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Dawn Fulton

Planet Condé: Writing Our Times, Writing the Anthropocene

There is a geographical expression – “the Caribbean” –
associated with a certain space.

– Maryse Condé¹

Scholarship at the intersection of francophone studies and the environmental humanities has foregrounded the creolized vision of landscape found in Caribbean literature, investigating narratives where, as Édouard Glissant writes in Le discours antillais, “the individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history”.² The works of Maryse Condé have not featured prominently in this scholarship, but a reflection on the fraught relationship between humans and their natural environment threads through her fiction.³ Often this reflection is a vehicle for an expression of alienation rather than community or belonging. In Traversée de la mangrove (1989), La migration des cœurs (1995), Desirada (1997), and La belle Créole (2001), for example, characters turn to the ravine, the trees, the morne, or the ocean in search of solace from the agony of human company.⁴ But in her 2010 novel, En attendant la montée des eaux (Waiting for the Waters to Rise), Condé filters recurrent themes in her œuvre – human collectivity, social ethics and responsibility, exile – through the lens of climate disaster.⁵ Below I look more closely at this “planetary” vision in En attendant la montée des eaux before turning to the author’s works for children where, in contrast to her fiction for adults, the environment figures as a dominant theme. While informed by the international outlook that characterizes Condé’s œuvre as a whole, this set of texts brings attention to the particular

concurrence of colonial history, cultural and biological profusion, and tourism economics that underpins the unique status of the Caribbean in contemporary thinking about anthropogenic environmental change.

Waiting Together: The Insularity of Climate Change

Condé's fifteenth novel, En attendant la montée des eaux, is imbued with a characteristically transient mood: its three protagonists from disparate countries and backgrounds forge a friendship out of displacement, and, like many of the author's characters, seem bound to a restless movement from place to place. Babakar Traoré begins his life pulled in two directions by his Malian and Guadeloupean ancestry, while Movar Pompilius lives an undocumented existence as a Haitian exile in Guadeloupe. Befriended through a common allegiance to Anaïs, an infant whose Haitian mother died in childbirth, Babakar and Movar ultimately return to Haiti where they encounter Fouad al-Larabi, a Palestinian chef and restaurateur exiled from Lebanon having lost his family to the Sabra and Shatila massacre. The climate events that frame the novel – a rising storm in Guadeloupe at its opening and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti at its close – signal the narrative's preoccupation with the natural environment and its imbrication with each character's story, but Condé insists also on political violence, sectarian conflict, and global economic opportunism as forces that have a similarly destructive effect on their lives and on the landscapes they inhabit.

The novel thus underscores the inseparability of geophysical and political forces that forms a key component of critical dialogues in the environmental humanities,⁶ while extending this palimpsestic vision across the globe through the juxtaposition of disparate neighborhoods

and cities ravaged by drought, storms, and human conflict. Descriptions of devastation echo one another throughout the narrative, at times verging on the extradiegetic, as when Babakar, returning to the capital city of a fictional West African country after a bloody ethnic conflict, evokes the devastation of Hurricane Katrina: “The wealthy, thriving capital I had once loved was unrecognizable. It looked like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The deserted streets were dirty and full of potholes, the sidewalks were littered with garbage, and dogs roamed around baring their menacing teeth” (129). While this nod to a contemporary North American readership may strike a false chord for some, the comparison accomplishes in a single gesture an alignment between political and natural disaster and a reminder of the socioeconomic inequalities embedded in the ways in which the consequences of such events play out.⁷ If Haiti, as will be discussed further below, is emblematic of the intersection of colonial and natural destruction, New Orleans can be read here as an emblem of the all too legible mapping of class and racial divides through the prism of natural disaster.

