a woman. Later revealed to be the adult voice of Sarah, she sings the following verse at the start of the film (discussed below): "To throw away is to forget, to pick up is to remember." Sung again by the character Sorel and played on the radio during a *macoute* raid on the local barbership, the task of remembering is clearly at the forefront of the film and is reinforced by these words, as well as the *mise-en-scène* of the first images of the film.[402]

Reminiscent of the first scene in *Royal Bonbon* when Chacha pushes a wheelbarrow along the docks, a man moves from right to left pulling a wheelbarrow. The content of the two

scenes is therefore similar, but the way in which this scene is filmed serves as revealing subtext for the film's content and message. The tracking shot used in *Royal Bonbon* creates an intimacy with the character Chacha. The camera, and as a result, the viewer, accompanies him on his leisurely walk. Bringing the camera closer to Chacha's face facilitates our identification of him as the central figure in the film. This first scene in *L'homme sur les quais* is striking in its difference. The camera never pivots or tracks the man pulling the wheelbarrow in Peck's film. Hence, the camera acts like a stationary observer, not a companion. The distance at which the camera remains from the man inhibits our identification of his face. He can only be described in generalities: muscular, poorly clothed, and en route to a destination offscreen. This makes it unlikely that he is the protagonist. Rather, this shot is filmed in such as way to portray him as an unidentifiable laborer, an everyman who represents the average Haitian.

It is also important to note that the laborer is straining forward to pull the wheelbarrow. Unlike Chacha, this action insinuates that he is struggling with a heavier load, a greater material burden. Rather than carrying his few personal belongings as Chacha does, this worker's wheelbarrow is a tool for hard labor. Given the words sung by the grown-up Sarah, the heavy load takes on a symbolic meaning. As I mentioned, she sings about the act of picking up in relation to the process of remembering. And here in this scene, there is a man who has obviously amassed a load that he must now pull along with him. Hence, his presence and the pulling of this heavy load symbolize the consequences of remembering. Gathering up the past, so to speak, encumbers one with a monumental charge. Because this man has amassed this heavy load, he is now under the obligation of coping with this charge. Peck thereby expresses what remembering entails for the Haitian people. He conjures up an image that corresponds exactly to his words in *Profit et rien d'autre*: "I come from a country where history is a burden."[403] Amassing anything, even memory, is necessary. Yet, it can leave behind a lasting and onerous reminder of a painful past. Such a raw truth makes perfect sense when considered in relation to the Duvalier context and plot of the film.

To further enhance the grim quality of the context, the *mise-en-scène* also features a dust-colored background. The monochromatic color and the man's isolation are dismal reminders of Haitian existence. In shooting these images, Peck widens the aperture on the camera to allow

[403] "Je viens d'un pays dont l'histoire est un fardeau."

more light to pass through the lens onto the film.[404] This increased opening gives the background a pale, sun scorched appearance. Such an overexposed shot makes the context seem all the more hot and desolate. This setting will be prominently featured twice more in the film: once, after Sorel paints *Macoutes Assassins* (Killer Macoutes) on the building and is be publically interrogated by Janvier in this same area; second, when clemency is announced on the loudspeakers through town and a small parade marches and dances from right to left in front of this building. In all three cases, the building and street are dirty and dusty and the sunlight is intense. Peck illustrates, through this setting, the unforgiving nature of this environment.

The intensity of the sunlight on this building is dramatically different from all the initial *mise-en-scène* of Grandmother Camille's attic. In the third scene, the camera rises above the street, then cuts to shoot the inside the attic of an apartment. In a soft voice, young Sarah says, "All the sea animals eat up men, but only the shark has a bad reputation." By mentioning a shark and the act of eating, similar to the lyrics in the song played during the credits, Peck hints at the presence of a looming antagonist. Next, Sarah picks up a photo of her parents. The act of picking up connects Sarah's behavior to the task of remembering mentioned in the introductory song verse, "To throw away is to forget, to pick up is to remember." Accordingly, at this moment where the act of remembering is mentioned, the voice-over recommences. As in the beginning, voice-over reminds the viewer that the action taking place onscreen is a reconstruction of the past narrated by the grown-up Sarah. Furthermore, young Sarah is in the attic, the room in a home that serves as a classic metaphor for a family's memory, and is being filmed in the very act of remembering. The photo, the remarks made by the voice-over, the mention of a dangerous antagonist, and the attic setting of this scene all work to effectively establish a connection between Sarah, her memory, and the fate of her parents.

The *mise-en-scène* of a later scene, also set in Camille's home, further reinforces these connections. At night, Sarah foolishly toys with her father's gun. Interrupting this ominous behavior, Peck inserts a flashback to a memory in which Sarah's father instructs her on how to shoot a gun. Notably, Sarah's act of picking up the gun coincides with a memory, as the earlier song verse indicated, "To throw away is to forget, to pick up is to remember." In the flashback within a flashback, the two stand together on a beach. Sarah's father holds his arms around her from behind. She smiles and seems completely at ease in his arms. Her father carefully guides

[404] http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/htmfiles/cinematography.htm

her grip and helps her aim a gun (the image from the film poster). However, just before the gun fires Sarah's expression changes and she looks back over her right shoulder. What began as a memory morphs into a nightmarish vision. Consequently, Peck connects memory and nightmare in such a way that they become part of a shared, undesignated space in her mind. With a terrified look on her face, she turns to look off screen. The camera cuts to show Sarah in the distance. Against the overexposured beach setting, she stands upright and alone, filmed in a three-quarter shot, a practice generally associated with and employed in Westerns. Peck then zooms in to show her fearful expression more closely. He then abruptly cuts to her dad in a medium shot as he aims his gun to a target off screen. Sarah's frightened expression indicates that her father is actually aiming his gun right at her.

The choice of shots and the staging of the two characters as adversaries preparing for a shoot-out are evocative of a Western's style and narrative, known to glorify violence, justify ruthless expansionism, and pit "good" versus "evil" for control over a given territory or town. In this disturbing scene, however, two "good" characters face off. Peck thereby operates a tragic twist on the genre. By positioning two "good" characters against one another, he creates an uncomfortable sensation for viewers that makes his message more convincing and explicit. He expresses disapproval of all manners of violence, effectively undermining a traditional theme of the Western film genre.

Although Peck's film does not feature as many components of the Western film genre as Djbril Diop Mambéty's Senegalese film *Hyenas* (1992), for instance, it does include certain elements that strongly conjure up the Western.[405] In addition to the alarming nature of the gun scene between Sarah and her father, guns and violence are prevalent. Furthermore, Janvier and his men have gained control of an isolated town by force and continue to terrorize the innocent townspeople. Under the guise of legitimacy, they institute marshal law. Janvier's battle with

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[405] Another example of a film that appropriates elements of the Western to subvert the genre's messages is Senegalese director's Djbril Diop Mambéty Senegalese film In this film, Mambéty makes a more enveloping critique of conventions promoted in Western films. To develop the relationship between the Western and this film, African scholar Danya Oscherwitz summarizes the dominant components of the Western, including the prairie, the dessert, the town, the sheriff, the saloonkeeper, the prostitute, the gun, the horse, the train, the wagon:

> All of these elements interact to create, in its most basic narrative form, the story of American westward expansion. Rooted in the concept of manifest destiny, this narrative legitimizes Western civilization's eradication of other civilizations (most notably that of Native Americans), glorifying violence by presenting force as a legitimate means of spreading a "superior" civilization (Oscherwitz 226)

Oscherwitz then names the equivalent of several of these components of Western films in *Hyenas*. She concludes Mambéty manipulates these markers to create "an African western that suggests the possibility and the necessity of African resistance to such power" (Oscherwitz 236).

Sarah symbolizes the classic struggle between "good" and "evil" mentioned earlier. André Bazin writes theorizes that "In the world of the western, it is the women who are good and the men who are bad" (Bazin 133). This is certainly the case in this film as only female family members remain to challenge Janvier. Finally, the building interiors are often dark, and the streets are wide, pedestrian, dusty, hot, and dry. In these multiple ways, Peck's film also alludes to the Western genre for the purpose of communicating a political message similar to Mambéty's. He employs the Western motifs of greed and violence to criticize the destruction they cause.

Besides evoking the Western, this gun-related sequence has a secondary purpose in the narrative. It relates Sarah's simultaneous interest and fear of weapons and violence, as well as the feeling of betrayal from being left by her parents. She is very distraught at having been left behind. This feeling surfaces through her actions, sifting through her father's belongings, as well as through her words. For instance, in a brief argument with her grandmother, Sarah angrily claims that her mother forgot her and her sisters, a very hurtful belief given the importance of memory. Evidence of Sarah's trauma emerges again another night. Instead of a vision, this time Sarah hears the voice of Sorel, her godfather who was crippled by Janvier and now lives on the street. Her eyes are open, suggesting that she is in a delirium rather than dreaming. Sorel's voice chimes in loudly to ask her repeatedly who her father is. She yells out again and again in Creole that she does not know. Her voice rises and then eventually softens as she repeats her answer. Camille comes to Sarah's bedside to comfort her, repeating the line from the beginning that it was just a "bad dream."[406]

In both of these two nighttime incidents, reality, memory, and imagination collide. This collision of feelings and events establishes Sarah's emotional confusion. Peck thereby provides a window into Sarah's fluctuating understanding of her parents' death. This also establishes that Sarah exists in a blurred space where the material and metaphysical world are not isolated from one another. Different from Najman's film in that it is mainly Sarah who experiences this type of existence rather than whole cast of that film, this narrative device nevertheless coincides with a popular Haitian understanding of the world. To paraphrase Valentin's expression at the end of *Royal Bonbon*, the living close the eyes of the dead and the dead open the eyes of the living. For Sarah, it seems as though her memory of her parents' death is beginning to help her understand

[406] "mauvais rêve"

what exactly happened to them. Through his cinematic techniques, then, Peck reveals how Sarah's opens her eyes to what is beyond her immediate surroundings.

Ultimately, the techniques deployed in the mise-en-scène and the cinematography add meaning and depth to the psychological portrayal of the characters, the centrality of memory, and the awareness and prominence of violence during this era.

C. Casting

The casting in Peck's film involves a blend of professional and nonprofessional actors. The actor playing Janvier, for instance, is Jean-Michel Martial, one of the most highly regarded and experienced actors appearing in French Caribbean and French film and television productions today. He acted in Peck's television drama *Corps Plongé* (1998) which takes place in New York and Haiti (but is primarily filmed in Paris), performed a relatively small part in Franco-Guadeloupan director Pascal Legitimus' comedy *Antilles sur Seine* (2000), had a leading role in Christian Lara's *Sucre Amer* (1998) and *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne*(2004) as Ignace (discussed in Chapter four), and even acted for up-and-coming Guadeloupan director Jean-Claude Flamand Barny in his television mini-series *Tropiques amers* (2007). In 2009, he played a character named Lamarch in six episodes of the French crime drama *Profilage* and appeared in two French feature films, the comedy *Trésor* (Claude Berri and François Dupeyron) and the thriller *Une affaire d'état* (Eric Valette). He even wrote and directed a film about Haitian Léon Gontran Damas, co-founder of the Négritude movement, *Léon Gontran Damas, le nègre fondamental* (2004).[407]

Aside from Martiel, the experience among the actors in the film varies tremendously. On the one hand, Jennifer Zubar (Sarah) had no experience in film or television prior to this film, and has only since appeared in two additional productions, the television series *Fatou, l'espoir* (Daniel Vigne, 2003) and the French film *L'été de Noura* (Pascal Tessaud, 2005).[408] On the other hand, Toto Bissainthe (Camille) has not appeared in any film or television series since the release of *L'homme sur les quais.* In her earlier years, however, she was involved in a few notable productions, particularly as the voice of Diouana in Ousmane Sembene's *La noire de…*(1966).[409]

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[407] http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0551793/
[408] http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0958228/
[409] http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0084297/

While both Najman and Peck's films are meant for Haitian audiences, speaking to and informing them, Peck's reliance on both experienced and inexperienced actors differs from Najman's strict use of nonprofessional actors. In Najman's film, the actors faced contrived, but culturally familiar territory. He then instructed his inexperienced actors to dress, behave, and speak with greater freedom. This strategy exposes his effort to film the life and imagination of actual living Haitians and to elicit their genuine reactions to a fictional story.

In Peck's film, it appears that he controlled and directed the actors' clothing, behavior, and dialogue. Furthermore, instead of placing them in an entirely fabricated situation or context, they respond to documented historical facts. His film directly addresses more recent history, not as exists in Haitian cultural imagination, but as it has traumatized contemporary Haitians. Hence, Peck's casting strategy reflects his political agenda of depicting a familiar, but fictionalized story emblematic of the tragedy and survival experienced during actual historic circumstances.

D. Character Representation

The representation of characters in this film reveals an intense and unrelenting rivalry between the Desrouillères family and Sorel, on one side, and Janvier and his men on the other. This rivalry stems from Camille and her family's consistent opposition to Janvier's cold-blooded conduct. Their defiance, varying from explicit to covert, sustains the antagonistic relationship that endures throughout the film. The strained dynamic between these characters helps to structure the film and create a credible ending. For instance, in the early part of the film, Sarah and her sisters live in hiding at a convent. Before the *macoutes* enter the convent and discover them, Sarah begins telling a story about a toad to the nuns at her lunch table. She imitates the hollow, deep throated sound of the toad as the men march in. When Janvier finally faces Sarah, he leans in close to intimidate her. Instead of cowering, she begins to make the sound of the toad. Even though a nun blames Sarah's reaction on fear, her actions demonstrate her subtle tenacity in confrontation. She continues to make the sound until Janvier's realizes that Sarah is in some way undermining his power. He then moves angrily towards her to slap her arm. The otherwise benign noise becomes an indirect affront delivered in a delicate situation to a treacherous man.

The way in which Peck films this interchange is especially informative in introducing the personality traits of the characters Sarah and Janvier. When Janvier leans forward, the camera

shoots Sarah from behind. His face appears to the right of her shoulder at a higher level than the back of her head. Peck uses this filmic device to demonstrate Janvier's dominance. However, his dominance is slightly countered by the fact that Peck stages the event in deep focus. Because the two characters are both filmed in focus even though they are at different depths, Sarah and Janvier are given equal importance in the image. This device foretells her defiant behavior at the end of the film.

When Sarah starts to make the toad noises, the camera continues to shoot Janvier until it cuts to capture Sarah from the front at a slightly high angle. Because she begins her oblique insult before her face is shown, Peck suspends the moment in uncertainty. What is she doing? Why is she making that sound? As Peck chose to do during the opening sequence, he keeps Sarah from being fully seen in the frame until the drama, in this case the insult, peaks in meaning and delivery. When filmed from the front, however, her fixed, rigid facial expression allows her courage and cunning shine through. The most dominant feature of Sarah's face is her eyes. From this point onward in the film, she most often expresses her feelings for Janvier through her fixed, piercing gaze. Even though her vulnerability surfaces in certain moments of the film, she consistently locks her eyes on Janvier to reveal her resistant personality and her awareness of his monstrous actions. Her stoic expression and unfaltering stare call to mind Gage Averill's assessment "Under normal circumstances, peasant accommodation to the power of the army and elite is dramatized through public deference that masks a private tally sheet of resentments: *Rayi chyen, di dan-l blanch* (Hate the dog, but say his teeth are white)" (Averill 8). Although Sarah is not a member of the peasant class, her public deference to Janvier hides her knowledge of his and Duvalier regime's crimes.[410]

During another scene Peck again films Sarah as she remains seated. As a result, she continues to appear markedly less aggressive or emotional than her actual words, sounds, or expression would indicate; her seated position prevents any expectation of the insult that is to come. In this scene, the three sisters are present for a lesson taught by their Aunt Elide. Since leaving the convent, they continue their education in hiding at Camille's home. When their Aunt sits down to begin the lesson, Sarah folds her hands and bows her head at the table. This time, she is filmed from the front, but her eyes are closed as she prays: "Our Doc living in the National

[410] Sarah belongs to the wealthier class of Haitians. Most of her poorer peers would not be educated and would be working at her age: "Most children work under harsh conditions, severely controlled and even whipped by their elders. The privileged children of the cities, however, are more likely to continue with their educations" (Putzi 240).

Palace for life may Your name be blessed by the present generation." Aunt Elide interrupts the prayer telling her that it is not funny. Praying for "Doc" meant supporting Duvalier, the corrupt leader of the country. He perpetuated such violence during this era, that, in the story, he is implicated in her parents' death. Although Sarah does not yet know for sure if her parents are alive or dead, she has clearly understood that they, and many are others, are in constant jeopardy. It is an ironic prayer that not only demonstrates Sarah's knowledge, but her ability to cleverly play with this information. Once again, Peck does not convey her wit immediately. Because Sarah looks down during the prayer and her eyes do not meet the camera, one assumes the validity of the message. Only when her Aunt has chastised her and eyes are open, looking dead ahead, do her sharp perception and jest become apparent. Peck therefore employs a delaying tactic in the manner in which he directs and films Sarah in order to build suspense and intensify the emotional impact of her actions.

As the film continues, Sarah becomes increasingly aware of the power struggle between her family and Janvier as well as more defiant in the face of danger. The reconstruction of the past through her memory has the benefit of allowing Sarah to see and affirm her strength of character. She becomes a key member of the small army of women in her family who stand up to Janvier. This is a political maneuver on Peck's part because it is a way for him to direct attention to Haitian resilience, particularly the covert resistance of women, during the Duvalier dictatorship.

On the other hand, this defiance is counterbalanced by the series of nighttime incidents that reveal how deeply traumatized she has been by her parents' absence. Peck gives her trauma its due, not to minimize her strength, but to make a political statement condemning the destruction caused by the regime's hostile tactics. Her feelings of abandonment and the violence she has witnessed have left her fragile emotions hanging in the balance. Just prior to the "Western" gun scene discussed in section B, Sarah unpacks and looks through her father's personal belongings. In a series of childish and cavalier gestures, she plays with his gun. Pointing it at her face and chest, she pulls the trigger until it clicks. Peck then cuts to her standing in the hallways facing Camille's and her sisters' rooms. Filming her from behind, Sarah points the gun at their grandmother's sleeping figure under a white mosquito net. By filming from this angle, Peck captures the length of her arm and the target in the room. Soon

after, she aims and pulls the trigger at her sisters' bed. The clicking of the gun comes as a relief that it is not loaded.

Another symbol for Sarah's emotional state is represented in the small figure that she keeps with her. Sarah is often filmed in the first half of the film holding this white, molded human figure. Peck eventually films her seated while she pulls it apart, murmuring a chant she heard from Sorel: "The little girl sitting by the fire throws ashes at her mother's ass." Given the camera's deference to the figure during this chant about a mother and daughter, Peck reveals that the doll represents Sarah's mother. By destroying the doll, Sarah symbolically attacks her mother. Hence, filming Sarah's aggressive treatment of this figurine accentuates her sadness, anger, and confusion about her abandonment.

Yet, Peck does not offer this type of insight into Janvier's frame of mind. Broadly speaking, Janvier is a highly perceptive power-hungry sociopath, a vulgar tyrant who sniffs around, leering at women and crushing any subversive tendencies with his insipid but deadly posse. He is clean, well-groomed, dresses smartly, and has a light-skinned wife whose unethical, arrogant behavior earns her the dislike of the Desrouillères family.

To achieve such a detailed representation of Janvier and emphasize his character traits, Peck represents him in specific ways. First and most obvious, Janvier tends to speak in Creole, a fact that suggests his recruitment as a *macoute* from the "the ranks of Haiti's impoverished black majority (Dash 97)." Of this poor, black, male majority, Duvalier eventually assembled three thousand men who were "easily recognizable with their denim uniform, dark sunglasses, red foulard, and omnipresent gun" (Dash 97-98). On the other hand, in light of their finer clothes, large home, and shop front business, Sarah, her sisters, and grandmother are relatively bourgeois. Having likely been educated in the French system, they speak mostly French to one another.

Peck also emphasizes the opposing characteristics of Sarah and Janvier by representing them in contrasting ways. As discussed, Sarah is most often shot seated, standing, or lying in bed. Consequently, she is almost always viewed in a fixed and immobile position. Because she moves so little, the camera does not follow her movements. Instead, it tends to begin from a stationary point and then zooms or moves slowly to get closer to her. This method of filming is tremendously relevant to the narrative itself. It reinforces Sarah's life of confinement caused by living in Camille's attic for more than the first half of the film.

Conversely, Peck films Janvier in a near constant state of movement. For example, when he enters the convent he snakes through the rows of the dining room, and lunges toward Sarah and the nuns to intimidate them. When threatening François in his office, Janvier moves freely around the room, comes behind him at the desk, and again moves in close to emphasize his threat. During Camille's visit to the police station, her stationary stance is vastly different from

Janvier's circulation in the room as well as his violent behavior toward the bus driver that Camille had wished to bribe for a ride for her and the girls to Port-au-Prince. Janvier also drives around town in an open top red jeep with his armed guards, especially at night when the townspeople are subject to a curfew. The jeep becomes his signature accessory, always present when he or his cronies are at large. Over the course of the film, it becomes a symbol of his power, brutality, and mobility and its sound, the signature rattling noise of its engine, always announces the bad news of his arrival. His free movement is so fascinating because it conveys his power in the film. Because movement equates to power, this manner of filming enables Peck to convey Janvier as emotionally-closed figure with supreme local authority.

In the second half of the film, Sarah's mobility dramatically improves, however. This development signals a slight, but significant shift in power relations. This change occurs when the President has granted clemency to everyone. The news, delivered again through loudspeakers on the street, reaches Sarah and her family right away. Henceforth, Sarah is not cloistered in the attic. She and her sisters can now leave the attic, work in their family's shop, and even leave their home. From the cloistered residence, to the wide-open street, the rare moment of amnesty enables the older sisters to casually walk into the street. Two particular scenes illustrate that Sarah's new mobility begins to gradually empower her. In the first situation, Janvier comes into the store when Sarah is alone doing inventory behind the cash register. Given her previous stoicism, it is sudden and surprising when she walks over to the sunglass counter where he is trying a pair on. He jokingly puts the pair on her face and laughs. She keeps them on for a moment, looking dead ahead. Without changing her cold, unimpressed expression, she folds them up, and puts them away. This understated confrontation symbolizes a key change in the film. Although Janvier has been promoted along with the act of clemency, Sarah has been given the right to act on her own accord. She is still a child, fearful for her parents and her grandmother, but she is never again as restricted in her actions as she was before in hiding. Despite her age, she is fully aware of his criminal behavior and his desire to overpower her grandmother's resilience.

In the second incident, Sarah and a newfound friend ride their bikes to the shore. The two girls sit together, looking out and beyond toward the water. The water is not shot, but merely heard in the soundtrack. This shot of the two of them is done from a low angle. Such a shot aggrandizes their bodies and faces, placing them in a more assertive position vis-à-vis the

camera. Instead of the numerous scenes in which Sarah is shot seated, sleeping, or standing next to a much larger adult, this is the first moment in which Sarah is truly positioned in more commanding way. They talk about each of their parents, and her friend explains that her parents were "disappeared: "They 'disappeared' my father," she says. This coded language is all that the children have to make sense of what happened to their families. The dialogue demonstrates their ability to synthesize the facts and to share their common loss. In both scenes, then, the depiction of Sarah has evolved from a cloistered child to a girl who is now incrementally gathering confidence and knowledge.

The clear sources of Sarah's strength and contumacious nature are her father, Francois, her Aunt Elide, her grandmother Camille, and her godfather Sorel. Camille and Sarah share the same ability to remain unflinching and dignified under pressure. Throughout the first half of the film, she attempts to fund and organize her family's escape. Assisting her in this process is an older white gentleman with long-time romantic feelings for her. She meets him secretively, in church on one occasion. During this scene, Peck films her sitting on pew ahead of him, looking ahead and fully composed despite the risks involved in their decision to try to flee Haiti. She maintains her composure in front of Janvier as well, telling him directly not to touch Sarah after the aforementioned visit to the shop. The singular incident in which Camille is filmed in weakened position occurs when Janvier's men come to her home to arrest her. Her escape scheme uncovered, they scatter from the jeep, storm her home, find her on the street, slap her viciously, and and knock her down. As she hits the ground and clutches her face, Peck films her from a low angle, hovering the camera for a few seconds over her injured figure.

What Peck's representation of Camille indicates about her character, then, is that, Janvier cannot simply overtake her by insinuation or intimidation. It requires the brute force of several men to overtake her. She is too mentally tough for his typical tactics. Ironically, then, a young girl and an elderly woman represent Janvier's most serious adversaries. Peck uses these two characters to demonstrate that Haitians, even the most defenseless and improbable individuals, staunchly resisted the Duvalier regime.

Another equally vulnerable character who opposes the regime is Sorel. To a far lesser degree than Janvier, but still with more freedom the Sarah throughout the first half of the film, Sorel circulates throughout the town. Peck's representation of him, in rags, roaming the streets, limping, and sporadically yelling, reveal that he is homeless, crippled, and seemingly mad. Yet,

he still tries to protect Sarah, diverting Janvier's attention from Camille's apartment during one of Janvier's midnight patrols. Peck uses Sorel's movement to draw attention to one of the most subtle but politically charged episodes in the film. Peck underscores the ongoing repression sanctioned by Papa Doc's regime by filming Sorel in a unique and affective scene.

In broad daylight, jubilant music blasts through a loud speaker. A man's voice, accompanying the music, gives the following message to an empty street: "On this anniversary, memorable day of our revolution, the honorable doctor, our President for life, sends you his best wishes of happiness and success." Peck sets up a clever reversal in this scene. As this music plays and this message is delivered, he only shoots the second story level of the street. Dozens of vertically striped black and red flags, the symbol of Duvalier's presidency, are strung up across the street from lamppost to building and back again. This flag remained in use during almost all of Duvalier's presidency, from 1964-1986. When Duvalier finally fled Haiti, the former blue and red flag was readopted, along with an insignia and motto in the center.[411] The abundance of these flags and constant piping of music are typical tropes of celebration. Through them, Peck establishes an expectation for a lively, crowded street.

When the camera cuts to the street, however, only one person, Sorel, is engaged in any type of celebratory action. Besides Sorel, the street is absolutely deserted. He hobbles down the road, carrying a huge imaginary automatic weapon, aiming it and skipping along by himself. He is the lone member of a would-be parade. By editing the images in this sequence together in this way, the reversal of the expectation for a huge celebration, which is replaced instead by the grim ambiance on the street, underline the irony of the situation. There is no one else to celebrate Duvalier's reign because such action would translate into a kind of approval of the hypocrisy that governs their lives. Yet, Sorel is able to expose this hypocrisy because of and in spite of his marginal existence: words promising clemency do not deliver true change. Without a home and not being perceived any longer as a threat, he has a degree of mobility that enables him to satirize this "celebration." Hence, the ways in which Sarah, Janvier, and Sorel are filmed all combine to provide evidence of a shrewd critique of dictatorship that Peck accomplishes, without even mentioning the name Duvalier until the second half of the film.

In another significant scene, Sorel lurches and dances again down this road at a later point in the film. Before he begins marching, however, he leaps into the road, bottle of liquor in

[411] http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1355300/flag-of-Haiti

hand, yelling out, "Who invented the *macoutes*? … God says it ain't him! Satan says it ain't him! And what about Duvalier? Duvalier says, Haiti fuck you!" Sorel is then filmed from behind as he carries and aims an imaginary weapon. His repetition of these actions has taken on a greater sense of urgency that is likely the result of an escalation in his madness.

Sorel's intensified anger presumably occurred after witnessing Janvier and his men capture dozens of people attempting to flee the island late one night. When Sorel listened from his shack and hears the guns fire, he clasped his ears and shook violently. Sorel ultimately represents the traumatized and tragic figure of any politically minded person who once had hoped to challenge Papa Doc and the *macoutes*. His miserable existence paints a very vivid picture of the degenerated psyche of the population. Through Sorel, Peck makes a sad, poignant commentary on human suffering in Haiti as a result of the violence and oppression enacted by the Duvalier regime. Sorel is Peck's most ostensible political mouthpiece in the film.

To return to Sorel's statement on the empty street, such language would have surely had severe repercussions if it were not for the fact that the most of the town, including Janvier and his wife, crammed into the pews at church. They listen as the priest says, twisting the Pope's visit to Haiti he union of the church and state: "A unique day in the religious history of our country. The meeting of two wills, sovereign and loving…There is at last between State and Church a deep agreement. Amen."[412] The delivery of this sermon and its content demonstrates that even the sacred was not safe from propaganda and the presence of the *macoutes*. In a revelatory manipulation of the soundtrack, when Sorel shouts in the street the sound of the church choir can be heard simultaneously reaching its crescendo. The energy of the townspeople finds an acceptable release, whereas Sorel's distress cannot be redirected. There is clear dichotomy in the self-possessed members of the church and the uncontrollable Sorel outside. Most importantly, this dichotomy forwards an implicit critique of the church as a morally bankrupt institution complicit in the actions of the *macoutes*.

E. Conclusion

The film concludes with the voice-over of the grown-up Sarah, a common thread that has run throughout the film. Because the film has finally pieced together this traumatic time in her

[412] Remainder of the sermon: "The will of a great pope burning with a saintly zeal for the love of God. The will of a great chief of State fulfilling the heroic dream he had conceived to bring even more spirit to the sacred heritage of our forefathers. This agreement with Rome finally consecrates the 'haitianizing' of our clergy under the authority of our natural leader."

past, incorporating her voice reaffirms the theme of memory. Moreover, her closing statement imparts several larger truths:

> Many years later while demons keep baring their teeth, while uniforms still get stained with blood, and even though my own story ceases to be my very own and becomes the story of all. I still wake up sometimes at night in a sweat. Then, my departed grandmother tells me very tenderly, 'It is only a bad dream, my darling, it is only a bad dream.'

First, Sarah's words indicate the continued prevalence of violence in Haiti. Second, Sarah remarks that her life story mirrors the past of "all," meaning every Haitian impacted by a malicious, abusive government. Over time she has seen how violence and tragedy are universal markers of the Haitian experience. Third, her memory of the time portrayed in the film continues to impact her present existence, even causing her nightmares.

The final and most important revelation of this passage is that Sarah, to cope with these memories, does not seek recourse in violence, but in the comfort of her grandmother. Although Sarah has remembered what happened to her and amassed a heavy burden in the process, her continued reliance on her grandmother enables her to cope with this burden. Sarah thereby remains as connected as ever to her past and to those who were a part of it, "It was so long ago," she says, "and yet it was yesterday." Carefully examined, Sarah's reliance on her past conveys an unexpected, albeit counterintuitive response to coming to terms with one's past. Peck implies that one can contend with past trauma by, of all things, turning back to the past for help. There, Sarah exhumes the resistance enacted by herself and her family, replays her awareness of the violent impulses of the regime, and offers a means for Haitians to witness and recall the courage exhibited during this era. The overarching message in Peck's film is that memory is the unforeseen antidote to a painful past.

