

Rotted Bones, Shackled Volcanoes: Igneous Landscape and Négritude in Aimé Césaire's Poems

APALA BHOWMICK

There occurs a distinct nexus between human bodily matter, forms of fire, and stone in Aimé Césaire's poetic pieces throughout his oeuvre. This phenomenon is observed, most notably, in two texts: his long poetic work *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1939) and a longer collection, *Ferrements* (1960). He places these seemingly disparate components in a relationship of entanglement with each other through a poetics of landscape—a strategy he invents in order to lend vitality to his political project of writing about the dual movements of anticolonialism and négritude. This paper will parse the ecocritical tendencies present in Aimé Césaire's texts, and demonstrate the ways in which the author relies on an underlying subtext of posthumanist language in order to articulate his aesthetics of anticolonial thought. In other words, he seems to claim that the question of colonial subjugation is not one that remains confined to, simply, human bodies but come to bear upon the existence of elemental and nonhuman-animal bodies too; that violence upon one “genre” of organic existence—to borrow from Sylvia Wynter's concept—is impossible to separate from the other.

WHY FLESH: GEOLOGIC, BIOLOGICAL, AND VEGETAL ENTANGLEMENTS

In *Notebook*, as well as in the poems collected under the title *Ferrements*, Césaire tries to draw out the tension brewing under the surface of his political times. He attempts to mold language in his efforts to encapsulate the spirit of protest that fuels such anticolonial

thinking. He demonstrates, in his poetry, how the future is not foreclosed for the oppressed, despite being subjugated by imperial agents of racial capitalism as long as they manage to sustain their desire for decolonisation. Césaire's repeated use of images of blood, bones, festering sores, and other leakages and organic phenomena of the body itself is fairly revolutionary use of language for his literary era. If the slave is reduced to his capacity for production, a mere machine described by the oxymoronic presence of a single part of his body—his back or his pair of hands—then Césaire pushes back against this dehumanization by foregrounding the rest of his bodily parts and components. By referring to their functions, through a set of Surreal images that are juxtaposed against one another like so many disparate pieces of a puzzle, he brings out the sense of fragmentary spiritual existence, which the dehumanizing plantation system reduces the unified being of a human body to. In fact, when he does refer to leaking infections on the body, it is carried out in accompaniment with references to lack of noise—often articulated through ominous language—exemplifying the lull before the metaphorical political storm, for instance, in the line, “an aged silence bursting with tepid pustules”.¹

My argument, of course, is not that Aimé Césaire was consciously writing ecopoetry. Such a claim would not only be appropriative—ecocriticism being a school of critical thought which was inaugurated largely within Western university departments—but also anachronistic, since the discourse of biodiversity destruction in light of capitalist extractive practices are rooted firmly in scholarly conversations which take place in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. However, it is absolutely undeniable that his poems rely quite heavily on a rhetoric of the natural environment, with reference to the flora and fauna present within the Caribbean islands as well as in various parts of the continent of Africa. In fact, Aimé Césaire was, by no means, the only member of the Négritude school of thought writing about the entanglements between the corporeality of the black body and

elements present in the natural environment vis-à-vis the paradigms of coloniality and power. His partner, and fellow poet and essayist, Suzanne Roussi-Césaire had begun to talk about how the artistic mode of Surrealism managed to successfully yoke together nature and culture into a language of powerful aesthetic protest for the oppressed and the enslaved in her various essays and poetry.²

However, for the sake of organization, my paper will deal primarily with Aimé Césaire's poetic oeuvre without delving into too many details about Suzanne Roussi-Césaire's creative production, even though she remains a stark presence in the cultural scene of the times. An examination of the messages of his polemical poetry without also doing due diligence to an analysis of his rhetorical strategies would remain an incomplete work of literary criticism. Césaire wrote during a time when a language of protest for the enslaved masses existed neither in the popular imagination, nor in the linguistic tactics of the official sphere. He carved out a space for his activism as an anticolonial poet by rendering the French language malleable to the spirit of rebellion felt only affectively, outside the existing discursive sphere of his times. In defense of my examination of Césaire's polemical poetics through language, it could be crucial to turn to what Paolo Virno writes in *When the Word Becomes Flesh*:

