

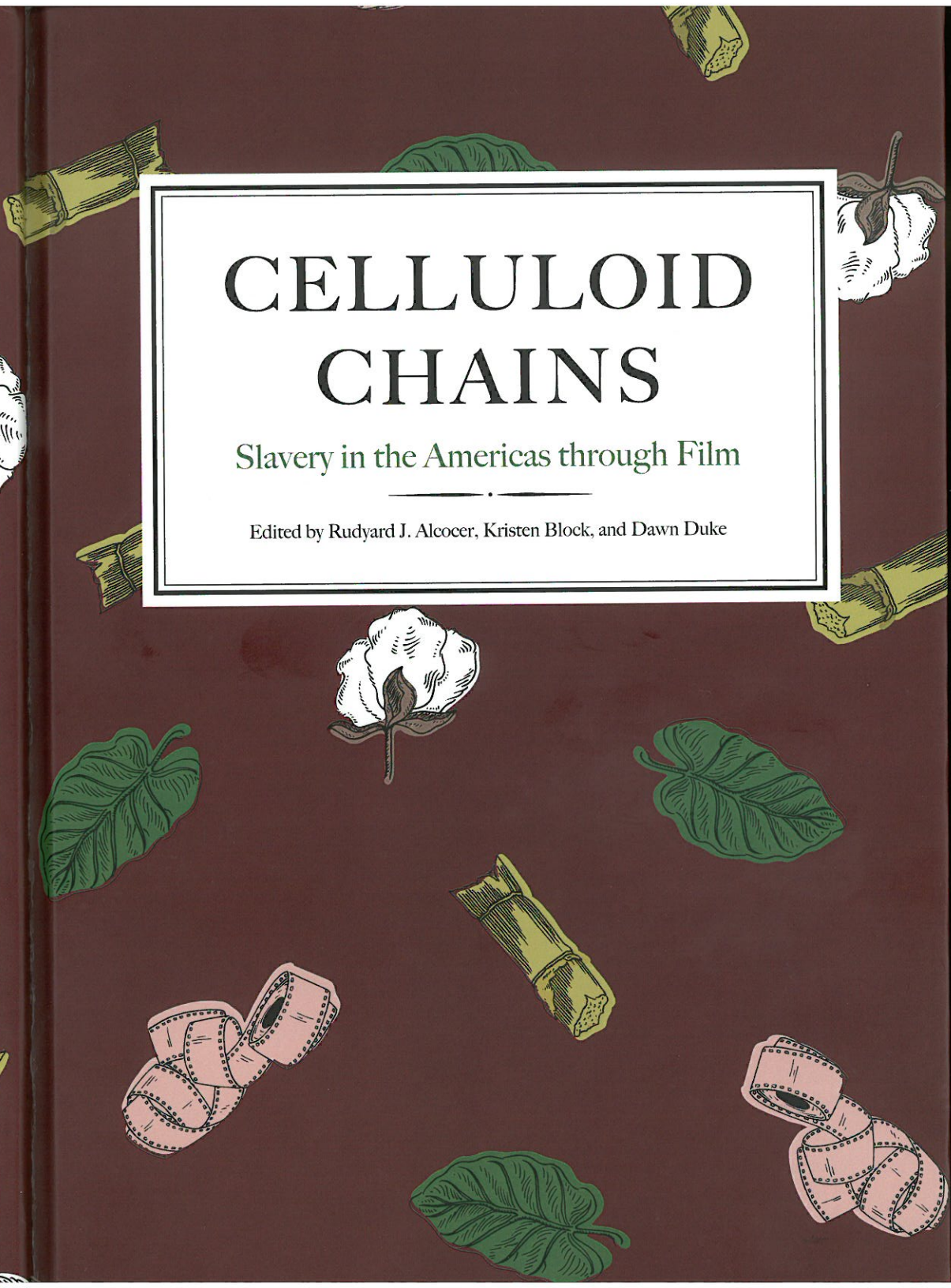
ALCOOER BLOCK DUKE

CELLULOID CHAINS

# CELLULOID CHAINS

Slavery in the Americas through Film

Edited by Rudyard J. Alcoer, Kristen Block, and Dawn Duke



"*Celluloid Chains* treats the topic of (re)presenting slavery more completely than any text previously published on the subject."

