Cannibalizing paradise: Suzanne Césaire's ecofeminist critique of tourist literature

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Abstract: This paper considers the ecofeminist geopoetics of Suzanne Césaire, developed over the course of seven essays that appeared in Martinican literary journal, *Tropiques*. Césaire deploys a 'cannibalizing' method aimed at subverting colonialist-utopian fantasies of the Antilles that cast them as inviting, penetrable spaces for European colonists and pleasure-seekers. I suggest that Césaire enlists the chaotic, often destructive forces of Caribbean climate to create a resistant geopoetics that opposes paradisal and sexualized visions of the tropics in travel literature. Yet, rather than simply activating the dystopian and disastrous antipode of Edenic paradise, Césaire diffuses the dialectical tension between utopia/dystopia, instead grounding the emergence of an unassimilated identity in the region's geo-climatic dynamism. I argue that Césaire's valorization of instability as a defining feature of Caribbean culture and geography impedes the reification of islands as either utopic paradises ripe for consumption or dystopian hotspots in need of technological rationalization and control. While Césaire's work has been largely left out of studies on postcolonial theory, ecocriticism, and Caribbean women's writing, I suggest that her essays demonstrate a latent ecofeminism, allowing her to subvert gendered, exoticized representations of Caribbean islands used to justify continued environmental exploitation, development, and neocolonial control.

Keywords: Francophone Caribbean, ecocriticism, disaster studies, ecofeminism, decolonization, geopoetics

https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.382 • Received July 2021, Early access March 2022

Introduction

This paper argues that the essays of Suzanne Césaire, which appeared from 1941–1945 in the Martinican literary journal *Tropiques*, develop an ecofeminist poetics of Caribbean identity centered in a non-exploitative interrelation with the Martinican biosphere. As opposed to gendered-utopian representations of the island produced by both colonial travel narratives and Négritude texts, Suzanne Césaire offers a collective vision of Caribbean identity in which liberation derives from a recognition of the interdependence of environment and human

communities. In contrast to the aforementioned utopian approaches, in which a feminized, idealized nature serves to either justify the colonial project (in the case of the French *doudou* literature) or to facilitate the transformation of a male colonized subject into an agent of anticolonial change (as in some Négritude texts), Suzanne Césaire advocates a model of Caribbean liberation based in the region's geo-climatic dynamism. On the other hand, she also contests the dystopian rendering of colonized spaces in Négritude texts, in which authors deploy sexual metaphors as a means of allegorically 'revitalizing' the depleted eco-cultural landscape of the colony, in an attempt to overcome alienation. In place of these fixed and immobile categories, Suzanne Césaire dispels the utopian/dystopian dialectic entirely, and instead proposes adaptability as a defining feature of Caribbean history. She articulates an organic, locally emergent ontology of Caribbean human and spatial identity, in which climatic and geophysical instability preclude the reification of tropical islands as utopian paradises ripe for colonial consumption, or as dystopian hotspots in need of technological rationalization. In place of rigid opposition, Suzanne Césaire proposes a globalizing, integrative, and non-dialectical view of the Caribbean. Today more than ever before, small islands face urgent threats to their survival stemming from climate change, historical (and often race-based) inequities, and uncertain postcolonial futures. In an increasingly homogenized global economy that continues to rely upon their ecological exploitation and economic dependence, Caribbean islands are compelled to devise creative strategies of adaptability and cooperation to ensure their survival. Incorporating scholarship on ecofeminism, tourism, and natural hazard, I suggest that Suzanne Césaire's imagery of natural disaster in her final essay, 'The Great Camouflage' (*Le grand camouflage*), shatters the gendered utopian/dystopian prism through which islands are viewed in colonial discourse. Instead, Suzanne Césaire's work demonstrates an awareness of mutually reinforcing forms of oppression, which operate on the basis of gender, racial, or environmental difference. I argue that this allows her to formulate a systematic model that diffuses dialectical opposition and prevents the reification of islands according to utopian or dystopian classification.

In spite of Suzanne Césaire's original contributions to the field of Caribbean theory, her essays have remained understudied. Lack of information about her life and work persists, despite colleagues' acknowledgements of her indispensable role at *Tropiques*, describing her as the "soul of the movement" (Institut national de l'audiovisuel, 1995) toward cultural renewal in Martinique. Perhaps partially because of her relatively small body of written work, Césaire's ideas have received less consideration than those of her male colleagues. Nevertheless, she was a driving, creative force at *Tropiques*, whose ideas about cultural dynamism, Caribbean geography, literary cannibalism, and, as I suggest, ecofeminism, decisively shaped a generation of post-Négritude Caribbean thought. In addition, Césaire provided crucial behind-the-scenes support for *Tropiques*, not only as an editor but more practically as well, obtaining the paper and printing materials necessary for its publication and advocating for the journal to Vichy censors. From 1942–1945, Martinique came under the control of the Pétainiste governor, Admiral Robert, prompting the establishment of an Allied Naval blockade around the strategically important French Antilles. The blockade, which aimed to prevent the islands from falling under Nazi control, severed Martinique and Guadeloupe from France for the first time in nearly three

centuries (Childers, 2016). World War II marked a time of scarcity, censorship, and intensifying racial discrimination for Martinicans. And yet, many islanders also remember the Vichy years as a brief moment of resourcefulness and self-sufficiency (Childers, 2016). *Tropiques* captured this moment of cultural flowering and autonomy in Martinique, and Suzanne Césaire's efforts, both as a contributor and editor, ensured the preservation of critically important ideas in an emerging field of Black radical and decolonial thought. As Kara Rabbitt (2008, 2013) has argued, the initially folkloric and ethnographic focus of the review — strategically adopted at the beginning to circumvent censorship — became consistently more radical and grounded in the concerns of Black liberation and decolonization over time. One common explanation for Suzanne Césaire's critical neglect in the years since her death is the apparent simplicity of her early work for *Tropiques* (Maximin, 2009). Pushing back against this interpretation as itself an oversimplification, Daniel Maximin (2009, pp. 10–11) emphasizes the need for strategic acts of dissidence and *camouflage*, calling Suzanne Césaire's poetry, "that blessed bread for deflecting the censor's attention from behind the masks of abstract formalism, of botanical precision, of surrealist obscurity." So important were these calculated acts of dissimulation and resistance that Maximin chose the title *Le grand camouflage* for the 2009 collection, which borrows the title of Suzanne Césaire's final essay for *Tropiques*. Over the past few decades, Suzanne Césaire has received much more critical attention, largely thanks to the efforts of Guadeloupean novelists Maryse Condé and Daniel Maximin. Maximin (2009) in particular found Suzanne Césaire indispensable to his post-Négritude literary project, which sought to nuance the patrilineal tradition of male poets, prophets, and protagonists by tracing the region's history through women's voices. As Lydie Moudileno (1997, p. 48) writes, "In the style of Simone Schwartz-Bart, Maximin re-establishes a critical feminine genealogy, in which the role of Aimé [Césaire; Suzanne's husband] becomes secondary." The opening pages of Maximin's 1981 novel, *L'Isolé soleil*, present an *éloge* to Suzanne Césaire s final essay, 'The Great Camouflage', whose celebration of ecological and cultural diversity presented an exciting reference for the proponents of Créolité and Antillanité.