Ultimately, following the narrative arc of its characters, En attendant la montée des eaux closes with a focus on the space of the Caribbean, underscoring the figure of the island as a crucial metonymic space in the study of climate change. The finite spatial contours of the island, its intimate relationship to the ocean, its vulnerability and exposure to natural forces, facilitate the visualization of planetary destruction on a cognitively manageable scale.⁸ In this reading, as Elizabeth DeLoughrey argues, the island can attain a prophetic function as a projection of a planetary future: “the island is understood not just as the Earth, but as its anticipated future.”⁹ The extreme incidences of natural destruction alongside and as a result of colonial exploitation make the Caribbean a space where climate change can be made legible, for example in the assessment of biodiversity loss as a harbinger for this kind of destruction across the globe.¹⁰

Condé's title points to rising waters as the dominant index of climate change for characters and readers alike, superimposing island and planet in its imagery of impending doom.

The novel's portrait of Haiti underscores the emblematic status of this particular insular space (an imagery that often forgets the unique dual-nation mapping of Hispaniola, where national and physiographic boundaries do not coincide). The polarities of beauty and destruction, resilience and vulnerability, hope and loss, figure prominently in representations of this iconic nation. The character of Hugo Moreno, Babakar's Cuban friend whose wheelchair he pushes nightly along the ocean cliffs as they talk, functions in many ways as the narrative's prophetic voice of environmental doom, projecting this vision in particular onto Haiti: "Such an extraordinary island! And yet, despite its vitality, it will be one of the first to disappear. Nature is conspiring against it. Already it's sinking into the ocean" (70). For his part, Babakar offers an apocalyptic vision of the island that borders on the cliché: "Babakar had never lived in a place so teeming with human life. The existences around him seemed to burn him with their closeness. He was afraid of the exuberance of this land, this Ogun spirit at war with dictatorships, corruption, drugs, supernatural beliefs, and natural disasters" (342). Here the fear provoked by this vision stems from a conflation of corruption and natural disaster that is at the heart of mediatized images of Haiti, images whose cumulative energy reached a fever pitch following the earthquake of January 12, 2010.¹¹

The earthquake may also account for the centripetal force of Haiti in En attendant la montée des eaux. In a piece she contributed to Martin Munro's edited volume, Haiti Rising, Condé writes of the irruption of this cataclysmic event into the composition of her novel. Initially, she recounts, the Port-au-Prince narrative in En attendant la montée des eaux was set to close on an optimistic note: "The country was said to be entering a period of relative peace and

prosperity. The kidnappings had practically ceased. The gang leaders had all laid down their arms. Now that the country had to be rebuilt, I had to rewrite everything” (151). The ways in which poverty in Haiti can be at turns hidden from view and catapulted into global visibility as it was in 2010 seem to have made their way into these revisions, as the published version of the novel returns repeatedly to class difference as it comes up against the natural beauty of the landscape. The apparent contradiction between economic hardship and natural splendor (“Why so much poverty amidst all this beauty?” (302) muses Movar as he travels along the country’s northern coast) comes to the fore in the description of Labadie, a private resort west of Cap-Haïtien leased by the cruise ship conglomerate Royal Caribbean International, where Movar has gone in search of work. Surrounded by barbed-wire fences and patrolled by a private security force, the resort spares its clients the sight of any actual Haitians as they revel in the admiration of the landscape: “It was in Haiti and at the same time not in Haiti” (303).¹² The multiplicity of narratives inscribed onto the Haitian landscape in this novel suggests that Condé, in moving beyond polarized visions of the island and its history, is intent on exposing the artifice that can inhere in these visions of excess: just as visitors to the Labadie resort see a whitewashed, constructed image of natural wonder, those who see extremes of either poverty or heroism, resilience or corruption, necessarily obscure the complexity of the country’s history and contemporary realities.