Politics is not a form of life among many, tied to a specific language game, as is believed by some excessively prudent Wittgensteinian thinkers. It does not find its roots in a circumscribed region of verbal activity, but is inherent to the very fact of having language. The biological configuration that allows us to speak and to act politically is one and the same. If anything, the political inclination of human speech constitutes the one presupposition for all different forms of life and language games (among which, of course, the cognitive and productive ones stand out for their importance). The study of language as biological organ for public praxis is not a marginal

task . . . but the crux of every inquest on human nature.³

To speak to my point on language, again, while *Notebook* was published in 1939, Césaire's poetry collection *Ferraments*—a name which immediately evokes images of smelting metal as well as igneous metaphors in any reader's mind—was published in 1960. Evidently, the place of Mount Pelée—with its volcanic rocks and landscape formed by congealed metallic ashes—has remained on his mind as an inspiration. The paper will incorporate a significant amount of analysis of Césaire's references to this place, trying to understand the (environmental) motives behind his allusions, and attempt to make connections between the rhetoric utilized by him in order to speak of the visceral pain felt by dark human bodies, the visual invocation of a literally black landscape, and their harnessing of vegetal metaphors to demonstrate human entanglements with non-human elements suffering under the aegis of imperialist extractivist projects.

Keith Louis Walker argues that the “richness and variety of his lexical choices suggest that for Césaire being is everywhere, in everything, in the zoological, the biological, the botanical, the geological, in fire, air, earth, water, flora and fauna. Césaire nearly always contemplates human nature on the level of its relationship to these multiple phenomena”.⁴ Further, quoting from an interview with Aimé Césaire conducted by him in 1977 (Walker's translation), he adds that the poet claimed this of himself:

I consider that if there is a criticism to be made of human society, of colonial, Caribbean, Martiniquan society, it is that it has not known how to give a human expression which is on a par with the animal expression or the floral expression. I have somewhat the habit of saying that in Martinique everything is beautiful, everything is magnificent, it's all ablaze.⁵

In the following example from *Notebook*, Césaire roots his poetic

praxis in the material reality of the Martinican soil and claims, simultaneously, to be one with it bodily. In a connection which follows an incontrovertible line of associations between earth/stone and flesh, the poet writes:

To go away... I would arrive sleek and young in this land of mine and I would say to this land whose loam is part of my flesh: 'I have wandered for a long time and I am coming back to the deserted hideousness of your shores'.⁶

This linkage stands also to bolster his own claims about being in search for a language to articulate his corporeal racial reality⁷ when the linguistic or imaginative tools were lacking.

That Césaire grounds his language in environmental elements within a geological territory serves also to collapse epistemological boundaries between human/anthropogenic and natural/planetary histories. Paolo Virno further argues:

Naturalist historians... care only about events that can only be deciphered through an analysis of verbal language, of labor, of political praxis. The focus of 'natural history' is limited, therefore to the history of human forms of life... If we expanded the concept of historicity to include the myriad of unique, unrepeatable, unnecessary and even casual events crowding the annals of geology and biology, we would acquire a panoramic view... Nature, which is transient and mortal because it is traversed by the arrow of time, takes on the aspect of a historical drama, while achieved historical facts assume the rigidity of fossils.⁸

In this paper, especially with regard to his poems occurring in *Notebook*, I have focused on the poet's deployment of transferred epithets that connect nonliving objects with living human bodies,

and volcanic metaphors in his poems. Moreover, Aimé Césaire—with almost all his transferred epithets in the poem involving human-elemental-non-human entanglements—forcefully foregrounds the natural venue of human protest as a predominant actor in the text. Often, he directly parallels the dark sands and soil of Martinique—upon which, plantations serving colonial profitmaking ventures have been established—with the black slave bodies that are coerced into backbreaking labor for the same purposes of generating capital. He cleverly inverts associations between the weapon of violence and the biological—the former causing damage to the latter—in the lines:

To me the whip's corolla.
 Beauty I call you the false claim of stone.
 But ah! my raucous laughter
 smuggled in
 Ah! my saltpeter treasure!⁹

Whereas saltpeter is a white crystalline salt which occurs naturally in niter, it is utilized, too, for manufacturing gunpower, which is black in color. Further, from both poetry texts, the “voluptuousness of quirts,”¹⁰ meaning, slave whips indicate that not the whips themselves, but the human bodies that are being whipped, are voluptuous, thus, drawing a connection through the fact of proximity of both and ascribing the quality of voluptuousness to the weapon of violence. A similar logic can be applied to parts of poems where he refers to the branding iron placed on human flesh and vegetal metaphor of lilies. How does something as beautiful as lilies—considered a symbol of innocence, purity, even naivete in certain European cultural contexts—stand as indexical of such terrible violence the minute the race equation is reversed? His Surrealist technique, of juxtaposing unlike elements to stir up affect in his readers, rears its head here once more. In the endnotes for my text of *Notebook*, it says that lilies were an emblem of the French Bourbon Dynasty, which owned slaves

in the lesser Antilles, where Martinique is located, and it is possibly this same association which Césaire gestures toward:

and the fleur de lys flowing from the red iron into the
fat of my shoulder

...

the shackles
the rack
the cippus
the head screw¹¹

Moreover, the imagery of the whip, a chicote in particular, that shares intimacy with the human flesh, mediated by a transferred epithet occurs in the poem, “The Time of Freedom” as well. It is important to note that “anger” and “fire” are consistently connected to black bodies, and the sense of rage boiling over to engender people’s protest is present as well:

History I tell of the awakening Africa
of the men who
when under the composite memory of chicotes
piled up the knotted black fire
whose anger like the angel pierced
the thick green night of the forest¹²

WHY STONE: MOUNT PELÉE AS A FIGURE AND A CHARACTER IN *NOTEBOOK*

The speaker, in *Notebook*, as well as his subjects in the poem, are placed in a visceral spatial environment where neither the human subjects nor the nonhuman and elemental ones are well-served. Both kinds suffer under the aegis of colonialism where each of them are wrung dry of their capacities for labor for European profitmaking ventures.

By virtue of black bodies residing within a landscape populated by other black elements—the sands, black cliffs, igneous rocks (formed from frozen cooled lava)—there is an ipso facto aesthetic mirroring taking place between both. This aesthetics is visual, for one, but also sonic and spiritual. Hence, it is established that both the human (enslaved) and the stone (igneous, or stratified) are composite beings cohabiting in the Caribbean colonies. Although Césaire references volcanoes in several of his poems across both mentioned texts, Mount Pelée is referred to explicitly, at least once, in *Notebook*. By this relationship of cohabitation and physical proximity then, coupled with the unpredictable, rebellious agency of volcanoes, Mount Pelée comes to stand as a cameo character in the poem. It is a volcano in the northwestern part of the island of Martinique, which erupted in a violent explosion in 1902, destroying plots of sprawling landscape and the entire city of St. Pierre.

An overt reference to the actual volcanic eruption at Mount Pelée where the whole city of Saint Pierre was destroyed by tidal flows of molten matter, thereby, the fire spreading through a city comprising living bodies through the presence of ignited human bodies made of flesh occurs in this excerpt:

Words? While we handle quarters of earth, while we wed delirious continents, while we force streaming gates, words, ah yes, words! but words of fresh blood, words that are tidal waves and erysipelas and malarias and lava and brush fires, and blazes of flesh, and blazes of cities.¹³

Moreover, his negritude isn't mute or unmoving like stone in its fully-formed, static state. It possesses, instead, the robustness and full-bloodedness of lava liquefied under intense, inhumane pressure. That the fact of his negritude has earned him the whiplashes, assault from quarts and chicotes, and made him vulnerable to being confined in iron chains, impels this dynamic spirit of resistance that flows in him.