Afflicted by poor health throughout her life, Suzanne Césaire died in 1966 from a brain tumor — just three years after her quiet divorce from fellow poet Aimé Césaire (Maximin, 2009). Some scholars have speculated about whether Suzanne's withdrawal from writing after the war might be interpreted as an acquiescence to her husband's ascendent political career, the kind of dutiful accommodation that would have been expected of a wife and mother at the time. It is equally likely that her eventual divorce from Aimé, and untimely death three years later, precipitated a further marginalization of her written work, despite her significant role at *Tropiques* (Curtius, 2020).

In keeping with her embrace of multiplicity and divergence, Suzanne Césaire wrote seven theoretically innovative essays, composed in a lyrical poetic prose. As scholars put together anthologies of Caribbean literature, she was often left out, perhaps in part due to the challenge of categorizing her work neatly according to a single genre. For example, Léon Gontran Damas' 1957 anthology of Caribbean poetry, *Latitudes*, might have included Suzanne Césaire's work had it been more clearly poetic. On the other hand, her work has been more consistently recognized

in studies of surrealist women writers and transatlantic surrealism (Praeger, 2003; Richardson, 1996; Rosemont, 2000; Watz, 2021).

Adding to the classificatory dilemma, some scholars have blamed Césaire's small body of written work as a reason for her omission (Wilks, 2008) — although this position has been called into question in a recent article by Vanessa Lee (2020), who points out that limited output has not impeded the canonization of many male writers and artists. Despite historical realities around gender roles that may have constrained Suzanne Césaire's literary practice, her work has not fared much better in anthologies of Caribbean women's writing (see Bloom, 1997; Boyce Davies & Savory Fido, 1990; Larrier, 2000; Mordecai & Wilson, 1989; Zimra, 1984). Suzanne Césaire's work is primarily concerned with assimilation, dependence, and racialized forms of colonial and ecological domination; with the exception of a few passages, she does not address gender head-on. As Kara Rabbitt (2013, p. 40) explains, Césaire's legacy is "complicated by her lack of explicit attention to the figure of the female [...]. Césaire rarely addresses gender in her writing." It is significant that her sole, direct reference to gender in 'The Great Camouflage' is presented as a refusal of the interlocking forms of patriarchal-colonialist domination that support the exploitation of both women and the environment. In spite of the absence of a direct gender analysis in these essays, Césaire's work reveals a careful attention to what we recognize today as intersectional forms of domination — of race, class, gender, sexuality, or ability.

With this in mind, I am inspired by the "archaeological" method practiced by Anny-Dominique Curtius (2020) in her most recent monograph, *Suzanne Césaire: Archéologie littéraire et artistique d'une mémoire empêchée*. Curtius (2020, p. 17) resurrects Suzanne Césaire's legacy from the "injunctions of silence" that surrounds her life, making the construction of a traditional biography all but impossible. I am equally influenced by Renée Gosson's (2006) practice of eco-historical "excavation," developed in response to the increasingly cemented landscape of Martinique, which today is hidden beneath highways, real estate developments, airports, and strip malls. This *bétonisation* ("concreting over") of the Martinican landscape — what Gosson (2006, p. 230) recognizes as the "repository" of the island's history and culture — threatens Martinique with possibly irremediable ecological *and* cultural loss. She writes that, for the French Caribbean, "regaining a sense of community with place is a necessary step toward founding an identity" (Gosson, 2006, p. 226). Yet, the transformation of French DOMs (*départements d'outre-mer*) into consumer- and tourism-based economies has subverted post-departmentalization dreams of political and economic autonomy, quite literally burying Aimé Césaire's (2016) decolonial-utopian vision of departmentalization beneath the built infrastructure of a fabricated, tourist utopia. Today, Martinique is packaged and promoted to European and North American tourists through familiar discourses of exoticism, adventure, and seductive availability. For example, the 2021 entry on Martinique in the *Guide de Routard*, one of France's most popular travel guides, promises visitors a "postcard island, truly enchanting, which knows how win over the visitor with its white sand beaches […] to then seduce him with its inland riches" (Routard, 2021). The persistence of such erotic descriptions of Caribbean space highlights the need for ecofeminist approaches, which encourage attentiveness to the buried vitality of historically

suppressed voices that speak on behalf of an increasingly submerged homeland. As Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 40) notes in 'The Great Camouflage':

> And as for the hummingbird-women [*femmes-colibris*], tropical flower-women, the women of four races and dozens of bloodlines, they are there no longer. Neither the heliconia, nor the frangipani, nor the flame tree, nor the palm trees in the moonlight, nor the sunsets unlike any other in the world... Yet they are there.

In Keith Walker's (2012, p. xvii) introduction to his 2012 translation of Daniel Maximin's 2009 book, *Le grand camouflage*, he writes that "the image of the hummingbird [is] an emblem of fragility, rare beauty, and incomparable stamina," a description that could be applied as much to Suzanne Césaire as to the island's endangered biosphere. Maximin draws heavily upon the metaphor of the *kolibri* in his novels *L'isolé soleil* (1981) and *Soufrières* (1987). *Kolibri* is the term for hummingbird in the Taìno language, where it occupies a mythical status as a warrior, symbolizing rebirth and transcendence of death (Zimra, 1992). Suzanne Césaire's references to the *kolibri* create an imagined lineage between contemporary Martinique and the indigenous culture that was all-but-eradicated after European colonization. Her image of the "hummingbird-woman," "the women of four races and dozens of bloodlines" attests to cultural survival *through* hybridity, insofar as she draws upon a Taìno cultural artifact; what is more, the hummingbird has historically occupied a taxonomic grey area between bird and insect, echoing the formal and classificatory hybridity that defines Suzanne Césaire's work — an element of *mestizaje* that in the past has occluded her place within the Caribbean decolonial canon.