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SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 1: LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF KING HENRI CHRISTOPHE

Depictions of famous figures of the Haitian Revolution like Henri Christophe constitute a notable subset of Haitian and Caribbean literature, poetry, and music. From Edouard Glissant's *Monsieur Toussaint* (1961) and Derek Walcott's trio of plays in his *Haitian Trilogy* (2002); to allusions in works of poetry like Césaire's *Cahier d'un Retour au pays natal* (1939) and Glissant's *Les Indes* (1955); and to musical compositions from Haitian composer Occide Jeanty, references to these figures positively abound. In addition to French Caribbean writers, A. James Arnold traces the literary fascination with the Haitian Revolution in his essay, "Recuperating the Haitian Revolution in Literature." (Arnold, 179-185). Evidence of this fascination can be documented in the profusion of writers who engaged with this subject. Such writers and their works include Victor Hugo's novel *Bug-Jargal*, 1826; Heinrich von Kleist's short story "Die Verlobung in Santo Domingo" or "Betrothal in Santo Domingo," 1812; the Duchess of Duras's novella *Ourika*, 1824; Wordsworth's two sonnets "To Toussaint Louverture," and "September 1, 1802" both printed in 1803; Alphonse de Lamartine's poem and play *Toussaint Louverture*, 1850; and Alejo Carpentier's novel *El reino de este mundo* or *The Kingdom of this World*, 1949. Beyond the literary realm, the Haitian Revolution inspired two African American composers. Clarence Cameron White and William Grant Still "wrote the operas *Ouanga* and *Troubled Island* respectively…which exposed U.S. audiences to the Haitian Revolution and to the Vodou religious tradition" (Largey 20-21).

As enticing as this history and the despotic figures have been to writers and filmmakers, interpretations of events and characters vary from one work to the next. Although Najman's film is similar to Césaire's play in the sense that they each parade the art and artifice of Roi Christophe's courtly life, construct lavish ceremonies, exaggerate titles, and emulate French customs in an ironic and poignant manner, several differences exist between the play and the film. One, the king's poor leadership is shown in far greater detail in the play. In the film, the shift from accepted, even embraced king to rejected leader is brief. Second, the setting of the play is meant to correspond to the

actual events whereas the film is set in modern day, amongst the ruins of the Citadelle. Third, the supernatural beliefs of Haitian people are not as central to the play as they are to the film.

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 2: MAROON SLAVES

Edouard Glissant contends, "the fact remains, and we can never emphasize it enough, that the maroon is only true popular hero of the Caribbean" ("Discours" 104). As the only true popular hero of the French Caribbean, the maroon represents a culturally specific phenomenon. In addition to maroon's direct relationship with French Caribbean culture, he maroon epitomizes subversive behavior and serves as "an indisputable example of systematic opposition, of total refusal" ("Discours" 104). Caribbean scholar J. Michael Dash writes: "Slaves called maroons, who escaped into the inaccessible mountainous terrain, would attack vulnerable plantations from time to time, but in 1758 they found a leader in Makandal, who used the voodoo religion to build a network of followers and succeeded in poisoning the water supply for the plantations of the Plaine du Nord" (Dash 4). Hence, the name maroon originally identified an escaped slave who hacked out a difficult existence in the hills or forested regions of Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique. Feared by slave owners, bands of maroons abandoned any material comfort and risked life and limb to live freely and reclusively. Arguably, their supreme knowledge of the terrain and fierce will enticed writers and intellectuals of the region to incorporate this figure into their literature.

Edouard Glissant names one maroon, Makandal, in his play *Monsieur Toussaint*, which recounts the leadership and alienation of Toussaint L'Ouverture in his highly criticized fight for Haitian independence. According to Reinhardt, Makandal was an African slave who escaped from a sugar plantation and joined a group of maroons in 1751. It was Makandal's "great skill in poisoning his enemies [that] brought him fame (Reinhardt 61). When he was caught plotting to poison "the entire white community of Saint Domingue," he was "burned at the stake in 1758" (Reindhardt 61). Reinhardt summarizes historical accounts that indicate: "Swearing that he would escape the flames by taking the form of a fly, Makandal remained in the imagination of the slaves who believed in his immortality" (Reinhardt 61).

As time went on after slavery was abolished, historian Reinhardt believes that the importance of the subversive acts of the maroons continues to stem from the fact that "The figure of the maroon is…one of the only anchor points allowing French West

Indians to identify themselves as makers of their history" (Reinhardt 18). The figure of the maroon, then, symbolizes freedom and agency for French Caribbeans.

For historical information on maroons: see Richard Price's *Maroon Societies: rebel slave communities in the Americas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Gabriel Debien's *Les esclaves aux Antilles francaises, XVIIe – XVIII siècles* (Basse-Terre: Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1974); Yvan Debbasch's *Le Maniel: Further Notes* (p.143-150); and Orlando Patterson's *The sociology of slavery: an analaysis of the origins, development and structure of Negro slave society in Jamaica* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967).

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA 3: PATRICE LUMUMBA

Patrice Lumumba, a legendary leader of the African decolonization movement, became the first elected prime minister of the newly independent Congo in 1960. His impact on Congolese government, however, was cut tragically short (Watson 230).

> Rising from obscurity to political activism in the Congolese National Movement party while working as a beer salesman in Leopoldville, [Lumumba] was imprisoned by the Belgian colonists for political activity but released to attend the 1960 international meeting on the Congo in Brussels prior to independance. Lumumba became the Congo's first prime minister in June 1960 at the age of thirty-four. He was forced out of office after two months, imprisoned, tortured and killed by Belgian soldiers – in complicity, the film claims, with European and American government agents and other Congolese leaders, notably Joseph Mobutu – six months later (Watson 230).

Lumumba was an African freedom fighter, militant Pan-Africanist, and victim of a Western conspiracy. Peck describes him as "difficult to pin down. He would switch from charm to anger in a second; he did foolish things."[413] Peck even admits, "Psychologically, it took time for me to like him."[414]

Lumumba's controversial death makes for compelling material in the construction of a film protagonist. Peck's decision to direct two films about him is entirely logical for these reasons alone. Nevertheless, other factors further connect Peck to Lumumba. One, there is a parallel between the way the West completely misunderstood and mishandled both Lumumba and Haitian affairs. Lumumba and Haiti represent the worst of outside intervention: fear, an overzealous need for control, miscalculation, and secrecy. Two, Peck and his family fled from Haiti to the Congo the very year Lumumba was elected, allowing Peck to experience Lumumba's term first hand. Lumumba certainly appeals to

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[413] Ibid
[414] Ibid

Peck as a protagonist for the above personal and professional reasons, but why would he direct two films about him? What else about Lumumba would ignite Peck's interest?

First and foremost, the films challenge "historical realities by giving voice from beyond the grave to Lumumba himself," and are therefore exercises in Peck's political expression (Watson 230). Another likely reason for Peck's decision to produce both films is to direct two films of very different length and scope. The first version is much shorter than the second, only a sixty-nine minute documentary that, in its initial stages, began as "a personal memoir of growing up in the Congo around Independence, and his connection to Africa" (Watson 231). According to Watson, "in 1992 it was awarded the prize for best documentary in festivals in Montreal and Paris" (Watson 231). In spite of the documentary's relative success, Peck had simultaneously begun work on a scripted version of Lumumba's life (Watson 231). This script took several years to complete. Working with Pascal Bonitzer, Peck was able to begin filming in 1999. Filming took place in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Belgium (Watxon 231).[415] (Shooting on location in the Congo was not possible at that time given that the country was still consumed by war.) Peck finished filming in three months with a budget of four million dollars from a "French, German, and Belgian consortium, and with the assistance of daughter Juliana Lumumba" (Watson 231). Worldwide box office figures are not readily available, but according to the International Movie Database (IMDB) the film grossed $684,121 in American theatres as of December 16, 2001.[416]

Based on the amount of time Peck dedicated to the film, the circumstances of its filming, and the level of private financial investment, Peck clearly put a great deal of effort in the completion of the feature length version. Ultimately, his hard work produced impressive results. Although the film does not appear to have been a box office sensation, it was still screened far and wide, earning Peck several awards: Best Film at

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[415] In a Mirror on Africa, a Hero Unfairly Tarnished" Alan Riding *The New York Times* June 24, 2001 http://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/24/movies/film-in-a-mirror-on-africa-a-hero-unfairly-tarnished.html?pagewanted=2

[416] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0246765/business

the Pan African Film Festival; the Paul Robeson Award; Best Film, at the Santo Domingo International Film Festival; Audience Prize, Jury Prize, and Grand Prize at the 11th African Film Festival; Best Film by a Foreign Director at the Acapulco Black Film Festival; and the Irene Diamond Lifetime Achievement Award, Human Rights Watch Organization, 2001.[417] Comparing the critical reception between the two films, Peck's feature was much more successful. Although the greater financial support allotted to the feature contributed to its success, it is also true that Peck directed this feature film at a later point in his career when his established reputation and level of experience in the industry could enable him to complete a more thorough project.

Peck's political views are particularly apparent in his representation of Lumumba's death. Thanks to details provided by the 1999 exposé, *The Assasination of Lumumba* by Ludo De Witt, Peck was able to reconstruct American and United Nations involvement in the assassination. In the film, "the hand of the Kennedy administration is visible in the machinations of both the American ambassador to the Congo and the CIA, which authorized agents to poison Lumumba" (Watson 232). Furthermore, the film also makes the claim that the United Nations did not protect Lumumba from Katangan secession efforts (Watson 233). Accusations of involvement are also directed at individuals. Besides the U.S. government and the U.N., Peck pinpoints former American diplomat Frank Carlucci for his complicitness in the assassination. Carlucci served "as the second secretary of the US Embassy in the Congo from 1960 to 1962."[418] Although he has "vehemently denied that he played any role in Lumumba's demise," the film depicts him abstaining from a vote amongst a group of Belgian and Congolese officials to assassinate Lumumba.[419] To defend his reputation, Carlucci's lawyers reportedly convinced HBO to censor this scene when it aired on HBO.[420]

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[417] http://www.answers.com/topic/raoul-peck

[418] Shorrock, Tim."Company Men," in *The Nation*. 14 March 2002. http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020325/shorrock20020314

[419] Ibid

[420] Ibid

In the context of this investigation on Peck's political orientation, these unfavorable portrayals are useful because they provide evidence of Peck's condemnation of Western hegemony. Watson writes that "unlike many political filmmakers, Peck does not shy from posing the possibility of heroic individualism or denouncing the high cost of preserving Western hegemony in the developing world" (Watson 233). By depicting Lumumba's assassination, a specific example of underhanded and hypocritical action on the part of colluding Western governments, Peck positions himself politically by revealing a strong mistrust of Western involvement in the government of developing nations. [421]

Peck's political orientation is apparent in other choices as well. The films demonstrate Peck's goal to familiarize African audiences with a prominent historical figure whose life and leadership call to mind the struggle and tragedy of other African nations who fought (or fight) for self-government. This is necessary because, despite his importance, Lumumba is not well-known amongst Africans. Traveling with Peck during the film screenings conducted in West Africa, the French-born actor of Camaroonian decent who played Lumumba in the feature film, Eric Ebouaney, noted: "People had heard of Lumumba without knowing much about his life or his death."[422] Ebouaney offers further anecdotal evidence of how little is known of Lumumba amongst people of African descent. He recalls:

> I didn't know much about him…I did most of my schooling in France, and there'd be three lines about him in our history books. I knew more about Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, partly because of the *Malcolm X* film, but also because we learn more about American heroes than about the history of decolonization.[423]

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[421] See Chapter 1 for details on foreign intervention in Haiti. Although I do not pursue this argumentation, I would suggest that Peck's mistrust mirrors the widespread Haitian suspicion of U.S. intervention that can be traced to the U.S. Marine Corps occupation, 1915-1934.
[422] In a Mirror on Africa, a Hero Unfairly Tarnished" Alan Riding *The New York Times* June 24, 2001 http://www.nytimes.com/001/06/24/movies/film-in-a-mirror-on-africa-a-hero-unfairly-tarnished.html?pagewanted=2
[423] Ibid

This lack of knowledge serves as a convincing reason for Peck's committment to portraying him onscreen. If Africans rely on film and popular culture for historical representation to the extent that Ebouaney did, directing a film on Lumumba has the potential to correct a void in African history.

This is not the only corrective measure in the film. By screening the film to audiences of developing nations, as Peck and Ebouaney did in several West African countries, they connect audiences with images that resonate with their own history.[424] After a U.S. screening, Peck recounted how certain audiences drew comparisons between the film's narrative and their own history:

> Speaking with gently measured irony, Peck observed that in developing nations around the globe – in the Caribbean and Latin America as well as Africa – audiences immediately grasped parallels to their own national histories in the story of Lumumba's meteoric rise and fall and the the games of international intrigue that were played out around him (Watson 234).

Evidently, during screenings in the developing world, a process of identification took place. This process, Peck explains, was not an afterthought or unforeseen consequence. It was, in fact, a political objective he had from the start of the project. In response to a heated post-screening "heated debate about Algeria between Algerians," Peck stated:

> That's the problem. Young Haitians or Congolese have never seen a mainstream film that shows their history, that shows personalities with whom they can identify. In making this film, that was one of my essential objectives.[425]

Peck evidently wanted audiences of developing nations to see themselves in this film. This is an inherently political decision because it encourages these audiences in the developing world to question their own "historical realities," as Watson phrases it in the earlier citation.

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[424] Ibid
[425] Ibid

Peck's remarks about this screening also indicate another aspect of his political motivation in making the film. He clearly disapproves of the disparity in the level of onscreen representation of African and Caribbean peoples. Consequently, his impulse to produce these films derives from a desire to reduce this inequity. His film adds to the growing library of films that privilege images of the underrepresented.

According to actor Eric Ebouaney, witnessing this process of identification was a "high point" for Peck and himself because of the positive response it generated. After several West African screenings, the actor divulged:

> I felt a very warm response, as if we were opening a door to what Africa might have been if Africans themselves had decided to take charge of their destiny.[426]

Despite the receptive mood of the audience created by this identificatory process and the political ramifications of such identification, Ebouany's remarks are rather bittersweet. He explains that these audiences enjoyed the aura of possibility generated by the film. The future that they glimpse in the films, however, is not their present reality. Hence, audience identification with the film is not an entirely positive phenomenon.

Additional observations by Ebouany develop the darker side of audience identification. Watching the film, Ebouaney notes that little has changed for formerly colonized Africans over the last forty years. He explains, "What I find sad is that things haven't changed. We still have a form of neocolonialism. The actors change but the situations remain the same.[427] The message of a flawed, illusory independence is a central part of Peck's political viewpoint in the film. Watson summarizes Peck's political viewpoint, writing:

> In building a sustained case against an international conspiracy that united disparate interests in marginalizing, brutalizing and coldly murdering a leader who would dance to their tune, Peck makes a powerful argument for the need to recall and critique betrayals and contradictions within the promise of

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[426] Ibid

[427] Ibid.

> independence if we are to understand both present tensions in many African nations and their prospects for a less dictatorial, egalitarian, and enfranchised future (Watson 234).

As Watson explains, one of Peck's principal political objectives in the film is to foreground the failings of independence in order to encourage a local critical response to previous historical accounts and promote dialogue for future change.

Having examined the two films on Lumumba, Peck's political orientation is far more evident. The circumstances of the screenings, combined with his own remarks, reveal that his political orientation is characterized by a revisionist agenda. He reconstructs past events in order to criticize the errors made by foreign governments, promote identification amongst the developing world, and counteract inequalities in representation.

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Martinican & Guadeloupan Films

I. WHY CHRISTIAN LARA AND EUZHAN PALCY?

Christian Lara and Euzhan Palcy began their filmmaking careers in the 1970's. They are unquestionably the two most accomplished Martinican and Guadeloupan directors, completing more than seventeen films between the two of them. Both have received awards for their work from FESPACO, the annual Ouagadougou Panafrican Film and Television Festival in Burkina Faso, but it is Palcy who is continually in demand at premier festivals and conferences across the globe.[428] In 2001, Roger Ebert presented her the Sojourner Truth Award at the Cannes Film Festival; she serves as an official Patron of the annual Images of Black Women Film Festival in London; and in July 2009, she earned the Award of Honor at the Caribbean Tales Film Festival in Toronto, Canada.

For both directors, much of the attention and acclaim they have received is due to their commitment to depict distinctly French Caribbean subject matter. Similar to their counterparts Charles Najman and Raoul Peck discussed in Chapter three, Palcy and Lara make specific film choices to foreground their island's historical events, sites, popular and public figures. Their cultural and historical references include the Guadeloupan

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[428] Palcy's awards: *Rue Cases-nègres* (1983) won the Public Award at the FESPACO (Ouagadougou Panafrican Film and Television Festival), Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival, Best First Work at the César Awards; Siméon (1992) won the Silver Raven from the Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Film, Best Director Golden Senghor from Ouagadougou Film Festival, Special Jury Prize from the Brussels Film Festival, Prix de la Jeunesse from the Milan Film Festival, Ban zil Kreol Award from the Montreal Film Festival; and *A Dry white Season* (1990) won the Orson Welles Prize for Special Cinematic Achievement from the Political Film Society; Sojourner Truth Award presented to her by Roger Ebert at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival; Patron of Images of white Women Film Festival; Award of Honor, Guest speaker, Caribbean Tales Film Festival Toronto Canada, July 2009;
Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_FESPACO_award_winners;
http://www.filmreference.com/Directors-Mi-Pe/Palcy-Euzhan.html;
http://www.imagesofwhitewomen.com/2009/About%20Us.htm;
http://www.imagesofwhitewomen.com/2009/About%20Us.htm;
http://www.creativeindustriesexchange.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=103&Itemid=71
Lara's award: *Sucre Amer* won the Paul Robeson Award at the FESPACO (Ouagadougou Panafrican Film and Television Festival).
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_FESPACO_award_winnersctor

Revolt of 1802; slavery and its societal impact; the appearance, espousal, and controversy surrounding *Négritude*; the political legacy of Aimé Césaire; *departmentalization*; and the contemporary relationship between these *départements* (or states) and France.

Although these references and the manner in which they are represented differs in their films, both Palcy and Lara pursue the same shared objective: to reinterpret and re-present the past in order to convey the problematic aspects of contemporary French Caribbean society. In an effort to engage with French Caribbean culture, history, and contemporary issues, both directors foreground the interworkings of memory.

II. CHRISTIAN LARA: BACKGROUND & CRITICISM

Christian Lara was born on the island of Guadeloupe in 1939.[429] As he succinctly informed African scholar Mbye Cham, "I was born in Guadeloupe. I grew up in Africa. I worked as a journalist in Paris, and I make films" (Cham 280). Film scholar Lieve Spaas discloses slightly more details about Lara's life, writing that Lara was indeed a trained journalist working for well-known French newspaper, *Le Figaro,* when, at the age of twenty-nine, his released his first film.[430] Driven by a self-professed love of Guadeloupe and the lack of "commercial Antillean cinema," Lara directed *Lorsque l'herbe* (*When the Grass*) (1968), a thirty minute film that "pleads for a return to the land and criticizes the mechanization of labor" (Cham 180; Spass 117). The film went on to represent France at the 1968 Tunisian film festival in Carthages: *Journées de Carthage* (Silou 39).

Although Osange Silou credits this work as the first French Caribbean film, the film was not set there (Silou 13). Before shooting one in the Antilles, Lara directed several more films set in France: *Les Infidèles* (1972); *Un Amour de Sable* (1977); *Bouches en Folie* (1977); *Déchaînement Charnel* (1978). Lara shot his first feature length work in the Antilles in 1979, entitled *Coco la fleur, candidat*. Silou indicates that

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[430] Unlike U.S. newspapers, metropolitan French newspapers are not impartial. *Le Figaro* is generally recognized as a more conservative news source, whereas *La Libération* for instance, is more leftist.

Lara collaborated with the Antillean production company, *Carib Productions*, in the making of this ninety-minute film shot on a 35 millimeter camera.[431] The plot takes place in the Antilles and features Antillean actors whose dialogue in the film is predominantly in Creole.[432] Summarizing the plot of this film, Spaas writes that "it shows an electoral campaign in Guadeloupe in which a Guadeloupan man named Coco la fleur is asked to stand for election for strategic purposes. However, when he discovers how much publicity the campaign offers, he seizes the opportunity to voice the people's grievances" (Spaas 117). According to Cham, the film represented "workers agitations in Guadeloupe" with a "pro-independence nationalist" slant (Cham 21). Aside from its historical importance as one of the first French Caribbean films shot in the Antilles by an Antillean director, it was also the first film of its kind to be screened to local audiences (Spass 117).

Since the release of this film, Lara has since founded a production house, *Guadeloupe Films Compagnie*, and directed thirteen additional films, among them *Adieu foulards* (1981), which portrays "the problems of challenges of Antillean musicians in Paris" (Cham 255); *Une Glace Avec Deux Boules* (*A Friend as a Birthday Present*) (1982);[433] and *Black* (1989), which follows "the adventures of a troupe of black actors performing in Africa."[434] Neither the New York Times or the *Complete Index to World Film Since 1895* indicate where Lara filmed *Chap'la* (1977) and *Cette Sacrée Chabine* (1992), however, given *Chap'la*'s description as "a tropical detective story, a comedy about the commercial bourgeoisie of the islands," it was most likely shot in the Antilles (Cham 255).[435] Lara, as we will see, most assuredly shot the two films *Mamito* (1979/80)

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[431] http://www.rfo.fr/infos/dossiers/le-cinema-antillais_99.html

[432] (In my view, wrongly categorized as French according to the *New York Times* and the *Complete Index to World Film Since1895.)*[432] http://www.rfo.fr/infos/dossiers/le-cinema-antillais_99.html

[433] I have not been able to see this film or locate a synopsis of its content.

[434] http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/431248/white/overview

[435] *Complete Index to World Film Since 1895* is available in print and on-line: http://www.citwf.com/indexx.asp

and *Vivre libre ou mourir* (1980/81) as well as the two films examined in this chapter in the French Caribbean.

Mamito is significant because it was the first of Lara's film to draw significant local attention. Cham writes that in the film *Mamito* "is considered by some to be Lara's best work" (22). In the film:

> The eponymous heroine comes to an awareness of the socio-economic and political deprivation of and challenges for the people of Karukera, the traditional Caribe name for Guaeloupe, through her association with a militant trade union activist who also advocates independence from France (Cham 22).

Given *Mamito*'s political storyline, it is logical that Lara considers it a part of his "political trilogy," included alongside *Coco la fleur, Candidat* and *Vivre libre ou mourir* (Cham 255).[436] *Vivre libre ou mourir* differs from the others because instead of portraying current events, it depicts Louis Delgrès and Joseph Ignace, heroes of the Guadeloupan rebellion. Consequently, it can be considered as the precursor to the two films analyzed in this chapter.

Tracing the varied content and genres of Lara's films demonstrates his breadth of interest and highlights the impressive quantity of projects he has directed. It is an admirable feat to have raised sufficient funds to gather the magnitude of resources needed for these early French Caribbean films. By doing so, Lara has directly contributed to the development of Antillean cinema. According to fellow filmmaker Daniel Boukman:

> It's Christian Lara, who by his know-how, his mastery of the production and commercialization process and his success (as much in the Antilles as in the Antillean population in France) has opened the door of Antillean cinema. What gives his feature films *Coco la fleur, Candidat, Mamito*, and *Vivre libre ou mourir*

[436] As discussed in Chapter three, the release of the three films coincided with political unrest in the French Caribbean.

> exemplary character is the relationship that the author created between the social reality and onscreen reality (Boukman *Antilles* 96).[437]

Boukman pays homage to a director who has managed, in the most unlikely and difficult circumstances, to become an expert in the production and commercialization of film and to make socially conscious films. Furthermore, as a prolific director, Lara has been in a position to create opportunities for local actors. Mbye Cham writes that he has been "instrumental in introducing young Caribbean talent to cinema and aiding in their development" (Cham 255). Aside from providing work for local actors, Lara has also made a positive impact on local community by assisting in the launch of the musical group, Kassav, which "popularized zouk music locally and internationally" (Cham 255). This is not a minor contribution, given the eventual widespread popularity of the group. As Haitian scholar Elizabeth McAlister explains:

> The mid-eighties saw the spectacular rise of zouk with the band Kassav, comprised of members from Guadeloupe and Martinique who now live in Paris. Kassav made over twenty albums from 1985 to 1990, some of which went gold. Their music was imported and consumed enthusiastically by transnational Francophone youth culture in Dominica, Saint Lucia, Haiti, the United States, Canada, Paris, Belgium, Switzerland, and West Africa (McAlister 195).

In sum, Lara's effort to improve the French Caribbean cinematic landscape, remain committed to represent significant social issues on screen, lend support and provide opportunity to develop local talent, and play an important part in the success of the zouk phenoms of Kassav all corroborate Cham's assessment that "Lara is a force to reckon with in Antillean cinema (Cham 255)."

Nevertheless, Lara's extensive filmmaking experience has not shielded him from criticism. In fact, Lara is the most problematic filmmaker researched in this study.

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[437] "c'est Christian Lara, qui, par son savoir-faire sa maîtrise du processus de fabrication et de commercialisation et le succès remporté (tant aux Antilles que dans l'émigration en France), a ouvert la voie d'un cinéma antillais de fiction. Ce qui sans doute donne à ses longs métrages *Coco la fleur, Candidat*, *Mamito*, and *Vivre libre ou mourir* un caractère exemplaire, c'est la relation que l'auteur a su établir entre réel social et réel filmique"

Criticism of Lara tends to fall into one of two categories: concerns regarding his vision and/or representation. Beginning with the most mild critique, fellow Guadeloupan and accomplished novelist Maryse Condé stated that, after the release of *Coco la fleur, candidat*, Lara has not since reach his potential as a director. She claims that "he generated a fair amount of hope with *Coco la fleur Candidat*, but he hasn't really kept his promise" (Pfaff 117).[438] Less vague than Condé, Lara's contemporary, Euzhan Palcy, also criticizes Lara by comparing their differing gender-based perspectives:

> We are very different, Christian Lara and me, we do not at all have the same vision, the same way of looking and speaking about Antillean things. Each of us has our own opinion. Besides, I do not think that a male director and a female director film in the same way. I believe that women are more detail-orientated and at the same time, perhaps, to say less about things, to show them less like that 'boom! This is not to underestimate male directors, certain of them have in themselves a strong feminine insight, sometimes mastered, sometimes it makes a sort of agreeable felicitous mixture (Audé 89-90).[439]

Although Palcy refrains from solely discussing Lara by broadening her discussion to include a male/female director comparison, her point about Lara is nevertheless quite pronounced. She does not see any similarity between herself and Lara's vision and manner of addressing French Caribbean issues. Even though Palcy's criticism of Lara glosses over the fact that different visions can positively impact Antillean film by encouraging dialogue, debate, and creativity, being perceived as sharing nothing in common with the foremost Martinican director calls Lara's talent into question.

In addition to Lara's vision, the second major difficulty critics have with Lara's work is related to representation. Film scholar Lieve Spaas finds fault with Lara's

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[438] Spellings of this title vary slightly in punctuation.

[439] "Nous sommes très différents, Christian Lara et moi, nous n'avons pas du tout la même optique, la même façon de voir et de parler des choses antillaises. Chacun a sa sensibilité. Je ne pense d'ailleurs pas qu'un homme cinéaste et une femme cinéaste filment de la même façon. Je crois que les femmes ont davantage le souci du détail et en même façon, peut-être, de moins dire les choses, de moins les montrer comme ça…'boum!' Ce n'est pas pour sous-estimer les hommes cinéastes, certains ont en eux une grande part de féminité, quelquefois maitrisé, quelquefois cela fait une sorte de mélange heureux."

choices in representation in his progression as a director. Spaas contends: "Although Lara's later films usually deal with Caribbean issues, they have failed to retain the early aesthetic authenticity. His more recent *Sucre amer* (1997), a historical fiction, borrows its style from French theatre rather than from the Caribbean oral tradition" (117). In this quote, Spaas notices a rupture in Lara's filmic choices. The way in which Spaas describes this rupture reveals that he does not approve of Lara's move from oral or authentically Caribbean style to borrowed theatrical influences. Though other critics might not agree with Spaas' use of the term authentic, his core argument that Lara has is supported by several examples provided by Martinican director Daniel Boukman. In spite of his positive comments provided earlier, Boukman has also articulated concerns about representation in Lara's films.

Boukman published a critique of Lara's work in a special edition of the journal *Le tiers monde en films* (*Third World Cinema*) in 1982. Years later, he contributed a second article on this subject to Mbye Cham's text, *Ex-Iles*. In neither article does he refer to a rupture in Lara's style from oral to theatrical like Spaas or rely on a gender-based contrast similar to Palcy. Instead, Boukman's main issue with Lara's work stems from what he views as a problematic representation of events in Antillean political or cultural spheres. In the earlier quote, Boukman praises the fact that Lara represents Antillean society in his films. However, as his argument continues, Boukman believes that the three films in Lara's aforementioned political trilogy are actually "distorted mirrors" (*Antilles* 96).[440] Boukman continues his critique by outlining exactly where Lara, in each film of the political trilogy, fails to justly represent social reality:

> The political situation is only partially and partly reproduced in *Coco la fleur, candidat* (1978). Christian Lara excludes in effect from his portrayal the nationalist forces: however, during the 1970's important fights took place under the direction of the Union of agricultural workers (UTA) and the Union of poor laborers in Guadeloupe which culminated in December 1973 at the constitution of

[440]"miroirs déformants"

> the General Union of Guadeloupan worker, the first union to have clearly taken a position for national independence (Boukman 96).[441]

According to Boukman, Lara makes a flagrant omission *Coco la fleur, candidat* because he did not choose to represent nationalist forces when they had such a significant presence in political conflict taking place on the island during this period. Boukman's criticism of Lara's interpretation of the past highlights the subjective nature of representing historical events, political issues, and the role of memory. In the case of *Mamito*, Boukman does not relate an omission per se. Lara does in fact include supporters for national independence in this film. However, Boukman argues that Lara represents them in a very troubling way:

> The pro-Independence supporters are portrayed like cheerful jokers among which one notes the presence of a sort of tropical clown who steals from the church offering, and meanwhile the union leader is wearing a tee-shirt emblazoned with the acronym U.S.A.! And the final sequence, when audience sees this leader declare that we must work toward a 'Guadeloupan state connected to France,' is unequivocal: it is the personal preference of the director or a dramatic effect wanted for political reasons. (To this day, no Antillean group or political party has adopted this stance) (Boukman 96-97).[442]

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[441]"Ainsi la situation politique n'est-ce que partiellement et partialement reproduite dans *Coco la fleur, candidat* (1978). Christian Lara exclut en effet de son tableau les forces nationalistes: pourtant, au cours des années soixante-dix d'importantes luttes se sont déroulées sous la direction de l'Union des travailleurs agricoles (UTA) et de l'Union des paysans pauvres de Guadeloupe, qui ont abouti en décembre 1973 à la constitution de l'Union générale des travailleurs guadeloupéens, premier syndicat à avoir pris clairement position pour l'indépendance nationale."