Volcano metaphors occur frequently in *Ferraments* too. Some, though not all, complicate the idea of an idyllic space by emphasizing the capacity for terror of an active volcano against the luxuriant natural bounty contained by the scenic Martinique island. In the poem, “Hail to Guinea,” “[v]olcano blaze your muzzle attentive // to the fierce vigil over this most rare treasure”.¹⁴ The volcano is zoomorphized into a beast—by all indications, a guard dog—which is playfully, but attentively, keeping watch over its master’s booty. This way, the destructiveness of the volcano is seen as an addition to the troop of slave bodies who will lead rebellion against the colonizers in their attempts to seize from the hands of their masters the rich natural resources which are exploited just as their labors are.

Commenting on the collection’s title in 1960, Césaire remarked, “[Ferraments] are quite simply the iron shackles the slaves wore during the time of the slave trade. It’s a word that belongs to the vocabulary of the slavers.” With reference to the poem “Ferment”, which plays on homophony with *Ferraments*, he added in the same interview that the poet’s and the poem’s role is “to be the ferment of the daily need to make hope rise”.¹⁵ Thus, expressions like “rebellious fires”¹⁶ can be read sufficiently well as gesturing towards anticolonial protest movements. Further, a scene of entanglement of metal (which is derived from solidified molten lava) and flesh occur in the poem, “Fangs”:

No remittance
 straight up along the stones
 straight up along the bones
 of copper weight shackle weight heart weight
 venoms caravaners of the bite
 at the tepid cutting edge of fangs¹⁷

Black labor is utilized the same way that metal is mined from ores. While he never used the word extractivism during his lifetime, I

wonder whether he may have thought of, and alluded to the definition of such a concept, in his poetic works as well as interviews. In places of Notebook, lithic agency is thwarted, albeit in anthropomorphic terms. His skill with transferred epithets is present here also. It is the slaves who are really shackled, and not the volcanoes; instead, by transferring the characteristic of being constrained from the physical human bodies to nonhuman elemental presence, he deftly draws out a constructed similarity without reducing the same to any kind of simplistic analogy:

At the end of daybreak, lost puddles, wandering scents,
beached hurricanes, demasted hulls, old sores, rotted bones,
vapors, shackled volcanoes, shallow-rooted dead, bitter cry. I
accept!¹⁸

In the description of the geological spaces of the poem, which are physical and can be demarcated upon the material surface of maps, sensuous geographies reside. He charts them out by borrowing the language of animal physiological terms. The beach which the street named rue Paille opens onto is one where “the sand is black”.¹⁹ In an animal-elemental relationship of proximity, Césaire compares this black beach being constantly washed by foaming waves to a ferocious black dog who will assault and maul its victims. The sands are black, like black bodies of enslaved peoples. “I would rediscover the secret of great communication and great combustions,”²⁰ declares the poet, before moving on to drawing numerous concatenations of relations between the earth, the human animal body, and the beast (poet’s phrasing).

When Césaire states, “beware of assuming the sterile attitude of a spectator, for life is not a spectacle, a sea of miseries is not a proscenium, a man screaming is not a dancing bear”,²¹ he marks a distinction of the spectator versus the spectacle. It further reminds one of freak shows in Victorian England where black bodies would

be on display—egged on by a trainer, often in pain—to perform for a gathered mass of onlookers. The spectators here would greedily, lasciviously consume the pain of the racially-suppressed person. They would likely have paid a ticket fare to view such a show.²² The threat of the spectacular emanating from the threatened spectacle—both kinds of threats bleeding into each other, and indeed, the latter’s plight of suffering triggering the other—occurs again later:

— a dragged man on a bloodspattered road a rope around his
 neck
 — standing in the center of a huge circus, on my black
 forehead a crown of daturas
 voum rooh
 to fly off

higher than quivering higher than the sorceresses toward
 the other stars ferocious exultation of forests and mountains
 uprooted at the hour when no one expects it the islands linked
 for a thousand years!²³

His associations of a blood-soaked rope and a crown of flowers, both placed upon the organic flesh of vital black bodies, prefigure the reader to translate the potential for blood spilled through violence as being a fruitful force (bearing flowers, if you will) for rebellion. And, followed on the heels of this visceral-vegetal association, the onomatopoeic “vouh rooh” invokes a sonic sense of explosion at a professedly unexpected moment in historical time.

FIRE MEETS VOLCANOES: PROBLEMATIZING THE IDEA OF PARADISE

Volcanoes exist in two states: that of dormancy, and that of activation. When dormant, it is impossible to know when—and whether, if

at all—it will erupt. In a similar vein, Césaire seems to say that the silence of the black enslaved peoples should not be confused with uncritical complacency or mute acceptance, that there is a real possibility that fiery notions of rebellion are brewing in their minds. His use of volcanoes is radical in another sense—one which is often glossed over while addressing the black psyche—that of interiority. The lava ensconced within the heart of a mountain is symbolic of the interiority of the black poet-activist's, or that of any oppressed black person's. Césaire constantly invokes the image of a volcano in his poems in order to signal towards this deficiency in hermeneutics, and to amend it albeit through the primary texts of his poetry. His aesthetic purpose is, primarily, to destabilize narratives of the Caribbean Islands as Edenic places of Paradise where nature quietly thrives and tourism flourishes. He dismantles orientalist notions of lush tropicality and languid lifestyles housed by the Caribbean Islands. What lies beneath the tranquility—of both the picturesque natural environment and the apparently passively laboring slave—is, in fact, an urge to resort to violence to overturn the status quo. While he does refer to the beauty of Martinique—with its azure sea, rocky cliffs, and verdant lands, he also goes on to call *Notebook* an anti-poem. An anti-poem which, in my opinion, reads best as an anti-idyl or even an anti-pastoral, as a work of poetry which goes to great lengths to portray the Caribbean landscape in its potential for terror and beauty alike.

An instance of the aforementioned modes of problematization occurs in *Notebook*, where the idea of Paradise and the idea of home are dual sides of the same coin. One is complicated by the lack of the other since they share this inextricable, almost Glissantian sense of relation:

my temperamental father gnawed by one persistent
ache, . . . drive[n] to towering flames of anger;

...

[T]he shack chapped with blisters, like a peach tree afflicted with curl, and the thin roof patched with pieces of gasoline cans, which create swamps of rust in the stinking sordid gray straw pulp, and when the wind whistles, these odds and ends make a noise bizarre, first like the crackling of frying, then like a brand dropped into water the smoke of its twigs flying up. . . . [A]bove [my grandmother's] bed, in a jar full of oil a dim light whose flame dances like a fat cockroach.²⁴

Here, their childhood home, which is meant to be a place of safety and refuge, is converted to a veritable smokestack. There is, in fact, no physical or spiritual asylum—no succor to be had—neither in the literal habitus not in the company of a parent. The father, being the male parent figure in a society arranged along a patriarchal axis, would be the strongest voice in the household, and hence, the one whose words have the most valence. The colonial state is a paternalistic one too. What is present in this passage, however, is ample fire imagery. He traces a genealogy of volcanic explosion in a natural setting within the microcosmic setting of a household, and thereby, creating an inverted paradise: a Dante-esque description of *Inferno* (as place). He addresses *négritude* and muteness, in conjunction with each other, later on in the same text. A sense of rage as well as threat are inherent in these lines:

siló where that which is earthiest about earth ferments and
 ripens
 My *négritude* is not a stone, its deafness hurled against
 the clamor of day
 ...
 my *négritude* is neither tower nor cathedral
 it takes root in the red flesh of the soil
 it takes root in the ardent flesh of the sky
 it breaks through opaque prostration with its upright patience.²⁵