In the following section, I situate Suzanne Césaire's contributions within the long tradition of colonial utopian discourse about islands, exploring her 'cannibalization' of avant-garde movements like surrealism and Négritude, and her subtle, 'camouflaged' critiques of the exoticism practiced by colleagues like André Breton.

The colonial writing of utopia

The development of utopian writing paralleled European explorations of the New World. The genre's origins are traced to the 16th century, beginning with Thomas More's *Utopia*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and, in the French tradition, novels like Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (Ashcroft, 2017; Loxley, 1990; Marin, 1973). These texts fictionalized early explorations and created enduring perceptions of islands as *utopias* ("no-place") in the truest sense of the word — textual, ecological, and socio-historic 'blank slates' upon which Europe projected both utopian and dystopian fantasies (Savory, 2011). Colonists' descriptions of islands are marked by contradiction: while celebrating their tropical abundance, islands were also represented as remote and 'deserted', a backdrop against which the self-sufficient (and proto-capitalist) male subject of stories like *Robinson Crusoe* proves his resourcefulness and ingenuity (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2002). The indigenous inhabitants of islands are described with the same narratological inconsistencies, with writers alternatively portraying them as savages or else entirely absent. In

Du Tertre's (1667–1671, p. 2) canonical work, *Histoire des Antilles habitées par les Français,* he writes that, "these deserted lands [*terres abandonnées*] [...] are today so well populated and well-fortified that they form a state." However, Du Tertre (1667–1671) spends much of the rest of this volume documenting a series of wars between French and Spanish colonists and the "Savages," which culminated in the near-total extermination of native Carib, Arawak, and Taìno peoples. Representations of island 'utopias' in colonial writing thus attest to the signification of an absence: the island environment is emptied of its concrete, historical reality and *misread* as geographically and socio-culturally non-signifying. Fiona Polack (2000) calls attention to how islands often function as textual metaphors in the European imaginary, citing an example from the French literary critic, Michel de Certeau (1984, p. 135), in which he makes a symbolic equivalence between the island and the blank page:

> The island of the page is a transitional place in which an industrial inversion is made: what comes in is something 'received,' what comes out is a 'product'. The things that go in are the indexes of a certain 'passivity' of the subject with respect to a tradition; those that come out, the marks of his power of fabricating objects.

Just as islands have figured as peripheral "blank slates" (Polack, 2000, p. 216) upon which Europe has projected utopian desires, Suzanne Césaire's life and legacy have been subjected to a similar process of erasure through exoticization. Lack of extensive biographical information has combined with what Curtius (2020, pp. 32–33) calls the "scopophilic surrealist habitus" which led artists like André Breton (1966) and Michel Leiris (1992) to produce mythologizing and exoticizing portraits of Suzanne Césaire through the few, now iconic photographs that survive of her. Curtius (2020, p. 156) shows how the restorative efforts of later artists, including Daniel Maximin, Ronnie Scharfman, and the filmmaker Euzhen Palcy, even in attempting to 'rescue' her image and legacy from racial exoticization, have also fallen into a trap of sexual reification: "In trying to combat the exoticism and silence in which she has been cloaked, there is nevertheless an insistence on only wanting to grasp the enigma of Suzanne through her beauty." Curtius (2020, p. 157) concludes that the "photographic manipulations, cinematic and textual presentations enclose [Suzanne Césaire] in a still-changing universe that holds more to discover."

Before addressing how Suzanne Césaire's disavowal of colonial travel narratives prefigure an incipient critique of postcolonial tourism, I address her 'cannibalization' of André Breton's exoticizing surrealism and her husband's masculinist Négritude. Similar to the process described by de Certeau (1984), I argue that Suzanne ingests outside influences, transforming them within the 'laboratory' of the page into a form of specifically Caribbean poetic expression that opposes the classification of the Antilles into fixed categories organized around their consumption or control.

Cannibalizing surrealism

Although closely aligned with pan-Africanism and Négritude, *Tropiques* was more regionally focused and less committed to resurrecting sources of New World Black identity solely from an

African past (Curtius, 2016). *Tropiques* covered a range of topics, with articles on French modernism appearing alongside studies of Martinican folklore and ecology. The journal included a constellation of cultural, historic, and geographic influences — including from the French avant-garde — in an effort to articulate an Antillean self-understanding whose irreducible multiplicity would resist homogenization. The conditions of political and cultural assimilation in the French West Indies were distinct; unlike British or even more recent examples of French colonization in Africa, Antilleans experienced an intense form of self-estrangement, achieved through an almost-total uprooting of African and indigenous traditions and their replacement by metropolitan culture (Mam-Lam-Fouck, 2006). The success of assimilation in France's *vieilles colonies* seemed to legitimize its putatively altruistic 'civilizing mission', which sought to reconcile France's superficially republican values of universal justice and equality with an oppressive colonial enterprise (Betts, 2005; Conklin, 1997; Wilder, 2005). Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 31) diagnoses assimilation as the basis of a stultifying mimicry in Martinican society, produced by the false belief that "assimilation [would] mean liberation." She understood surrealism as providing a method for dismantling political, ideological, and social structures that limit human freedom. Surrealism provided concrete techniques for imagining other alternatives, and for reconciling Martinicans to their true nature, which, according to Césaire, is interwoven with the island itself. She writes, "It is exhilarating to imagine on these tropical shores, finally restored to their inner truth, the long-lasting and fruitful harmony of humankind and soil. Under the sign of plant life" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 33).