SERETHA D. WILLIAMS

coeditor of *Afterimages of Slavery: Essays on Appearances  
in Recent American Films, Literature, Television, and Other Media*

Featuring a variety of disciplinary perspectives and analytical approaches, *Celluloid Chains* is the most comprehensive volume to date on films about slavery. This collection examines works from not only the United States but elsewhere in the Americas, and it attests to slavery's continuing importance as a source of immense fascination for filmmakers and their audiences.

Each of the book's fifteen original essays focuses on a particular film that directly treats the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in the New World. Beginning with an essay on the Cuban film *El otro Francisco* (1975), Sergio Giral's reworking of a nineteenth-century abolitionist novel, the book proceeds to examine such works as the landmark miniseries *Roots* (1977), which sparked intense controversy over its authenticity; Werner Herzog's *Cobra Verde* (1987), which raises questions about what constitutes a slavery film; Guy Deslauriers's *Passage du milieu* (1999), a documentary-style reconstruction of what Africans experienced during the Middle Passage; and Steve McQueen's Oscar-winning *12 Years a Slave* (2013), which embodies the tensions between faithfully adapting a nineteenth-century slave narrative and bending it for modern purposes.

Films about slavery have shown a special power to portray the worst and best of humanity, and *Celluloid Chains* is an essential guide to this important genre.

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## Unshackling the Ocean

Screening Trauma and Memory in Guy Deslauriers's

*Passage du milieu ~ The Middle Passage*

*Anny Dominique Curtius*

I see her body silhouetting against the sparkling light that hits the Caribbean at that early dawn and it seems as if her feet, which all along I thought were walking on the sand . . . were really . . . walking on the water . . . and she was travelling across that middle passage, . . . our psychology is tidalectic like our grandmother'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 . . .

—KAMAU BRATHWAITE

Now it is a matter of seizing and admiring a new art, which while leaving man in his true place—fragile and dependent—opens up to the artist unsuspected possibilities however, in the very spectacle of things ignored and silenced.

—SUZANNE CÉSAIRE

When Guy Deslauriers's documentary *Passage du milieu* [*The Middle Passage*] came out in 1999, some critics<sup>1</sup> praised the stylization of the film, the remarkable voice-over narration that accompanies a series of staccato, blurred

images in slow motion. Yet, other critics<sup>2</sup> questioned Deslauriers's choice to proceed with what they perceived as over-stylized and over-poeticized dramatic images of slavery. However, people have generally wondered about the message proposed by the film, and have more precisely raised the question of the manner in which the tragedies surrounding slavery and the slave trade should have been adapted for the cinema.

Guy Deslauriers is a Paris-based filmmaker of Martinican descent who has consistently tackled the cinematic representation of the entanglements of trauma and memory in postcontact French Caribbean societies. In *Passage du Milieu*, a slave ship's hold and a captive's gripping narration of the Middle Passage constitute key paradigms through which Deslauriers and Martinican co-scriptwriters Patrick Chamoiseau and Claude Chonville dissect the repressed memory of slavery and the healing dynamics involved in a duty of memory. Haitian-born guitarist, composer, and ethnomusicologist, Amos Coulanges, composed the music, nonprofessional actors played the role of slave-captives, and Maka Kotto, a Quebec-based actor, stage director, and politician of Cameroonian descent, is the narrator of the film. For the 2003 HBO and English adaptation of Deslauriers's film under the title *The Middle Passage*, Benin-born actor Djimon Hounsou was selected as the narrator of the voice-over.