The portrait of Guadeloupe in En attendant la montée des eaux, although less prominent than that of Haiti, demands a similar examination of the Caribbean double bind. Although his Guadeloupean mother had hoped he would fall in love with her native land, Babakar professes to be unable to love a land where there is human misery: “Nature is nothing but a great camouflage. What matters is if a man is unhappy, bitter, frustrated. And here, people are not happy, because

it's impossible to live in a state of dependence" (166-67). This sentiment offers a key insight into the novel's engagement with the Caribbean environment: an admiring gaze at the landscape is suspect in that it risks complicity with the blind ignorance of the wealthy tourist, erasing the human experience in and of that landscape. The phrase "great camouflage," moreover, points to an early and resounding critique of this exterior gaze: it is the title of Suzanne Césaire's final contribution to the Martinican magazine Tropiques (1941-1945) that she founded with her husband Aimé Césaire. In "Unheard Voice: Suzanne Césaire and the Construct of a Caribbean Identity," Condé traces the evolution of Suzanne Césaire's writing through the magazine's four-year run, and argues that this final essay marks a break with Négritude and Surrealism on the particular question of exoticism. "At first reading," Condé writes:

Le grand camouflage seems to be a celebration of the dynamism and splendor of Caribbean Nature. [Césaire] starts by praising the sea and the volcano, then the hurricanes and the earthquakes, as if their violence were the sign of a profound creativity. But very soon her voice changes and she links Nature with Humanity. [...] What Suzanne Césaire wants to illustrate is how difficult it is for an outsider to appreciate the inner reality of the island as he is overwhelmed and blinded by its beauty. She wants, on the contrary, to establish a fundamental relationship among all the elements existing on the island. For the superficial visitor, the poverty and despair of the human beings are veiled behind the smokescreen of natural beauty. (66)

The problem of camouflage underscores the dilemma of representation confronting all writers of non-dominant cultures: the potential collapsing of cultural affirmation and exoticism. As we see in Condé's reading of Suzanne Césaire, the iconic beauty of the Caribbean landscape makes this

risk particularly urgent, and the simultaneous assessment of that beauty and what lies behind it particularly elusive.

The exigence of exoticism in the Caribbean points to an important tension between the fields of the environmental humanities and postcolonial criticism. For, as has been noted, the primacy placed on nature in environmental protectionist discourse can veer into an idealization of pre-modern, pre-industrial landscapes that sounds uncomfortably similar to colonialist fantasies of unconquered territory. The “people” inhabiting these spaces can be conflated with the land itself, idealized as noble victims needing to be saved in the way of the trees or the shorelines.¹³ Couched in these dualities is thus a species stratification that defines sharply separate and unequal concepts of “the human” in an era that purportedly offers – at last – a universalizing view of the human. The impulse to salvage what is about to be lost, Condé reminds us, can participate in reductive gestures inherited from colonial exoticism, reinscribing representations of the island that are devoid of human agency.¹⁴

Along similar lines, as we see in the example of Labadie in En attendant la montée des eaux, the inexorable force of the tourism industry in the Caribbean underwrites a direct link between admiration and destruction. Jamaica Kincaid has vividly parsed the ugliness and voracious appetite of the tourist in Caribbean spaces, and Condé’s novel points to the systemic economic and environmental transformations of the islands that scaffold that figure.¹⁵ Royal Caribbean Group is an extreme example in its physical and economic amputation of the Labadie peninsula from Haiti, but other transnational corporations display a similar disregard for the local in their claims to space on the island.¹⁶ Trees and landscapes are leveled to make way for resort hotels that ostensibly welcome tourists motivated by the possibility of enjoying that “natural,” “native” landscape. The health center founded and run by Babakar, Movar, and Fouad, for

example, having lost its financial support, is bought out by an international hotel chain whose representative is sanguine in his approach: “Everything would have to be razed. This uninviting place would be transformed into an earthly paradise. They would build a palace like the one the hotel chain had in Saint Barthelemy. He seemed oblivious to the absurdity of what he was saying.” (343). The disconnect between the investment strategy and the valued object itself thus dramatizes on a systemic scale the relationship between the tourist outsider and the idealized island space, at once hyper-defined by its locality and yet lifted out of its local context to fit a global vision of desirability.