In her practice of 'literary cannibalism', Suzanne Césaire incorporates aspects of European surrealism, adapting them to suit her particular geohistorical context. Far from being derivative, she conceives a personal, local, and non-totalizing approach to surrealist poetics centered in the local ecology of her island. While Suzanne Césaire's admiring portraits of European antecedents have been dismissed by other Caribbean writers, including Maximin (Scharfman, 1992), it is worth considering her relationship to the European avant-garde in light of her explicit and forceful rejections of imitation. She views surrealism as a means of harnessing an authentic cultural voice beyond the limits of assimilation and self-denial: Surrealist poetry will "dare [Martinicans] to know themselves and what they want to be" (S. Césaire, 2012, pp. 9–10). She notes that, "far from contradicting, diminishing, or diverting our revolutionary feeling for life, surrealism [shores] it up" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 37). The movement offered not so much a given or established poetic tradition, but a creative praxis that could be adapted. Suzanne Césaire appreciated it as a "critical tool, a means of reflection that would provide [her] with a critical foundation from which to explore her own cultural context" (Richardson, 1996, p. 7). In contrast to her colleagues' more limited engagements with surrealism, Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 37) understood the movement as "a total activity, the only one that can liberate humankind by revealing to it the unconscious." Her method demonstrates what I would term a *non-totalizing* 'total activity', characterized by a motility that allows for a constant expansion of thought rather than its fixity or assimilation to established models. We might justifiably read Suzanne Césaire's non-totalizing yet total approach to surrealism as anticipating Édouard Glissant's ontology of difference, developed almost a half century later in *Poétique de la relation* (1990). According to Glissant's (1990, 1997) concept of *tout-*

monde, the "whole" world is understood as a complex entanglement of cultures, geographies, histories in which unique identities are preserved by virtue of their interdependence, rather than being subsumed into a singular totality.

Understanding surrealism in this way alerts Suzanne Césaire to logical inconsistencies within surrealism as practiced by its founders, including André Breton. In spite of the surrealists' explicit anti-imperialism (Richardson, 1996), they frequently deploy exoticizing tropes in their descriptions of the Martinican landscape, Creole women, and Suzanne Césaire herself (Breton & Masson, 1948). In her final essay for *Tropiques*, 'The Great Camouflage', she implictly contests Breton and Masson's erotic/exotic characterization of Martinique's Absalon Forest in their 'Creole Dialogue', writing that "the heliconia shrubs and flowers of Absalon Forest bleed over the chasms, and the beauty of the tropical landscape goes to the heads of the poets passing by" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 45). This camouflaged critique underscores the complexity of Suzanne Césaire's 'cannibalizing' relationship with surrealism. Far from an uncritical *éloge* to Breton or an outright rejection, Suzanne Césaire's cannibalizing method permits a discursive conversion of European surrealism, through which she subverts the exoticizing propensities of one of its practitioners while preserving the critical practices she finds useful (Loichot, 2013).

Suzanne Césaire's (2012, pp. 37–38) insistence on surrealism as a total activity is always directed at the "transcendence of antinomies" — including colonial, racial, and regional divisions. In the essay '1943: Surrealism and Us', she presents it as a critical weapon (an *arme miraculeuse*, to borrow her husband's term) against the destructive contradictions imposed on the world by colonialism:

> Our surrealism will then supply them the leaven from their very depths. It will be time finally to transcend the sordid contemporary antinomies: Whites–Blacks, Europeans–Africans, civilized–savage; the powerful magic of the mahoulis will be recovered, drawn from the very wellsprings of life. Colonial idiocies will be purified by the welding arc's blue flame. The mettle of our metal, our cutting edge of steel, our unique communions — all will be recovered. (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 38)

For Suzanne Césaire, surrealism opposes forms of Enlightenment reasoning that nurtured oppositions between advanced/primitive, utopian/dystopian, and civilization/barbarity, suggesting that these contradictions reach their apogee in the Second World War when Enlightenment reason pursues oppositional thinking to its most violent, genocidal ends (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2002). She writes that:

> Surrealism is living, intensely, magnificently, having found and perfected a method of inquiry of immeasurable efficacy. The dynamism of surrealism. And it is this sense of movement that has kept it always in the avant-garde, infinitely sensitive to the disruptions of the period, the "scourge of balance." (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 37)

Césaire's understanding of surrealism as continuously diversifying sets it apart both from her husband's Négritude as well as from Breton's insistence upon surrealism's dialectical nature. This instability prevents the calcification of thought into rigid ideological poles, encouraging a dynamism that is rooted in the tropical environment. She advises against the temptation to ground Caribbean identity in a mythical African past, instead focusing on how it reflects the hybridity and transformations of the island itself:

> It is not at all about a backwards return, a resurrection of an African past that we have learned to know and respect. On the contrary, it is about the mobilization of every living strength brought together upon this earth where race is the result of the most unremitting intermixing. (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 33)

Leo Frobenius and the sources of an ecologically embedded cultural critique

Césaire's first essay for *Tropiques*, 'Leo Frobenius and the Problem of Civilizations', provides a useful illustration of her critical practice. She discusses the work of German ethnographer Leo Frobenius to advocate for the emergence of an unassimilated Martinican identity rooted in a non-exploitative land consciousness. While Césaire is deeply influenced by Frobenius' model of two distinct 'drives' animating European and African civilization, her discussion of the *homme-plante* ('plant-human') and the *homme-animal* ('animal-human') should not be read as biologically or environmentally essentialist classifications. Instead, her attempt to legitimize the plant-like nature of the Ethiopian is framed against a backdrop of cultural erasure and assimilation, in which the *only* viable way of relating to the natural world was through competition and control.

Frobenius describes Ethiopian civilization through the metaphor of the plant, which embodies cyclical change and flexibility. Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 5) writes that "the 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 the plant, confident in the continuity of life." Centered on principles of adaptability and harmony with nature, the *homme-plante* is a model for a Caribbean cultural identity that pulls to some extent from an African past, but just as much from an emergent local specificity. By contrast, the *homme-animal* is the drive that underlies European civilization. The *homme-animal* is "active, conscious of external occurrences to which he opposes himself and that he must vanquish in order to survive. [The Hamitic] never abandons himself freely to things but strives to dominate them by force or by magical practices" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 5). For the Ethiopian, however, "the lived fact of poetry [is] felt so profoundly that the Ethiopian is almost never capable of projecting, of expressing outwardly" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 5).