Thus, this essay seeks to explore the way the captive's omniscient narrative, the cinematic slow motions, long shots, and lap dissolves of the captive bodies in the hold complement each other, and stitch several complex layers of memory, agency, and historical modalities. Drawing from Kamau Brathwaite's tidialectics—an eco-poetic counter-epistemology to a Hegelian dialectic that underscores the anthropology of historicized bodies and voices crossing the Middle Passage and that interweaves Caribbean landscape, seascape, and history in the shaping of new Caribbean cultural forms and diasporic imaginaries—I contend that Deslauriers reshapes the slave ship's hold as an intangible heritage where spatial complexity, agency, guilt, complicity, and variously poeticized, historicized, and fragmented bodies are intertwined. Additionally, focusing on American novelist Walter Mosley's<sup>3</sup> rewriting of Chonville's and Chamoiseau's narration in the HBO version for a North American audience, I argue that the postcontact entanglements between France and Martinique, and the post-Jim Crow and post-Civil Rights predicaments in the U.S. that sustained the artistic imaginaries of the Martinican and American artists, unfold a tidialectical cinema of slavery in which memory, resilience, and agency are interrogated through the tenets of both Postcolonial and Trauma studies. I further contend that Deslauriers's film is an insightful example of a hybrid cinematic theory of trauma in the sense

that it encapsulates a cross-generational and diasporic cinematic postmemory of slavery.

The first Sub-Saharan African films on slavery date back to the 1960s and 70s' West African cinema of Ousmane Sembène's *La Noire de . . .* (1966), and Med Hondo's *West Indies: Les nègres marrons de la liberté* [West Indies: The Maroons of Freedom] (1979). Both films are adaptations, the former of Sembène's 1962 short story *La Noire de*, the latter of Daniel Boukman's play, *Les Négriers* [The slave ships/The slave traders]. Both films have the merit of transposing the traces of the period of the slave trade and slavery in contemporary contexts by way of a reworking of history through a memory of the past in order to reflect upon today's conditions of modern slavery in the case of Sembène, and the migrations of French Caribbean people to France through the BUMIDOM<sup>4</sup> in the 1960s in the case of Hondo and Boukman. With both films, this release of the memory of the slave trade and slavery is brought about by a clear dialectic between the written and the visual. Haile Gerima and François Woukouache have also questioned how to build a memory of slavery with their films *Sankofa* (1993) and *Asientos* (1994), respectively, while Roger Gnoan M'Bala articulates in 1998 a reflection on the responsibility of African kings concerning the slave trade by staging a pro-slavery king from the Gulf of Guinea in the seventeenth century in his film, *Adanggaman*. By deciding to put an end to the silence of African artists and intellectuals on slavery, these filmmakers focus the attention of Africans on this delicate topic of the slave trade and on the absence of an objective critical gaze on this particular aspect of the history of Africa in contemporary African societies. As for the French Caribbean, it can be argued that slavery is the subject that inaugurates its cinema. From the first film entirely dedicated to slavery by Christian Lara in 1980, *Vivre libre ou mourir* [To Live Free or Die], to his most recent, *1802, l'épopée guadeloupéenne* [1802, the Guadeloupean Saga] (2004), slavery has been at the heart of the concerns of Caribbean filmmakers. Slavery also remains the necessary starting point for any reflection on contemporary Caribbean societies; in that respect, one should mention Christiane Succab-Goldman's documentary *Les descendants de la nuit* [The Inheritors of Darkness] (1998), in which she has descendants of slaves and slave owners speak about the "tortures of memory caused by the sugar cane" and the various forms of coexistence between these two groups that can occur today on many levels of society, whether economic, political, social, cultural, or individual. Finally, one must pay attention to Fabrice Éboué's, Thomas N'Gijol's, and Lionel Steketee's satirical film *Case Départ* [Starting Point] (2011) that did quite well at the box office in France with more than one million tickets sold. Laughter and satire as

a way to think about slavery and racism was the major objective of *Case Départ*. On the other hand, Deslauriers's film was well received only in independent movie theatres and international film festivals.