When, in the face of this destruction, Babakar and Fouad finally decide to abandon their center and to leave Haiti behind, they are chastised by a government employee as they drive toward the airport: “It’s a mistake to leave our country now. Soon it will be again what it used to be, the Pearl of the Caribbean. Look at all those businessmen crowding in. They’re coming from everywhere” (261). International financial attention functions here as the gauge of Haiti’s value, while the phrase “Pearl of the Caribbean” underwrites a colonial nostalgia that seals the connection between European conquest and contemporary tourism.¹⁷ With a nod to more recent configurations of global economic power structures, however, Condé complicates this North/South dynamic in her novel by casting a Chinese company in the role of the acquiring power. Zhang Zhong Li, the company representative, speaks five languages “to perfection” (343) and swoops in from Hong Kong to appraise the space about to be replaced by his company’s hotel. Soon that space is unrecognizable, as workers are flown in from China by charter to level the ground and cover it with sand. While the East Asian presence in Haiti is evoked in passing in Condé’s novel, its imbrication in the dynamics of profit and exchange is noteworthy in that it signals something other than the replication of colonial power structures. In this brief glimpse of

the hotel development project, for example, we see China represented by both the global corporate elite and the manual laborer. Similarly, teachers at the Korean language institute that took over part of the lease the health center was unable to continue paying find their surroundings transformed and destroyed before their eyes without having any say in it, while the center's beds and medical equipment will be sold to a new hospital staffed by a team of volunteers from Thailand. Condé's trenchant gaze offers a reminder at once of the persistence of tropes that are fundamentally tied to Caribbean spaces and of the new ways in which these tropes are being constituted through shifting geographies of economic power.

Readers of the Future: Environmental Poetics for Children

The future-oriented thrust of climate change study and activism makes children's literature an intuitive place to raise questions related not only to the ethical (modeling the everyday applications of energy conservationism) but also to the ontological. As Zoe Jaques maintains, fiction can serve as an important arena for children to explore and stretch the boundaries of the human and to imagine existence beyond environmental constraints.¹⁸ The young reader, in this sense, provides the promise of a conceptual and categorical freedom that might function in concert with the writer's creative freedom to generate new understandings of common humanity in the anthropocene. Maryse Condé has written eight works for children, a corpus where environmental concerns predominate in a way that is considerably more conspicuous than in the case of her literary works for adults. Haïti chérie (Beloved Haiti) and Conte cruel (Cruel Tale) both open with departures or migrations forced by drought, Savannah blues features the heavy rains and cyclones of the U.S. South, and Hugo le terrible (Hugo the Terrible) recounts the days

leading up to and following the historically violent Hurricane Hugo that struck Guadeloupe in September 1989.¹⁹ In her sole incursion into science fiction, Condé imagines in Planète Orbis (Planet Orbis) a peaceful army of children, selected and transported to the planet Orbis to receive an ethical and social education that they will eventually bring back to earth with them. The story thus voices the particular hope that children embody in corrective visions of human life, noting that “children alone are capable of reinventing the world.”²⁰

While her books for children have received less critical attention than her novels, Condé speaks spiritedly of this aspect of her vocation in her second set of interviews with Françoise Pfaff, suggesting – with a characteristic clin d’œil – that writing for children is an expression of political activism: “Talking to children about the world as it is, cruel and hard, about how difficult and treacherous life can be, is a challenge I’m glad to take on. [...] I think a writer has to reach out to young readers, to present the world’s problems in way they can understand. It must be the lingering activist in me!”²¹ While Condé acknowledges the pedagogical aspect of her works for children,²² however, she also recounts disputes with her editor about the tragic ending of Haïti chérie, which tells of the drowning off the coast of the United States of a group of Haitian immigrants, forced overboard by their traffickers. In Condé’s insistence that, contrary to the concerns expressed by her editor, this was in fact a “story for children,” and in her protestations that she aimed in Haïti chérie to tell neither a morality tale nor an exemplary one, we see similar strains to those that characterize critical responses to the author’s literary corpus as a whole: the disruption of generic boundaries, the resistance to cultural codes.²³ Given the recurrent theme of environmental change, this tension plays out in important ways here, as Condé presents the anthropocenic moment as one that reinforces external perceptions of the

Caribbean, and the natural landscape as the very filter through which Caribbean space is divested of its human agency.