[442]"Les indépendantistes y sont figurés comme de joyeux drilles parmi lesquels on note la présence d'une sorte de clown tropical qui pille des troncs d'église tandis que le leader syndicaliste porte un tee-shirt orné de sigles US! Et la séquence finale aucours de laquelle on voit le leader, en question déclarer qu'il faut s'acheminer vers 'un Etat guadeloupéen associé à la France' ne laisse pas d'être équivoque: est-ce l'option personnelle du réalisateur ou un effet d'amplification voulu pour un mot d'ordre politique. (A ce jour, aucun groupe ou parti antillais n'a opté pour un tel mot d'ordre)."

With such a bizarre if not contradictory portrayal in the films of pro-Independence supporters, Boukman demonstrates how and why Lara's films "lose some of their impact and their credibility" (Boukman 96).[443]

In the final film of the Lara's political trilogy, Boukman continues to question Lara's credibility in accurately and effectively representing Guadeloupan history. Similar to the two films analyzed in this chapter, this first film was "directed to honor the memory of hero who has for a long time not been well-known, Ignace" (Boukman 97).[444] Lara's portrayal of this character, however, falls well short of Boukman's expectations. He writes:

> It is to be feared that that this film does not highlight the valor, on the contrary, those who fought so much so that this exceptional man is represented in a mediocre way: questionable choice of the actor, bad directing of the actors, episodic appearance of the character stuck in the witness stand while speaking with disconcerting linguistic flatness while the other protagonists, even his lawyers, subjugate him to lyrical argumentation (Boukman 97).[445]

As admirable as Lara's effort may have been, Boukman failed to emotionally connect with the character of Ignace. He stresses the chasm between Lara's intentions and the final product. Eventually, Boukman refines his observation of this rift, surmising that Lara is "a filmmaker with a certain ingenuity, with noble intentions, undoubtedly patriotic at heart. But in cinema as in many other areas, best intentions are not sufficient to produce a quality product" (Boukman 382).

Toward the end of the article, Boukman returns to his analysis of *Vivre Libre ou Mourir*. His reasons for Lara's failure to produce a superior film echo, for the most part, his earlier appraisal:

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[443]"perd de son impact et de sa crédibilité"

[444]"réalisé pour honorer la mémoire d'un héros longtemps méconnu, Ignace"

[445]"il est à craindre que ce film ne mette pourtant en valeur, au contraire, ceux qui l'ont combattu, tant cet homme exceptionnel nous est médiocrement montré: choix discutable du comédien, mauvaise direction d'acteurs, apparition épisodique du personnage toujours enfoncé dans le box accusés sont d'une platitude linguistique déconcertante alors que les autres protagonistes, même ses avocats, subjuguent par l'envolée lyrique de leurs prestations."

> Lara's desire to honor the memory of this exemplary man [Ignace] is conveyed through the statements of the filmmaker, the (central) place given to the figure in the film poster, and the fact the film rests entirely on the trial of this hero. However, the final film product insidiously betrays this project on account of a number of awkward elements. These include the conception of characters, casting of actors, directing actors, framing and dialogue (Boukman 382).

In this citation, Boukman disparages Lara's film for the numerous elements that contribute to a deficient, unsophisticated representation of political issues. Cham expounds upon the unfortunate effects of poor representation. He relates that Lara's "work has been hailed as pioneering, but it is mostly criticized as imitative and unoriginal with a tendency to reinforce the exotica of Euro-American productions about the Caribbean and to unconsciously subvert its avowed militant pro-Antillean pretentions" (Cham 255).

Boukman and Cham's criticism highlights the conundrum facing critics when examining certain of Lara's films. This dilemma is best characterized by the acute conflict between his rhetoric and his aesthetic. That is to say, Lara has articulated his desire to revisit and valorize Guadeloupan history and to inspire political change, but critics have not been favorable to the ways in which Lara has carried out these objectives. As a result, this Guadeloupan director continues to straddle a precarious position in French Caribbean filmmaking.

This severe criticism must be unpacked. Can these remarks be taken at face value, or is there another angle from which to examine the films so as to shed light on the concerns over Lara's vision and choices in representation? Although his research stems from a different problematic, film scholar Bill Nichols offers relevant insight into this question. In his article on Iranian film, he examines the critical expectations of non-Western cinema. He argues that film critics who analyze non-Hollywood film seek to recover "the strange as familiar." That is to say, one way critics make sense of non-Western films is to find commonalities in their style. As a result of the common critical

process of formulating generalizations about these films, critics establish a set of expected characteristics in these and future non-Western films. Evidence of these characteristics is found in the film's style, or as Nichols calls it, "form" (Nichols 18).[446] These characteristics then evolve into the "acknowledgment of an international film style (formal innovation; psychologically complex, ambiguous, poetic, allegorical, or restrained characterizations; rejection of Hollywood norms for the representation of time and space; lack of clear resolution or narrative closure; and so on)" (Nichols 17).

One consequence of this critical strategy is that it has lead to a sphere of expectation for non-Western filmmakers. Critics have created an informal code of production filmmakers, consisting of, but not limited to the presence of didactic, allegorical, anti-capitalist thematic material; the employment of non-professional actors to create more "authentic" interaction and representation; and the dismissal of what are universally seen as stalwarts of Hollywood cinema (sex, violence, expensive special effects, and the classic happy ending, etc.).[447]

In regards to French Caribbean film, one contributing factor to the precariousness of Lara's position has been the fact that he does not abide by this informal code. The presence of Western influenced techniques such as professional actors, ornate costumes, and ostentatious special effects techniques in *Sucre Amer* and *1802, l'Epopée*

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[446]Nichols also outlines a second way of "recovering the strange as familiar" which has also structured and influenced my pursuit in this analysis: "the retrieval of insights or lessons about a different culture (often recuperated yet further by the simultaneous discovery of an underlying, crosscultural humanity)" (Nichols 18). This is a process he calls "inferring meaning." (Nichols 18). Although I do not ultimately discover this crosscultural humanity, I do attempt to infer and propose meaning and political implications of the set of films I examine by analyzing their form/structure.

[447]Having identified this code and its flaws, scholars such as Kenneth Harrow are writing against the debate over the notion of authenticity or an authentic rendering of historical events in film. Harrow argues that authenticity as a concept fails to acknowledge the "model of the divided subject, fundamental to all poststructuralist thinking" (Harrow xi-xii). Like Nichols, Harrow believes that this discussion has led to predetermined conclusions and rigid expectation of political engagement within a certain model that has limited analysis of filmic choices. In his book *Postcolonial African Cinema: From Political Engagement to Postmodernism* he aims instead "to make visible the presence of the camera in those shots so that we might begin to understand quite how important fantasy, desire, the gaze, and their inscriptions across the visual surface are in constructing an African cinematic order" (Harrow xv). Harrow examines subversive and groundbreaking films of directors like Sembene Ousmane and Jean-Pierre Bekolo to challenge these expectations.

Guadeloupéenne destabilizes assumptions about non-Western films. The critical dilemma created by the presence of these techniques has yet to be overcome. When faced with his films, is there an alternate perspective from which to analyze Lara's filmic choices? Is it possible to offer explanations for Lara's controversial aesthetic?

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *SUCRE AMER* (BITTER SUGAR, CHRISTIAN LARA, 1997) AND *1802, L'EPOPÉE GUADELOUPÉENNE* (1802, THE GUADELOUPAN EPIC, CHRISTIAN LARA, 2005)

The 1790's were a volatile period in Guadeloupan history. According to historian William Cormack, "On Guadeloupe, as elsewhere in the French West Indies, the Revolution undermined existing authority and provoked a struggle for power" (33). Following a counter-revolutionary rebellion led by the "planter-dominated Colonial Assembly," *petits blancs*, or small scale white farmers, joined forces with the mulattos to defeat the plantation owners and gain control of the island for the Republic in early 1793 (Cormack 33). Meanwhile, Britain (at war with France) attacked the islands and finally seized both Martinique and Guadeloupe in the spring of 1794. To fight off the British invasion, France enlisted the help of free blacks and ex-slaves. By 1802, however, Napoleon feared that the Guadeloupe and Martinique would stage a revolution as Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti had done successfully. Napoleon therefore decided to send additional forces to Guadeloupe (Klein 109, Heinl 100). General Antoine Richepance landed in Pointe-à-Pitre with 3,400 French soldiers on May 6, 1802 "with orders from Napoléon to reestablish slavery" (Moitt 127).

In light of Napoleon's catastrophic decision to reimpose slavery, the enslaved Guadeloupan population, under the leadership of a Louis Delgrès, "a mixed-race colonel born in Martinique" launched their own revolt (Moitt 128). According to Catherine Reinhardt, other major players in the revolt include Joseph Ignace and Palerme: "Delgrès's commanders who led factions of the army after it split to fight the French on several fronts to maximize its chances of success" (Moitt 128). Women and children also participated in the fighting, most notably, Mulâtresse Solitude, a pregnant female slave.

Reinhardt explains that "Mulâtresse Solitude is remembered for her tireless fight. Although she was pregnant she never ceased to abandon the cause of freedom until her capture and hanging" (Reinhardt 151). Historian Bernard Moitt writes that she fought on May 12, 1802, at "one of the major battles fought under the slave commander Palerme which took place at Dolé, an important post in the hands of the rebels" (Moitt 128). As a result of her bravery, Solitude "battled her way into history by participating in all the fighting" (Moitt 128).

The Guadeloupan rebellion lasted nearly the entire month of May. Towards the end of the month, the rebels suffered two major losses. Ignace and 675 followers perished on May 25th at Fort Bainbridge outside of the capital city. According to Moitt, "The fort proved easy to penetrate, and Ignace and the men and women he led became easy targets for a section of the French forces commanded by General Nicolas Gobert" (Moitt 129). Three days later, Delgrès and his faction lost the battle of Matouba at the Danglemont Plantation (130). Moitt writes that Delgrès and his followers spread gunpowder "along the approaches to the main entrance of the plantation" and "within firing range of his two defensive positions in the plantation Great House" (130). Then, "after shouts of 'vivre libre ou mourir!' (liberty or death) Delgrès and about five hundred men, women, and children were killed when the gunpowder exploded" (130). After the battle of Matouba and Delgrès suicide, France officially reinstituted slavery in July, 1802 (Moitt 130).

Although the revolt ended in defeat, as did a subsequent uprising twenty years later in Martinique, it exacerbated an already chaotic colonial period characterized by shifting alliances, Caribbean rebellions, and war among European powers (Williams 326).[448] Most importantly, though, it inspired heroic efforts that are at the center of Lara's two films.

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[448] Martinique 1776: 11,619 whites ; 77,268 slaves ; 2,892 free whites
Guadeloupe 1776: 13, 261 whites ; 85, 327 slaves
Haiti 1779 : 32,650 whites ; 249,098 slaves (6.5 :1 ; 6.4 :1 ; 7.5 :1Williams 106)

IV. ANALYSIS OF *SUCRE AMER* (BITTER SUGAR, CHRISTIAN LARA,1997) AND *1802, L'EPOPÉE GUADELOUPÉENNE* (1802, THE GUADELOUPAN EPIC, CHRISTIAN LARA, 2005)

A. Narrative Structure and cinematography of *Sucre Amer*

More than twenty years after the release of *Vivre libre ou mourir* (1980/81), Christian Lara returns to its principal theme, the Guadeloupan revolt of 1802, in his two recent films, *Sucre Amer* and *1802, l'Epopée Guadeloupéenne*. Although Lara released these two films separately, they are stylistic replicas of one another; the lighting, dominant colors, and costumes are unchanged from one film to the next. Oftentimes, the films also feature the same actors and setting. From the historical events surrounding the rebellion, in both films Lara chooses to represent several major battles, the relationship amongst the officers, the enthusiastic participation of the Guadeloupan people (male and female), and the French decision to send troops in anticipation of Guadeloupan resistance to the reinstitution of slavery. Yet, the films differ in one substantial way. *Sucre Amer*, whose title ostensibly references the entwined history of sugar production and slavery in the New World, does not focus solely on the historical period of the rebellion. The narrative alternates between three settings: the 1802 battle, the modern-day imaginary trial of Joseph Ignace, and the deliberations in a jury room. The trial involves additional historic and invented characters and a secondary plotline meant to deliver a scathing indictment of colonial France. The alternating depiction of these three settings creates a chronological, but discontinuous and episodic narrative structure that continues for the duration of the film.

During the opening sequence of Lara's film *Sucre Amer*, Lara introduces this structure and foreshadows the conflict that will be at the very heart of plot. First, he briefly films the Guadeloupan context preceding the revolt. He begins with a close-up, tracking shot of horse legs galloping through water. As the horses pull a carriage, the slow-motion of the racing hooves, with water spraying in every direction, infuses the moment with controlled urgency and suspense. Why are the horses sprinting? Who is riding in the carriage and where are they headed? This urgency is also conveyed through

sound. The extra-diegetic rapid rhythm of beating drums accompanies the images of the horse and carriage. The sight of this dated means of transportation immediately displaces the viewer from modern-day to the past and begins to establish the time period in which the film is set.

To further establish the time period, the camera cuts several times to young Guadeloupan girls dancing the *menuet* (minuet), an elegant and formal French court dance and musical composition that originated in seventeenth century France.[449] The audience is composed of well-dressed Guadeloupan figures, presumably members of the hierarchical Mulatto society that have adopted French colonial tastes and habits. Despite the decorum and elegance of the affair, this scene evokes a controversial trend in Mulatto society. The imitation of French music and clothing suggests cooperation and support of French rule, and by extension, the enslavement of fellow Guadeloupans. The melody of the *menuet*, layered over the sound of the drumbeat also has an underlying connotation. It establishes a societal division that dominates the Guadeloupan population: the Afro-Antillean cultural presence is established through the drum beat and the influence of colonial France is heard through the *menuet*. The tempo of the drum beat increases, heightening the drama and intensity of these revealing introductory images. Next, the camera retracts, becoming significantly higher than the horse-drawn carriage below. When the image is finally fixed, an establishing shot of the carriage remains in view as the title of the film appears. The speed of the carriage is no longer in slow motion. In the distance, against a bare landscape, the carriage is an even more obvious symbol of a bygone era in a rural environment. Along with the dress of those present at the dance recital, the carriage conveys that the narrative begins in Guadeloupe at the turn of the nineteenth century.[450]

Abruptly, the scene changes when a gavel, a metonymy for a courtroom, strikes a judge's bench. Next, a jury files into a modern-day jury room. The appearance of the

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[449] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/minuet

[450] Also, as I will explain in a detailed example later, he also uses close-up during tense moments to emphasize the emotional state of a characters.

jurors indicates that, in addition to being a racially and socioeconomically diverse group, they belong to different eras and hail from a variety of homelands. In the courtroom, Joseph Ignace is on trial for treason against France. The prosecution relates his three crimes: "The man who appears before the court is called Ignace, a freed slave who has become a commander in the French army. He is accused of high treason because of his rebellion against the Republic's army after Napoleon Bonaparte restored the Code Noir, an edict dealing with slavery issues, and slavery itself," establishing a "separatist government," and of fighting France's army.

After the prosecutor makes her opening remarks, the sound chimes in as the camera hits Ignace. The next image is a close-up of Marie, a juror, emphasizing her significance and responsibility in the ruling. The defendant's lawyer, an older distinguished Guadeloupan, then states that he will present "the same events but a different story." His opening argument concludes with the statement that Ignace is the "victim of historical manipulation." This remark represents the political orientation of the film: an artistic rendering of events and figures that will right the wrongs of recorded history. The final salient words of the scene come from the judge, who instructs the jury, "A Man's honor is at stake. You must clear his name or find him guilty. Your duty is to separate the facts from what may be imaginary to reach a unanimous verdict."

Henceforth throughout the film, Lara consistently juxtaposes the past and the present, designating the three key settings in the film: the reconstruction of the failed Guadeloupan rebellion, the courtroom where the trial of Ignace takes place, and the jury room where the eight jurors must reach a unanimous verdict. The first of these settings depicts the first emancipation of the Guadeloupan slave population, news of which reaches Guadeloupe on June 7th, 1794. The French shrewdly enacted the emancipation to encourage the enlistment of local help in the fight against the British.[451] To correspond to the history, Lara films the French arming and outfitting Guadeloupans. After which, he returns again to the courtroom and Ignace's wife begins her testimony. Describing the

[451] http://www.schudak.de/timelines/guadeloupe1493-1946.html

emancipation, she says, "whites and blacks made peace, then we got to work...It was like a celebration." To present the emancipation and short-lived camaraderie between French and freed Guadeloupans, Lara inserts a scene in which Ignace defends a French soldier from a British attack and cradles the dead white man who carried the official emancipation document.

Soon thereafter, Lara again returns to the courtroom where an animated French Lieutenant takes the stand and declares that "the land, the heat, and the rum," caused the French Governor Lacrosse to poorly direct the newly freed country.[452] With Guadeloupe reverting to its official status as a colony, Lacrosse attempted to arrest and imprison certain black officers who had served the French against the British, including Ignace. The Guadeloupans arrest Lacrosse instead, depicted in a lengthy flashback. As these flashbacks continue throughout the film, Lara demonstrates his broad knowledge of Guadeloupan history. His knowledge not only provides a panorama of figures involved in the rebellion, but also begins to slowly repair the historical "manipulation" of Guadeloupan rebels mentioned by the defense.

As a corollary to this discussion, the flashbacks that constitute the reconstruction of the rebellion are atypical in a fundamental way. Generally speaking, "in its most common form, flashback is signaled when an older character's memory of the past leads to a cut to a scene or series of scenes representing that past" (Satterlee 64). For example, if an older character flashes back to his/her life many years before, the director will maintain the verisimilitude of the film by ensuring that this character looks and behaves in a way that is appropriate to the younger age. In flashbacks in Lara's films, however, the characters that appear in flashback are the same age and wear the same attire in both settings: the 1802 rebellion and the contemporary trial. For example, Lara's main character, Ignace, is not featured as an old man in one era and as his younger self in this film's flashbacks. In other words, although the trial seemingly takes place two hundred

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[452] Ibid.
Lacrosse, who arrived in Guadeloupe with his aide-de-camp Louis Delgrès on May 29th, 1801, had been instructed to reinstitute slavery according to the French 1799 Constitution.

years after the rebellion, Ignace looks exactly the same in either setting. In fact, every character is depicted as him/herself, at one age and with one appearance, whether he/she appears during a flashback or in the contemporary scenes. All characters from Guadeloupe's past that have been integrated into the modern setting of the courtroom dress and behave exactly as they would have during their actual lifetime.

According to Abrams, juxtapositions, like the ones Lara has created, result "in new meanings, produced by the viewer on seeing the montage of shots that are pieced together" (Abrams 109). Because Lara deviates from the recognizable flashback formula, his alternation in shots results in the creation of new, unexpected meanings for the audience and in his search of reassessing the past. Mainly, Lara establishes an atemporal, blurred space that allows for a maximized impact of the past on the present day. Through this technique, the significance of Lara's film becomes apparent. Because such a trial is implausible given that Ignace perished in the fighting and other characters would be long dead by the time of this trial, the trial is in effect a complete fabrication put in place for the singular purpose of facilitating the communication of Lara's political argument.

Moreover, the narrative structure also enables Lara to educate the audience about the current prevalence of racism. For instance, after a psychiatrist takes the stand later in the film, Lara films the jury room where the members deliberate the difference between whites and blacks, particularly white and black men. The black writer and head juror Privat D'Anglemont asks Marie, the young French woman, to explain her opinion of the difference between white and black men.[453] Stereotypes are raised when Nolivos states differences in color and odor. D'Anglemont then interjects, calling attention to how anatomical differences became the "defense of racism."[454] Further racist statements surface in the courtroom when a self-proclaimed eyewitness named Duboyer describes the black rebels as zombies. He accuses Louis Delgrès of commanding the rebels to burn

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[453]The deference to Marie will be discussed later in the analysis. In this case, asking Marie for her opinion about men definitely conveys Lara's assumptions about this character's sexuality.
[454] "défendant même du racisme."

everything and kill all the whites. The jurors, in particular Marie, take note in the deliberation room that Duboyer could not have seen anything. As Lara adds testimony from Ignace's mother, Ignace, Rougier (the man who killed Ignace), Victor Schoelcher, and Empress Josephine, he continues to frequently cross-cut between the courtroom and jury room to convey, in quick order, the jury's responses to the remarks made on the stand. Although juries do not typically deliberate after every testimony, this narrative structure overrides realism to create a back-and-forth dialogue.

Hence, as past events come to light over the course of the trial, they have an immediate impact on the impressions of the various jury members. In other words, past events progressively influence the thinking and attitude of the jury. For example, at the end of the film, the trial is almost over and the lawyers give their final arguments. The defense recounts the history of slavery and the lack of official apology from France. He demands that the past be "a clean slate…with above all a recognized importance…it's our obligation to remember."[455] The battle scenes reach their climax and in a flashback to the end of the rebellion, the French forces defeat the Guadeloupans and Ignace is assassinated in battle. Immediately, Lara cuts back to the jury. They sit silent and downcast in the jury room. Abruptly, the film ends and the credits roll. Even though the trial is based upon an imaginary pretense, that a fallen hero could stand trial for a trumped up charge, the jurors have an emotional reaction to his death.

No verdict in the courtroom is ever given. Snatching Ignace's fate from the French legal system, Lara indicates that the jury, representative of Guadeloupan society, is responsible for his legacy. At its core, Lara's film engages in this retelling of the past in order to demonstrate the heroism of Guadeloupan rebels, propose a re-presentation of major events in Guadeloupan history, condemn France for its colonial history, and illustrate France's present involvement in modern-day Guadeloupe.

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[455]"une table rase…avec surtout une dignité reconnue….C'est notre devoir de mémoire."

B. *Mise-en-scène* of *Sucre Amer*

Given that there are two time periods depicted in *Sucre Amer*, the *mise-en-scène* varies depending on context. In all of the scenes involving the rebellion, the *mise-en-scène* is a studied application of factual elements, from locations to clothing, hair, accessories, and weapons, in a closely replicated timeline of verifiable events and probable interactions. In both the courtroom and the deliberation room, the appearance of the characters takes precedence over the background. Costumes dominate this invented space, an authentic and lackluster replication of a judicial environment. Regardless of the context, Lara purposefully configures each image in order to lay bare his political reading of the past and Guadeloupan culture.

From the onset of the beginning of the film, this effort is evident. The racing carriage, *menuet* music, and the appearance of the characters comprising the audience of the small outdoor concert help to establish the first setting of the film: Guadeloupe prior to the arrival of Richepance. The elegance of the costumes, the peacefulness and seclusion of the setting, the choice of music, and the composed behavior of the audience strongly suggest the espousal of French tastes by the Mulatto population.

Multiple elements of another early image in the film further demonstrate the extent to which French customs are obeyed. For instance, prior to the separation of Guadeloupan officers, they all gather to dine at Pélage's home. The officers wear French uniforms, the women wear European style evening gowns, and they all dine on fine china. To complete these elegant surroundings, there is an ornate chandelier hangs above the table and a beautiful *clavecin* (harpsichord) in the room. During the dinner, the guests are attended to by a cluster of black servants. The formality of this room is also indicated by the staging of the table in the dining room. The camera shoots slightly from above, elongating the table and allowing for all of the guests to be seen. Lastly, the guests, the table, and the circulating servants are all doubled in a mirror that hangs on the back wall of the dining room.

The mirror, capturing these surroundings and the interaction between black officers and servants, alludes to a rather unsettling fact. The customs and tastes of these Creole officers mirror those of French colonial society. Most notable amongst these customs and tastes is that black are forced into servitude, even by members of their own race and ethnic background. In other words, through the *mise-en-scène*, Lara communicates a derogatory representation of the Guadeloupan officers, outfitted by the French and loyal to their cause. Soon thereafter, Ignace disrupts this portrayal, abandoning the dinner with the servants.

When the film transitions to the contemporary courtroom, not all of the characters present in the scenes logically correspond to the setting. The costumes and hair styles are the first visual indication of a clear disconnect between the setting and presence of certain jurors. In light of their tailored suits, modern haircuts and twentieth-century, legal vernacular, the lawyers and judge are figures consistent with contemporary setting. Yet, Ignace, a number of jurors, and later, a majority of those testifying in the trial remain at odds with the setting. He and others were brightly colored ensembles made of fine fabrics, and even Nolivos and Saint Georges wear wigs.

One of the most salient moments of the *mise-en-scène* involving the visual presence of a character is Josephine's entrance in the courtroom. When she enters to the courtroom, a flock of Antillean photographers hover around her, appearing eager to take pictures of an attractive and coquettish woman. Lara employs a long, full body shot in this take that allows for the cluster of Josephine's "admirers" to be seen. Two young Antillean girls stand in the foreground, preemptively covering her path with flower petals. This type of shot and the crowded, luminous *mise-en-scène* of her initial appearance suggest that the Antilleans welcome her as one of their own. It is an important filmic choice that actually allows the viewer to witness the entirety of the extravagant fanfare. Once she finally takes her seat, there is a startling reversal in this portrayal. Her dialogue reveals her racist beliefs and her cruel, arrogant nature. As Josephine tumbles from her regal station, it becomes evident that Lara designed every

element of this *mise-en-scène* involving Josephine to participate in his attack on colonial France.

By comparing all of the costuming and behavior of the characters present in the courtroom, it is clear that Lara juxtaposes the contemporary and historical figures in an invented space. The courtroom and jury room themselves are not striking. The standard arrangement of the two rooms (tables, chairs, judge's bench, jury seating), the wood furniture, the adequate lighting, and modern amenities (plastic blinds, electricity, microphones, headsets) create a bland, but well-defined setting. It is the characters and the dialogue that Lara foregrounds in this environment. Through the juxtaposition of these characters in this setting, Lara implicitly suggests that the rebellion and the historical figures associated with it remain highly relevant the identity and future of modern Guadeloupans.

The contemporary relevance of the rebellion is also verbally articulated and visually expressed. During a recess from the trial, Ignace and his lawyer (never given a name) stand face to face in a prison. As the only two men in the scene, this image serves to define their private interaction and the significance of this moment. In a tense conversation, the lawyer encourages Ignace to take the stand. Ignace resists, saying, "I am not a hero. I am a black man from Guadeloupe, that's all."[456] The lawyer responds: "For us, your trial is important."[457] In this statement, Lara expresses the idea that Ignace's heroism resonates with living Guadeloupans because it satisfies a desire for self-knowledge, cultural pride, and historic preservation. Essentially, the lawyer is urging Ignace to testify because it brings this heroism to life.

As the conversation continues, the *mise-en-scène* reinforces its serious content. Filmed in medium to close-up shots, Ignace spins twice around the attorney, hovering close to him as powerful music accompanies their dialogue. This music is similar to that which is played during the film's battle scenes and is consistently used to intensify the

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[456] "Je ne suis pas un héros, Je suis un nègre de la Guadeloupe c'est tout."
[457] "Pour nous, votre procès est important."

importance of their conversation. Finally, Ignace agrees to testify and explains his participation in the rebellion: "Respect and identity…to give Guadeloupans confidence in themselves. I wanted to escape slavery to build something."[458] The conversation between the men implicitly advances Lara's perspective on the rebellion. Even though the rebellion was not successful, its existence enables Lara to depict the Guadeloupans' desire for freedom and their bravery in attempting to attain it.

Yet, despite the noble message of the lawyer and the favorable and detailed portrayal of the rebellion, there are multiple techniques of the *mise-en-scène* that, upon initial viewing, could detract from a positive impression of this film. For instance, there are repeated instances of endless death scenes, exaggerated dialogue, grandiose personalities, and overt symbolism.[459] The manifestation of these choices must be addressed in order to make sense of Lara's project as a whole. Otherwise, they risk undermining his intent and clouding his message. Given the stereotypical nature of these techniques, one is forced to question their role and effectiveness in the innovative and intellectual framework established by the *Sucre Amer*'s narrative progression. There are two possible interpretations for these types of techniques. One, in attempting to bolster the emotional impact of the film, Lara has been caught in the trap of relying too heavily on clichés. For some, their overuse may detract from their political messages. On the other hand, there is a second interpretation of the epic battle scenes and dramatic acting: such intensification and excess unmistakably convey the heroism of the Guadeloupan figures, elevate the stakes of combat, condemn the French colonial empire, and attack the continued prevalence of racism and colonial ideals.

When weighing the differences between these two interpretations, one factor cannot be overlooked. Lara has been outspoken and explicit about his objectives in the film. At a landmark cultural event, Lara articulated this intellectual agenda. Following a projection in Guadeloupe in front of former French president Jacques Chirac and South

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[458] "Respect et identité…pour redonner aux Guadeloupe la confiance en eux-mêmes. Je voulais échapper à l'esclavage pour construire autre chose."

[459]Film such as Alexander, Troy, King Arthur, Dune and Pearl Harbor

African Nobel peace prize winner Nelson Mandela, Lara stated that the projection of the film *1802* served as "A great moment of awareness and recognition of History and Guadeloupan identity, as well as the History of black people."[460] Lara evidently sees film as a way to influence history and shape Guadeloupan identity. The principal actor in these films, Saint Eloy, also commented on his underlying motivation to participate in Lara's films. In his statement, he underscores the connection between the films and the contemporary social concern of continued oppression in Guadeloupe:

> We are proud of our past and it is for that reason that we want to revisit it in order to build the foundation that we are missing. We do not want the foundation that was established for us, but on the contrary to construct our own. The fight we lead is in their heads and ours. It's a veritable power struggle between the colonizers and the colonized. We are obliged to speak about oppression and the rediscovered freedom.[461]

These remarks underscore how deliberate Lara's choices in filmmaking have been. Such calculated choices would suggest that Lara is perfectly cognizant of clichés and their overuse, but has decided to use them to his advantage. Lara creates a film whose *mise-en-scène* is deliberately theatrical.