In the opening scenes of Deslauriers's film, a historical "post-it"<sup>5</sup> appears on the gloomy scenery of the agitated waves of a dark ocean. The absence of light and the intensity of this dark perspective are meant to coalesce with the text<sup>6</sup> that appears on the screen and that reminds the audience of the horrors of the Middle Passage:

For nearly four centuries in order to exploit the resources of the New World, Europe developed the triangular trade route. The second side of the triangle, its black underside, deported millions of Africans to America. Many died at sea. This route continues to haunt history under the mysterious name of: The Middle Passage.

The mention of the duration of the slave trade<sup>7</sup> in France (1670 to 1831) and in the United States (1678 to 1860), its massive human losses (millions of Africans), and its economic purpose (the European exploitation of the New World) rapidly inscribe the film within the vein of a documentary. However, at the beginning of the film, the viewer is slowly drawn closer to the waves, as the eye of the camera, through a variety of extreme close-ups, moves closer to the water, as if to excavate this history, and most specifically the voice of the narrator-captive, from the bottom of the ocean.

The intentional instability of the camera (the shots are taken from a ship) that espouses the movements of the waves intensifies the gloominess of the scenes and purports to make the viewers feel dizzy before they are plunged, through a three-second fade out, into a black hole, namely, the ocean, and an entangled and suppressed history. This feeling of dizziness imposed upon the viewers, this black hole moment, is meant to put the viewers into a state of consciousness that demands a specific mindset in order to watch what is about to be screened, to hear a captive narrator's harrowing story, and to go through a difficult process of rememory.<sup>8</sup> In addition to representing the state of a new consciousness, the three-second fade out can also be identified as the birthing of the proto-slaves who became the architects of the creole societies of the New World. Thus, the cinematic techniques that are deployed right from the beginning, Amos Coulanges's soothing piano, violin, and violoncello trio, the sound of the waves, and most importantly the gripping and poetic voice-over, quickly reveal that this subjective documentary cannot be identified as a docufiction, but most accurately as a performative and hybrid documentary.

Then, by interweaving the captive-narrator's voice-over account of the transatlantic slave trade and the peaceful presence of a young boy walking on a beach and watching the peaceful turquoise waters of the ocean, Deslauriers unveils the urgency to craft an intergenerational memory of slavery.

Two aspects of Deslauriers's film need to be discussed: first, the choice of the hold of the slave ship as the location where most of the action takes place, then the association between poetic images enhanced by scenes in slow motion and blurred images, a series of tracking shots, combined with the narration that accompanies and reinforces the photography as a way to re-appropriate history.

It is important to note that Deslauriers's objective is to inscribe the slave trade and slavery in memories as "an unprecedented genocide in the history of humanity." On the other hand, he also intends to interrogate for the peoples of the African Diaspora the very notion of heritage that has been anchored exclusively until now in monuments and statues as supports of an official colonial history. His intent is to advance the idea that the slave ship, as the central theme of the film, is a part of the cultural heritage of the peoples who have suffered slavery:

In fact, for them, for a long time, the word heritage has been associated with the monuments that bear witness to the colonial side of History, in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas. To valorize places such as the slave ships, that are symbols of the death of earlier peoples and the birth of "creole" peoples, to study and know them, to prolong them by appropriation is also to give them a chance to exist in the eyes of a world that has never wanted to acknowledge the extent and consequences of the transatlantic slave trade, still affecting us today. And to allow them to exist is to fight to have these slave ships become part of the heritage of humanity in general. Furthermore, it allows us, the descendants of slaves, to regard our own history not with shame (we were not the organizers of this system and of the raids that decimated Africa), but with pride: the pride of people who, out of chaos, were reborn, who became beings "in our own right," beings rich with history. In the face of the institutionalization of silence, looking at Slavery through the prism of the slave ship is a way for us to lay, in the garden of the countries, which organized or were accomplices to this atrocity, the first stone of the first monument in memory of the 250,000,000 anonymous Africans that came before us.<sup>9</sup>