Condé has attributed the motivation for writing Haïti chérie, her most successful children's book, to her observation of the treatment of Haitian immigrants: she writes in her 1994 essay, "Pan-Africanism, Feminism, and Culture," that it was seeing the prejudice of schoolchildren in Guadeloupe and Martinique that prompted her to write Rose-Aimée's tragic story.²⁴ Interwoven with the environmental focus, then, is a concern for the outsider's gaze, with familiar misgivings around the untenable choice between idealization and denigration in the representation of Caribbean spaces. Condé recounts that her original Creole title for the book was rejected by the publisher, Bayard Presse, in favor of its French-language title, Haïti chérie, referencing a popular song of the same name.²⁵ As the author points out, the tension between the book's title and its content captures what she calls the "Caribbean reality" of false appearances: "This is the reality of the West Indies. These are countries that appear to be attractive and pleasant but that are actually very hard."²⁶ The implicit link to tourism emerges more explicitly in the closing pages of Haïti chérie, as its young protagonist, Rose-Aimée, traveling by sea for the first and last time in her life, marvels at the natural beauty of her surroundings while taking stock of the fact that this beauty is not equally accessible to all. Why, she wonders, were some of the earth's creatures destined to think only of survival while others had the luxury of esthetic admiration? The beauty of her own country, so distinctive and desirable as to bring tourists from all corners of the world, is something she herself must turn her back on.²⁷ In these final reflections before her death, Rose-Aimée exposes the prismatic quality of the Caribbean's privileged status as a tourist destination, while also predicting the increasingly artificial nature of its representation for that external – and ecologically destructive – industry.

In Hugo le terrible, where the impact of climate disaster in Guadeloupe is told through the story of the eponymous hurricane of 1989, Condé makes a similar connection between geoclimatic conditions and class difference, as the novel's thirteen-year-old narrator Michel observes the variation in damage and devastation experienced by residents of his own middle-class neighborhood in comparison to those of poorer neighborhoods on the island, including that of his family's maid Gitane, an immigrant from Dominica. The two-week time frame of the narrative offers a kind of snapshot bildungsroman in which Michel's experience of the hurricane and its aftermath brings him to an awareness of socioeconomic injustices that had previously been invisible to him. The character's class position in this text is in fact a key aspect of the narrative in that it allows for a deft modulation of viewpoints: while Gitane's story speaks to populations and existences swept under the rug by the tourism industry, Michel's solidly bourgeois experience of the storm offers a counterweight to the potential misérabilisme of a tale focused on the most vulnerable. Through Michel's voice, the story finds a way to model a young, educated reader's response and attention while querying both the exoticizing tourist's gaze and the sensationalist focus on victimhood.

The subtlety of Hugo le terrible's critique also emerges in its inscription of the geographically and culturally external perspective, rendered here not through the figure of the tourist but through the example of disaster journalism. In the hours leading up to the storm, Michel meets a couple from metropolitan France, photojournalists who cut short their vacation in Dominica in order to witness and photograph the cyclone in Guadeloupe. They are lucid about the sensationalism that undergirds their line of work: "You know," the woman tells Michel, "photographers are voyeurs. They scour combat zones and refugee camps, they're there for every catastrophe, stopping at nothing to get the most sensational shots."²⁸ While Pascal and Manuëla

appear only fleetingly in the narrative, the presence of these photojournalists speaks to an additional layer of consumerism afflicting the Caribbean, one that trades in the spectacle of disaster. The fact that they are Europeans who transitioned swiftly from vacation to voyeurism suggests the blurring of boundaries among different forms of island consumerism, between tourism and sensationalism, between the enjoyment of natural beauty and the fascination at natural destruction and vulnerability, between extremes of climactic change and extremes of human suffering. This conflation is brought to the fore in the couple's triumphant assessment of their successful venture upon its close: "[The cyclone] exceeded our expectations. It was even more beautiful than we hoped. Apparently it's the most beautiful one there's been in the region in a long time."²⁹ Along with awakening him to class difference in Guadeloupe, then, Michel's coming of age in Hugo le terrible attunes him to the politics of media representation in the Caribbean. Shaken by his encounter with Pascal and Manu la, he asserts that he will never look at such photographs the same way again.³⁰