The model of the Ethiopian *homme-plante* provides a cooperative and non-extractive model of human relations with the natural world. These distinctions help recuperate the value of non-Western epistemologies outside of European developmental standards, while also allowing Césaire to formulate an ecologically situated critique of historical development. She writes that Frobenius "discovered that the idea of uninterrupted progress, cherished by the nineteenth

century, which showed civilization progressing along a single line from primitive barbarism to modern high culture, was a false idea. Humanity does not have a will to achieve perfection" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 7). Rejecting the telos of historical development championed by figures like Hegel and Marx, Césaire at the same time discredits the will to perfection embedded in utopian thinking. In place of this, she writes that humanity "goes forth [...] in multiple directions, from one 'shock' to the next, just as the vital force goes from mutation to mutation among the diversity of living species" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 7). The impossible quest for perfection embedded in Western paradigms of historical progress engenders utopian thinking by generating an oppositional relationship to the present. However, far from suggesting that subaltern communities submit to existing conditions of political oppression, Césaire suggests exploring modes of thought that are not based in an antagonistic relationship between present and future, in which an unsatisfactory present must be overcome by a future moment. Instead, she proposes a more integrated temporal schema:

> Humankind, freed from the bonds of time and space, might *see* clearly into a past that is at the same time its future – clear to the outward signs that are in complicity with his desires, clear in the daydreams – which are at the same time actions of the day before: total knowledge. (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 23)

In this formulation, the struggle to achieve a particular future, to resurrect lost histories, or to re-shape the present is replaced by an acceptance of chance that restores all temporalities to the "plenitude of the moment" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 22). Paradoxically, the "total knowledge" Suzanne Césaire alludes to is generated by submission to *not knowing*, to uncertainty. Unlike revolutionary utopian narratives that derive from a dialectical struggle against the conditions of an untenable present, Suzanne Césaire critiques the radicality of such models, which are limited to an opposing struggle between two entities or ideas. She structurally deconstructs the premise of utopian actualization that promotes acting upon the present in order to achieve a specific future outcome, instead suggesting a surrealist practice of dwelling in "the abysses of unconscious [and freedom]" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 22).

Suzanne Césaire's non-disruptive vision of resistance through acceptance is at odds with more proactive strands of utopianism — especially postcolonial utopianism — practiced poetically and politically by her husband, Aimé. Gary Wilder (2009) has made the case that Aimé Césaire's attempts at decolonization through national integration should be understood as pragmatic utopianism. According to Wilder (2009), Aimé Césaire's departmentalization law aimed to revolutionize the French Republic from the inside, by demanding recognition of the Antilles as integral, equal, and federally autonomous members of the French state. Aimé Césaire saw departmentalization as a practical response to Martinique's immediate problems of poverty and human suffering. National integration seemed to promise a path toward industrial development that would bring much-needed jobs and economic opportunity to Martinique. The ambivalent results of departmentalization aside, the dialectical-utopian approach toward achieving a particular future through job growth and economic development overshadowed the fact that

development would continue to subordinate the island's workers and environment to what Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 43) calls "the degrading forms of the modern wage system" (Nesbitt, 2022). Indeed, ecofeminists point to the ways in which environmental domination has been produced through discourses of utopia, wherein technology is seen as a means of "emancipation" (Mies & Shiva, 1993, p. 5) from the constraints of the natural world:

> Socialist utopias were [...] informed by a concept of freedom that saw man's destiny in his historic march from the 'realm of necessity' (the realm of nature), to the 'realm of freedom' — the 'real' human realm — which entailed transforming nature and natural forces into what was called a 'second nature,' or culture'.

This conception of human liberation through the domination of nature was an undisputed feature of both capitalist and socialist development theory in the 20th century (Kothari et al., 2002). For many anticolonial leaders, including Aimé Césaire, industrial development was seen as indispensable for securing political autonomy, increasing employment, and raising standards of living (A. Césaire, 2016). On the other hand, Suzanne Césaire's attention to the interreliance of nature and human communities alerted her to the contradiction inherent in pursuing economic development at the expense of the environment (Nesbitt, 2022). While Aimé Césaire's political affiliations are widely known — including his departure from the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1956 announced in the famous 'Letter to Maurice Thorez' — fewer details exist about Suzanne's politics, besides derisory and vaguely misogynistic comments about her communist "fanaticism" recorded in Michel Leiris' journal. Leiris (1992) notes that Suzanne's engagement with the PCF included distributing the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* each Sunday morning; something which, according to her nephew Gilles Roussi, she continued to do even after Aimé Césaire left the party (Curtius, 2020). Unfortunately, very little documentation exists that would paint a clear picture of Suzanne Césaire's personal and political response to departmentalization, though it seems clear that she actively supported it, campaigning for her husband's election first as mayor of Fort-de-France and then as a representative in the Chamber of Deputies (Curtius, 2020).

While Martinique had been experiencing disinvestment and neglect for years, conditions after World War II were especially desperate, precipitating broad support for the departmentalization law which passed in 1946 (Wilder, 2009). Addressing the French legislature in 1958, Aimé Césaire (2016) describes Martinique as the "sick man of the Antilles." His famous poem of anticolonial resistance, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, also portrays Martinique in a state of apocalyptic despair. The landscape is "pitted with smallpox," "dynamited with alcohol," "leprous," and "a desolate wound on the waters" (A. Césaire, 2017, pp. 13–14). Aimé Césaire casts the Martinican environment as sterile, an analogue for the island's cultural deficits and voluntary psychological assimilation. As scholars frequently observe, his Négritude poetics enact a recovery of Martinican identity through phallocentric imagery of the land's penetration by a male poetic subject who 'fertilizes' the barren landscape, restoring it to fullness and authenticity:

> Suddenly now strength and life assail me like a bull and I revive ONAN who entrusted his sperm to the fecund earth and the water of life circumvents the papilla of the morne, and now all the veins and veinlets are bustling with new blood and the enormous breathing lung of cyclones and the fire hoarded in volcanoes and the gigantic seismic pulse that now beats the measure of a living body in my firm embrace. (A. Césaire, 2017, p. 53)

Aimé Césaire frames racial awakening and postcolonial utopia in sexualized terms in which a feminized and previously infertile island functions instrumentally, facilitating the poetic subject's arrival at self-consciousness. By contrast, Suzanne Césaire articulates a symbiotic understanding of the relationship between Antillean people and environment, wherein the survival of each is interwoven with that of the other. Rejecting the false promise of "liberating machines" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 44) as a means of emancipation, she writes that, "it is with them, the workers, that the land has a shared and common cause, and not with the colonial Whites or the mulattoes" (S. Cesaire, 2012, p. 44). Rather than viewing the Martinican environment as ancillary to cultural and racial revitalization, Suzanne Césaire emphasizes the central role of the island's geography — which she describes as already rich and abundant — in constructing a model for authentic Martinican autonomy. In the following section, I trace the emergence of Suzanne Césaire's ecofeminist approach to the problem of Caribbean freedom, in which the subordination of the island environment to touristic development would undermine true freedom and autonomy.