During one of the battle scenes in particular the deliberate theatrically is evident in Lara's choice to enhance the visceral impact of the moment by portraying the death of a child. Because no previous portrayal of the boy is offered in the film, Lara can make use of an anonymous character whose identity has not been explored in the film and can therefore symbolize the unjust deaths of many Guadeloupans. In the scene, a battle rages between French forces and Guadeloupan insurgents. As a result of the fighting, a young

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460 "Un grand moment de reconnaissance pour l'Histoire et l'identité guadeloupéenne, mais également pour l'Histoire du peuple noir."
See http://www.guadeloupe-informations.com/article.php?id_article=45

461 "Nous sommes fiers de notre passé et c'est pour cela que nous voulons le faire ressurgir pour bâtir le socle qui nous manque. Nous ne voulons pas du socle qu'on a établi pour nous, mais au contraire bâtir nos propres repères. Le combat à mener est dans leurs têtes et dans nos têtes. C'est un véritable rapport de force entre colonisateurs et colonisés. Nous sommes obligés de parler d'oppression, de liberté à retrouver."
See http://www.fluctuat.net/cinema/interview/eloy.htm

boy dies. Delgrès clutches the boy in his arms. To heighten the affective quality of the scene, Lara shoots Delgrès in a close-up. The actor playing the role of Delgrès, Luc Saint- Eloi, delivers his lines very slowly, "he…is…free." [462] At this pause in action, Delgrès, tilts his chin upward, looks off into the distance and speaks with marked passion. Throughout the film, the character Delgrès often pauses between words. In this scene, this acting technique is especially noticeable. He speaks stiff-jawed without addressing any one person on the battle field. Accompanying this scene is the background of the setting sun and a booming orchestral soundtrack. This combination of elements adds such intentionality to the drama that the film exudes a strong theatrical quality. Moreover, unlike the invented space of the courtroom and jury deliberation room, the setting during the large battles is as significant as the characters themselves. Lara films the expanse of the land to foreground its natural beauty as well as the scope of the Guadeloupan participation and their weaponry, in particular their large canons, muskets and pistols. There is no juxtaposition, no person or prop out of place. Every element in the frame is meant to demonstrate the activity, the vigor, the bravery, and the organization of the Guadeloupan rebellion.

The theatricality in the film is also meant to emphasize the trauma of slavery and the violence of the rebellion. In a series of scenes toward the end of the film, Lara films an encampment of rebels. Pivoting the camera, he depicts women crying and moaning, while others dance and eat. The film then cuts to portray Ignace's wife, who confesses, "I hate my color."[463] She exposes her back, horribly scarred from lashings inflicted during her enslavement. Against the dark backdrop of night, her back is illuminated by firelight. As the most dominant aspect of this images *mise-en-scène*, it is a painful sight meant to convey the suffering of the Guadeloupan people and rationalize their decision to rebel.

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[462]"il est libre."
[463]"Je hais ma couleur."

On the eve of Ignace's final battle, Lara features a group of individuals who exhibit a range of emotional responses to their distressing condition. Ignace's preparation for battle involves the decision to paint his face white, which calls a "tradition." Ignace's action causes a stir. Within earshot of Ignace, another soldier reproaches Ignace's reliance on tradition, stating: "Africa is long gone."[464] In this mini-dialogue, Lara exposes the tension between the reliance on African roots and the damage to these beliefs as a result of generations of struggling and a failing revolt. To ensure that Ignace's opinion overrides this cynical attitude, Lara films him as he quickly retorts, "Today we are reborn!"[465] By depicting a protagonist who asserts the value of tradition, Lara demonstrates the way in which he imagines and configures the presence and significance of African beliefs amongst the rebels. This face painting is another example of how Lara uses the appearance of the characters to create meaningful visual symbols in the film. When the battle begins, both men and women fight as has been the case throughout the film. Many of them painted their faces like Ignace, proving the significance of the African cultural influence in the battle.

Over the course of the fighting, a woman's head is cut off. Her body convulses as her head rolls to face the camera in close-up. Again, sparing no gruesome corporeal detail, Lara purposefully highlights the sacrifice of the Guadeloupan rebels. As described in the section on narrative structure, Ignace dies during this battle. Lara then ends the film with a shot of the very somber jury. The normally animated cast sits silent and dejected, clearly conveying their understanding of Ignace's sacrifice. The *mise-en-scène* of this image supports the political implications of the entire film. Lara effectively establishes that the rebellion, engineered and sustained by inspiration figures pursuing a noble cause, continues to have direct and undeniable bearing on modern-day Guadeloupe.

Additionally, in both films, Lara adeptly exposes the spirit of the French Revolution in the Antillean context. One example of this influence is apparent in the

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[464]"Afrique, c'est fini."
[465]"Aujourd'hui nous renaissons!"

decision of certain Guadeloupan soldiers to continue to wear the *tricorne*, or three-corner hat, long after their break from the French army. Other Guadeloupans sport the *bonnet phyrgien*. The bonnet, visible in this scene and in previous battle scenes, is a headpiece popularized by French Revolutionaries.[466] The Guadeloupan soldiers even sing the *Marseillaise*, the French national anthem. The presence of these customs and symbols is done for the express purpose of solidifying the fact that the Guadeloupan rebels have adopted the ideology of the French Revolution. This is possible because this ideology is interpreted as separate and distinct from the French state. In an unforeseen development akin to the same phenomenon in Haiti, the main principles of the French Revolution became a unifying rhetoric amongst the colonized despite being at war with the French state.

Hence, when Lara captures a *tricorne* floating, abandoned and listless in the water after Ignace's defeat, the *mise-en-scène* drives home a key point about the rebellion and the French Revolution. The style of this shot is significant because it uncovers a message about the relationship between Guadeloupe and France. Instead of using a shot in which the camera appears to be at the same height of its subject, the camera is held in a dominant position over the water and floating hat. High angle shots often emphasize the weakness or dependence of the figure featured in the image. In this case, the high angle calls attention to the failure of the rebellion, represented by the hat. Furthermore, because the hat serves as a double metonymy for the French Revolution as well as this Guadeloupan uprising, this shot accentuates the failure of ideals of the French Revolution in the Guadeloupan context. Because the French army defeated the Guadeloupan rebels, this shot also exposes the irony of the entire conflict. By defeating the Guadoupan rebellion, the French colonial system was also rejecting the very principles of the French Revolution solely because these principles were espoused by those outside of the

[466] Prior to its popularity in the 1790's, its first documented use was in Ancient Greece and was worn to distinguish manumitted slaves.
http://www.blason-armoiries.org/heraldique/b/bonnet-phrygien.htm

Hexagon. The way in which this image is filmed thereby denotes the inequitable colonial relationship between Guadeloupe and France.

By selecting these very noticeable symbols of the French Revolution and incorporating in the appearance of Guadeloupans, Lara highlights the unique blend of French Revolutionary and traditional African elements (as seen with Ignace's face painting) to suggest the unique, complementary, and, to borrow Edouard Glissant's term, "unpredictable" coexistence of these two influences in the Guadeloupan context.

C. Character Representation in *Sucre Amer*

The characters in this film are an impressive tableau of figures connected to Guadeloupan history and society. Although certain characters of the jury and courtroom scenes are not famous, the majority of the characters are historical figures. The most important figure in the film is Joseph Ignace. Consequently, Lara's representation of him offers the most insight into the political orientation of this film. [467]

Ignace is the physical incarnation of a hero: strong, well-built, physically imposing, and articulate. In the courtroom, he is immaculately dressed in uniform, sitting silently, but upright and attentive to the proceedings. Although Lara's representation of Ignace in the courtroom highlights his integrity, the flashbacks to his contribution to the rebellion are more revealing. Rather than await his fate as he must do in the courtroom, during the rebellion he is an active leader, aware of the injustice of slavery, and unfailing in his loyalty to the cause. Lara represents him as a dominant force on the battlefield, capable of calculated military maneuvers, as well as a dedicated father figure.

In direct contrast to Ignace's behavior, Lara represents his opponents in the courtroom, Madame le procureur (the prosecutor at the trial) and Comte de Nolivos (Count Nolivos), as contentious figures with outmoded and callous opinions. As mentioned, characters that actually lived and died in the past are integrated into the modern setting of the trial and interact throughout the film with contemporary characters.

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[467] Although Delgrès does appear in this film, he role is more significant in *1802* and will be addressed in the following section.

These two characters are no different. Their clothing immediately denotes the time period to which each of the characters belong: the prosecutor, sporting a sleek, short blond hair style and a tailored suit, is a contemporary figure; whereas Nolivos has a white, curled wig and wears tights that are typical of his class during the era in which he served as governor of Guadeloupe (1765-1768). Hence, these two characters represent the present and the past respectively. Despite this obvious difference, Lara ensures that they share a very similar opinion about the case: they are both purely interested in the facts. In regards to the prosecutor, it is perpetually apparent that her strategy is to discredit any other information besides the fact that Ignace rebelled against France and is therefore a traitor. Nolivos also reminds the character Privat D'Anglemont that their only concerns as jurors are "the facts, just the facts."[468]

These white characters also share another noteworthy, but unfavorable characteristic: they each exhibit racist beliefs during the course of the trial. Lara exposes Nolivos' xenophobia and intolerance at the very onset of the film when the jurors file into their quarters. When Privat D'Anglemont, a black man, seeks help to adjust the blinds in the room (which, as part of the *mise-en-scène*, immediately draws attention to the disconnect between the contemporary setting and several of the characters), Nolivos does not respond to the request for help, but instead defers to another juror, a Mulatto with much lighter skin named Chevalier Saint Georges. In this scene, Nolivos blatantly avoids responding directly to D'Anglemont, refusing through his body-language and response to help with the blinds. Instead, Nolivos uses Saint Georges as the intermediary, expecting him to undertake the menial task. His role as a go-between demonstrates Lara's knowledge of the stratification of tasks based on race during Nolivos' real lifetime. Hence, Lara manipulates a modern-day situation to communicate Nolivos' racially biased beliefs.

A later scene exposes a similar belief held by the prosecutor. After shedding his reluctance to testify, Ignace takes the stand. However, once on the stand, he prefers to

[468]" des faits, uniquement des faits."

speak in Creole. This ignites an argument between herself and defense attorney about whether Creole is indeed a language. Ignace's attorney states that Ignace understands French perfectly, but prefers to speak in Creole. Madame le procureur then lashes out: "Creole is not a language! A dialect at most!" Instead of responding with a well-articulated, substantiated reason, the prosecutor is angry for no apparent legal reason. One can theorize that she is criticizing Ignace's choice for the possible advantage that it might allow the defense to connect with a few members of the jury, but she does not clarify her position whatsoever. Her tone is so reactionary, intolerant, and without justification that she gives the impression of basing her argument on an irrational, racist viewpoint.

Because Nolivos' temperament and language mirrors that of the prosecutor, Lara is able to communicate a serious political message to the audience. Racism transcends time and space to continue to affect the beliefs and behaviors of the white French establishment, incarnated in the roles of Governor Nolivos and Madame le procureur, the state prosecutor. Therefore, both characters demonstrate how powerful, educated white figures can hide behind the facts to cover the absurdity of their desire to defend racial stratification and reinstitute slavery. They are the voice of reason, twisting logic to uphold their own racist beliefs.

Furthermore, these characters also reveal that time may have tremendous or minimal bearing on their opinions. In other words, characters may have archaic or progressive viewpoints regardless of their actual lifetime. Consequently, Lara advances the notion that contrary to the common progressive opinion, racist beliefs are not necessarily overcome in time.

Nolivos and Madame le procureur only represent a fraction of the assemblage of characters in the film. Their rigidity and racism are counterbalanced by the characters Privat D'Anglemont, a nineteenth century writer, and the defense lawyer, a fictional character. Both characters are sharply dressed, well-spoken, humble, and charismatic. As discussed in the *mise-en-scène*, the defense lawyer's motivation in the film is to

amend the historical depiction of Ignace for the benefit of modern Guadeloupe. The representation of Privat D'Anglemont also reveals another layer of Lara's political agenda in the film.

Historian Jerrold Seigel writes that Privat, born in 1815, was "the illegitimate child of a mulatto woman in Guadeloupe" (136). At age ten, he was sent to study in France where he earned his *baccalaureat* in 1833 and as an adult wrote a "series of explorations of the underside of Paris that made his reputation" (139 Seigel).[469] Seigel argues that Privat belonged to the generation of French writers, along with Baudelaire, that "devoted themselves to exploring areas and segments of society that seemed exotic, marginal, and threatening to many respectable people" (Seigel 145). In the film, Lara evokes these characteristics, introducing him as a black writer and assigning him the role as head juror. His gestures are calm, his assessments intellectual and diplomatic. In light of Privat's identity, Lara's choice of him to make him head juror suggests that Lara wishes to assign a leadership role to a character whose real-life pursuits mirror the political orientation of the film: to recuperate marginalized figures in a popular format.[470]

Thus far, the comparison of character representation has drawn a line between black and white characters. Nevertheless, it is vital to note that the representation of other white, French characters is not entirely unfavorable. In the film, a young woman named Marie serves as one of the jurors. As a whole, the jury forms an aggregate of real and fictitious individuals whose mission, to assembly the facts and determine Ignace's fate, gradually becomes a debate about their role in the excavation and reconfiguration of Guadeloupan history. In a revealing dialogue early in the film Marie asks Man Nel,

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[469] For example, *Paris anecdote* (1854) and *Paris inconnu* (1861).

[470] Popular format, meaning historical films. To explain: the production of historical pictures reflects a bellwether in Hollywood filmmaking: "from 1981 to 2005, thirteen of the twenty-five Oscar winners for Best Picture have been movies based in history" (Niemi xxi). Recent critically acclaimed historical dramas include films such as *Atonement* (Joe Wright, 2007), *There Will Be Blood* (Paul Thomas Anderson 2007), *The Other Boleyn Girl* (Justin Chadwick, 2008), and *The Duchess* (Saul Dibb, 2008). According to film scholar Vincent Pinel, historical films refer to "fictive films in which the action takes place in a reconstructed past. The historical film, thus defined, does not constitute a genre in the narrow sense of the term but a vast domain that encompasses, entirely or partially, most of the great screen genres, particularly the 'western' and the war film" (Pinel 120).

another juror and heavy-set Guadeloupan woman in traditional madras clothing, what her role is in the history of Guadeloupe. Her far from benign question indirectly communicates the fact that all of the jurors share a connection to Guadeloupan history. Although Man Nel responds that she does nothing, just sells fish, she obviously represents all the *petites marchandes* (street sellers) clustered at every corner and in every village, whose work sustains their families and the Guadeloupan economy. Marie, on the other hand, works at a French hospital, eventually confessing that she expected her visit to Guadeloupe to be a typical, superficial tourist experience: "I thought besides the beach, I'd be bored. But not at all! We know so little. It's crazy! Guadeloupe's history teaches us about France's." Marie's initial remarks correspond to a stereotypical metropolitan French interpretation of Guadeloupe. Yet, instead of remaining closed-minded to Guadeloupe's history, she suddenly has a change of opinion. Ostensibly didactic, Marie becomes the mouthpiece for an enlightened France, newly aware and open to learning about Guadeloupan history.

Given Marie's importance in the film, it is appropriate to examine how Lara stages her amongst the jury and in the courtroom. In several instances in the film, the cross-cutting reveals the deferential place attributed to Marie. For example, after the prosecutor makes her opening remarks, the sound chimes and the camera lands on Ignace. The very next image is a near close-up of Marie. In film, "cross-cutting is an invaluable editing technique and is commonly used for building suspense. It consists of editing together shots of events in different locations which are expected eventually to coincide with each other" (Abrams 106). This cross-cutting emphasizes their connection, as well as the connection of Guadeloupe with modern day France. To prove that this not merely coincidental, another similar instance occurs. When a Guadeloupan Lieutenant involved in the rebellion testifies in the contemporary courtroom, he exuberantly code-switches between French and Creole, looking at one point to Marie. Then, the camera cuts to her as she smiles encouragingly at him. This approving look demonstrates that she fully supports his attitude and language use.

Even amongst the jury, Marie is regularly given a privileged status. Sitting around the table, the jury implicates England and America in Guadeloupan history by noting that the two countries had an interest in obtaining the island. Marie then begins to tell the history of Guadeloupe at this epoch. She rises from the table and the camera tracks her as she takes off her jacket. Looking smart and sexy, the camera stays fixed on Marie in her revealing corset top.

Again in the jury room, Marie is repeatedly placed in the center of any given group gathered in the jury room, first in between Nolivos and D'Anglemont (minutes: 41:43; 51:35; 1:00:38). Later, discussion leads to the difference between whites and blacks, and then white men and black men. Another juror asks Marie directly if there is a difference between black and white men. Squeezing six people into the frame, everyone huddles around Marie for the remainder of the debate. Despite her small size, she stands in the dead center of the group. The rest of the jurors fan out beside her in a common theatrical staging technique to assure that all the actors face the viewer/camera. Lastly, Marie is given a special place even in the final scene in the jury room. At this point, she argues passionately: "Today we want this to change."[471] The instances in which Lara defers to Marie help to construct a significant message in the film. Lara's recurring referral to Marie substantiates his objective of guiding and changing a biased, antiquated opinion of Guadeloupe. Her journey from ignorant tourist to engaged juror represents Lara's hopeful trajectory for all metropolitan French spectators: to counteract the power struggle between both the former colonizers and colonized.

This power struggle surfaces in the character representation of the enlisted French soldiers in both *Sucre Amer* and *1802* (which I will also address in the following section). In the former film, early in the trial a flashback occurs in which the pregnant female companion of Ignace's superior officer, Delgrès, is captured by French forces. Two soldiers grip her arms and push her into the French General Richepance's quarters. When she refuses to betray the Guadeloupan rebels by giving Richepance information

[471]"Aujourd'hui on veut que ça change"

about their plans, he orders that she be hanged after giving birth. Seeing injustice in Richepance's order, a young soldier contests this decision. In a close-up of his handsome face, he pleads emotionally: "she is French."[472] Richepance does not cede to the young soldier's call for clemency, but instead orders that the soldier also be arrested. In representing the young soldier's insubordination, Lara aims to communicate the hypothesis that not all members of the French colonial establishment are greedy and inhumane. Moral corruption, Lara indicates, is a trait of the leadership and not the common soldier.

The French soldiers are not the only contingent of combatants represented in the film. Deciphering Lara's vision of this era is event in his representation of the Guadeloupan officers. Before a decision is made to launch a rebellion, Lara depicts these officers in the Creole style home of the Guadeloupan General Pélage. In this scene (described in the section on *mise-en-scène*), the officers and their wives sit down to dine. Suddenly, the servants refuse to work. They are tired of being exploited in this imitative scenario. Ignace attempts to reason with the servants, but is quickly convinced by their argument. His change of heart is so abrupt that his 0decision to immediately accuse Pélage of perpetuating servitude of his own people seems rash. Nonetheless, Ignace's opinions are convincing. After this argument, Pélage still remains loyal to the French. However, Ignace and Delgrès lead the Guadeloupans to battle, accompanied by two of the frustrated servants.

Lara's representation of the more powerful French figures in the film is even less favorable than this depiction of the Guadeloupan General. Two of these French characters are General Richepance and Josephine Bonaparte. In both cases, Lara completely undermines their grandiose position by drawing attention to unflattering aspects of their personalities. To explain, the first depiction of Richepance occurs in a brothel. Lara uses an establishing shot of one bedroom in which Richepance partakes in a perfect tableau of upper class debauchery. The boudoir, with its beautiful linens, large

[472]"elle est française"

bed, and the raucous behavior of the parties involved, all contribute to a portrayal of Richepance as a common noble, belonging to an anonymous and indistinguishable society engaging in activities that shred him of his dignity. This image therefore constitutes a subtle humiliation meant to establish a detrimental image of Richepance.

An interesting tactic on Lara's part is to withhold Richepance's identity until after this first scene of Richepance in the brothel. Only after he is interrupted by a call to duty, does Lara reveal his profession. There are two consequences to this order of events. Lara begins the process of establishing a character whose seedy behavior evokes the action of male antagonists in period films: someone of loose moral character, quick to partake in casual and unnecessary violence, all the while possessing an inflated sense of entitlement. Also, this strategy configures Richepance as a ludicrous personality, obviously not as a trustworthy leader equipped to look past his own immediate pleasure for the sake of Guadeloupe. Lara thereby undercuts the kind of power and prestige that generally accompany historical descriptions of colonial heavyweights. Because Richepance is first depicted as a common noble, Lara expresses how misleading such descriptions can be. Importantly, this is also a strategy that contributes to the shift of power and prestige from French colonials to the Guadeloupan rebels like Ignace and Delgrès.

Equally as detrimental to the façade of colonial status is Lara's biting and ironic representation of Josephine, a white Martinican-born Creole herself. Significantly, it is the defense that calls Josephine to the stand in order to clarify the timeline for the French reinstitution of slavery. Because the prosecution objects, it becomes clear that her testimony could damage the prosecution's case. To explain, for years the statue of Josephine in Fort-de-France's downtown park, *La Savane*, has remained profaned and beheaded. Antilleans have always been aware of the encouragement she gave her husband to reinstitute slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe. With this as her legacy in the Antilles, it is generally accepted that the statue will never be repaired. This harsh and enduring opinion of Josephine is not censured on film. In fact, it is merely reinforced

through Lara's mockery of her reception in *Sucre Amer*. Hence, for Antilleans she is not the exquisite icon that she remains in the traditional narrative of French history.

In historical accounts of nineteenth century France, for instance, Josephine is lauded for her charismatic nature. She enraptured the French people and tamed her fiery husband, the Corsican Napoleon Bonaparte. A 2006 synopsis of her life and her reputation is emblematic of the way in which she is consistently depicted in French history:

> Napoleon crowned himself on 2 December 1804 and made Josephine empress. She rose to the task by performing her onerous royal duties flawlessly; her style was greatly admired. Josephine played a superb role at formal ceremonies, her numerous functions were staged impeccably, and she set the stage for many trends in French society. She charmed the French and many foreigners with her attention to detail and warm personality (Richardson 512).

Here, Richardson focuses primarily on her reputation in French society, an altogether different interpretation of her legacy than what has endured in the Antilles.

Lara uses the medium of film to demonstrate his awareness of these two interpretations of Josephine. He stages a metropolitan French reception of the empress in the Antillean context, highlighting the dichotomy in the dominant aspects of her historical legacy. Once seated and questioned, as mentioned in the section on *mise-en-scène*, her racist viewpoint comes across through her testimony. Hence, Lara reverses expectations of her character. Instead of the refined woman she first appears to be, her words betray her and expose her haughty and inflexible nature. She exhibits blatant racism by saying that blacks are in the Antilles for the express purpose of working for the French land owners; her remarks are extremely satirical and frivolous. Such a portrayal demonstrates Lara's awareness of her problematic legacy and complicates the character representation in the film.

D. Narrative structure and cinematography of *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne*

In *1802,* a trial of Ignace never occurs. The narrative of this film is a causal, chronological account that remains strictly within the bounds of the 1802 battle. Lara does not insert any contemporary scenes, but instead chooses to explore the events of the past in more depth. From the historical account, Lara focuses on the leadership of the Guadeloupan rebels, especially Louis Delgrès, the enlistment and participation of male and female Guadeloupan rebels, the colonial anticipation of a rebellion, the arrival and involvement of French forces, several key battles, and the mass suicide organized by Delgrès.

The film begins with the soundtrack of instrumental string music accompanying a wide screen shot of fields and open road. Superimposed on the image of the fields, giant golden letters of the date, "1802" emerge, followed by blood-drenched letters spelling "L'épopée guadeloupéenne." In a caption, Lara then briefly introduces the historical context abolition of slavery in 1794 and Napoleon's decision to reinstitute it. The first two scenes then stage the opposing players in the plot: the Guadeloupan rebels gathering in a large, white home and Napoleon and Josephine discussing the colonies in Paris, November 1801. In the scene involving Napoleon and Josephine, Lara films a dialogue in which Josephine pleads with Napoleon to return to Martinique. When the question of slavery arises, Napoleon quickly states that the emancipation was never actually legitimate. Napoleon's dismissive remarks convey his notorious arrogance and highlight the fundamentally conflicting positions regarding the emancipation. Moreover, the juxtaposition of these two scenes also connects the Guadeloupan revolt to a highly recognizable, internationally renowned historical couple. This connection serves to raise the significance of the revolt, place it in the wider historical context, and justify the Guadeloupan resistance to the reinstitution of slavery.

After Napoleon assigns Richepance to his mission in Guadeloupe, he arrives and immediately purports his mission to "reestablish order," a euphemism for reinstating slavery. Richepance begins by disarming of the Guadeloupans. As the Guadeloupans

shed their uniforms, white soldiers laugh and point at their vulnerable, disrobed figures. Order, then, is actually the demeaning process that reflects the returning racial hierarchy. Fully aware that this disarmament is the first step in re-enslaving the local population, several Guadeloupans attempt to run away. Lara films vicious dogs and French soldiers chase these men until he cuts to portray Ignace informing Delgrès of the recent events. The film continues to follow the chronology of the rebellion with the enlistment of Guadeloupan men and women followed by Delgrès' rousing speech at Fort St-Charles (now known as Fort Louis Delgrès) in which he states: "We will fight this oppression to our death."[473] Subsequently, the Guadeloupan leadership crafts a proclamation outlining their grievances and strategizes late into the night, representing these figures as resourceful, contemplative tacticians who fight only as a last resort.

Another significant aspect of the film is the addition of scenes involving British interest in Guadeloupe. Set in Dominique, the nearby English colony, Lara films the white English governor as he receives a letter from the French for help in Guadeloupe to counter the slave rebellion. To convey the outside involvement in Guadeloupan affairs, the Governor discusses the French request with an American Army Major present at the Governor's mansion. The two men discuss fact that neither the French Generals Leclerc nor Richepance are succeeding in quelling the rebellions in Haiti and Guadeloupe. The American then reminds the Englishman that the French never consulted either the U.S. or British government on the consequences of abolishing slavery. Consequently, he states, "our slaves started flocking to Guadeloupe to gain their freedom. And now, under pressure from us, it's more than likely they'll want to reestablish slavery again." Following this meeting, Richepance receives munitions from the English and rearms the Guadeloupans who have chosen to fight against Delgrès' men.

Similar to the scenes involving Napoleon in Paris, Lara raises the stakes of the Guadeloupan rebellion by highlighting its effects on the American and British government. Moreover, Lara implicates other powerful countries in the history of slavery

[473]"Nous combattrons cette oppression jusqu'à la mort"

and the casual, dismissive way they address the topic. In his decision to bring the colonial context forward, Lara denounces the colonial powers and their self-serving agenda.

For the rest of the film, Delgrès continues to evolve into the more prominent protagonist. After the next bloody battle between Delgrès and Richepance, Delgrès decides he must evacuate the fort and descend into Point-à-Pitre to fight. During a meeting, the leaders express their hope for munitions from Toussaint L'Ouverture. In comparison with the previous scenes involving the colonists and their loyalty to one another, their remarks establish an alternate alliance amongst the former slaves in the Caribbean.

The next day, Ignace and Delgrès lead different groups of people into battle. Lara films Ignace's death on May 25th in Baimbridge, at a fort outside of Point-à-Pitre. Meanwhile, Lara films Delgrès as he receives news that Ignace's head is on display at Place de la Victoire in Point-à-Pitre. Lara then depicts the violent battle of Matouba at the Danglemont plantation on May 28th, 1802. After losing this battle, Delgrès counts the wounded in the rebel camp. With no more munitions, he announces, "it's over."[474] In the final scene, Delgrès looks upon the loosing Guadeloupan forces. In the film, the suicide is not overtly announced. Instead, Delgrès sits upon a rocking chair on the veranda of a Creole style home. Smoking a pipe, he observes his fellow rebels. Suddenly, the home explodes. As the credits roll, Lara lists all the men who lost their lives in the rebellion. A final quote from Oruno Lara, Lara's grandfather and historian (1879-1924), appears on the screen: "Each day of our progress is due to each day of their sacrifice," reinforcing the film's indictment of colonial France and its effort to recuperate the courage and endurance of Louis Delgrès. [475]

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[474] "C'est la fin."
[475] "Chaque jour de notre progrès est fait de chaque jour de leur sacrifice."

E. *Mise-en-scène* in *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne*

The general characteristics of the *mise-en-scène* in *1802* are identical to *Sucre Amer*. In both films, Lara does not manipulate or mask the setting through lighting in either film. He films in color with low contrast. This means that by using a small ratio of dark to light, the colors are more naturalistic. Furthermore, he does not use a color filter or digital alteration to tint the images in a certain way.[476] As distant in the past as this revolt is, Lara does not stylize the environment to signal a bygone era.[477] Another cinematic technique common to the films is his specific choice of shots. As Martine Beugnet explains, "choice of shot can be stylistically experimental. Shots can be motivated by style or by narrative" (99). Lara does not shoot either film in an experimental or radical manner. For instance, he does not zoom in at speeds that startle the viewer and convey the director's presence behind the camera. There is no canted framing and the shots are not obscured, fuzzy, at non-right angles or upside down. Rather, Lara chooses shots that allow the narrative to take precedence over style; he uses common shots in traditional ways. Given the naturalistic lighting and familiar shots, the *mise-en-scène* ensures that the focus of the film remains on a realistic portrayal of historical events.

Nevertheless, because there are no alternating settings in *1802* as there are in *Sucre Amer*, the appearance of the characters corresponds to the time period. As a result, the period attire and bold colors of the costumes do not stand out as they do in the drab courtroom of *Sucre Amer*. Yet, the costumes, accessories (*tricorne* or *bonnet phyrgien*), or weapons of the Guadeloupan soldiers remain visually striking in *1802* because they wear the uniforms supplied to them by the French. Instead of serving as evidence of juxtaposition between past and present, the uniforms are significant because they are a

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[476] This is of course occasionally scene in historical films. Scenes depicting World War II in *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998) were widely remarked upon for their metallic color.
[477] Unlike Euhzan Palcy's opening sequences of *Rue Cases-Nègres* (1983), for instance, Lara does not use sepia tones.

central part of the *mise-en-scène*, always acting as visual reminder of the fluctuating demands of the colonizer.

Hence, in the battle scenes that monopolize this film, the costumes do not always distinguish the opposing sides. Although Pélage and his followers fought with the French, in the film skin color frequently and reliably indicates the presence of either French or Guadeloupan forces. Lara often depicts these battles in open plains, crowded with black and white soldiers engaged in hand to hand combat or repeatedly loading canons. Once fired, clouds of smoke hang in the air, as the Guadeloupans, outnumbered and underequipped resist the French forces.

In addition to the open fields where fighting took place, Lara also features another more rugged natural environment that plays a significant role in the film. Both Guadeloupan and French forces trek through the tropical forest at different points in the narrative. Because Guadeloupe is covered in thick, lush vegetation that presses in on civilization, as either of these groups make their way through this jungle, they are surrounded, almost swallowed, by dense greenery. This *mise-en-scène* demonstrates how the natural environment dominates humankind. Yet, in these scenes, the body language of the two sets of soldiers in this environment that reveals the Guadeloupan advantage. In the jungle, the French soldiers march without the same certainty and composure of the Guadeloupans. The Guadeloupans navigate more easily, cutting through the forest at a swifter, more confident pace.