In her critical works and in public lectures, Cond  has wryly noted that the Caribbean only receives international attention in the case of a climate disaster or visiting celebrity.³¹ This reflection often serves as a kind of introduction – of herself, of her work, of her native land – as if to frame her artistic interventions in opposition to this externally produced image. In the context of anthropocene studies, then, it is significant that her work not only gives voice to the human subjects inscribed in that sensationalized landscape but also strives to expose the potential dissolution of such narratives into images of smiling natives or helpless victimhood. A comment in "Pan-Africanism, Feminism, and Culture," reveals the particular barrier this effort represents in the Caribbean, a space that struggles to gain equal status even, she argues, in black internationalist movements. Recalling her participation in Guadeloupean independence

movements in Paris in the 1980s, Condé notes the relative invisibility of the movement's leader, Luc Reinette, whose name on a banner next to that of Nelson Mandela was met with puzzlement by metropolitan allies. "Was the life of one man not equal to the life of another?" Condé asks, "Were Luc Reinette and Nelson Mandela not fighting injustice and oppression? Were they to be treated differently just because one came from a large and well-known country, while the other came from a small and desolate island?"³² The value and validity of Luc Reinette's political actions, of his contributions to pan-Africanism, are obscured, in Condé's reading, by the primacy of the Caribbean's identification as a natural landscape – as a double-bound space of either catastrophe or beauty. To proclaim the humanity of Caribbean people may not be enough, her work suggests, and may even turn complicit at a moment when the politics of environmentally-conscious humanism seem to stand at odds with the recognition of difference.

If understanding the destructive impact of human life on the planet prompts a newly-scaled vision of an anthropogenic "we," the next cognitive step in a posthumanist frame would be to imagine, as Rosi Braidotti puts it, a "we-are-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same" kind of subject.³³ Condé's title, "Waiting for the Waters to Rise," suggests a planetary, pan-human experience of sea-level rise with its accompanying mix of impending doom and retrospective culpability. An echo of her first novel's Malinke title, *Heremakhonon* ("waiting for happiness"), its implied universalism shifts the focus from the sentient to the ecological.³⁴ But just as the story that tells how "we are all waiting for happiness" is one that denies precisely the homogeneity of that experience, the story of a collective anticipation of planetary flooding preserves the inexorable variation of the environmental disaster narrative. With Haiti and Guadeloupe as metonymic worlds, Condé's narrative indicts centuries of exoticized, commercialized, and sensationalized imagery in that project. And in evoking the 2010

earthquake, a new zenith in internationally mediatized attention on the Haitian nation, the author strikingly takes poetic license not to describe the disaster or its nameless victims. While she confesses her own mesmerized state in front of the all too exhaustive televised accounts of the earthquake's aftermath ("I felt like a pitiful voyeur," she writes in "Haïti chérie"³⁵), Condé refuses to satiate that desire in her novel. Instead, the narrative closes on the truncated departure of Babakar and Fouad, as the two exiles obey a sense of common human responsibility and make their way through the airport, with Anaïs on their shoulders, back to the heart of the disaster. The future-facing imperative for adults and children alike, her novel suggests, is to rebuild the Caribbean's cultural, artistic, and political specificity through but also beyond the prism of environmental catastrophe.

NOTES

¹ Maryse Condé, "Unheard Voice: Suzanne Césaire and the Construct of a Caribbean Identity," in Winds of Change: The Transforming Voices of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars, ed. Adele S. Newson and Linda Strong-Leek (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 61.