Césaire's ecofeminist critique of *doudouisme*

In the centuries after colonization, literary representations of the tropics began to shift. If early utopian literature presented New World islands as Edenic paradises where European dreams of social transformation could be played out, by the 20th century, literary discourse about the French Antilles increasingly reflected anxieties about colonial authority. It is in this context that a genre of "eroticizing and exoticizing" (Couti, 2021, p. 141) travel writing known as *doudou* literature took shape, beginning as early as the 18th century (Burton, 1993). *Doudouiste* authors produced fantastical tales about exotic peoples and places, reinforcing and even generating ethno-climatic prejudices about Afro-Caribbeans' inferiority that were entangled in concerns about the turbulent tropical environment (Couti, 2015; Jennings, 2006). Richard Burton (1993, p. 81) explains that the figure of the *doudou* embodied the colonial relationship between the metropole and its tropical citizens during the Third Republic:

> [The *doudou* was] the smiling, sexually available black or colored woman (usually the latter) who gives herself heart, mind, and body to a visiting Frenchman (usually a soldier or colonial official) and is left desolate when her lover abandons her to return to France, having, of course, refused to marry her though often leaving her with a child who will

> at least lighten the race […]. [The *doudou* functioned] to justify the exploitation of the 'feminine' French West Indies by a France now thematized as 'masculine'.

Jacqueline Couti (2021, pp. 41–42) describes its resurgent popularity during the interwar period, writing that "Eroticism and exoticism directly correlated with the (faltering) national(ist) ego in need of reassurance about its superiority over others, of an individual — often but not always a European male — who exoticized the subject, objectifying and denying their humanity." Against this backdrop of imperial-libidinal anxiety about France's diminishing hegemony, Suzanne Césaire develops an ecofeminist critique aimed explicitly at this genre of colonialist travel writing that fetishizes island spaces and communities. At the end of her 1942 essay, 'Poetic Destitution', Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 27) writes:

> Come on now, real poetry lies elsewhere. Far from rhymes, laments, sea breezes, parrots. Stiff and stout bamboos changing direction, we decree the death of sappy, sentimental folkloric literature. And to hell with hibiscus, frangipani, and bougainvillea. Martinican poetry will be cannibal or it will not be.

Anticipating her description of "tropical-flower women" in 'The Great Camouflage', this passage demonstrates how *doudouisme*'s literary subjugation of tropical space is accomplished through recourse to feminized nature imagery. Despite the scarcity of overt references to gender in Césaire's work, her denunciation of *doudouiste* nature writing reveals gender and ecology as overlapping sites of exploitation under a system of patriarchal capitalism. Ecofeminism uses "gender as a category of analysis" to shed light on "the interconnections of *all* systems of unjustified human domination" (Warren, 2000, p. 2, emphasis in original). Ecofeminist analysis is attuned to the material and discursive ways in which subjectivity is denied to women, the environment, racial minorities, and other marginalized groups, in order to facilitate the European male subject's liberation from the "realm of necessity" (Mies & Shiva, 1993, p. 5).

The feminized image of the *vieilles colonies* popularized by *doudouiste* poets fulfilled colonial fantasies of the islands as submissive yet entropic regions predisposed to disorder and, thus, in need of rationalization and control. Suzanne Césaire's criticism of *doudouiste* travel narratives foreshadows the reinscription of Caribbean islands into global networks of dependency through the establishment of the tourism economy. The repeated references to geophysical disasters in her final essay, 'The Great Camouflage' — including hurricanes, fires, volcanoes, and cyclones — activate the dystopian antithesis to touristic/utopian objectification of Caribbean islands as spaces of pleasure and relaxation. In what follows, I suggest that Suzanne Césaire's allusions to natural hazard form not only a geohistorical means of cultural resistance to Western hegemony, but also an essential part of her non-totalizing surrealist geopoetics. Through a geopoetics of disaster, Suzanne Césaire highlights how planetary networks of climatic interrelation contest colonial divisions of the world into center and periphery. I use Maximin's (2006) term "geopoetics" because of its emphasis on the role of geophysical hazard in shaping Caribbean history and geography. Alternatively, Anny-Dominique Curtius (2016, p. 515) has used the

term *ecopoetics* to describe Suzanne Césaire's "nature-centered discursive practice where the Caribbean landscape and weatherscape are astutely woven together with issues of colonial expansion, historical trauma, social injustice, and struggle for political agency in the Caribbean."

Antillean agriculture, which had been in decline for at least half a century, continued to shrink after departmentalization in 1946. By the 1970s, it was replaced by the growth of public sector employment and tourism (Aldrich & Connell, 1992). The postwar period saw a major expansion of commercial air travel, facilitating the installment of what David Weaver (1988) calls the "plantation tourism model." During this time, significant investments were made to develop a tourism industry as the productivity of plantation-based agriculture and sugar refining declined, in spite of Aimé Césaire's best efforts to bring development and jobs to Martinique. "Everywhere airports were reconstructed, hotels built and golf courses and marinas added to the landscape; ports were also rebuilt to enable the docking of cruise ships which, especially in the Antilles, bring in the most visitors" (Aldrich & Connell, 1992, p. 150). In its attempts to attract Western tourists, Martinique, along with most of its Caribbean neighbors, has undertaken real estate and recreational development projects like the ones listed above. Despite the fact that the French Antilles' departmental status aimed to integrate them into the French economy, thereby raising wages, employment, and standards of living, the predominant postcolonial industry on the islands — tourism — exerts competitive pressures on wages as neighboring islands compete for visitors, muddling the supposed economic advantages of non-sovereignty. As Alfred Wong (2015, pp. 30–31) explains:

> The business model of mass land-based tourism as controlled by large trans-national corporations is based essentially on lowest cost of goods and services [...]. With each island state fighting to provide least-cost to touristic services, there is an unrelenting downward pressure on local wage scale.

While Wong's comparative analyses reveal that the French Antilles fare better than their non-sovereign neighbors in terms of wages and their total dependence on tourism, these superficial advantages are complicated by the astronomically high cost of imported goods in the French Antilles, rendering benefits like higher wages and social welfare much less significant (Murdoch, 2021).