Even in his use of the island's mythologies among the enslaved, invoked by Césaire in the poem, are those involving the process of ignition, for instance, in the case of the tree that "plucks the maroons from the fire".²⁶ In the following extract, Césaire describes a pyroscapes, created by the eruption of volcanoes, where the dream of the slaves has folded in on itself. The future is unsustainable for the European imperial actors who serve as victor in this equation. The subaltern subject may be silent for now, but won't remain so forever. The two m-dashes spatially mark a dystopic futurity for the slave post in Martinique:

At the end of daybreak, on this fragile earth thickness exceeded in a humiliating way by its grandiose future—the volcanoes will explode, the naked water will bear away the ripe sun stains and nothing will be left but a tepid bubbling pecked at by sea birds—the beach of dreams and the insane awakening.²⁷

In a fittingly moving ending to *Notebook*, both fire and flesh unite:

wind ...
to you I surrender my conscience and its fleshy rhythm
to you I surrender the fire in which my weakness smolders²⁸

In his poems, across the two texts, *Notebook* and *Ferraments*, Césaire inaugurates a poetics of entangled violence. By harnessing igneous metaphors connected with volcanoes, stone, and soil and placing them in relation to human flesh and weapons of violence, he comes up with a mode of ecopoetics which straddles the zone between polemic and object-oriented discourse. Although it would be anachronistic to claim him as an anticolonial ecopoet, I hope to have demonstrated of why such a claim would not, in fact, be entirely unfounded.

NOTES

- 1 Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of A Return to the Native Land*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 2.
- 2 In her essay, “Leo Frobenius and the Problem of Civilization,” Suzanne Césaire likens the identity of an Ethiopian to that of a botanical existence. She writes, “[t]he Ethiopian does not seek to understand phenomena—to grasp and dominate facts outside of himself. He lives and lets live, in a life identical to that of plant, confident in the continuity of life: germinate, grow, flower, bear fruit, and the cycle starts all over again.” (Césaire 2012, 5) Further, she adds, in a different essay titled “The Malaise of A Civilization,” her postulations about an ontologically-hybrid entity that she calls *l’homme plante* (the plant-human). She asserts that “[l]ike a plant, [*l’homme plante*] abandons himself to the rhythms of universal life. There is not the slightest effort to dominate nature. . . . [H]e lives in a plant-like manner. His indolence? That of the vegetal. Do not say ‘he is lazy,’ say ‘he vegetates,’ and you will speak the truth for two reasons. His favorite phrase: ‘Let it go,’ By that, understand that he lets himself be carried along by life, docile, light, un-insistent, non-rebellious—in a friendly way, lovingly. Obstinate moreover as only a plant can be. . . . And is always everywhere in the slightest manifestations, the primacy of the plant, the plant trampled underfoot but still alive, dead but reviving, the plant free, silent, and proud.” (Césaire 2012, 30) Roussi-Césaire was likely using the same negative traits ascribed to the black population of the enslaved and reclaiming them, through her use of vegetal metaphors, as signifiers of resistance.
- 3 Paolo Virno, *When the Word Becomes Flesh: Language and Human Nature*, translated by Guiseppina Mecchia (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2015), 41-42.
- 4 Keith Louis Walker, “In Quest of the Lost Song of Self: Aimé Césaire and the Problem of Language.” *Callaloo*. Vol. 17 (1983): 27.
- 5 Aimé Césaire, interviewed by Keith Walker, March 1977.
- 6 Césaire, *Notebook*, 13.
- 7 In a significant turn away from basing a conversation on the workings of power on the visible color of the African worker’s body—in other words, their discernible ontological origins—Frantz Fanon coins his two concepts of “epidermal schema” and “corporeal schema” to refute such essentialization. Important to note, too, that Fanon was Aimé Césaire’s student, and despite having been taught by the Négritude generation, viewed much of his teachers’ ideas as defenses of passive resistance to the colonial state. Fanon, unlike Césaire and his generation of thinkers, discusses activism and anticolonial resistance in terms of its potential for bringing about radical change through enactments of self-organized protest. In a sense, he almost deemed the Négritude movement’s ideas of passive resistance obsolete and ineffective. To this effect, Frantz Fanon