² Édouard Glissant, Le discours antillais (Paris: Seuil, 1981); Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays, trans. J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1989), 105.

³ See for example Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture, ed. Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), where the focus in the francophone context is on Édouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant. Kathleen Gyssels asserts that in Condé's work climate events are mere décor in contrast to the deeper engagement with the

landscape found in works by Glissant and Daniel Maximin (See “Prévisions et divagations batoutiques face aux déréllections du Tout-monde: Daniel Maximin et Édouard Glissant comme Guerriers des (dés)astres antillais,” in The Caribbean Writer as Warrior of the Imaginary/L’Écrivain caribéen, guerrier de l’imaginaire, ed. Kathleen Gyssels and Bénédicte Ledent (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 250 n.7.) Counterexamples include Ellen Munley, “De la parole-racine à la parole-rhizome: La voix de la nature comme guide chez Maryse Condé,” Nouvelles études francophones 33/1 (2018): 178-192; Daniel Brant, “Disaster Cosmopolitanism: Catastrophe and Global Community in the Fiction of Daniel Maximin and Maryse Condé,” International Journal of Francophone Studies 17/2 (2014): 215-237; and Annie Rehill, “Perspective éco-critique: La nature dans trois romans de Roumain, Zobel et Condé.” International Journal of Francophone Studies 16/1–2 (2013): 135-50.

⁴ Condé, Traversée de la mangrove (Paris: Mercure, 1989); Crossing the Mangrove, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Doubleday, 1995). La migration des cœurs (Paris: Laffont, 1995); Windward Heights, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Soho Press, 1999). Desirada (Paris: Laffont, 1997); Desirada, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Soho Press, 2000). La belle Créole (Paris: Mercure, 2001); The Belle Creole, trans. Nicole Simek (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).

⁵ Condé, En attendant la montée des eaux (Paris: Lattès, 2010). Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

⁶ See for example Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” Critical Inquiry 35/2 (2009): 197-222; and Greg Bankoff, Cultures of Disaster: Society and Natural Hazards in the Philippines (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁷ On the ways in which this reference to New Orleans exhibits a “global ‘disasterscape,’”

see Brant, “Disaster Cosmopolitanism,” 229. Blogger Marcel Inhoff, however, found the reference jarring and implausible in the voice of a Malian character. See “Maryse Condé: En attendant la montée des eaux,” shikeguni, <https://shikeguni.wordpress.com/2015/09/24/maryse-conde-en-attendant-la-montee-des-eaux/> (accessed May 17, 2020).

⁸ On this topic, see DeLoughrey, Allegories of the Anthropocene (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 165-196; Caribbean Literature and the Environment, ed. DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley, 10-15; and Islanded Identities: Constructions of Postcolonial Cultural Insularity, ed. Maeve McCusker and Anthony Soares (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011).

⁹ DeLoughrey, Allegories, 166.

¹⁰ See Antonio Benítez-Rojo, “Sugar and the Environment in Cuba,” trans. James Maraniss, in Caribbean Literature and the Environment, ed. DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley, 49.

¹¹ See Deborah Jenson, “The Writing of Disaster in Haiti: Signifying Cataclysm from Slave Revolution to Earthquake,” in Haiti Rising: Haitian History, Culture, and the Earthquake of 2010, ed. Martin Munro (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 2010), 103-112; and Martin Munro, Tropical Apocalypse: Haiti and the Caribbean End Times (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015).

¹² The Economist reports that passengers have no need to go through customs upon disembarking in Labadie and pay for their “Labadoozie” cocktails in U.S. dollars. See “Island Shopping,” The Economist, August 10, 2019: 37.

¹³ DeLoughrey’s emphasis is on the visual turn in climate change documentaries that speak to “‘collective fantasies,’ particularly from the global north, of a prelapsarian Eden, a space where islanders live in harmony with ‘nature’” (Allegories, 168).