Besides the additional battle scenes in Guadeloupe, the narrative of *1802* focuses more on the colonial involvement. Early in the film Lara constructs a scene in which Napoleon and Josephine conspire at his bureau. To correspond with historical accounts and portraits, Lara dresses them each in their signature apparel. Napoleon appears in a scarlet and gold embellished uniform and Josephine wears a flowing ivory gown. The *mise-en-scène* of this room is distinctive: brightly lit, filled with large wooden furniture, and vividly colored fabrics. To emphasize their exuberant flirtation, Lara films them intermittently in close-up. Their voices constitute the primary sound of the scene and are

at times boisterous, then soft, playful, and coy. Josephine is more active, filling the screen with her coquettish movements. The excessive, luxuriant *mise-en-scène* conveyed through the colors, shots, and movement creates a portrayal of an indulgent lifestyle far removed from the realities of slavery.

As a counterpoint to the visual excess surrounding Napoleon and Josephine, the leader of the Guadeloupan revolution, Delgrès, often appears in far simpler, more austere environments of the 1802 rebellion. The *mise-en-scène* of an organizational meeting between Delgrès and his subordinates exemplifies this type of setting. Seated around a round table that occupies nearly the entire room, Delgrès receives preferential treatment in the images, enabling Lara to exhibit his immaculate dress, calculated mannerisms, and obvious authority.

Nonetheless, the circular arrangement of the men also suggests collaboration, focus, and order. The soundtrack of the scene consists of steady, medium-tempo classical (sounding) orchestral music and infuses the room with a refined, somber quality. The men decide collectively at this moment, "If we do not act, history will condemn us."[478] A revolt is justified, needed to save an island "in danger."[479] One by one the men (among them Ignace, Commander Alain, Captain Dephin) swear to defend their freedom. The slow pace of the action maintains the solemn atmosphere. The music then stops as they search for the right title to their manifesto. Working late into the night, the candles dripping with wax, and the sound of hooves in the background, the final line of the manifesto is written at last: "We will die, satisfied."[480] The document is then passed from one leader to the next to be signed. After which, the screen fades to black. Because this entire montage takes place in this particular arrangement in this setting, Lara effectively constructs their surroundings as immersed in the rebellion, as well as conducive to diligence and ideological reasoning.

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[478] "Si nous réagissons pas, l'histoire nous condamnera."
[479] "en danger."
[480] "Nous mourons, satisfaits."

The images of another incident in the film also demonstrate the organization and legitimacy of the revolt. Surrounded by a stone fort, Guadeloupan recruiters conduct an enlistment campaign. As the recruiters sit outside behind a desk, men and women wait their turn to sign a large, opened book. Lara films the succession of people from a low angle as they approach the desk. As a result, the recruits appear dominant in stature. By enhancing their presence, these individuals seem more impressive and eager to fight. Every recruit is posed the same question regarding their motivation to enlist. As the scene progresses, several different women stand in a queue to reach the desk. Each one that approaches the recruiters is attractive and modestly dressed, handkerchiefs holding back their hair. When asked for their reasons for participating, their responses include the following vociferous declarations: "I am proud to be a black woman!...Because I am a human being and I am black…Proud to be free."[481] On the whole, the *mise-en-scène* of this campaign conveys the quality, enthusiasm, varied gender, and abundance of the volunteers as well as the secure environment surrounding this well-regimented organization of the enlistment. Through images such as these, Lara constructs the rebellion as a momentous event, supported by passionate, willing Guadeloupans.

F. Character Representation in *1802, L'Epopée Guadeloupéenne*

Unlike *Sucre Amer*, the main characters of *1802* all play a role in the revolt. Despite their historical significance within the context of Guadeloupan culture, however, the manner in which Lara represents these characters has been cause for controversy. The controversy stems from the fact that the characters, more so in this film than in *Sucre Amer*, employ acting techniques more commonly seen on stage. On stage, louder voices, greater articulation, and a wider range of movement are tools that enable an actor to emphasize his character's emotional composition for the benefit of the entire audience. On film, however, a character's voice, pronunciation, and gestures can be more

[481]"Je suis fière d'être négresse!...Parce que je suis un être humain et je suis noir…Fière d'être libre."

understated. For what purpose is this type of theatrically present in Lara's character representation?

Rather than over-direction, the theatricality of the performances in this film can be considered as a choice, made for specific ends. The benefits of emotional acting are that it manufactures the intensity of the era and magnifies certain personalities to expose either the flaws or the courage of these individuals. The most noticeable example of a character exhibiting such behavior is Louis Delgrès, played by Luc Saint-Eloi. He delivers his lines slowly, enunciating fully and often pausing between each word. Examples of this include his statement upon the writing of the manifesto, "I, Louis Delgrès, swear to defend our freedom even if it means I must sacrifice my life," and when he makes the following announcement at the fort, "We will fight this oppression to the death."[482] When speaking of death, liberty, and freedom, as he frequently does, his facial expression is markedly somber, his gestures controlled, his body stiff and unmovable. There is also unmistakable intensity in his interaction with Ignace. Before they split their forces, they stare directly into each other's eyes and unhurriedly shake hands. Delgrès confesses, "I'm counting on you, Ignace."[483]

By representing Delgrès in this manner, Lara portrays him as a man who is playing for the highest stakes, aware of what his contribution would mean to future Guadeloupans, and possessing a strong bond with the other rebels, especially Ignace. Lara clearly directs Eloy to represent Delgrès as the embodiment of a great hero, driven by a single, momentous cause. By giving such weight to his performance, Lara elevates the importance of his sacrifice.

To emphasize the dichotomy between the Guadeloupan heroes and the colonial leadership, the representations of Napoleon and Richepance are immensely unflattering. Rather than representing Napoleon as a master tactician, Lara repeatedly shows him in the presence of Josephine. Their flirtation continues in a scene in which they return to

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482"Moi, Louis Delgrès, je jure de défendre notre liberté même si je dois pour cela sacrifier ma vie." "Nous combattrons cette oppression jusqu'à la mort."
483 "Je conte sur toi Ignace."

their extravagant home. In a caption at the bottom of the screen, Lara indicates the date is May 20th, the height of the Guadeloupan rebellion and just days before the death of Ignace and Delgrès. In an ornate carriage, the two flirt ostentatiously, Napoleon affectionately (and inaccurately) calling Josephine his "câpresse."[484] Their laughter and boisterous behavior underscore their lack of concern for the ongoing rebellions in the French Antilles. At one point, Napoleon even mispronounces "Guadeloupe": "gag…gag."

The French colonials are also dismissive of the rebellion and its cause. During the fighting, wealthy whites and mulattos gather for a ball at a plantation in Basse-Terre, *Demeure de M. de La Brunerie*. Richepance struts haughtily around the home, dancing with chic, arrogant women. Filming from the group from above in an overhead shot, Lara underscores the fact that the opulent lifestyle of the colonials is uninterrupted by the revolt. The women carry on superficial conversation, joking about infidelity as merely "a question of organization."[485] This evening affair maintains the portrayal of Richepance from *Sucre Amer* as a hedonistic commander.

Richepance's soldiers, on the other hand, do not enjoy any of these pleasures. Similar to the character portrayal in *Sucre Amer*, Lara portrays the French soldiers in a positive manner. For example, Lara cuts repeatedly to a platoon of French soldiers hiking in the forest while attempting to track down the insurgents. In any given altercation with Delgrès' troops, and particularly in this scene, the French soldiers are nearly always shown as scared, battle-scarred, and fatigued. This more sympathetic portrayal shows men who find themselves on opposing sides, but are not vicious colonizers.

In a later instance, the French soldiers discuss the fact that political matters are responsible for this fight in Guadeloupe. This conversation displays their humanity and reinforces the absurdity of their role in the reinstitution of slavery. After this

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[484]Female inhabitant of the French Antilles, daughter of a white and a mulatto. http://www.esclavage-martinique.com/uk/def/capre.htm

[485]"une question d'organisation"

conversation, the soldiers continue marching until they decide to rest and set up a camp. Suddenly, they discover a French soldier hanging from a tree. When they bring his dead body down to the ground, he wears a sign in blood that reads "Français…rentrez chez vous (Frenchmen…go home)." Reacting to the situation, the young Lieutenant in charge informs them that if they want to return to France one day "vous devez tuer! Amen (you have to kill! Amen)." At the mercy of events beyond their control, the Lieutenant calls upon the men to kill, not to enact a colonial agenda, but purely for personal survival.

Immediately after this incident, Lara films a group of Guadeloupan women bathing in a secluded grotto. To the sounds of string instruments, whistles, and laughter, the women entice the dirty, fatigued white soldiers to join them. The soldiers give in instantly, making them appear incredibly naïve. As soon as the soldiers drop their weapons and begin ripping off their shirts, the women grab hidden weapons and ambush the soldiers. Mulâtresse Solitude, the most famous female participant in the rebellion, slices a white soldier's throat, yelling out the rebellion's trademark motto "vive la liberté! (Long live freedom!)" Caught with their pants down, so to speak, the men scamper away, picking up their heels to avoid a bullet. With the French soldiers defeated, the women cheer and shout, intensely proud of their successful ploy.

There are two important aspects of this scene. First, rather than abide by the common trope of historical dramas to feature the dominance of the more powerful male figures over the women of the opposing group, usually in the form of rape or murder, this event in the plot reinforces the notion that the French soldiers are at the mercy of events rather than men on a violent war path.[486] As is the case for the average Guadeloupan, Lara represents the French soldier as another cog in the colonial machine. Secondly, this scene is one of the most memorable instances of the cunning and sacrifice of the women. The prominent role of the women in the rebellion is confirmed by historical evidence. Bernard Moitt writes, "During the wars in Saint-Domingue and Guadeloupe, women

[486]Examples of such films include *Rob Roy* (Michael Caton-Jones, 1995) and *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995).

demonstrated a striking strength of character": "slave women also transported ammunition, food, and supplies, served as messengers, cared for the sick, acted as cover for men under fire, and chanted revolutionary slogans which kept spirits high in the insurrectionary forces of Delgrès, Palerme, and Ignace" (Moitt 130). Ensuring that the film represents their historically documented actions, Lara replicates nearly all of these contributions in the film.

The main female figure in the film, Mulâtresse Solitude, exemplifies the zealous participation of the women. When she appears in the enlistment scene, for example, a soldier inquires whether or not she can actually fight in her state. In response, she snatches his gun and with a loud bang shoots off his *tricorne*, causing the hat to literally leap of his head and leaving a large puff of smoke billowing upward. The soldier's mouth gapes open, astonished at Mulâtresse Solitude's accuracy. In this film, Mulâtresse Solitude is a strong-willed, able-bodied force whose theatrical behavior enhances to Lara's positive, exuberant representation of the Guadeloupan rebels.

G. Casting of both films

Lara assembled an extensive cast for these two films, the majority of which have a great deal of experience in film and/or television. For example, Maria Verdi (Marie), Patrick Mille (Napoleon), Anne-Marie Philippe (Madame le procureur), and Gabriel Gascon (judge), all have enjoyed active acting careers.[487]

The most significant casting choices are the protagonists, however. Jean-Michel Martial, who plays Ignace, is a familiar onscreen presence in the French Caribbean. He has the lead role in Raoul Peck's *L'homme sur les quais* (1994) as discussed in Chapter 3. As mentioned in that film's section on casting, he has also performed in numerous French Caribbean films. Given his level of experience, Martial is arguably the most accomplished leading man of French Caribbean cinema today.

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[487] *1802:* http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0417386/
Sucre Amer: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0206321/

Luc Saint-Eloi, who plays Delgrès, is the renaissance man of Antillean cinema. In addition to roles in other Antillean films such as Pascal Legitimus' *Antilles sur seine* (2004), he has also written and directed his own short films: *Map-térnité* (2008) and *La Barrière des préjugés* (2008). Eloy is also very active in the Guadeloupan theatre community. He serves as the Artistic Director of the *Théâtre de l'Air Nouveau* and is a member of the Committee of Theatre Experts at the Guadeloupan DRAC, a government entity discussed in detail in Chapter two. Eloy's artistic pursuits include playwriting and music as well. In the early nineties, Eloy wrote an award-winning play, *Trottoir Chagrin* (1992), and released an album, *Bang Bang Solo* (1991).[488]

Another actor who has worked with Raoul Peck is Maka Kotto (Privat D'Anglemont). He played Joseph Kasavubu, first Congolese President (1960-1965), in *Lumumba* (2000). He also has collaborated with Guy Deslauriers, narrating *Passage du Milieu* (Middle Passage, 2000).[489]

One additional significant connection amongst the actors involves Robert Liensol. He plays the defense attorney in *Sucre Amer*. He starred in the same role in Lara's 1980 film, *Vivre libre ou mourir*, which also depicts the 1802 Guadeloupan rebellion.

In light of the impressive collective experience of each of these actors, Lara clearly pursued professional performances. In contrast to Najman's casting strategy, Lara's film channels a different political viewpoint. The aim is not to mirror Guadeloupan society, but to dramatize and glorify the past.

H. Language in both films

Another absolutely crucial socio-cultural issue in the Antilles is language. Equally important and as complex as the visual elements of character representation and *mise-en-scène* is the matter of language. Having been hailed as one of the first directors to feature Creole in his early films, Lara stays faithful to this earlier decision by

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[488]http://www.formations-bureautique.net/sites_clients/lse/site_flash/index.html

[489] This film was written by the famous Martinican author Patrick Chamoiseau. Deslauriers and Chamoiseau are also the same team responsible for the Martinican film *Biguine* (2003).

incorporating Creole into these more recent works. In these two films, French and Creole are spoken by different characters at different times. Although French and Creole are the primary languages of the films, their use is tremendously varied. For instance, the Guadeloupan Lieutenant provides testimony in French inflected with Creole expressions. Marie also speaks French, but without these expressions. Her French is very contemporary and in great contrast to the French of her Nolivos and the prosecutor. Their French is far more formal than Marie's. It even features antiquated grammar and expressions. Given this range of linguistic registers, what is it that Lara conveys about language in the Antilles?

The range of linguistic registers reveals two facts: both French and Creole are commonly spoken in these islands and neither language one pure form. The best example of the political implications of language involves Ignace. Ignace speaks in both Creole and French, not unusual given the context. However, even though he knows both languages, he never speaks the expected language for his circumstances. He speaks primarily in French during the scenes depicting the rebellion. Amongst his fellow officers and soldiers and to his superior, Delgrès, his dialogue is mainly in French. Even at the end of the film, when Ignace embraces his son and encourages him, he speaks in French. This stands in contrast with Ignace's presence in the courtroom.

Although Ignace seems to have no problem understanding the testimony by other witnesses given in French, when he takes the stand at his trial, he speaks in Creole. To accommodate his choice, the court furnishes the jury, judge and lawyers with headphones. In an episode resembling a speech at the United Nations, the audience can hear the French interpreter's translation of Ignace's testimony through these headphones. Even though it would be more logical for Ignace to speak French in the courtroom and Creole in battle, the opposite is true. This reversal raises an important question: why would Ignace use the less likely language in both of these environments?

There are various responses to this unanticipated situation. First, it conveys that language has meaning. Ignace's use of Creole in the film is evidence of a highly tactical,

purposeful employment of the language. The act of speaking Creole in the courtroom is yet another way for Ignace to manifest his defiance. Through language, Ignace resists the French judicial system and its superiority by communicating in the method of his choosing. Furthermore, the way in which Lara films Ignace's testimony reinforces his agency. Because of this choice, the use of Creole takes on a new meaning. It is no longer a language of oppression born out of slavery, but acts as a unifying force. With a more positive significance, Lara shows how Creole can be spoken with pride.

Second, the act of speaking French during the rebellion demonstrates that Ignace knows the language. His ability to speak French is yet another means of comparing the rebels with the French soldiers besides their training and uniforms. The Guadeloupans' knowledge of French is places them on equal footing with their French counterparts. The political implication of this portrayal is that Guadeloupans are as capable as the French soldiers and pose a serious threat to this army. Through these structural, directorial choices, Lara makes calculated statements about language in the French Caribbean. Not only does he effectively communicate the range of spoken language, but he levels the discrepancies between Creole and French and emphasizes that language in the French Caribbean is a personal, political choice that has a discernable impact on the context in which it is spoken.

I. Conclusion

Rather than continue the thread of criticism of Lara's films for an imitative tendencies or politically incorrect viewpoint, this analysis brings the complexities of his filmic techniques to the fore, demonstrates the interworkings of memory, highlights his numerous socio-cultural references, and provides an explanation for the theatrical quality of the films. Offering a new interpretation of Lara's films exhibits their highly polemical quality, the nuanced and intelligent attack on racism and the *béké* society, and the clear, purposeful re-presentation of the past.

What is at work in both *Sucre Amer* and *1802* is very well articulated by Sheila Petty in her work on black Diasporic cinema. She explains the relationship between

memory and fractured histories, writing that "memory, valorization of oral history, and the challenging of racist precepts become driving forces in reassembling and reconceiving fractured histories" (Contact Zones Petty 3). Petty's insight highlights the role of memory in rehabilitating fragmented identities and histories which resulted from the cycle of slavery, colonization, and neocolonialism in the French Caribbean and other black Diasporic communities. As in the case *Sucre Amer*, the act of remembering and the memories recalled immediately informs and affects the contemporary scenes**.** This film therefore provides a convincing example of how a cultural production relies upon memory and the audience to reassemble fractured histories.

In fact, the new representation of historical events is so intensely important in contemporary Guadeloupan culture because it allows the public, the Guadeloupan audience most notably, borrowing Petty's terms, to "reassemble" and "reconceive" of fractured histories. One film critic applauds Lara's success in employing this strategy:

> The last decade of the twentieth century participated in the continuity of beginnings, it's a militant cinema, a probing cinema in which directors look to the past to interrogate the present and the future. It's in this spirit that Christian Lara brings to the screen, in 1998, the historical events involved in the founding of the Guadeloupan archipelago…The resistance is undertaken by Major Ignace and Colonel Delgrès, and a number of Guadeloupans of all ages and social backgrounds. The director has said to want to reconcile the island with its past and expose the public to a turbulent historical period left behind in the folds of obscure history.[490]

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490 "La dernière décennie du 20eme siècle s'inscrit dans la continuité des débuts, c'est un cinéma militant, un cinéma de questionnement dans lequel les réalisateurs regardent le passé pour interroger le présent et l'avenir. C'est dans cet esprit-là que Christian Lara porte à l'écran, en 1998, les événements historiques qui ont fondé l'archipel guadeloupéen….Le réalisateur dit avoir voulu réconcilier l 'île avec son passé et faire connaître au grand public un épisode historique gênant jeté aux oubliettes de l'histoire. Cette grande fresque historique (c'est le choix de style voulu par l'auteur) contribue à forger un mythe plus qu'elle n'affirme une idéologie."
See http://www.guadeloupe-informations.com/article.php?id_article=45
"Le cinéma" – from Comptoir de la Nouvelle Economie de la Guadeloupe

As this critic mentions, Lara's film has a calculated purpose of bringing the past to light. Lara envisions the film as means to revisit the past in order to reconstruct a missing historical foundation. The film is part of a cultural effort to pay tribute to the Guadeloupan rebels, to condemn colonial France, and to overcome the lasting tangible and intangible effects of colonialism by awakening or reawakening Guadeloupans to painful moments of their past.

V. EUZHAN PALCY: FILMMAKING JOURNEY

Although Palcy has also received her share of criticism, she remains by far the most well-regarded and sought-after Martinican director. Given Palcy's experience, she is a frequently interviewed cultural figure. These interviews provide insight into her upbringing and influences, as well as her artistic and professional choices. Born in Martinique on January 13, 1958, Palcy grew up with four brothers and two sisters in a large "family of artists"(Givanni 286, 289). By age fourteen, she "started writing short suspense stories and thrillers" that she submitted to competitions and the local magazine, *Martinique Magazine* (Givanni 286-287). This same year Palcy discovered Josephe Zobel's novel, *Rue Cases-Nègres.* Speaking about her relationship with cinema as child in Martinique and her discovery of this novel, Palcy confessed:

> I was deeply disturbed in my childhood when I went to the movie theatre or turned on my television and only ever saw American films in which black characters were reduced to playing the black thief, or the black ignoramus or were on the receiving end of blows to the behind whilst saying 'Yessir.' I was frustrated, unhappy; it didn't seem to me that we lived this way. At that time I was twelve years old. And at the age of fourteen, I discovered Zobel's book

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Dans « 1802, l'épopée guadeloupéenne », son treizième long métrage, il raconte l'expédition du général de Richepance, chargé par Bonaparte, Premier consul, de rétablir l'esclavage aboli en 1794 par la Convention et la résistance du commandant Ignace et du colonel Delgrès qui seront rejoints par de nombreux Guadeloupéens de tous âges et de toutes conditions sociales (In *1802, l'épopée guadeloupéenne*, his thirteenth feature film, he recounts the expedition of General Richepance, under the direction of French Consul Bonaparte, to reestablish slavery, which had been abolished in 1794 by the Convention).

Sugar Cane Alley. And all of a sudden, while reading the book, I saw the film that one could make of it (Audé 85).[491]

This passage reveals a great deal about Palcy and Martinican culture during the 1960's and 70's. What is so informative in these statements is how Palcy ties her own experience to Martinican culture and history, similar to what she accomplishes in *Une Voix pour l'Histoire*. For instance, she felt disillusioned by the depiction of black characters in the films she saw as a youth. She simultaneously provides anecdotal evidence of the penetration of American films in the Martinican market, reinforcing the second chapter's documentation of this time (Audé 86). By connecting the cultural facts like the lack of plentiful exposure to Martinican films to her own desire to transpose Zobel's novel on film, she strongly implies how *Rue Cases-Nègres* will eventually remedy the inadequacies of Martinican cinema and her issues with it.

Although Palcy had to wait several years to begin production on *Rue Cases-Nègres*, at the age of seventeen she wrote the first draft of its screenplay and directed "her first piece of audiovisual work" (Cham *Shape* 254). She directed and acted in this first film, *La Messagère*, in1975, while working for the Radio Télévison Française office in Fort-de-France. The film is fifty-two minute black-and-white television drama that she completed before leaving for Paris to study at the Sorbonne (Warner 268, Givanni 190).[492] The film, Palcy claims, offered "people in my country" their first opportunity to see themselves "on television talking about their problems and their joys and hopes, laughing and joking and speaking Creole too" (Givanni 190). Martinicans responded well to the film, sending her "three thousand letters, all expressing joy and

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[491]"J'ai été profondément choquée dans mon enfance lorsque j'allais au cinéma ou que j'allumais ma télévision de ne voir jamais que des films américains dans lesquels les rôles des Noires se réduisaient à celui du nègre voleur, du nègre ignare, du nègre qui recevait des coups de pieds au cul et disait 'Oui, Monsieur.' J'étais frustrée, malheureuse, il me semblait pas que nous n'existions sous cette forme. J'avais alors douze ans. Et, à l'âge de quatorze ans, j'ai découvert le livre de Zobel *Rue Cases-Nègres*. Et tout de suite, en lisant le livre, j'ai vu le film qu'on pourrait faire"

[492] http://movies.nytimes.com/person/105423/Euzhan-Palcy/biography "Full Biography" by Sandra Brennan. Accessed August 20, 2008.

encouragement" (Givanni 290). The film represents a rather remarkable achievement on the part of an inexperienced teenager.

Right before leaving for Paris, Palcy made another advantageous and strategic decision regarding her film career. She boldly introduced herself to Aimé Césaire, presently Mayor of Fort-de-France. Césaire had, that very same year, established SERMAC (Service Municipal d'Action Culturelle), an organization that continues to fund a variety of artistic endeavors, including film. Recalling her initiative to meet him, Palcy said that "he was, in fact, the last person I went to see before leaving. When I went to his office, I said, 'Hello, you don't know me, but I wanted to see you to let you know that I am going to France to study. I want to become a filmmaker.' I remember he was sitting in this big chair in the old town hall, looking at me very seriously" (Givanni 294). Over the course of the meeting, Palcy said Césaire appeared very proud of her, and eventually sent her a check from the city of Fort-de-France to help with her studies (Givanni 295). Although the establishment of this organization and Palcy's meeting with Césaire may only be coincidental, it nevertheless demonstrates Césaire's efforts to support the audiovisual industry.[493]

Although Palcy has said she was "scared" to leave for Paris, she prepared by studying film books from Paris ahead of time (Givanni 290). While in Paris, Palcy earned a Master's degree in Literature from the Sorbonne and a film degree from the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure Louis Lumière*.[494] Through the years, Palcy's relationship with Césaire grew as well. She informed Givanni that "whenever he was in Paris I would

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[493] As an aside, according to Guadeloupan filmmaker Tony Coco-Viloin, a similar system for requesting and receiving government funding for local films is still presently in place in Martinique. As I discussed in Chapter two, without an established agreement between the DRAC (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* – Regional Management of Cultural Affairs) and the CNC (*Centre National Cinématographique* – National Cinematographic Center), filmmakers in Martinique still make individual appeals for aid rather than participate in an organized bi-annual competition and selection proves for funding as they do in Guadeloupe.
Interview with the author. Wednesday August 19th, 2009 at the *Conseil Regional* (Regional government offices) in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe

[494] http://www.austinfilm.org/node/3105 "Euzhan Palcy and Sugar Cane Alley" by R.J. Laforce. Accessed August 20, 2008.

have dinner or lunch with him, and he would listen to everything I told him about me and my work, especially the problems I was encountering at the time" (295).

In Paris, Palcy held fast to her goal of transforming the novel *Rue Cases-Nègres* into a film. She submitted her script to a governmental competition for the best script and received a grant in 1981 to begin shooting the film. After receiving the grant, Palcy said that French Television Channel 3 planned to coproduce the film (Givanni 292). As serendipitous as this prospect appeared, collaborating with the TV channel led to protracted delays. Palcy disclosed in this 1988 interview that:

> Even though [Channel 3] had shown interest in the film since it was the first one about Martinique, they did not really want to go through with the project because of political reasons. They were worried that it would be the kind of film that would reaffirm the cultural identity of Martinique, and don't forget that at that very moment there was a lot of popular agitation in Guadeloupe and Martinique, with bombs being planted all over the place. So they did not want to encourage a movie like *Rue Cases-Nègres*, but they did not tell me that. I found out a little later after they kept stalling and made me wait and wait and wait (Givanni 292).

This passage suggests that the relationship between the growth of the French Caribbean film industry and the local context discussed in chapters one and two also exists between films directed by French Caribbeans in France. According to Palcy, the French perception of the overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique affected her ability to acquire funding for *Rue Cases-Nègres*. Moreover, these stalling tactics had consequences. The regulations put in place by the governmental grant allowed her only approximately fifteen months to finish the film. Having to wait so long for Channel 3's support nearly cost Palcy her the government grant (Givanni 292).

Another ploy to eliminate Palcy's pursuit of the funds was to request that meanwhile she make a short film as a trial venture. Palcy acquiesced even though she recognized that the futility of this "test." After all, as she put it:

> I had already graduated from the best film school in France, Vaugirard; I had already made the first television drama in the French Caribbean; I had already written a script and won a French government grant for it; and they still wanted me [to] make a short movie just to test me and also waste my time and make me wait. I was extremely upset, but I said 'O.K., so you want to make me wait? Fine. You do not know who you are dealing with. I will do what you want.' I get very stubborn when people act that way toward me (Givanni 292).

To satisfy this test, Palcy immediately wrote the screenplay for *L'Atelier du Diable* (*The Devil's Workshop*) (1981).[495] The story involves a Martinican artist living in France. The actor in the film, Réné Coraille, actually created the art seen in the film (Givanni 296). To help fund this film, Palcy earned an award from another organization and completed the project.

Despite having satisfied Channel 3's request, Palcy's career had not yet progressed. As she remembers, *L'Atelier du Diable* did not suddenly open doors. Attempting to further integrate herself into the world of filmmaking, Palcy noted that her very identity stood in the way of her professional goals:

> Being young, a woman and black were three terrible handicaps. I didn't have a name for myself, and my short film *Devil's Workshop* was known primarily by children, not by the public at large (Audé 87).[496]

Difficulties in funding the film did not end with her problems with Channel 3. At the end of filming, Palcy was "six or seven thousand dollars short to complete the production of the film" (Givanni 295). Aimé Césaire once again intervened. The Fort-de-France City Council voted to allocate her the necessary funds to complete the film (Givanni 295).

In spite of these difficulties and the years it took to overcome them, Palcy succeeded in obtaining the $800,000 necessary to fund *Rue Cases-Négres*. This notable sum for the French Caribbean film industry finally resulted the long awaited completion

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[495] Brennen.

[496] "Le fait d'être jeune, d'être femme et d'être noire, ont été trois handicaps terribles. Je n'avais pas de nom, mon court métrage *l'Atelier du diable* était surtout connu des enfants, pas du grand public."

Rue Cases-Nègres. Once released, the film met with tremendous success. Palcy and actress who portrayed Man Tine in the film, Darling Légitimus, both received awards at the Venice Film Festival. Palcy won her most prestigious award to date in France, a *Caesar* (equivalent to an Oscar) for best first film, well-deserved and mildly ironic given her struggles with French National channel, Channel 3 (Warner 271).

The widespread success of *Rue Cases-Nègres* enabled Palcy to become involved in international projects such as *A Dry White Season* (1990). However, this project was not without its own formidable challenges. Palcy's experience directing this film confirms that having adequate funding or the backing of a major studio does not prevent problems from developing. At first Palcy attempted to attract funding in France for the film. After two years without any luck, she came to the U.S. and sought American help (Givanni 302). In an interview with "Black Lights," hosted by Stany Coppet, Palcy discussed her proposal to direct *A Dry White Season*.[497] Palcy spoke about a meeting with her producer, a woman named Paula Fischer, who offered her the opportunity to direct a number of different films, including *Malcom X*, all of which Palcy turned down. She then proposed to adapt the best-selling novel, *A Dry White Season*. Crucial to her success was the backing of a Vice-President of MGM who loved the idea.[498] Consequently, the studio ultimately provided the nine to twelve million dollars cost to make the film (Givanni 306).

In the planning stages, Palcy managed to convince Marlon Brando not only to come out of retirement to star in the film alongside Donald Sutherland and Susan Sarandon, but to work for free.[499] Palcy also chose the other actors in the film and said she "had total freedom to shoot it with no pressures at all" (Givanni 305). Shot on location in Zimbabwe, Palcy called the experience "most fantastic… amazing" in the

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[497]http://www.vtap.com/video/Euzhan+Palcy+itw+white+Lights/CL0013058643_3387ae1c8_T0M3ODE4MjE
[498] ibid
[499] ibid

beginning (Cham 246).[500] Despite her glowing account of the filming, Palcy had trouble with her star. She explained in her Black Lights interview that Brando had stage fright and did not memorize his lines. As a result, he wore an earpiece which fed him the lines. This, Palcy confessed, accounts for Brando's slow and methodical delivery.