writes, in his influential text, *Black Skin, White Masks*: “[o]ntology does not allow us to understand the being of the black man, since it ignores the lived experience. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. . . . Beneath the body schema I had created a historical-racial schema” (Fanon 2008, 91). Fanon argues that the dialectical play between the epidermal schema and the corporeal schema is key to identity formation within the subjective self of the raced person, in relation to those of the powerful person’s, within a racialized system of social organization. The racialized person must be understood against a rubric of cultural signification and colonial power, and a mere knack for polished polemic—which, arguably, is what Césaire’s generation thought was the means towards emancipation from prejudice and oppression—is not quite the means to true liberation.

- 8 Paolo Virno. *When the Word Becomes Flesh: Language and Human Nature*, translated by Guiseppeina Mecchia. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2015), 171-72.
- 9 Césaire, *Notebook*, 17.
- 10 Césaire, *Notebook*, 25.
- 11 Césaire, *Notebook*, 40.
- 12 Césaire, *Complete Poetry*, 599.
- 13 Césaire, *Notebook*, 23.
- 14 Césaire, *Complete Poetry*, 537.
- 15 Césaire, *Complete Poetry*, 525.
- 16 Césaire, *Complete Poetry*, 569.
- 17 Césaire, *Complete Poetry*, 561.
- 18 Césaire, *Notebook*, 42-43.
- 19 Césaire, *Notebook*, 11.
- 20 Césaire, *Notebook*, 12.
- 21 Césaire, *Notebook*, 13-14.
- 22 Philip McEvasoneya discusses how black bodies were cast in the role of “commercial display of living people as exotic curiosities or anthropological specimens” (McEvasoneya 2013, 26) with special emphasis on the example of Sara Baartman who was treated in this manner between 1810 and 1815. She was ferried across various parts of England, Ireland, and France. Karen Ruth Kornweibel discusses how a spectacle was made of such exhibition of black bodies in imperial Europe and how the performances were given an almost theatrical dimension in modes of production and aesthetic organization.
- 23 Césaire, *Notebook*, 20-21.
- 24 Césaire, *Notebook*, 10.
- 25 Césaire, *Notebook*, 35.
- 26 Césaire, *Notebook*, 18.
- 27 Césaire, *Notebook*, 2.
- 28 Césaire, *Notebook*, 50.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Césaire, Aimé. *Notebook of A Return to the Native Land*. Translated by Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
- . “Ferraments.” In *The Complete Poetry of Aimé Césaire: Bilingual Edition*. Translated by A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017, 525-643.
- Césaire, Suzanne. *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent (1941-1945)*. Edited by Daniel Maximin, translated by Keith L. Walker. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2012 [2009].
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2008 [1952].
- Kornweibel, Karen Ruth. “A Complex Resurrection: Race, Spectacle, and Complicity in Suzan-Lori Parks’s *Venus*.” *South Atlantic Review* 74, no. 7 (2009): 64-81.
- McEvansoneya, Philip. “Hottentot Venus:” the Exhibition of Sara Baartman in Dublin in 1812.” *History Ireland* 21, no. 1 (2013), 26-28.
- Virno, Paolo. *When the Word Becomes Flesh: Language and Human Nature*. Translated by Guisepina Mecchia. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2015.
- Walker, Keith Louis. “In Quest of the Lost Song of Self: Aimé Césaire and the Problem of Language.” *Callaloo*, vol. 17, 1983, pp. 120-13.