Like industrial development, postcolonial tourism depends on two of the central targets of Suzanne Césaire's critique of assimilation. It first requires the development of a travel and hospitality infrastructure that often compromises ecological resilience. Tourist development on islands centers on the development of coastlines, which exacerbates coastal erosion, pollution, and the worst effects of tropical storms (Gössling, 2003). Secondly, Caribbean tourism is promoted through a neo-*doudouiste* reification of local cultures, which are packaged and marketed as exotic curiosities alongside pristine beaches and palm trees. A study by Stefan Gössling (2003, p. 551) reveals the interconnectedness of cultural and ecological alienation created by tourism: "[tourism is] an agent of modernization which decontextualizes and dissolves the relationships individuals have with society and nature, and increases the separation from structures that are the base of sustainable human-environmental relations." As indigenous communities are displaced to

make room for tourism projects, they must also accept the objectification of their cultural traditions for touristic consumption. The Hawaiian writer Haunani-Kay Trask (1999, p. 50) notes that in Hawai'i this has resulted in a "grotesque commercialization of Hawaiian culture, [the] creation of a racially-stratified, poorly paid servant class of industrial workers, [the] transformation of whole sections of [the islands] into high-rise cities, [and the] contamination and depletion of water sources." This sinister and underlying reality of tourism belies the utopian image it presents to visitors. In the following section, I explore Suzanne Césaire's essay, 'The Great Camouflage', in which she identifies the dual processes by which Caribbean ecological and cultural autonomy are undermined through a touristic utopianization of tropical space.

A climatic ontology of difference in 'The Great Camouflage'

At the start of what is arguably Suzanne Césaire's (2012, p. 39) most lyrically powerful work, 'The Great Camouflage', she adopts the perspective of a passenger flying over the islands, high enough to see the network of islands below and to interrogate the imagery used to describe them:

> There are, melded into the isles, beautiful green waves of water and of silence. There is the purity of sea salt all around the Caribbean [...]. There is my island, Martinique, and its fresh necklace of clouds buffeted by Mount Pelée.

The idyllic overview of the islands is abruptly interrupted as a Haitian peasant watches his horse struck and killed by lightning by the "age-old killer storm at Hinche" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 39). The lightning strike produces an instantaneous rupture in the vision of a peaceful tropics evoked in the first few sentences, and catalyzes a moment of recognition, in which the farmer understands the true nature of his island is its "absence of equilibrium" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 39). The passage continues, "But this sudden access to terrestrial madness illuminates his heart: he begins to think about the other Caribbean islands, their volcanoes, their earthquakes, their hurricanes" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 39). Rather than viewing the islands as isolated fragments, sequestered by their various colonial histories and languages while geographically cut off from the rest of the world, Suzanne Césaire traces the path of the hurricane as it envelops first Puerto Rico, then the Antilles and Haiti, and finally making its way north to Florida. If the focus in previous essays has been on Martinique, 'The Great Camouflage' zooms out to view the region as a whole. It explores the Caribbean both through the narrator's aerial view from the plane window and through tracking a hurricane as it sweeps across the ocean. As the storm develops, the Atlantic "takes flight toward Europe with great oceanic waves" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 39). The course of tropical storms — which form off the coast of West Africa, reach their peak over the Caribbean, and, as they subside, dump remnants of wind and rain in Western Europe (Elsner & Kara, 1999) — recalls the 'triangular circuit' used to describe the flow of goods and capital between Africa, Europe, and the New World during the slave trade. And yet, the chaotic, spiralic power of the storm abolishes the fixed points of relation established by the network.

In Suzanne Césaire's poetic rendering, the hurricane dissolves territorial distinctions and instead draws its strength from the interrelation of land masses, oceans, and climatic conditions produced through the triangular circuit. In melting territorial subdivisions and recognizing the supremacy of the ocean, Suzanne Césaire points to an alternative model for Caribbean consciousness — one that opposes a logic of territorial identity. In contrast to conventional understandings of identity as rooted in the soil or to a traceable ancestral lineage, the hurricane provides a climatic allegory of relation in which Caribbean history and geography are produced by multiple sources and through continuous displacement. This foregrounds Glissant's (1997, pp. 146–147) theory of rhizomatic relation in the 1980s and 1990s, in which he argues that Western land consciousness — premised upon the sacred association between land, lineage, and identity — is inoperable in the Caribbean, where history has been defined by dislocation and erasure:

> The massacre of the Indians, uprooting of the sacred, has already invalidated [the search for the rightful 'possessors' of Caribbean land]. Once that had happened, Antillean soil could not become a territory, but rather, a rhizomed land […]. But the consequences of European expansion (extermination of the Pre-Columbians, importation of new populations) is precisely what forms the basis for a new relationship with the land: not the absolute ontological possession regarded as sacred but the complicity of relation.

While Glissant only mentioned Suzanne Césaire once in his writing (Curtius, 2020), it seems clear that her understanding of Caribbean identity and non-territorial relation (rather than possession) anticipates subsequent movements in the francophone Caribbean, such as Antillanité and Créolité. In our contemporary moment, in which decolonization more or less equates to national independence, Suzanne Césaire's model of identity through interdependence reminds us that the possibilities for human freedom are not restricted to territorial sovereignty. In fact, she comprehensively rejects the idea that liberation could be achieved in this way, if sovereignty over the land rests on the power to exploit and degrade its resources.

Suzanne Césaire's geopoetic critique of neoliberal development takes what might be described as a 'world systems' approach, to borrow Immanuel Wallerstein's term (2004). Rather than framing anticolonial struggle through diametric oppositions between utopia/dystopia, developed/underdeveloped, core/periphery, or independence/dependence, Suzanne Césaire's ecofeminist geopoetics upholds diversity while dispersing 'harmful antinomies' in favor of a model of Caribbean history that emerges organically from the dynamism of its geography and climate. In this sense, her approach is better suited to addressing the complex circuits and processes in which small islands find themselves entangled today. Her refusal to accept contradictions between utopia and dystopia, continents and islands, or core and peripheral states is equally important, as it demands a realistic consideration of how local autonomy and cultures are undermined when postcolonial nations are absorbed into an increasingly unequal global economy. Disaster studies scholars observe that globalization has a profound, negative impact on the vulnerability of postcolonial economies to natural hazards:

> Free unregulated capital flows [...] have rendered economies even more unstable and less policy independent than before [...]. Therefore, at least in the medium term, these processes are likely to render significant numbers of people more differentially at risk and hence more vulnerable than before. (Albala-Bertrand, 2007, p. 149)

As discussed previously, Suzanne Césaire's conception of a 'non-totalizing total poetics' affirms the geohistorical place of the Caribbean within a broader conception of global interrelation, while at the same time pointing out the harmful ways in which its integration in this neocolonial network manifests. Like many Caribbean writers after her, including Édouard Glissant, Hortense Spillers, and Kamau Brathwaite, Suzanne Césaire opposes a rooted and territorial identity with a distinctly Caribbean one whose authenticity derives from the region's climatic flux. In discussing his notion of 'tidalectics', Brathwaite (1999, p. 34) writes:

> Why is our psychology not dialectical – successfully dialectical – in how Western philosophy has assumed people's lives should be, but tidalectic, like our grandmother's – our nanna's – action, like the movement of the ocean she's walking on, coming from one continent/continuum, touching another, and then receding (reading) from the island(s) into the perhaps creative chaos of the(ir) future.

The impossible passage of the woman walking across the sea confounds Eurocentric conceptions that link identity to a 'solid ground' or a stable genealogical source. Instead, the sweeping rhythm of the matriarch dispels the apparent contradiction between "continent/continuum" (Brathwaite, 1999, p. 34), where the ebb and flow between these two concepts maintains their difference, establishing a temporality of alternation rather than progress (DeLoughrey, 2007). Brathwaite (1999) often returns in his work to the "submerged mothers" of Caribbean history, recalling the latent yet essential feminist framework present in Suzanne Césaire's work. As I have suggested, environmental and gender consciousness merge to offer a model of Black diasporic identity based on multiple sources, histories, and modalities of survival. In the final pages of 'The Great Camouflage', Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 45) describes in a flourish of lyrical detail how a great "Caribbean conflagration" sweeps away any touristic illusions of the islands as enchanting or compliant:

> The heliconia shrubs and flowers of Absolon Forest bleed over the chasms, and the beauty of the tropical landscape goes to the heads of the poets passing by. Across the swaying latticed networks of the palms they can see the Antillean conflagration rolling across the Caribbean that is a tranquil sea of lavas. Here life lights up in a vegetal fire. Here on these hot lands that keep alive geological species, the fixed plant, passion and blood, in its primitive architecture, the disquieting ringing suddenly issue from the chaotic backs of the dancers [...]. Here the poets feel their heads capsize, and, inhaling the fresh smells of the ravines, they take possession of the wreath of the islands, they listen to the sound of the water surrounding the islands, and they see tropical flames kindled no longer in the heliconia, in the gerberas, in the hibiscus, in the bougainvilleas,

> in the flame trees, but instead in the hungers, and in the fears, in the hatreds, in the ferocity, that burn in the hollows of the mountains.

In place of either a tourist-utopian or dystopian-catastrophic vision of her island, Suzanne Césaire offers a Caribbean eco-historical reality premised upon disorder, multiplicity, and continuous interconnection. Her reference to disruptive natural hazard subverts the gender hierarchy established in *doudou* imagery, challenging the fantasy of a placid and docile tropical space. However, she challenges this literary tradition of utopian erasure not necessarily through denying the connection between landscape and femininity, but by redefining the relationship in terms of a productive disruption. This might best be understood in terms of what Maryse Condé (2000, p. 160) described as creative disorder:

> In a Bambara myth of origin, after the creation of the earth, and the organization of everything on its surface, disorder was introduced by a woman. Disorder meant the power to create new objects and to modify the existing ones. In a word, disorder meant creativity.

In the essay 'Poetic Destitution', Suzanne Césaire (2012, p. 30) poses the question, "What is the Martinican?", to which she answers, "A plant-human. Like a plant, he abandons himself to the rhythm of universal life. There is not the slightest effort to dominate nature." This sensibility is accessed again in 'The Great Camouflage' when the hurricane sweeps across the Caribbean. As opposed to resistance or "consternation," she suggests acceptance: "Consternation seizes objects and the people spared at the fringes of the wind. Do not move. Let it pass" (S. Césaire, 2012, p. 39). Instead of reifying the relationship between women and nature in essentialist terms, as in the case of *doudouisme*, Négritude, or, as Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2007) has argued, in recent diasporic studies, I contend that Césaire's ecofeminist approach draws attention to various modalities of oppression that combine to reinforce the exploitation of human beings and nature. In 'The Great Camouflage', she calls upon geophysical hazard not only to communicate the true reality of her island and to summon its resistant potential, but to suggest an alternative, decolonial conception of human–environment relations based in resilience and adaptability as opposed to technological control.

Transcending utopia: "This land […] can only be what we want it to be"

By way of conclusion, I wish to allude to Lisa Fletcher's 2011 article, '"…some distance to go": A Critical Survey of Island Studies'. Fletcher (2011) makes the case for the inclusion of island literature and art as vital components of an interdisciplinary field, which she sees as increasingly dominated by social scientific approaches. Suzanne Césaire's oft-neglected contributions to postcolonial theory serve as a reminder of this urgency. Her critique of utopian portrayals of tropical 'paradise' from *doudou* literature sheds light on the gendered and racialized construction of the Antilles in French colonial discourse. Utopian narratives generated perceptions of islands

that have shaped histories of economic exploitation and political inferiorization during the period of Empire (Burton, 1993; Church, 2016). Suzanne Césaire was aware of the close connection between text and the production of concrete historical realities. Her work has been neglected or passed over for a variety of reasons, including her divorce from Aimé Césaire shortly before her death, and her fetishistic memorialization by male contemporaries, who often rendered Suzanne Césaire in the very *doudouiste* terms she struggled against. Until the past few decades, her legacy was subject to the same kind of gendered-utopian objectification and silencing as the Martinican environment that she attempted to revitalize. Women poets and novelists have historically been excluded by male-dominated movements like Négritude, Créolité, and diaspora studies (Burton, 1995; DeLoughrey, 2007, 2011), but recognition of their contributions to Caribbean theory is even less common. While Suzanne Césaire's work has primarily been considered in terms of a cultural critique, it is vital to center how her analysis of gender, racial, and environmental domination in Martinique shaped a systematic critique of a patriarchal capitalist economy, development, environmental destruction, and the incipient rise of neocolonial globalization.

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