After editing the film to her liking, Palcy submitted the director's cut of the film to the studio. However, as is customary in studio contracts, the studio has the option to edit this version and release, at their discretion, the final commercial version of the film. During the editing stages, the relationship between Palcy and Brando became very strained. In the process of editing this film, she professed that her worst moment in her life as a filmmaker came when Brando argued with her about keeping a specific "take" of a courtroom scene. They each preferred two very different versions. Palcy testified that he became obsessed with releasing the version he wanted into the film, going so far as to threaten that if she did not include the deleted take, she would never work in Hollywood again. Even though Palcy faced a serious threat from an esteemed actor, she never faltered. In the Givanni interview, she maintained that her loyalty was to the South African people and the film would be ruined if she kept the take Brando favored. Similar to her experience with Channel 3, Palcy withstood outside pressure. Both of these anecdotes detail the tremendous stamina involved in becoming a filmmaker and provide evidence of Palcy's artistic integrity during this arduous process.

In the years following, Palcy has remained an active director and writer. Her more notable credits include *Siméon* (1992); *Comment vont les enfants* (1993) (segment "Hassane"); the three part documentary *Aimé Césaire: A Voice for History* (1994); *Ruby Bridges* (1998) (TV); *The Killing Yard* (2001) (TV); *Sisters in Cinema* (2003); and *Parcours de dissidents* (2006) (TV). According to IMDB, she is currently developing *Midnight's Last Ride* "a poignant, funny story about Toots Mays, an ex-rodeo champion

[500] ibid

with a secret... he's illiterate."[501] The film was reportedly shot 2008, but has not been released.

VI. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *UNE VOIX POUR L'HISTOIRE* (EUZHAN PALCY, 1994)

Aimé Césaire is the central figure of Palcy's three-part documentary. Césaire, born in Basse Pointe, Martinique in 1913, was one of six siblings. His father, Fernand, earned his teaching degree but turned to employment as a plantation manager and tax inspector. Césaire's mother, Elénore, worked as a seamstress. At a young age, his grandmother taught him to read in a home where "French, not créole, was the language of the Césaire home" (Adi 20).

As a young student, Césaire excelled in his education. He won a scholarship to Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France, the only high school for non-white students in the French Caribbean colonies at the time of his entrance. After his *baccalauréat* exam, he left for Paris in 1931 to study for entrance exams to the ivy-league equivalent, *Ecole Normale Supérieure*. Biographer Hakim Adi writes that during Césaire's first year in Paris he "learned that he was not accepted as an equal by the Parisians, who saw him either as black (simply inferior), or even worse as a 'nigger' (close to savage). For a young man raised on assimilationist principles, this was devastating" (20). He suffered a nervous breakdown, but with a growing friendship with Senagalese Léopold Senghor and Guyanese poet Léon Damas, he found inspiration in the Harlem Renaissance.[502] Together with Senghor and Damas, Césaire published six issues of the journal, *L'Etudiant Noir* (Black Student) from 1935-1936. The term *Négritude* appeared in this journal for the first time and according to Adi "was intended to aid interaction between

[501] Imdb: See article "Off Camera: Euzhan Palcy" by Bruce Williamson, *Playboy*, January 1990 Vol. 37, Issue 1, p.18.

[502] Damas functions as a hyphen between Negritude and the Harlem Renaissance by introducing francophone intellectuals to the American white world of Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and even Alan Locke (Kemedjio & Mitsch 194).

Francophone Africans and Caribbeans in Paris" who saw each other as "barbarians" and "bureaucrats" respectively (21).[503]

At home in Martinique for his school holidays in 1936, Césaire published his *chef d'oeuvre*, a fifty-five page poem entitled *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Notebook of a return to a native land) which eventually caught the attention of surrealist André Bréton (which will be investigated more fully in the analysis). Césaire then returned to Paris, where he married fellow student Suzanne Roussi in 1937. The two came back to Martinique to work as teachers at Lycée Schoelcher and publish the journal *Tropiques* which "promulgated the central ideas of Négritude, that is the acceptance, affirmation and pride in 'blackness'; it also denounced colonialism" (Adi 25). In an interview conducted by Thomas Rowell, Césaire surmised the significance of this condemnation, saying "*Tropiques* attempted to give a new impulse to the Martinican creativity. It was the death certificate of colonial literature" (Rowell 59).

In the 1940's, Césaire transitioned into politics. He joined the Communist Party, which at the time still espoused the altruistic, if not utopic ideology outlined by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel.[504] Scholars of Césaire, Cilas Kemedjio and R.H. Mitsch, argue that the decision of many intellectuals and militants in colonial societies to join this party was "less a question of a conversion to Communism than…a search for the best trenches in the struggles for liberation" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 194). As a member of the Communist Party, Césaire was elected to serve as the Mayor of Fort-de-France and a deputy to the French National Assembly.

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503 Eventually Senghor and Césaire's understanding of Négritude diverged: "Senghorian Negritude, anchored in identitarian security that plunges into the universe of legends, has an essentialist, metaphysical orientation, whereas Cesairean Negritude ensues from the impossibility of laying claim to a mythical origin" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 193).

504 In the introduction to the 1998 republication of *The Communist Manifesto*, editor Mark Cowling writes "The most important part of Section III at this distance in time is the last part on utopian socialism…their own theories retain utopian aspects, for example the confidence that all social problems would be solved by a plentiful supply of goods under communism" (4). See, *The Communist Manifesto: New Interpretations*. Ed. Mark Cowling. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (1998).

The year after Césaire's election, Martinicans chose to become a *département* of France. Césaire has been criticized for this decision because it meant bureaucratic and political assimilation with the Martinique's colonizer, France. Furthermore, it has been viewed as a path "contrary to all notions of black pride or self-assertion," notions that Césaire espoused in his publications (Adi 25). (As the analysis will show, Palcy confronts this controversy in her interviews with Césaire and others.) While in office, Césaire continued writing and published *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950), which criticized the dehumanizing process of colonization.

Césaire's political career hit a turning point when he became disillusioned by the Communist Party. According to Kemedjio and Mitsch, this disillusionment stemmed from remarks made by the head of the Soviet delegation: he denounced what he viewed as decadent art and literature. This denunciation "profoundly marked" Césaire, "who did not understand that jazz, a music that rose up out of the sorrow of an enslaved peoples, could be placed in the ranks of bourgeois decadence" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 194). French film scholar June Gill provides a second reason for Césaire's decision to resign. By the mid-1950s:

> Martinique has gained departmental status, but France continues to neglect the island; every road, school, and hospital must be fought for. The Communist Party soon proves a forgetful ally and, as Russian tanks move to crush the Hungarian revolt in 1956, Césaire resigns from the Party in bitter disappointment (Gill 380).

In other words, support by the Party for development in Martinique is superseded by other destructive compulsions. Césaire resigned from the party and both his positions in 1956. His eloquent resignation letter was published as *Lettre à Maurice Thorez*, and "was widely read in the colonies, especially France's West African departments" (Adi 24). In the letter, Césaire makes the following resounding distinction. From the point of view of "a man of color," the struggle of the colonized cannot be considered as a part of

the struggle of the French proletariat.[505] Critics concur that the formulation of this distinction signifies an "exemplary moment in the intention of autonomization of Antillean political, intellectual, and cultural practices" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 195).

After forming his own political party in 1958, *Parti Progressiste Martiniquais*, Césaire wins reelection as Mayor and deputy. Even as a politician, Césaire produced groundbreaking literary works. He co-founded the journal *Présence Africaine* and wrote the plays *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*, (1975), *Une Saison au Congo* (1966), and *Une Tempête* (1969). Césaire continued to serve in both offices until he retired from politics in 1993 at the age of 80.

A year after Césaire's retirement, Palcy released *Une voix pour l'histoire*, which was co-produced by *Saligna and So On*, *France 3* (a major French network television station), *l'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel* (National Audiovisual Institute), *RFO* (Radio France Overseas) and *Radio-Télévision Sénégalaise* (Radio-Television Senegalese). Three years later, it was "featured at the 1997 Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema" (Sherwood and Adi 25). Since its release, no other Martinican documentary has surpassed its scope, intellectuality, and incisiveness in detailing four crucial topics: "Negritude, the 'Lettre à Maurice Thorez,' the impasse of departmentalization, and the opening up of Africa and the future" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 192). Furthermore, it is a Martinican-directed film about another Martinican. This is a rare set of circumstances that serves to legitimize its content and locate the film in an elite category of local cultural production.

In addition to these auspicious characteristics, the film is also noteworthy because it illustrates how Palcy engages with memory. Césaire is the conduit through which Palcy conveys the notion that the French Caribbean is not an insular, obscure grouping of islands without a compelling history of its own. Rather, the film demonstrates that the

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[505] En tout cas, il est constant que notre lutte, la lutte des peuples coloniaux contre le colonialisme, la lutte des peuples de couleur contre le racisme est beaucoup plus complexe – que dis-je, d'une tout autre nature que la lutte de l'ouvrier français contre le capitalisme français et ne saurait en aucune manière, être considérée comme une partie, un fragment de cette lutte." http://www.lmsi.net/spip.php?article746

islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe are culturally and historically rich and politically engaged. It rehabilitates Césaire's image, clarifies his decisions, and establishes the global context for the mercurial political context of the French Antilles. Now that this revered poet and philosopher has passed away (April 17, 2008), this work is even more significant because it captures and preserves the legacy one of Martinique's most remarkable figures. Cognizant of Palcy's contribution, Kemedjio and Mitsch surmise, "Having the wisdom to recognize the historical scope in the awakening of colonized peoples is also to install Césaire and Negritude as determining voices in the history of humanity" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 194).

VII. ANALYSIS OF *UNE VOIX POUR L'HISTOIRE* (EUZHAN PALCY, 1994)

A. Narrative structure

Palcy's three-part documentary on Aimé Césaire, revered Martinican poet and long-time mayor of Fort-de-France, is not strictly a sequential retelling of his life. Palcy carefully revisits the past but refrains from reconstructing historical events according to a strict, implicitly progressive, chronology. The documentary is a sophisticated project that situates the salient moments of Césaire's intellectual and political contributions and the Martinican context in relation to major events in Caribbean, European, African, and American history.

To accomplish this immense task, Palcy incorporates a vast array of contemporary interviews of friends, literati, statesmen, to include the former Presidents of Benin and Mali; archival and newsreel footage; sweeping shots of the island; dramatic graphics; and stills of books and photographs. Several images and interviews are fragmented and incorporated throughout the documentary in order to gradually develop a specific point. For instance, Césaire's deputy Mayor, Pierre Aliker appears several times over the course of the documentary to defend Césaire's political choices, Martinican author Joseph Zobel repeatedly complements Césaire's literary and cultural contributions, and historian Edouard Deléphine returns intermittently to describe various turning points in Césaire's

life and career, such as his decision to leave the Communist party. Meanwhile, Palcy continually transitions to new material to create a thorough rhizomatic representation of Césaire's legacy and the French Caribbean in the global context, a manner of representation that has been consistently advocated by French Caribbean authors and theorists over the last twenty years.

A rhizome is a botanical term referring to "an underground root system that attaches itself to other root systems and scatters in all directions" (Ven der Klei 48).[506] In the late 1970's, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari developed an interpretive philosophical model based on this root system. In their treatise, *A Thousand Plateaus*, they summarize the characteristics of a rhizome and argue for its application to the practice of analyzing books.[507] In *Poétique de la Relation* (1990), Martinican essayist, intellectual, and cultural figure, Edouard Glissant adapts the distinction between a rhizome and a single root system to his theory of Antillean identity, arguing in favor of *identité-rhizome* over *identité-racine unique* (multiple, rhizomatic identity rather than a singular or exclusive identity). Fleshing out this distinction, Glissant writes:

> The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root. Rhizomatic thought is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other" (Glissant 11).

506"In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the rhizome is defined via the principles of connection, heterogeneity, non-signifying rupture, cartography and decalcomania…the two philosophers oppose the rhizome to the root, since the latter grows vertically, in opposition to the stem, into the ground where it fixes to the plant. In doing so, the root reproduces a schema that opposes two segments – one in height, the other in depth-that are unified in the plant as an organism. At the same time, Deleuzian philosophy criticizes the notion of contradiction and opposition, of depth and organic unity within classical thought, in order to develop an open system based on multiplicity, simultaneity and surfaces" (Colombat 15)

507 "Let us summarize the principal characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states…It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and and which it overspills…the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, non signifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or a central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states" (Deleuze and Guattari 23).

Hence, Glissant's conceptualizes Antillean reality as "multiple and heterogeneous…constantly undergoing fragmentation and rupture, always spreading out and connecting" (Lewis 86). Following the release of Glissant's text, this conceptualization has gained currency in the Caribbean, becoming "the metaphor for the articulation of identity in creolized culture" (Murdoch 14).

By adopting this metaphor for creolized culture and organizing her documentary as an artistic manifestation of *identité-rhizome*, Palcy works in synchrony with great Antillean thinkers like Glissant. Instead of employing a chronological organization that does not, for her purposes, emphasize the nuances of Antillean history, identity, and culture, she transforms the rhizome from an abstract concept into an aesthetic strategy.[508]

In the same way that Deleuze, Guattari, and Glissant are "antigenealogy," Palcy does not divide the three volumes of the film according to a linear progression of Césaire's life. Rather, the titles and content of the three volumes of the documentary correspond to Césaire's poetry: "the homeland, Martinique, to the call of the African continent by way of France and Europe" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 198).[509] The first volume, *L'Isle Veilleuse*, begins with a close-up of Césaire speaking about the geological formation of Martinique, followed by reading of his famous work of poetry, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, 1939).[510] Reinforcing the intensity of this passage, Césaire passionately describes the volcanic eruptions that created Martinique.

After this segment of the interview, the voice-over of Palcy's film begins the narration. The voice-over coincides with a 1939 photo of Césaire and describes the

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[508] An aesthetic strategy based on the rhizome can be and has been argued to manifest itself in the work of certain French Caribbean authors, namely Patrick Chamoiseau and Daniel Maximin.

[509] "The rhizome is an antigenealogy" (Deleuze and Guattari 12).

[510] Although the English title of the first volume is The Vigilant Island, the word "veilleuse" actually refers to a very weak light, a single candle, or nightlight and often appears in expressions denoting a dormant, suspended, or hibernating state. The English title does not stand in opposition to the French version, but it certainly does not convey have the same implications. In light of Martinique's history, it can be thought of as a dim candle, the site of a dormant volcano, or an island waiting for a great disruption. The impending disruption could be interpreted as Césaire's critique of colonialism.

publication of *Cahier*. Palcy next returns to the time prior to the publication of *Cahier* when Césaire returned from his studies in France to teach at Lycée Schoelcher, the enormous high school perched over Fort-de-France. After filming the high school, Palcy interviews another teacher who recounts that Césaire discussed Africa in his classroom at time when this was not at all part of the standard curriculum.[511] Palcy then returns the Césaire interview, and taking his lead on the necessity of remembering, she leaps further back into the past to slavery. The first installment continues to follow this pattern: from the interview, a certain idea or historic episode will be mentioned that Palcy uses as a launching pad for discussion. Palcy investigates and explains an idea or episode through a combination of images and narration, at which point she resumes her interview(s) with Césaire.

As was the case in this sequence (interview, high school, paintings, interview) in which various references to the past generate meaningful discussion, so too does the next sequence continue this narrative strategy. Palcy films two paintings of slaves which are then followed by scenes of Martinique during World War II. Slavery and World War II are obviousl not causal, chronological events. However, they share a common thread in that both represent tragic eras in French Caribbean history. Hence, this sequence is representative of Palcy's narrative strategy to dispense of linear organization in favor of contrast and juxtaposition to put forward a certain theme or idea. This sequence thereby serves as a second example of the rhizomatic structure in the film, a structure that is more provocative than simple transitions because it jolts the viewer into awareness of Martinican history and allows forays into the deep recess of memory.

The inclusion of images of Martinique during World War II underscores a second aspect of Palcy's narrative strategy. That is, Palcy consistently broadens the context of Martinican events to establish how local events are globally relevant. If a viewer has no previous knowledge of Martinican history, Palcy provides an opportunity to relate this

[511]Incidentally, the faculty lounge is dedicated to Césaire and where my interest in Césaire began as an English Assistant working at the high school, 2001-2002.

islan to his/her knowledge of international affairs. By inserting these events in international history, Palcy raises Martinican history from obscurity by reconfiguring international history around the Martinican context. In this way, Palcy reminds Martinicans and the French of Martinique's role and importance in World War II.

Furthermore, the rhizomatic structure of the film continues to unfold, continually anchored by the conversations between Palcy and Césaire. Branches from these interviews include several landmark moments in Césaire's life. For example, Palcy refers to the fortuitous meeting of Césaire and André Breton, a renowned French poet. In the nineteen-forties, Breton was the "self-anointed leader" of the Surrealist movement, the major Western artistic movement of the era (Davis 67). In 1941, Breton's boarded a boat in Marseilles to flee from Vichy France to America. On its way to New York, the ship docked in Martinique, where the passengers, after surviving a difficult voyage on an overcrowded boat, were debarked and treated like prisoners. His stay in Fort-de-France at last took a turn for the better with his sudden and unexpected discovery of the stunning craftsmanship and beauty of Césaire's poetry. [512]

Breton's appreciation of Césaire's writing gave the young Martinican the credibility and support needed to launch him onto the French intellectual and cultural scene. In his 1947 preface to the New York edition of *Cahier*, this support is exceedingly clear: "that poem is nothing less than the greatest lyrical monument of our time" (Breton xiii). Because of this serendipitous and extraordinary endorsement, doors opened to Césaire that directly contributed to the widespread publication and admiration of his poetry and essays, including his eventual condemnation of colonialism, *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950). Speaking of Césaire in the film, Breton's enduring belief in Césaire continues to manifests itself: "A black man who masters the French language as no white man is able to…The first new breath able to revive and restore complete confidence…A black man who is not only a black man but all of humanity."

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[512] See Breton's account of the voyage and his stay in Martinique in *Martinique: Snake Charmer* (trans. David W. Seaman. Austin, Texas: University of Texas (2008).

Palcy also revisits another paramount relationship, that between Césaire and the Afro-Cuban painter Wifredo Lam. As a young adult, Lam left Cuba to reside in Europe. After eighteen turbulent and formative years (eventually becoming a contemporary and mentee of Pablo Picasso), he fled France with Breton and others. During his time in Fort-de-France, Lam also met Césaire. According to Rowell's 1989 interview with Césaire, Lam and Césaire developed a strong friendship as a result of this visit. Césaire attributes a great transformation in Lam's work to this forced stop-over in Martinique and the shock of his return to the tropics (Rowell 67). Lam passed away in 1982, but in the film Palcy interviews his widow. She gives credit to Césaire for Lam's evolution as an artist, saying, "Césaire was a catalyst." A year after Césaire and Lam's first encounter, Lam solidified their lifelong connection by contributing illustrations to the 1942 Spanish translation of *Cahier* (Davis xiv).

Another facet of Césaire's inter-Caribbean impact and relationships unfolds as Palcy integrates shots of Haiti that accompany the details of the arrival of the *Cahier*. Next, Palcy films an interview with René Depestre, a preeminent Haitian poet. In this interview, Depestre focuses on the matter of Négritude. This interview is significant, not solely because of the topic, but because of the discord that characterizes the early interaction between Césaire and Depestre. The two authors engaged in a heated philosophical debate, instigated by Depestre in the mid-1950s. Known as "The Debate over National Poetry," their two-year written exchange was published in the journal *Présence Africaine* (Dayan 76). In his essays, Depestre "firmly opposed an abstract, equivocal notion of négritude (Dayan 76)." Although Depestre has remarked in a separate interview that since this debate "much water has gone under the bridge," this segment of the film nevertheless foregrounds the years of criticism that Césaire contended with, the evolving perceptions of Négritude, and the ongoing conversations between Caribbean intellectuals.

Following the Depestre interview, Palcy continues to shoot the Haitian landscape – streets, people, the ocean, and fields. When the interview with Césaire resumes, he

considers the bilateral Martinican-Haitian relationship from another perspective besides Négritude: "We must not forget what we owe Haiti…we owe our freedom." Césaire's statement demonstrates the lasting effect of the Haitian Revolution on Caribbeans of African descent, most importantly the ongoing debt of formerly enslaved Caribbeans to Haitian revolutionaries. He implies that Martinicans may not have been granted their freedom if not for the success of the Haitians. To emphasize Césaire's point, Palcy follows his statement with various poignant stills (discussed further in the section on *mise-en-scène*), including paintings and drawings of the great Haitian revolutionary heroes.

Another relationship addressed in the film involves both Suzanne and Aimé Césaire and the governmental entity controlling France during World War II, the Vichy regime. In the early 1940's, Suzanne and Aimé Césaire worked together to publish several volumes of their journal, *Tropiques*. Caribbean scholar Kara Rabbitt explains that, at first, the journal survived the scrutiny of the regime: "With its apparently apolitical cultural focus, the revue initially thrived in a period of unusual censorship, racism, and oppression during the reign of the Vichy representative Admiral Robert in Martinique" (Rabbitt 122). However, the oppression instituted by the regime escalated. Consequently, the content of the Césaire's revue became more "revolutionary and racial" (Rabbitt 122). As the narrator of Palcy's film explains, the Césaires' withstood accusations of treason and a brief ban of the journal in 1943.

Césaire's political career monopolizes the next major section of the film, beginning with his allegiance of the French Communist party. Like many intellectuals of his time, Césaire was drawn to the inerrant logic of Marxism, believing in its promise to transform class structure. However, his disappointment in the party (as discussed in the previous section) caused him to resign. This decision cost Césaire dearly. In his interview with Palcy, Césaire remarks that once he left the party, the Martinican people abandoned him. Nevertheless, he eventually wins back their support after founding his own political party, *Parti Progressiste Martiniquais.* The specific goal of this new

political direction, he indicates, is to "make the West Indies responsible for itself." The narrator recounts Césaire's return to office and then Césaire describes the mandate Césaire was given by the Martinican people to ensure Martinique became a French *département* (or state). Palcy then traces the widespread discontentment with the effects of the *départementalisation* process and what has been interpreted as a controversial decision on Césaire's part: not to reject or repeal this status at any point in his forty-year career as Mayor of Fort-de-France.

Au rendez-vous de la conquête (Where the Edges of Conquest Meet), the second installment of the documentary, does not resume with a chronological account of Césaire's lengthy term in office. Instead, it returns to an earlier time in his life and begins by re-examining the period leading up to and following the publication of *Cahier*. Palcy recounts Césaire's friendship and collaboration with fellow students and poets Léopold Sédar Senghor and Léon Gontran Damas. Césaire met Senghor just two days after his arrival in Paris (Rowell 49). His encounter with Senghor, the first in a series of timely and providential meetings that characterize Césaire's early adulthood, had astounding personal implications:

> He introduces me to the school, and very quickly we become pals. We translate our Latin texts together; we build the world anew. He asks me about the West Indies. I literally drink from his lips whatever he can tell me about Africa. He brings me books, ethnography books. Together we discover Frobenius. We are filled with wonder; we read all this and comment upon it. He writes. I show him my poems…and this goes on for months (Rowell 51).

Damas is given credit for exposing Senghor and Césaire to "Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, later Sterling Brown and other people of the Harlem Renaissance collected in Alain Locke's anthology" (Rowell 51). Césaire describes this collaborative period as:

> The beginning of a cultural revolution, a kind of revolution of values. It was in no way a refusal of the outside world, it was bringing things into focus. What for us

> became fundamental was and that was new - a desperate quest for the Negro 'Self' (Rowell 51).

By documenting the early friendship between the two men, Palcy demonstrates her recognition of the magnitude of this relationship. In Paris, Senghor and Césaire were formulating the ideas that would soon establish them as two of the twentieth century's most formidable thinkers of Creole and/or African origin.

Besides mapping out principal relationships and obstacles that Césaire faced, Palcy also depicts Césaire's creative process. After finishing his studies in 1938, Césaire spent a few weeks on the coast of Yugloslavia. While Palcy captures the coastline in extreme long shot, the narrator describes Césaire's stay. There, the narrator relates, Césaire began composing *Cahier*. He found particular inspiration for his composition during his time visiting the island of Martinska in the Adriatic Sea because its name was evocative of his homeland.

A central part of this installment involves Palcy's effort to clarify the diverging definitions and interpretations of *Négritude*. After its inception, the term gradually took on different meanings and implications depending on the interlocutor and context. For example, Césaire saw *Négritude* as a means to "lay claim to his history" whereas for Senghor it served as a means for describing the essence of blackness.[513] The diverging interpretations appear to stem from what Césaire describes as a distinctly Antillean anguish, separate from the trials of African history. Regardless of these variations, however, Négritude has had an acute and verifiable impact on international history. It became the philosophical seed for the pursuit of independence in colonized Africa; was integral to the logic and convictions of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement; and, because of its widespread impact, inspires appreciation for black literature, theory, and culture**.**

Palcy then examines Césaire's intellectual publication, *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950) and his assessment of colonialism's de-civilizing mission. By

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[513]"revendique son passé

focusing on this work, Gill argues that Palcy delineates "Césaire's role as actor in and spokesperson for the tide of decolonization movements sweeping the globe after World War II (Gill 378)." In addition to the Harlem Renaissance, the narrator discusses other world figures and events such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Pablo Picasso, and the Russian Revolution in order to situate Césaire's writing in the international context.

Having underlined Césaire's role in decolonization in the previous volume, the third volume depicts Césaire as he responds "to the daunting challenges of post-colonialism" (Gill 378). The title of the final installment, *La force de regarder demain* (The Strength to Face Tomorrow), appears in the preface of Césaire's 1982 poetry collection, *Moi, laminaire* (which, incidentally, contains two poems dedicated to Wifredo Lam):

> In every life there is a north and a south, and the east and the west…at the crossroads…the uneven struggle of life and of death, of fervor and of lucidity, be it that of despair and repercussions, the strength also and always to look toward tomorrow. Thus goes every life. Thus goes this book, between sun and shadow, between mountain and mangrove, at the twilight hour of the dog and the wolf, limping and binary (Césaire ix).[514]

Palcy's pays homage to Césaire by transposing his words in this preface to the documentary. This title also implicitly forwards her interpretation of decolonization as a period necessitating the strength that Césaire mentions. The film's subject matter, well articulated by Kemedijo and Mitsch, "is devoted entirely to Africa, to the euphoria of independences, to the new hopes that came with democratic renewal in the 1990s after three thorny decades" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 197). Linking Césaire to Africa highlights the

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[514] This translation appears in *Counter-Modernism And Francophone Literary Culture: The Game of the Slipnknot*, by Keith Louis Walker. Original text in French: "Dans toute vie il y a un nord et un sud, et l'orient et l'occident…au Carrefour…l'inégale lutte de la vie et de la mort, de la ferveur et de la lucidité, fut-ce celle du désespoir et de la retombée, la force aussi toujours de regarder demain. Ainsi va toute vie. Ainsi va ce livre, entre soleil et ombre, entre montagne et mangrove, entre chien et loup, claudiquant et binaire."

extent to which he engaged with and impacted the wave of decolonization, events that constitute defining moments of the twentieth century.

In this installment, Palcy registers Césaire's international influence on decolonization, accelerated by violence in countries such as Indochina, Morocco, and Tunisia. The narrator also comments on the Algeria War (1958-1966), in which Fanon participated; as well as the turbulent period in Congolese government that culminated in the assassination of Patrick Lumumba.[515]

Shifting from war and politics, Palcy returns to concentrate on Césaire's literary contributions. This transition and the interviews to follow are emblematic of the rhizomatic structure of the film. At first, Palcy films Césaire as he discusses his work as a playwright, his desire to reach a greater audience through this literary form, his belief that theatre enables the audience to better see and understand themselves (a *Brechtian* notion as discussed in the section on Raoul Peck). However, after a brief intervention by the actor Yvan Labejof on the importance of acting in Africa, Palcy incorporates a segment in which Césaire delves into African history. He explains the enduring significance of Patrick Lumumba, the Congolese freedom fighter whose term as Prime Minister ended with his assassination.[516] Lumumba's story was such an inspiration to Césaire that he published about him not long after his death, *Une Saison au Congo* (1966). Using Césaire's comments as a springboard, Palcy then adds footage of several intellectuals and dignitaries, primarily of African descent - the linguist Pathe Duagne, sociologists Marie-Angelique Savane and Ehsan Naraghi, anthropologist Edgar Morin, biographer Roger Toumson, poet Bernard Zadi Zaourou, the journalist Jacqueline Lumumba, the former President of Benin Nicephore Soglo, and the former President of Mali Alpha Oumar Konaré. Each of these interviewees alternately debates the following contemporary African issues: democracy, the role of women, post-colonialism, and

[515] Discussed in detail in Chapter three
[516]See Chapter three for further information.

literacy.[517] The final major segment of the film takes another direction. It is fittingly dedicated to Césaire's contribution to Antillean culture. Palcy concludes the film with images of Césaire who continues to see himself as a warrior and firmly announces "a new era."

In its entirety, Palcy's documentary provides a wide set of opinions about Césaire. She thoroughly and contemplatively documents the places, the leaders, the lives, and the issues that he undeniably affected. Most profoundly, she demonstrates how Césaire raised Antillean consciousness and reconceptualized black identity, actions that would forever change the course of black history. As Maya Angelou thoughtfully states at the end of the film, "He lets us know we have not sprung from the ground like grass. We have come from the ground like trees. He is part of the root; that's why he is important."

B. *Mise-en-scène* of *L'Isle Veilleuse*

In the first installment of the documentary, Palcy begins with an interview with Césaire that is followed by a reading of Césaire's poetry. This reading is accompanied by images of a volcanic eruption, after which the female voice-over begins narrating the publication of *Cahier* in 1939. These three sections represent very different ways of documenting this publication. The interview demonstrates Césaire's continued belief in the poem's words and themes, the poetry reading conveys the text's performative power, and the description of the 1939 photo of Césaire and the still photos of the text underline the historic significance of the publication. Consequently, the *mise-en-scène* of first few minutes of the film comprises a three pronged effort to communicate the contemporary and historic importance of Césaire's text.

Despite the fact that these three sections involves the same subject, they are each very different in regards to time. The interview with Césaire is contemporary, whereas the description of the 1939 photo clearly references the past. And yet, the performance defies this past/present binary because it is not marked by a time period and could take

[517] http://www.chipublib.org/search/details/cn/1403772

place at any point from the release of the his book of poetry until present day.[518] Because of the variety in the manner in which each section relates to time, this section provides an introduction to the way Palcy manipulates memory in the documentary. A single event such as this publication can serve as a means to revisit the past, demonstrate the effect this event has on the present, or reveal how certain events go beyond time or their historical status to remain continually relevant. From this starting point of this 1939 publication, Palcy works forward and backward to depict the major events of Martinican history and Césaire's career.