¹⁴ On this topic see Eric Prieto, “The Uses of Landscape: Ecocriticism and Martinican Cultural Theory,” in Caribbean Literature and the Environment, ed. DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley, 236-237; Jana Braziel, “‘Caribbean Genesis’: Language, Gardens, Worlds (Jamaica Kincaid, Derek Walcott, Édouard Glissant),” in *Ibid.*, 110-111; and Greg Bankoff, Cultures of Disaster, 10-11. Bankoff argues that the insistence on vulnerability as a trope undergirds an assumption that technocratic solutions will come from outside the island.

¹⁵ Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place (London: Virago Press, 1988).

¹⁶ See for example George B. Handley’s conversation with Derek Walcott about the Hilton Jalousie Hotel in St. Lucia: “‘The Argument of the Outboard Motor’: An Interview with Derek Walcott,” in Caribbean Literature and the Environment, ed. DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley, 127-39.

¹⁷ As Maeve McCusker notes, this jewel metaphor is part of a larger semantic network that aims to convey the precious and sacred status of the Caribbean islands while emphasizing their smallness and vulnerability, framing the entire archipelago as a string of beads readily subject to the “acquisitiveness of the Western gaze” (“Writing Against the Tide? Patrick Chamoiseau’s (Is)land Imaginary,” in Islanded Identities, ed. McCusker and Soares, 41-42).

¹⁸ Zoe Jaques, Children’s Literature and the Posthuman: Animal, Environment, Cyborg (New York: Routledge, 2015), 5.

¹⁹ Condé, Conte cruel (Montréal: Mémoire d’encrier, 2009), Haïti chérie (Paris: Bayard, 1991); Hugo le terrible (Paris: Sépia, 1991); Savannah blues (Paris: Sépia, 2009).

²⁰ Condé, La Planète Orbis (Point-à-Pître: Jasor, 2002), 67.

²¹ Françoise Pfaff, Nouveaux entretiens avec Maryse Condé: écrivain et témoin de son temps (Paris: Karthala, 2016): 157-58.

²² Ibid., 162.

²³ Françoise Pfaff, Entretiens avec Maryse Condé (Paris: Karthala, 1993); Conversations with Maryse Condé (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 117-118. See also Condé's interview in Paola Ghinelli, Archipels littéraires (Montréal: Mémoire d'encrier, 2005), 38; and Kiera Vaclavik, "Damaging Goods? Francophone Children's Books in a Postcolonial World," International Research in Children's Literature 2/2 (2009): 236.

²⁴ Condé, "Pan-Africanism, Feminism, and Culture," in Imagining Home: Class, Culture, and Nationalism in the African Diaspora, ed. Sidney J. Lemelle and Robin D.G. Kelley (London: Verso, 1994): 58.

²⁵ Pfaff, Conversations, 78-79.

²⁶ Ibid., 78.

²⁷ Condé, Haïti chérie, 73-74.

²⁸ Condé, Hugo le terrible, 40-41.

²⁹ Ibid., 110.

³⁰ Ibid., 41.

³¹ See for example Condé, "O Brave New World," Research in African Literatures 29/3 (1998): 1; and "Giving Voice to Guadeloupe," The New York Review of Books, February 6, 2019, <https://www-nybooks-com.libproxy.smith.edu/daily/2019/02/06/giving-voice-to-guadeloupe/> (accessed June 23, 2019).

³² Condé, "Pan-Africanism," 56. The name of Anaïs's mother in En attendant la montée des eaux, Reinette, inscribes a tribute to this Guadeloupean hero.

³³ Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman, All Too Human: The Memoirs and Aspirations of a Posthumanist," The 2017 Tanner Lectures (Yale University, March 1-2, 2017), 23.

³⁴ Condé, Heremakhonon (Paris 10/18: 1076); Heremakhonon, trans. Richard Philcox (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1982).

³⁵ Condé, “Haïti chérie,” in Haiti Rising, ed. Munro, 151.