The depiction of salient moments of Martinican history and Césaire's career continues with a brief representation of Césaire's time as a teacher at Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France, a large French Antillean high school overlooking the bay.[519] The high school is named for Victor Schoelcher (1804-1893), the famous French Caribbean abolitionist whose efforts helped lead to the eventual emancipation of French slaves in 1848. The construction of Lycée Schoelcher represents a historic moment in Martinique. As Césaire has stated, this high school:

> Is the symbol of the Martinicans' will for intellectual emancipation and development, because the origin of the Lycée is Martinican. The people in Martinique have passionately wanted this Lycée. It is their work, their victory (Rowell 59).

During the period in which Césaire attended the school, there were only two high schools in Martinique: "And for a long time there were two high schools face to face: there was the religious College for whites and the Lycée, the government school, for the sons of people of color. Therefore, it is really a symbol. It symbolizes a will, a will for emancipation (Rowell 59). Palcy's decision to film at this school puts in relief a place that would furnish Césaire with a valuable pedigree as both a student and teacher, serve as the backdrop for a formative period in his creative endeavors, and acquaint him with

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[518] Existing outside time or being unmarked by time is a trait similarly assigned to Lara's courtroom in *Sucre Amer* or Roi Christophe's role in *Royal Bonbon*.

Franz Fanon, a student who, despite their divergent paths, would become another one of Martinique's great figures.[520]

In one of the several courtyards of this massive structure, Palcy films a former student who recounts Césaire's teachings: "He brought us a kind of world which was almost unknown, the world of Africa." Evidently, Césaire's new acquaintances and education in Paris permeated not only his personal endeavors at the time, specifically the publication and content of *Tropiques*, but also his teaching material. Modifying the curriculum to inform Martinican students about Africa has serious political and cultural implications: it reflects a shift in the knowledge base and conception of identity among these students, the future educated residents of the island.

Though the school boasts a beautiful and expansive view of the Caribbean Sea, the images accompanying the interview do not highlight the surroundings. Throughout the majority of the documentary in fact, Palcy consistently focuses on the subjects raised during the interviews, rather than their visual impact. During the interviews, Palcy understates the *mise-en-scène*, shooting her interviewee straight on. She does not enhance the visual appearance of her subjects or the background in any way. While these images may be stark, an entire leaf of history is summoned in the mind of the viewer because of the powerful connotations of the names or figures mentioned, the context or site of the shooting, or the subject matter presented. The focus of this interview, for instance, is assuredly on the historic importance of the high school, Césaire's innovations as a teacher, and, as the narrator indicates, his relationship with Fanon.

After the interview with the former student, Palcy returns to her interview with Césaire, who makes a statement that indirectly references a belief that relates to this classroom teaching. He declares, "It's fundamental. We must remember." Palcy takes this command to remember literally. She immediately incorporates shots of paintings

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[520]Briefly, Fanon, a trained psychiatrist, French freedom fighter, and militant, published a series texts [*white Skin, white Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) are two of the most well-known] condemning colonization and exploring the psychological impact of racism. After having fought in the Algerian War for the Front de Libération Nationale, he died of leukemia in 1961 at the age of thirty-six.

depicting Africans in slave boats crossing the Atlantic. This series contrasts with the interviews because Palcy aims to affect the viewer through the visual impact of these stills. Immediately, the Antillean viewer is confronted with the haunting legacy of slavery, the singular cause of his/her existence in these islands, and the traumatic rupture an ancestry that can never be fully recovered.

Yet neither Palcy nor Césaire dwell on what is lost. Césaire appears again to make the positive assessment, "Without the Negro, there would be no Creole." In other words, Creole sprung from the atrocities of slavery, but still serves as a source of pride, a means of innovation in expression, and a unique and defining aspect of Antillean cultural identity. Palcy next films another series of paintings that feature fields and escaping slaves. In this sequence, the filmmaker reorients the viewer from what causes pain to what instills pride: Creole and acts of resistance. Both sets of paintings in this segment are significant. They offer examples of *mise-en-scène* that are noticeably different from the interviews. Palcy demonstrates her talent as a director by communicating the Antillean history of subjugation in a very visual, artistic, and moving fashion.

At first, the contemporary interview from Césaire's former student appears to merely follow the progression of Césaire's life and career. However, in this interview, an oblique reference to slavery initiates a new direction for the film content. It introduces Césaire's preoccupations as a teacher, indicates the history of slavery in Martinique, and culminates in revealing Césaire's continued belief in the necessity of remembering. Once this series is finished, it is clear that Palcy has intentionally ordered the interviews and images to communicate a crucial message that is present throughout the documentary. Césaire's career and personal beliefs consistently involve or can be related to Martinican history, to such a degree that in this film that Césaire arguably serves as a living artifact of Martinican history. His words and actions connote the constant presence and interworkings of memory in French Caribbean society and discourse.

The next montage of the film is introduced by the narrator. Grainy images of the impoverished capital of Fort-de-France from World War II appear as the narrator

discusses discusses the German occupation of France and the resulting economic deprivation of the Martinican people during this era. As distant as the major battles of WWII were from the French Caribbean, this war represents yet another catastrophe in addition to slavery that best these islands. According to historian Adlai Murdoch, the Vichy regime occupied Martinique and Guadeloupe from September 1940 to July 1943. He writes that this period was:

> Characterized by scarcity and restrictions on civil liberties, and with this grim leadership personified by its leader, Admiral Georges Robert. Any semblance of Caribbean calm were completely disrupted and replaced by feelings of fear and displacement; dissidents left for neighboring Saint Lucia to fight with Général de Gaulle, and Martinique itself was isolated by a blockade (Murdoch 69).

Besides this bleak environment, Martinique also had to contend with American fears of the islands' governmental status: "Martinique in 1941-42 evoked and foreshadowed the same sort of exaggerated fears of geo-graphical enemy proximity that Castro's Cuba would during the cold war" (Jennings 303).

Palcy also integrates archival footage of at the start of the second volume when the narrator introduces 1930's Paris. Cars, pedestrians, and buses circulate at the foot of the Bastille, at a short distance from Place de la Concorde, and in front of the Madeleine. From this *mise-en-scène* of Paris, the viewer extrapolates what the young Francophones were experiencing, seeing, and hearing at the time of their studies. Although the voice-over speaks of Senghor's stay in Paris and his encounter with Césaire, these shots do not feature the men. Rather, they subtly demonstrate how different Paris, with its traffic, noise, and dearth of black residents, would have been from Martinique, Senegal, and French Guiana at this time. This is the Paris where Césaire, Senghor, and Damas' ideas and creativity would germinate. In this way, Palcy demonstrates the historic occurrence of these friendships without even including footage of the men involved. Beneath these simple, superficial images, Palcy's narrator conveys the true focus of the documentary. She conveys the notion that remembering the Martinican past involves creating and

expanding connections between island and world events in order to highlight the entangled, interrelated quality of history. Consequently, in the film, memory is a conceived of as a growing, multidimensional web of past events.

An additional strong point of Palcy's film is her multimedia approach. At the outset of the film a fast-paced drumming soundtrack accompanies images of the fiery, spewing Mont Pélée. The drumming evokes the sound of the *tanbou bèlè*, an Antillean instrument built from a wooden barrel and possessing an elongated shape and specific proportions that give its unique character (Desroches 30).[521] Meanwhile, a male voice-over, who becomes increasingly passionate, quotes Césaire's poetry. These aural and visual elements are very moving and perfectly complementary. Together, they constitute the perfect collage of images and sounds that illustrate his poetry. This is followed by a close up of Césaire's most famous text, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Then Césaire declares: "Imagine this amazing sight, ten volcanoes together spewing their lava to create Martinique! Fantastic, an extraordinary birth. It's worth more than any big bang."

This emotional outburst sets the tone of the film. In awe of the geological formation of Martinique, Césaire equates the birth of the island with the creation of the entire universe. This incredible statement is made in the most inauspicious of circumstances: the plain background of the interview, the lack of music or effects. As was discussed, all of Césaire's emotion takes precedence over the *mise-en-scène*. Yet, Césaire's fervor is clear and the scene reinforces the film's objective: to reconfigure international affairs around Martinican history. Moreover, this sequence immediately signals Césaire's analogous effort to valorize the Martinican past. He chooses a symbol for Martinique, the volcano, to illustrate the power, potential, and permanence of the

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[521]Unfortunately, the final credits of Palcy's film do not indicate the musician or instrument used in this segment. (These two film reference books do not contain the music credits either: *Cinémas d'Afrique* by Association des Trois Mondes, p. 381; and *Frame by Frame, Volume 3* by Audrey T. McCluskey, p. 705.) Hence, despite Palcy's collaboration with the group Kassav, Martinique's most famous musical group, this drumming is unlikely to be their contribution. However, it is probable that given the sound of the drum, it is a *tanbou bèlè*. For further reading on the historic importance of this drum, see Dominique Cyrill's chapter, "Martinique," in Malena Kruss's book, *Music in Latin America and the Caribbean: an encyclopedic history* (pages 281-310).

island. From this single statement, it is evident that Césaire's attachment for the island is rooted in his knowledge, memory, and awe of its entire development.

Several noteworthy directorial choices surface during this revealing opening sequence. To begin, Palcy directs a reader to recite Césaire's poetry. While Césaire was clearly available to Palcy given the extent of the interviews in the film, a younger man completes the recitation, infusing it with a dramatic intensity. The younger man's voice becomes more rushed and vociferous as the reading progresses. Because this man is younger, Palcy implicitly indicates that Césaire's poetry is still relevant to the younger generation. Consequently, she is able to convey that Césaire's work still imparts, to current generations, the turmoil of slavery, racism, departmentalization, poverty, isolation, and stagnation.

Furthermore, the younger man's voice reminds the viewer of Césaire's earlier years, and contrasts these with his role at the time of filming as a senior political figure. The memory of the entire progression of his career is present in this juxtaposition of younger voice and older figure. This choice also establishes a precedent that Palcy maintains throughout the films: she portrays Césaire across time from a variety of angles, never privileging one aspect of his life, career, or legacy over another.

Combining the images of the volcano and the poetry recitation is a very clever move because it recalls Césaire's origins as an artist while providing distinctly Martinican imagery as the context for his work. By first featuring the volcano in the midst of eruption, Palcy also draws attention to the volcano's power and volatility. There are two implications of this particular image of the volcano. One, Palcy creates a parallel between the eruption of the volcano and the unforeseen and enduring disruption caused by Césaire's masterpieces *Cahier* and *Discours sur le Colonialisme.* Two, the order and content of this segment subtly remind the viewer of Césaire's nature. Although the volcano is now inactive and Césaire is an older man, their intensity should not be forgotten: they represent the fervor of nature and man that lingers beneath the surface. His own words strengthen this notion. Towards the end of this opening sequence, Palcy

zooms out slightly and Césaire mandates: "This anger must be continued. We must continue. And not fall asleep into a sort of acceptance and resignation. There is a kind of challenge from history and a challenge from Nature."

For the rest of the documentary, Palcy presents the volcano in its present state: imposing, but dormant, historic, but silent. These shots are important in their own way, too, however. They establish an obvious triangular relationship between the island, the volcano, and Césaire that that is strengthened through the editing. At the end of the first volume, Palcy zooms out from a close-up of Mont Pélée. Once the zoom out is completed, Césaire is present within the frame. Palcy captures Césaire fixated on the volcano. He is visibly moved by the sight, appearing to be on the verge of tears. His emotional response immediately conveys his indelible link to his homeland.

Césaire clearly had a deep, lasting connection to Martinique. This fondness is all the more apparent when considering biographical information about Césaire related in the film. Unlike Franz Fanon for example, Maryse Condé states in her interview in the first part of the documentary that Césaire is the only Antillean writer who successfully returned to his native country. In fact, Césaire never permanently left Martinique. This decision on his part makes all the more sense in light of this sequence. When Palcy captures Césaire's emotional state in this segment, it becomes more clear as to why he remained in Martinique and commit himself to his political roles.

C. Palcy's Representation of *Départmentalisation* in *L'Isle Veilleuse*

One of the most compelling political messages in Palcy's film surfaces in her depiction of the controversy over *départementalisation.* This controversy, conveyed through a splintered narrative structure that frequently involves the interplay between archival footage and contemporary interviews, stems from the legal and legislative process that occurred in 1946 whereby former French colonies Guadeloupe and Martinique were accorded state-like status in relation to the French government and gained the right and responsibility of electing and sending representatives to the Parisian *Assemblée Nationale* (National Assembly). Although *départementalisation* ensured that

Martinique and Guadeloupe would be more economically stable, it also signified that the French government would still have ultimate control over the islands.

Until the release of this documentary no film has ever succeeded in reconciling the supposed dual nature of Aimé Césaire, beloved and respected for his literary accomplishments, but resented and misunderstood for his political decisions. As Kemedijo and Mitch explain, "Departmentalization in 1946 and the 1958 referendum mark the political turning points in Cesaire's career. That is the moment when the trajectory of the humanist and anticolonialist essayist encounters the demands of Martinican reality" (Kemedjio & Mitsch 195). To address this schism and resolve one of the greatest dilemmas in twentieth century Martinican history, Palcy revisits Césaire's role in *départementalisation*.

Critics of this decision claim that it has been detrimental to the cultural identity and financial independence of the islands, locking them into a neo-colonial relationship with their former subjugators. The various interviews and contextual information in Palcy's film highlight the divided opinions of this status. Palcy reminds the viewer through her interviews with Césaire that, at the time this decision was first made, the majority of the black working population favored departmentalization as means of protection from the white landowners. Generally speaking, the landowners saw independence as a way to pursue profits without French governmental oversight. Césaire, in an effort to provide the best possible living conditions for his people, supported the people's vote on the matter. He states in the film:

> I was given an imperative mandate. The people of Martinique demanded that the first task of their new representative be to transform Martinique into a French department. The problem was…that the goods seemed to me not to be sellable, because the project was called, 'Assimilation.'… I was reluctant…What the people of Martinique wanted was the end of a regime…the end of segregation.

Césaire recognized that the Martinican people wanted solid infrastructure like schools and roads, as well as social programs like health care and social security. Because

Martinicans equated the fulfillment of these needs with assimilation, Césaire supported *départementalisation*.

However, when various African countries began pursuing independence, which Palcy captures through archival footage, and French Antilleans became disillusioned by the benefits of *départementalisation*, a movement for independence took hold in the region. In a black and white clip of Césaire speaking to separatist groups, Césaire challenged them and questioned the costs of their belief in the African and even Haiti path: "independance cannot be given. It must be taken. Torn away. Its price is blood and dead bodies. I ask you, is Martinique ready to pay this price?" For the majority, this price of attaining independence was too high. Referendums took place, but never resulted in a majority in favor of independence.

Despite the rising opposition to *départementalisation*, Césaire did not waver in his views on *départementalisation*. Bearing in mind the much more difficult living conditions in Haiti, a neighboring independent nation, he still viewed the state-like status as the best choice at the time. Césaire believed that:

> If tomorrow we are told that independence will give us more freedom, greater prosperity, more security, more responsibilities. Yes! But if it simple means another little Haiti dominated by small group of men hungry for power, my answer is no. Because this is not emancipation. I want something more for my country not something less.

What Palcy clarifies by including this citation is the fact that Césaire did not oppose independence per se. Rather, he rejected the economic distress that independence, based on the experience of other once colonized places or nations, would bring about. Because Césaire did not want Martinique to become another Haiti in the process of obtaining independence, he risked his popularity for what he considered to be a better life for his people. In his own words, he always hoped for "something more" for his country even it making a politically unpopular decision.

Palcy then quotes an interview with Martinican historian Edouard Deléphine. Speaking for himself and the rest of the island population at the time, he reveals that "we were a little disappointed Césaire didn't play the role that we expected him to. To speak instead of the people. I think Césaire never accepted that. He was never tempted to substitute himself for the people." This citation brings to light the fact that Césaire put his own opinions about independence aside after *départementalisation* went into effect. One cannot read his poetry collection *Cahier* or his philosophical treatise *Discours sur le colonialisme* without having the sense that Césaire strongly opposed subjugation in any form. Yet, the unrest and discord over *départementalisation* and his position did not tempt him to become the mouthpiece for an ideologically appealing but economically detrimental status. He did not substitute his beliefs if it meant a dire outcome. Instead, Césaire subordinated his own views because he is intensely aware of the dangers of independence that others felt surmountable or simply ignored.

In light of this comprehensive examination of *départementalisation*, Palcy conveys the political message that Césaire's moral compass and strong pragmatism dictated a line of action that damaged his popularity amongst intellectuals and others. They saw Césaire as hypocritical and refused to reconcile his obligations to the greater good with the themes present in his own writing. Ultimately, Césaire was much more insightful and forward thinking than he has been given credit for. Césaire knew that an ideological position was not enough to ensure economic stability. By communicating this, Palcy advances the notion that Césaire was a humanitarian acting in the political arena. Although departmental status remains unpopular in certain circles, the hard evidence remains that, despite much poverty and underdevelopment, the standard of living in Guadeloupe and Martinique is inordinately higher than in Haiti and a number of independent African nations. In addressing this controversy, Palcy underlines both the consistency and the precariousness of Césaire's position that has haunted his legacy.

As mentioned, the framing of this controversy, similar to all the major issues presented in the documentary, is accomplished through the rhizomatic narrative structure

involving archival footage and contemporary interviews. Yet, why does Palcy focus on modern responses and reactions to historical events? What is the particular the impact of such a strategy? The use of contemporary interviews, such as Deléphine's, to reflect on historical events has an underlying meaning. The memory of these events remains incredibly strong because they continue to affect modern French Caribbean reality. *Départementalisation* is a perfect example of such an occurrence. Although Martinique and Guadeloupe have never overturned their departmental status, the debate over independence lingers. Caribbean scholar Consuelo López Springfield observes, "Today there are political parties devoted to the cause of independence from France in Guadeloupe and Martinique, though they typically earn a small percentage of the vote in local elections" (Springfield 23). As Springfield explains, the movement has not gained tremendous momentum in the political arena. However, it has been effective in raising cultural awareness:

A major contribution of these groups, however, has been to raise the consciousness of the Antillean people about their own Creole culture and language, and major progress has been made, mainly through education and grassroots work, in the reaffirmation of a distinct cultural identity for the people of the French Antilles (Springfield 23). Hence, the focus on modern responses and reactions to historical events is due to the lasting relevance of these decisions. Although the January and February 2009 riots "led by the umbrella group Collective against Extreme Exploitation" in Guadeloupe were reportedly caused by the economic crisis, future scholarship could likely find other triggers such as the continued angst and disappointment over residual effects of Guadeloupe's dependent political status.[522] Overall, the multiple contemporary interviews constitute a filmic strategy meant to emphasize the current impact of historic events. Not only does this strategy demonstrate the active role memory plays in ongoing

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[522] http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/18/nicolassarkozy-guadeloupe
"Guadeloupe riots turn paradise into war zone as one protestor shot dead."
Lizzy Davies, 18 February 2009. *The Guardian.*

regional discourse, but it also illustrates how Palcy paints the French Caribbean as a society that continues to remember, judge, and reinterpret the past.

D. Palcy's Representation of Césaire

In this documentary, Palcy offers an extensive, diverse portrayal of Césaire by filming him in various combinations of colors, locations, and shots. These different shots and environments display her relationship with Césaire, drawing attention to his public or private persona to create a rich, complex representation of him. At the start of the second installment of the documentary, the specific filmic choices of an early scene provide an example of how memory manifests itself in the documentary. After the voice-over narrates the encounter between Senghor and Césaire in Paris, Palcy shoots a close-up of a black and white photograph of Senghor. This heightened attention on Senghor is fleeting; Palcy begins zooming out from the photograph almost immediately. The moderate rhythm of the zoom out lessens the focus on Senghor and creates a segueway to Palcy's interview with Césaire. At the instant Césaire appears on screen, the image changes from black and white to color. The visual impact of the change in color is an obvious but essential mechanism for indicating a passage of time. The black and white photo situates the film in the past, but when Césaire appears in color, the contrast indicates that he is being filmed in the act of remembering.

Sitting on the caned wooden sofa, Césaire's words reinforce his activated memory. He informs his addressor, Palcy, that Senghor gave him "the key to myself," then compares Senghor's beliefs about the *Négritude*, referring to the anguish of Africa with what he considers the altogether different anguish of French Caribbeans. Here, Césaire details Senghor's influence on him as well as Senghor's conceptualization of *Négritude*. This is a landmark moment in the film because, since its inception and introduction to the public, *Négritude* has provoked critical, even accusatory debate. Here, however, it is presented in a new light. In this scene, through a discussion of *Négritude*, Palcy establishes that memory is a crucial component of the film because it prompts discussion and comparative thinking.

Besides portraying Césaire in the act of remembering, a second notable aspect of this interview is evident in the *mise-en-scène*. Over the course of Césaire's discussion of Senghor and Antillean anguish, the camera moves from a point that maintains an angle of framing even with Césaire's face and then zooms out, replicating the same technique just used to transition away from Senghor. Because the camera does not shoot Palcy's face, it clearly defers to Césaire, giving him almost full attention. Consequently, there is a visual acknowledgement of Palcy, but Césaire occupies the privileged position. Palcy instead occupies a mediating positioning that is reminiscent of investigative television reports. Her deference to Césaire is also evident in their formal clothing and in the official, indoor location of the interview. Their clothing, the site of the interview, and positioning are all staged. These elements of the *mise-en-scène* abide by the protocol and decorum of interviewing a statesman such as Césaire, working to establish his stature, significance, and a sense of his public, political persona.

Another scene in the first installment of the documentary also helps to define Césaire's public persona. In this formal interview, Palcy films Césaire in an office. This interview is equally as formal interview as the first, but instead of a sequence of close-up, zoom out, long-shot, Palcy films Césaire in a mid shot as he remains seated behind a desk. As Abrams confirms in the study of film, a lack of camera movement as seen in these images "allows the narrative to unfold in front of it without trying to add meaning through movement (100)." The choice of shot therefore emphasizes his official position and allows the viewer to focus entirely on his words. Whereas the formality of the former scene is due to the distance between Palcy and Césaire, in this case, there is less distance between them, but they are separated by his desk. His desk is a synecdoche for the conventions of official business, consequently, this interview retains the formality of the one previously discussed.

Yet, Palcy does not only film Césaire in ceremonious, staged discussions meant to emphasize his role as a public figure. Over the course of the documentary, her portrayal includes images of Césaire in a far more relaxed setting. In another interview, Palcy

films Césaire outside, not in his office. In a series long shots, Palcy captures Césaire strolling in the Martinican countryside, walking in the hills, and stopping occasionally to stare pensively at Mont Pélée. Palcy's use of the long shot establishes an altogether different relationship between Césaire and Palcy/the camera/the viewer than created in the office setting. At first viewing, the longer distance would seem to create an even more formal connection between Césaire and Palcy/the camera/the viewer. However, her choice of location actually creates the opposite effect. Palcy establishes Césaire's relationship to Martinique, not through his direct quotes, but through his actions. The camera follows Césaire in moments of private reflection as he connects to his environment. Hence, these images are in point of fact much more intimate than those images of him in his office. In these wide open spaces, Palcy films Césaire from both the back and the front, allowing the viewer to watch and share in his private world, encountering Césaire as one might in normal life. The camera traces Césaire as he walks, becoming more of an inert observer rather than a mechanism integral to conventional dialogue.

In this scene, Césaire's lingering pauses convey his emotional response to his environment. The viewer thereby garners a more complete understanding of Césaire's his contemplative nature, his humanity, and the source of the beauty and intelligence of his language. To borrow the words of Kemedijo and Mitsch, in this moment Césaire appears as "the poet-volcano pressed against Martinique's rocky facade, clinging to the roots of ancient Africa (Kemedjio & Mitsch 197).

By filming Césaire in these two surroundings, Palcy proves how specific film techniques brilliantly reconcile the perceived dichotomy in his legacy. In the office, he is the public official, instructing and leading Martinicans. In the outdoors, overlooking the ocean, Césaire appears more as a vitally important cultural figure, deeply connected to the island. Through these two series of images, Palcy clearly creates a fuller understanding of Césaire. Her broader representation of the man presents a wealth of information but manages to still withhold final judgment. Her vision of Césaire will be

one that endures because it is fair, inclusive, and allows the audience to synthesize its own opinions.

E. Concluding Remarks

Palcy, a director who possesses the necessary knowledge, personal relationships, and sincere affection for Martinique, created a documentary that celebrates a great poet and statesman who relentlessly fought for equality. In her film, Palcy fuses a blend of personal and international memory through the activated, comparative memory of Césaire. She documents key aspects of Césaire's life and intellectual development, crisscrossed with providential encounters of prominent individuals, and links his cultural contributions and political decisions to major artistic movements and historical events of twentieth century Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. Césaire becomes the means through which Palcy condemns colonialism, outlines the artistic, intellecttual and political history of Martinique, and demonstrates that the French Caribbean is not an insular, inconsequential region. Because of Palcy's stirring, inventive, and detailed documentary, Césaire and the French Caribbean are seen anew.

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CONCLUSION

I am haunted by the notion of identity.

Aimé Césaire[523]

I. RELATING THE FILMS OF CHAPTERS FOUR AND FIVE

In director Sylvaine Dampierre's statement accompanying the press release of her Guadeloupan documentary, *Le Pays à l'Envers* (2009), she eloquently and incisively expresses her understanding of memory in the French Caribbean: "It is said that in [Guadeloupe] stories are buried, words are locked behind closed lips, secrets are well guarded, and memory is afflicted. It is said, and decidedly true. The history of this country is short and painful, as fragile as memory."[524] With great sensitivity, Dampierre lays bare the fragility of memory. In the final section of her statement, Dampierre reveals her interest in the pursuit of memory, where and how memory survives, and further keys to its recovery: "Along with the characters of my film, I dream of a plural history, of all the stories still buried, of all the tales left to tell. It only takes scratching the surface, trekking the land, and hearing its call, to set off on the dance." Dampierre's desire to understand memory in the French Caribbean context, her dream of a plural history, and

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[523]See Thomas H. Rowell's "It is Through Poetry That One Copes With Solitude: An Interview with Aimé Césaire." *Callaloo*. No. 38 (Winter, 1989), pp. 49-67. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

[524] http://histoiresenchemin.fr/articles2.php?cat=1&rub=2&art=79
Accessed June 15, 2009
My translations, as indicated in the introduction. Fort he purpose of simplicity, the entire citations is given here: "On dit que dans ce pays les récits sont enfouis, les paroles serrées derrière des lèvres closes, les secrets bien gardés et la mémoire blessée. On le dit et c'est sûrement vrai. L'histoire de ce pays est courte et douloureuses, elle a la fragilité des souvenirs. Les traces se perdent de n'être pas foulées et les grandes personnes n'ont pas tout raconté aux enfants perdus. Les racines des arbres disputent à la mémoire des hommes, les figuiers maudits dévorent les anciennes prisons d'esclaves et les machineries des usines déchues disparaissent, enserrées par les lianes; les parkings et l'asphalte assèchent ce qu'il reste de souvenir. Mais il suffit de gratter la terre, de se laisser caresser par le vent, d'ouvrir les yeux et les oreilles, de regarder autour de soi pour rencontrer les porteurs de mémoire, les arpenteurs, les jardiniers. Le pays parle, il suffit de l'écouter. Ici la mémoire est fragile, elle s'inscrit dans les corps plutôt que dans le marbre, mais elle est vivante, elle est à réinventer. J'aime les traces incertaines, les documents à moitié effacés, les interstices de la mémoire pour ce qu'ils recèlent d'invention, pour ce qu'ils laissent imaginer. Je rêve avec les personnages de mon film d'une histoire plurielle, de toutes les histoires encore enfouies, de tous les contes encore à dire. Il suffit de gratter la terre, d'arpenter le pays, d'entendre son appel, de se mettre à danser."

her decision unearth this history express the point of departure and the ambitions of the five films analyzed in Chapters three and four of this study.

Similar to Dampierre, statements made by the four directors discussed reinforce the political ambitions and conceptualizations of memory apparent in their films. Charles Najman, for instance, recorded the following description of Haitian memory in the director commentary of *Royal Bonbon*:

> Haiti's relationship with its history is neurotic; its memory is haunted. This is what interests me—this memory in the skin, lodged in the body—not a historic retelling. And also a kind of communal, egalitarian, free, childlike utopia, which stands for something real here. History has remained frozen, confiscated by a narrow elite that drives around in air-conditioned cars.[525]

Najman's words are reminiscent of Dampierre's belief that memory "inscribes itself on bodies instead of stone. It is living and ready to be reinvented."[526] Both interpret memory as corporeal, believing the body is marked by memory, the mind retains memory, and individuals are the source of its recovery. Furthermore, in a quote provided in Chapter three, Najman personifies memory, stating that Haitian memory is "starving."[527] For Najman, then, memory is both organic and sacred, a metaphysical means of feeding the Haitian imaginary. His words underscore the relationship between memory and two major cultural currents in Haiti and his film: spirituality and poverty. Because of his pauper-king's connection to a glorious moment in Haitian history, he offers a new sense of hope to poor, isolated Haitians. However, the king's poor leadership reminds the Haitian audience of their disappointing choices in government and subtly charges them with a shared responsibility for their future. In addition to the

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[525] http://www.worldpress.org/europe/0302artsliberation.htm
Isabelle Potel, "*Royal Bonbon* – Entranced and Entrancing." *Libération.* 2 January 2002. Accessed 26 September 2009.

[526] See footnote 616.

[527] As I quoted in Chapter three, Najman stated: "in this country, where there is almost nothing left, people continue to live in the imaginary because all that remains for them is their memory, a starving memory (dans ce pays où il n'y a presque plus rien les gens continuent à vivre dans l'imaginaire parce que ce qui leur reste, c'est leur mémoire, et leur mémoire là est affamée)."

plotline, the material poverty and the distant revolutionary heritage are conveyed through Najman's *mise-en-scène* and cinematography: bland colors and shading; sparse, but meaningful props; and intimate shots of certain characters and their environment as well as sweeping shots of the alternately lush and polluted landscape.

For Peck, memory is somewhat differently conceived thematically and aesthetically. As discussed in Chapter three, he equates memory to a heavy "burden" because it calls to mind the tragic, painful fairly recent past of failed leadership, oppression, and horrific violence. Rather than focus quite as much on the poor segment of the population and their reliance on memory as spiritual subsistence as Najman does, Peck demonstrates how a deeply troubled history defines the Haitian reality and affects current and future generations in the middle-class as well. Peck's images in *L'homme sur les quais* also contrast with Najman's. Peck alternates between the sun-baked, dusty shots of village streets with the dark, inner confines of Sarah and her family's home. Peck sets himself apart because he is noticeably adept at capturing all the minute details that speak volumes to a viewer: the knowing looks and revealing gestures of each character. More explicit than Najman in his criticism of Haitian politics, he reproaches the Duvalier era through Sarah's evolving understanding of her parents' disappearance. This emotionally complex child, at times highly sensitive and astute, at times precocious and afraid, demonstrates that while the Duvalier era continues to weigh upon the Haitian psyche, the resilience and cunning of the Haitian people, of women in particular, sustains and heals families.

The third filmmaker discussed, Christian Lara, builds a historical "fresco" (to his words) of the Guadeloupan rebellion in his two films *Sucre Amer* (1997) and *1802, L'Epopée guadeloupéenne* (2005). Both films abound with frequent changes of scenery, elaborate period costuming, props, and a wide-range of major and minor characters. In the courtroom featured in *Sucre Amer* and the extended battle scenes of *1802*, Lara creates characters and situations that voice his serious disapproval of France's colonial wrongdoings and questions its present involvement in Guadeloupe. In Lara's telling

remarks at the historical screening of *1802,* quoted in Chapter four, he articulates the film's objective, to create "awareness and recognition of History and Guadeloupan identity, as well as the History of black people."[528] Hence, as opposed to a burden or haunting element of daily life, Lara interprets memory as a positive and enabling phenomenon. From his statement one can also infer a call to build a missing historical foundation, an unresolved and detrimental consequence of slavery and colonialism. His words imply that the challenges facing Martinicans and Guadeloupans are not so much the problems facing Haitians, namely widespread destitution and the impact of internal dictatorial rule (although unemployment and poverty are still major concerns), but the need for memory to correct and confirm the islands' distinctive and inspiring local history.

Also motivated by a call to remember and build a missing foundation, Palcy undertakes a documentary film of epic proportions, *Une Voix Pour l'Histoire* (1994). The film's unadorned *mise-en-scène*, numerous juxtapositions, varied footage, and use of voice-over combine to pay tribute to her mentor, Aimé Césaire, and her homeland of Martinique. Through the rhizomatic structure, an organizational strategy advocated by great thinkers and writers of the French Caribbean, Palcy cleverly exposes her political agenda: to demonstrate the significance of Césaire and Martinique in the major artistic and political movements of the twentieth century. In an interview with public policy scholar, Fassil Demissie, Palcy sheds light on her directorial decisions and understanding of memory. When asked why she is very concerned with the history of Black people, she responded:

> It is important because our culture, African culture, was based on an oral tradition. It is very new that we write, and now we are making films and things like that. It is very important that we retrace our heritage and put it in film, put it in writing, put it in books, and everything. Because you know that memory disappears so

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528" reconnaissance pour l'Histoire et l'identité guadeloupéenne, mais également pour l'Histoire du peuple noir."

> quickly. It is very fragile. This means that it is so easy for somebody to tell your grandchild later on, that something did not exist, that something is not true, etc. Thank God, we are developing our own literary tradition to explore our own history and experiences. This is very important for me because at school I was never taught about my history. Everything I learned was from my mother and my grandparents and my own searching (Demissie 108).

In this citation, Palcy explains that she creates films to compensate for the fragility of memory, a belief identical to Dampierre's. Also similar to Dampierre, Palcy speaks of the role of adults in the oral tradition.[529] Both women intimate that adults are responsible for the preservation of memory, but certain segments of the adult population have been unsuccessful in this regard. Lastly, both directors view film as a means of bringing the French Caribbean oral tradition to the forefront and providing another resource for knowledge of the past. Palcy modestly surmises the process and result of her effort of memory: "So every time I make a film, I am a kind of archaeologist. I dig, I make discoveries, and I share them. And I am very happy because it is so rewarding" (Demissie 109).

These remarks by the four directors, as well as my analyses of Chapters three and four, demonstrate that each filmmaker shares the same imperative: to engage with memory and represent pressing political matters in his/her own way. All the films advance an overtly postcolonial stance through lyrical, moving portraits of well-developed characters or figures involved in local, historically significant events. Together, they prove that a wave of French Caribbean cinema is presently giving form and force to the wider contemporary cultural phenomenon in the region, the effort of memory described in the introduction.

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[529]http://histoiresenchemin.fr/articles2.php?cat=1&rub=2&art=79
Accessed June 15, 2009
Dampierre states, "Les traces se perdent de n'être pas foulées et les grandes personnes n'ont pas tout raconté aux enfants perdus (Memories are lost from lack of concern. Adults have kept things from their scattered children)."

What exactly is at stake in the desire to foreground the role of memory through these films in this particular context? To borrow Palcy's words, "historical memory is important because you cannot survive if you do not know where you come from. You cannot know where things are going, what your […] future can be…if you do not know these things" (Demissie 108-109). Simply put, the future of the French Caribbean hinges on memory. Because the artistic process of filmmaking enables individuals to recover memory and represent history, film has become nothing less than a modern tool necessary to cultural survival.

Along these same lines, further insight into the role of memory in the French Caribbean films is apparent in Michael Largey's scholarship on Haitian music. Though he writes about Haitians specifically in this passage, his assessment can be easily applied to French Caribbeans as a whole:

> Haitians are adept at taking cultural expressions from Haitian history and religion to forge new, symbolically constructed ideas through traditionalizing processes that connect them with their past and, hence, their power. Traditionalizing processes bring the past into a relationship with the present, giving contemporary subjects discursive power to negotiate authority over their history (Largey 70).

Similar to music, French Caribbean cinema is also, I would strongly argue, an avenue for the acquisition of "discursive power" over French Caribbean history. This has meaningful, far-reaching implications. Through film, French Caribbeans filmmakers are coming to possess the power of interpreting the past in the way of their choosing. These directors can choose to remember and direct attention to specific matters which have been purposely erased, elided, or avoided. As a matter of fact, they resist the way history has been recorded.

Possessing a tool for cultural survival and gaining control over historical accounts reflect a serious societal progression. More than cultural productions, French Caribbean films are evidence of major change. In the process of employing memory to expose political readings of contemporary reality, memory in film has the potential for the

extraordinary: to assist in the reconfiguration of power and authority over French Caribbean history and identity.

II. French Caribbean Cinema and the Global Cinematic Context

The data which I provide in the first and second chapters unequivocally demonstrates the distinctive nature and verifiable existence of regional film production. However, given that French Caribbean films are not preponderant in the international market, what is the present impact of this industry on global cinematic production? Is this industry able to influence film as an aesthetic and commercial medium beyond the borders of these islands?

The French Caribbean industry is currently undergoing fundamental changes and improvements. Yet, the nature and extent of this metamorphosis remains extremely complex to define for three reasons. One, in my research I have found a paradoxical aspect to the levels of film production: it is the poorer nation of Haiti, not Martinique or Guadeloupe, that possesses a more extensive filmmaking history. Not only have foreign filmmakers, especially directors of documentaries, filmed the Haitian political landscape much more frequently, but Haitian filmmakers have also produced more films than the Martinican and Guadeloupean directors. This discrepancy in production levels may stem from two phenomena. First, the turmoil in Haiti put the island on the global media map, providing filmmakers with the more recognizable and enticing material. Second, although Martinique and Guadeloupe have the more structured avenues for funding, the bureaucratic system has led me to conclude that these challenges may indeed be partly responsible for their, until recently, less productive filmmaking industry. Furthermore, it is also plausible (and based on Palcy's experience making *Rue Cases-Nègres*) that another reason for this discrepancy is that French authorities have been reluctant in the past to fund films with depict slavery, colonialism, exploitation, etc. In sum, the bureaucratic structures that enable greater film production in Martinique and Guadeloupe, where other funding would be infinitely more difficult to obtain, also impedes production of certain, more "controversial" or "accusatory" films.

A second reason for the difficulty of establishing the extent of this metamorphosis is the fact that it is still unclear if the evolution of the French Caribbean film industry will solidify its position as a viable and influential industry within and beyond the islands of the Haiti, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. What will the future of French Caribbean cinema be on a local, regional and international level? What impact will this industry have over time in relation to global cinematic production? Even if the future of French Caribbean cinema can only begin to be envisaged, it is still necessary to start the process of gathering information for an eventual answer. This conclusion will therefore initiate the pursuit of an answer by addressing the related, requisite matter of discussing the advancements made in this industry that have had a demonstrable international influence.

On one hand, one can quite state quite assuredly that an explosion of interest in content and style of French Caribbean cinema has not occurred in the international film community. One would be hard-pressed to argue that on a macro level the industry of French Caribbean cinema is dictating global filmmaking trends such as enormous budgets for the best in computer generated graphics and celebrity performances. Without evidence to the contrary, it is clear that French Caribbean film has not made that sort of impact as a whole.

On the other hand, however, as counter-hegemonic productions, individual filmmakers are making notable inroads in the international film community. Because the best of French Caribbean films defy global trends in lucrative films, a film such as Palcy's *Rue Case-Nègres* has been consistently screened in film series from Melbourne to Brooklyn over the last twenty-five years. As the perfect counter point to global filmmaking trends, completed under a million dollar budget, featuring lesser-known or non-professional actors, in a traditional narrative that takes place in a poor, rural setting, Palcy's film has surfaced in series on female filmmaking, the African Diaspora, youth and international cinema.[530] Over time, these festivals demonstrate how influential

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[530]http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T5423810240&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T5423810243&cisb=22_T5423810242&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=299219&docNo=17

Palcy's film has been. Furthermore, in 1989 she became the first black woman to direct a major Hollywood production, *A Dry White Season*. Awarded France's highest distinction of the Legion of Honor in September 2004 for her filmmaking, her international influence is irrefutable.[531] As famous American film critic Roger Ebert wrote of Palcy, she "strikes me as proof that great directors can come from anywhere - but they must know they are great directors and trust they are great."[532]

Indeed, it is on this micro level that the case of the individual filmmaker rather than the industry as a whole, that French Caribbean cinema's influence is most apparent. Another film set in Haiti has roused controversy and attracted a varied public to the point of certifying its international impact. Cuban-American director Amy Serrano featured her documentary *Sugar Babies* (2007) at the 3rd Montreal International Haitian Film Festival.[533] Despite its "resounding success: a full house and a standing ovation" in Montreal, the film has been in the midst of a contentious media storm because of events surrounding its screenings in Florida and Paris.[534] To begin, *The New York Times* reported that a screening at Florida International University in June 2007 "erupted into a near riot."[535] The Dominican Republic's sugar industry has been implicated in a scheme

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Accessed 21 December 2008
http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T5423810240&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T5423810243&cisb=22_T5423810242&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=6742&docNo=16
Accessed 21 December 2008

[531] "Martinique-born filmmaker Euzhan Palcy awarded France's top honour," *Agence France Presse—English*, 11 September 2004,
http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T5423810240&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T5423810243&cisb=22_T5423810242&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10903&docNo=1
Accessed 21 December 2008

[532] Ibid

[533] http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/pdf/com_22sept2007_en.pdf

[534] Film trailer available at:
http://nolahumanrights.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=113
Accessed 21 December 2008

[535] John Strausbaugh, "A Maverick Mogul, Proudly Politically Incorrect," *The New York Times,* 19 August 2007.
http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com/pdf/com_22sept2007_en.pdf
Accessed 21 December 2008

to cause its censure at two festivals in south Florida. Power players in the industry caused the screening at the Miami International Film Festival to be cancelled.[536] The pressure from the sugar industry also resulted in its withdrawal from the Women's International Film festival:

> Leading the effort to counter the movies' impact are the Fanjul and Vicini families, who own the first and second-largest Dominican sugar companies, respectively. The Cuban-American Fanjul family also owns vast sugar operations in Florida where Haitian workers on temporary U.S. visas harvest cane.[537]

In addition, radio producers in Florida reported that Dominican diplomats attempted to bribe them into halting the screenings or giving the film a negative review.[538] The sabotage continued in Paris, when a screening there was nearly called off.[539] Fortunately, the film has not been prevented from been screened across the U.S. and France at festivals aimed exposing human rights issues.[540]

The international impact of Haitian film can also be measured by the success of Haitian filmmakers Raoul Peck and Michelange Quay. Peck's two feature films, *L'homme sur les Quais* (1993) and *Lumumba* (2000) were featured at the Cannes Film Festival, arguably the premiere international film festival in existence. Most recently, Haitian filmmaker Michelange Quay was accepted to screen his film *L'Evangile du Cochon Créole* (*The Gospel of the Creole Pig*) at Cannes in 2004.

Perhaps at some point, the hard work, collaborative efforts, and increased production of French Caribbean films as a whole will result its international recognition.

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536 Jonathan M. Katz, "Dominican sugar industry strikes back at critics on worker mistreatment," Associated Press, 7 February 2008
537 Ibid
538 http://www.sugarbabiesfilm.com/cgi-local/content.cgi?pg=1
Accessed 21 December 2008
539 http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/The-Sugar-Babies
Accessed 21 December 2008
540 http://nolahumanrights.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=113
Accessed 21 December 2008

For now, however, its reputation and legacy are in the hands of prominent individual French Caribbean films and filmmakers such as Palcy, Serrano, and Peck. Because of their divisive and original material, screened and debated in celebrated venues, their work has begun to expose the potential for a visible presence of French Caribbean filmmaking over time. Their work highlights the potential for an important and meaningful place for French Caribbean film in directing and shaping international film culture.

French Caribbean cinema is a rich topic with many issues which remain to be explored and others that will surface as the industry gains traction. Though advancements in technology, financing, and the the festival circuit are currently the strongest causes for the industry's growth, additional factors involved in development, such as newly present educational programs for adolescents in small local institutes, participation of local film professionals in postcolonial discourse, and the role of local and international television in reaching larger audiences can be examined at further length. In addition to continuing to uncover these forces at work in the expansion of the industry, further topics to investigate include questions of trauma in film, a more in-depth analysis of media infrastructure in the islands, the relationships and influences of other world cinema trends (black Diasporic, Caribbean, African, American) on the industry and vice-versa, evolution in the present distribution model, audience response, depictions of youth in revolt, the relationship between French Caribbean music and film culture, the role of government in the film production, and shifts in productions levels. As these issues are addressed, French Caribbean cinema will continue to move out from the shadows of film studies to become the locus of its own unique debates.

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APPENDIX 1: FRENCH CARIBBEAN FILMOGRAPHY

DATE	Foreign Film Shown in the French Caribbean	Films by unknown directors depicting the French Caribbean and shown in the French Caribbean	Foreign Films that Features French Caribbean Setting	Martinican Film	Guadeloupan Film	Haitian Film	Foreign Setting/ French Caribbean Director	Diasporic Experiences of French Caribbean/ Directed by non-French Caribbean
Pre-1900	*The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (Luigi Topi, shown Fr. Consulate in Haiti in Dec. 1899)	*The Last Fire of 15 December 1899 in Port-au-Prince* (1899) (Haiti)						
	La Place du Vieux Port de Marseille ; *La Partie de l'Ecarte* ; *La Chasse des Cuirasiers* ; *Le Carnival à Nice* ; *Le Bain à Milan* ; *Le Crepage de Chignon* ; *Le*							

	Faux Cul-de-Jatte (Most popular of Titles of the some 24 shorts shown by Filippi in Haiti at the French Consulate and Petit Seminaire College in Port au Prince in 1899)							
	Footage of Filippi's travels in Latin American and the Caribbean Islands (Filippi, 1899)							
	Adaptations of Victor Hugo and Emile Zola novels (1915)							
	La Danse Heroique ; *La Comtesse Noire* (1916)							
1900-1925		*News Magazines: Carnival Celebrations, Children's Danse in Port-au-Prince,*	*Martinique île aux fleurs* (Méliès)					

		Mariane Tennis Tournament, footage of selected Haitian cities (1925)						
		Le Coute Kostia (1925)						
1925-1949	*Sanitation Department propoganda* (1925/1929)		*White Zombie* (1932) (Haiti)					
	US Government propoganda (1915-1934)		*The Devil's Daughter (Arthur Leonard's 1939) (Haiti)*					
	L'Agonie des Aigles ; *Mondragore; Orphelins de la Tempete* ; *Douze Round d'un Furieux Combat* (1930)		*To have and have not* (Howard Hawks, 1944) (M)					
	Footage of Vincent-Roosevelt meetings (1933-1934)							

	La Bataille ; *La Robe Rouge* ; *Gai Divorce* ; *Banque Nemo* (1935)							
1950-1959			Footage of Hazel Hurricane (Gustavo Maynulet, 1954)					
			On N'enterre Pas le Dimance (Michel Drach, 1959)					
1960-1969	B-movies, Karate, pornography (ex : *Theree et Isabelle* – censored in 1969) (Lafontant Médard 73)		*Antilles, les vieilles provinces francaises* (1961, documentary) (M)			*Mais Moi Je Suis Belle* (Jean Dominique, Edouard Guilbaud, Emmanuel Lafontant, produced by Ricardo Widmaïer 1962)	*Un Agent de la CIA peut-il être un mecène?* (Arnold Antonin, 1965)	
			Coumbite (Tomas Guttierez Alea, 1964) (based on Gouverneus de la Rosée)				*Lorsque l'herbe* (Christian Lara, 1968)	
			The Divine Horsemen, the Living Gods of					

			Haiti (Maya Deren, 1963)					
			The Comediens (Peter Glenville, 1967)					
			Banana's Boulevard					
			Tumuc-Humuc (Jean-Marie Périer, 1969) (M)					
			Adieu Oncle Tom (1969)					
1970-1979	*Le Journal d'une Femme de Chmbre* Bunuel, 1975)		*Le Radeau de la méduse*	*Karukéra au bout de la nuit* (Constant Gros-Dubois)	*La Machette et le Marteau* (Gabriel Glissant, 1975)	*Les Duvaliers au Banc des Accusés* (*The Duvaliers Stand Accused*) (Arnold Antonin, 1973)	*Le Retour* (1971)	
	Les Peintres de la Fete et du Voudou (Jean-Marie Dot, 1977)		*Il Posto del Pavone* (Giampaolo Lomi, 1971)	*Dérive ou la femme jardin* (SERMAC-Silou ; Jean-Paul Césaire – Cham, 1977 – adaptation of a René Depestre short story)	*Liberté Coupée* (Jacques Ferly, 1975)	*Haiti : Le Chemin de la Liberté* (Arnold Antonin, 1975)	*Le Pion* (Gabriel Glissant, 1972)	
			Tchimbé rèd pas moli (Caroline and Mireille Abramovici, Jean-Denis	*Hors des Jours Etrangers* (SERMAC, 1978)	*Ça Ne M'A Pas Plu* (Jacques Ferly, 1975)	*Les Duvaliers Condamnés* (Arnold Antonin, 1975)	*Un amour de sable* (Christian Lara, 1976)	

			Bonau, 1972)					
			Simparele (Humberto Solas, 1974)		*Chiba Ti Mal-Là* (Gabriel Glissant 1976) Creole-dubbed Kung Fu film	*Art Naif et Repression en Haiti* (Arnold Antonin, 1975)	*Une Glace avec Deux Boules* (Christian Lara) (F)	
			Haiti, Perle des Antilles (Omer d'Hoe, 1974)		*Tambour au Loin, Joli Son* (Jacques Ferly, 1976)	*Map Pale Nèt (*Raphael Stine, 1976)	*La Seconde Manche* (Elsie Haas, 1979)	
			Haiti Enchainée (Benjamen Dupuy, 1974)		*Chap'la* (Christian Lara, 1977)	*Olivia* (Bob Lemoine, 1976)		
			Après la Coumbite (Philippe Tolenado, 1975)		*Coco la fleur, Candidat* (Christian Lara, 1978)	*Mwin se an*	*O Madiana* (Constant Gros Dubois, 1978-1981)	
			Un Homme, Une Terre (Sarah Maldoror, 1977)		*Mamito* (Christian Lara, 1979-1980)	*moun kon ou minm'* (Elsie Haas, 1979)		
			Le Crabe-Tambour (Pierre Schoendoerffer,1977)			*Ya Bon Banania* (Elsie Haas, 1970)	*Football et les Haitiens à New York* (Raphael Stines, 1970's ?)	
			Toutes les Joséphines ne sont pas impératrices (Jérome Kanapa, 1977) (Morne Rouge)			*Le Romancero (Elsie Haas, 1970)*		
			En l'autre bord (Jérome Kanapa,					

			1978) (M)					
			West Indies: Les Nègres Marrons de la Liberté (Med Hondo, 1979) (M)					
1980-1989			*Le Sang du flamboyant* (Francois Migeat, 1980-1981)	*L'Atelier du Diable* (Euzhan Palcy, 1981)	*Vivre libre ou mourir* (Christian Lara, 1980-1981)	*Un Tonton Macoute Peut-Il Devenir Poète* (Arnold Antonin, 1980)	*Mizik Rez de Chausée Neg* (Michel Traoré, 1981)	
			The Art of Haiti	*Bourg La Folie* (Benjamin Jules-Rosette, 1982) adaption of Roland Brival novel	*Adieu foulards* (Christian Lara, 1981)	*Où vas-tu, Haiti* (Lucien Bonnet, 1980)	*Solitaire à Micro Ouvert* (Julius-Amédé Laou, 1983)	
			(Mark Mamalakis, 1982)	*Rue Cases-Nègres* (Euzhan Palcy, 1983)	*La Charpente de Marine* (Jacques Ferly, 1981)	*La Mort d'un Zombie* (Arnold Antonin, 1980)	*Les Saints et les Anges* (Elsie Haas, 1984)	
			Les enfants de la Guadeloupe (Olivier Landau, 1984) (G)	*Quiproquo* (Guy Deslauriers)	*Et Survint la Vipère* (José Egouy, 1983)	*Zatrap* (Elsie Haas, 1980)	*Joumankole (El Dia de Mi Ira)* (Rassoul Labuchin, 1984)	
			Hayti Même Bagay (Ronald Wayne Boone, 1987)	*Frayeur au Sixième Ciel* (Harmel Sbrair, late 1980's)	*Chronique du Cœur* (Jacques Ferly, 1984)	*Anita (*Rassoul Labuchin and Yves Médard, 1982)	*La Seconde Manche* (Elsie Haas, 1985)	
				Premonition (Henry Vigana, late 1980's)	*Karukera au bout de la nuit* (Constant Gros-Dubois, 1986)	*Bitter Cane* (Jacques Arcelin, 1983)	*Sonate en Solitudes Majeures* (Julius Amede Laou, 1986)	

				La Nuit de la Saint-Sylvestre (Patrick Baucelin, late 1980's)	*Noirs et Blancs en 1789* (1989)	*La Ronde des Tap-Tap* (Elsie Haas, 1986)	*Lien de Parenté* (Willy Rameau, 1986)	
				Mante des Aurores (Errance) (Benjamin Jules-Rosette, 1988)		*La Ronde des Vaudou* (Elsie Haas, 1987)	*La vieille quimboiseuse et le majordome* (Julius-Amédé Laou, 1987)	
				Les Fruits de la Passion (Michel Traore, 1989)		*No Comment* (Elsie Haas, 1988)	*Mélodie de Brumes à Paris* (Julius-Amédé Laou, 1987)	
				Les Oubliés de la Liberté (Guy Deslauriers, 1989)		*Kraze Lanfe* (*Breaking Hell*, Raphael Stines, ?)	*Haitian Corner* (Raoul Peck, 1988)	
						Les gens de bien (Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé, 1988)	*Tilom à Letranje* (Tilom Abroad) (Jean-Claude Fayolle, ?)	
1990-1999			*Souvenance* (Thomas Harlan, 1990)	*L'exil du roi Béhanzin* (Guy Deslauriers, 1994)	*Putain de Porte* (Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 1994)	*L'enquête se poursuit (Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé, 1991)*		*Comment Faire l'Amour avec un Nègre sans se Fatiguer* (Jacques Benoit, 1990)
			La Vieille qui marchait dans la mer (Laurent Heynemann, 1991)		*A Bamako, les femmes sont belles* (Christi-ane Succab-Goldman, 1995)	*Lumumba: la mort du prophète* (Raoul Peck, 1991)		*La Porte qui claque* (Clarisse Bagoe-Dubosq, 1997)

			Gwoka (Caroline Bourgine & Olivier Lichen, 1995)		*Le Contrat* (Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 1996)	*L'homme sur les quais (Man by the Shore)* (Raoul Peck, 1992)		*Le Cri* (Clarisse Bagoe-Dubosq, 1997)
			Frantz Fanon: peau noire, masque blanc (Isaac Julien, 1996)		*Sucre Amer* (Christian Lara, 1997)	*Le Cap à la Une* (*To the One*, Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé, 1992)		*Le Petit Plat d'accras* (Clarisse Bagoe-Dubosq, 1999, short)
						Le Silence des chiens (Raoul Peck 1994)		
						Cicatrice I (Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé, 1997)		
						Père de mon fils (Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé, 1998)		
						Chronique des femmes oiseaux (Michele Lemoine, 1998)		
						Cicatrice II (Jean-Gardy Bien-Aimé, 1999)		
						Corps Plongé (Raoul Peck, 1999)		
						Les Illuminations de Madame Nerval (Charles		

						Najman, 1999)		
						Les Enfants du coup d'Etat (Rachèle Magloire, 1999)		
						La Tour Inachevée (Rachèle Magloire, ?)		
						Chère Catherine (Raoul Peck, 1999)		
2000-present			*The Agronomist (Jonathan Demme, 2002)*	*Volcans des Antilles* (Jean-François Gonzalez, 2003)	*Antilles sur Seine* (Pascal Legitimus, 2001)	*Ame Noire* (Martine Chartrand, 2000)	*Les Controverses* (Hilaire Absalon, ?) (Canada)	*Nation, Place des Antilles* (Jil Servant, 2007)
			Dreamers (Jorgen Leth, 2002, Denmark)	*Biguine (Guy Deslauriers, 2004)*	*Têt grenné* (Christian Grandman, 2001).	*Le Choix de ma vie* (Mora Etienne, ?)	*Conféssions* (Jean-Claude Guillaume, ?) (Orlando, FL)	
			L'Evangile du cochon créole (Michel-ange Quai, 2004)	*La tragédie de la mangrove* (Guy Deslauriers et Patrick Chamoiseau, 2004)	*16 Heures* (Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 2001)	*Barikad* (Richard Sénécal, 2001)	Roland Paret, Canadian short-film director	
			Madanm Ti Zo (David Belle, 2004, US)	*Une Voix Pour l'Histoire* (Euzhan Palcy, 2004)	*Traces à Vieux Habitant*	*Le Profit et rien d'autre* (Raoul Peck, 2001)	*Black Mozart of Cuba* (Stephanie James and Steve James,2006)	

			Vers le sud (Laurent Cantet, 2005)	*Monsieur Etienne* (Yann Chayia, 2005)	(Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 2003)	*Lumumba* (Raoul Peck, 2001)	*La première étoile* (Lucien Jean-Baptiste, 2009)	
			Haiti Chérie (Claudio del Punta, 2007)	*Pleine lune à Volga Plage* (Camille Mauduech, 2005)	*Nèg-mawon* (Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 2004)	*Lè loa voye rele'm* (Laurence Magloire and Anne Lescot, 2001)		
			Mange, ceci est mon corps (American-Haitian with French production company Michelange Quay, 2008)	*Nation, Place des Antilles* (Jil Servant, 2006)	*Nous, de ce pays bouleversé* (Christiane Succab-Goldman, 2004)			
			Une mémoire vodou (Irène Lichtenstein, 2008)	*Il était une fois…Sasha et Désiré* (Cécile Vernant, 2006)	*Karukera Gorée…vers les dieux* (Tony Coco-Viloin, 2004 - title also appears as *Karukera Gorée, mémoire de demain*)	*La Peur D'aimer* (Reginald Lubin, 2001)		
				Les 16 de Basse Pointe (Camille Mauduech, 2007, features Aimé-Césaire)	*1802, l'épopée guade-loupéenne* (Christian Lara, 2005)	*Royal Bonbon* (Charles Najman, 2002)		

				Les Mémoires d'orchidées ou La Chronique d'un départ annoncé (Henri Vigana, 2007)	*Trafik d'info* (Jeanluk Stanislas, 2005)	*Des Hommes et des Dieux* (Laurence Magloire and Anne Lescot, 2002)		
				Les Eglises de la Martinique (Patrick Baucelin, 2007)	*15 Lanné Mizik* (Dominik Coco, 2006)	*40 ans après…Roussan Camille* (Mario Delatour, 2002)		
				Kassav, une Epopée Antillaise (Michel Traoré, 2007)	*Lettre à Irène* (Tony Coco-Viloin, 2006)	*Million-naire par Erreur* (? ,2003?)		
				Chronique Antillaises (Yann Chayia, 2008)	*Darling LEGITIMUS, ma Grand-Mère, notre Doudou* (Pascal Legitimus, 2007)	*40 Ans Apres* (Mario Delatour, 2003?)		
				L'Ami Fondamental (Euhzan Palcy, ?)	*Le Mur du Silence* (Jean-Claude Flamand Barny, 2008?)	*Haïti Coeur battant* (Carl Lafontant, 2003)		
				Les Armes Miraculeuses (RFO, 2006)	*Kartyé La A Nèf* (9 Guadeloupans aged 16-25, 2008)	*Tchala…l'argent des rêves* (Michèle Lemoine, 2003)		
				Trenelle Citron (Laurent Cadoux, 2008)	*Aliker* (Guy Deslauriers, cost €3million, 2008)	*Les Chemins de la mémoire* (Frantz Voltaire, 2003)		

				La Yole (Teddy Albert, 2008)	*Considerant Que…* (Dominique Roberjot and Christine Della-Maggiora, 2007, Guadeloupe)	*GNB contre Attila* (Arnold Antonin, 2004)		
				Les derniers maîtres de la Martinique (Roman Bolzinger, 2009)	*Retour au Pays* (Julien Dalle, 2009)	*La vi ka bel pou tout moun (La Vie Peut-etre Belle)* (Laurence Magloire, 2004)		
						Bonjour la Rezoné (Elsie Haas, Bestabee Haas, and Nixon Amilcar, 2004)		
						E publius Unum (Maxence, Denis, 2004)		
						L'arbre de la liberté (Maxence, Denis, 2004)		
						Haïti: La fin des chimères (Charles Najman, 2004)		
						Un certain bord de mer (Mario Delatour, 2005)		
						Territories of the Breast (Jean-René Rinvil, 2006)		

						Latibonit (Guy J. Elie, 2006)		
						Choix Final(?, 2005)		
						Cousines (Richard Sénécal, 2006)		
						Tiga Haïti : rêve possession création folie (Arnold Antonin, 2006)		
						Haiti : Violence ou la paix? (Mario Delatour, 2006)		
						Le Président a-t-il le sida (Arnold, Antonin, 2007)		

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