Deslauriers's project is linked to a number of events that have preceded and followed the sesquicentennial ceremonies of the abolition of slavery in the French West Indies and Reunion in 1998. To this effect, one should mention Christiane

Taubira's December 22, 1998 sponsorship of a bill that recognizes slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity. The law was passed on May 21, 2001 and is named after Taubira, who was the deputy of French Guiana at the time, and has been France's Minister of Justice since 2012. The Taubira Law led to former President Jacques Chirac's January 31, 2006 decree<sup>10</sup> stipulating that May 10 be the official day of the annual commemoration of the abolition of slavery in metropolitan France. Similarly, in 1998, the City Council of Nantes, the largest French slave port in the eighteenth century, decided to erect a monument to commemorate the abolition of slavery in the French colonies. The Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery opened on March 25, 2012 and is meant to be "a testimony to a memory which the city has accepted, and stretches beyond the context of local history as it carries a universal message of solidarity and brotherhood." Former Deputy and Mayor of Nantes, Jean-Marc Ayrault declares on the Memorial's website:

Taking responsibility for such a past, without feelings of repentance, allows us to carry on our struggles with our eyes wide open. . . . My wish is for [the Memorial] to become a place where younger generations can learn and develop awareness. The Memorial will then have fulfilled its promises: it will be a living site, a place where people unite and commit collectively to upholding the memory of past struggles and continuing our fight for the recognition and promotion of human rights.<sup>11</sup>

Among other events, one should also mention the *Comité devoir de mémoire Martinique* [Committee for the Duty of Memory from Martinique] created under the aegis of *Médecins du monde* [Doctors of the world] and the Committee for the Memory of Slavery presided by Maryse Condé and instituted by a decree of January 5, 2004, in accordance with the law of May 2001.

What also led to the need to fight against forgetting is a series of events such as the controversy that surrounded an auction sale in Lyon on January 12, 2005 of eighteenth-century family and commercial archives such as correspondence and old manuscripts that belonged to French ship owners and slave traffickers, and that addressed the transatlantic slave trade. Lyon residents originally from the French Caribbean, French Guiana, and Reunion strongly protested against the sale and, along with Christiane Taubira, required that these documents should not be dispersed and sold to individuals. They demanded that the State use its pre-emption rights to acquire them, in order to keep them in museums, libraries, and cultural centers, so that they could be available to the public. The second event that has a direct echo with Deslauriers's intention to redirect the duty of memory from being based on the presence of colonial monuments toward

seeking the true loci of memory in instances that are not part of official history, is the recurrent defacements of the statue of Empress Joséphine in Fort-de-France, its ambiguous restoration, and the latest symbolic re-appropriations of the beheaded statue by Sarah Trouche, a French visual and performance artist.<sup>12</sup>

On a global scale it is worth mentioning UNESCO's choice of August 23 as Slavery Remembrance Day as a reminder of the 1791 slave uprising in Haiti that subsequently gave birth to the Haitian Republic in 1804. Similarly in 1994, National Museums Liverpool opened the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, the first of its kind in the world, and then the Liverpool International Slavery Museum opened on August 23, 2007, a date that corresponds to the annual Slavery Remembrance Day, but also the year of the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade, and the city of Liverpool's<sup>13</sup> 800th birthday.

In their effort to highlight the hold of the slave ship as the central location in the film, Deslauriers, Chonville, and Chamoiseau not only interrogate the scarcity of monuments<sup>14</sup> related to the slave trade, but they also disentangle the thick temporality (400 years) of the slave trade, which in my opinion might be the reason why slavery is often forgotten in analyses of trauma and memory by cultural theorists in Trauma studies. Furthermore, by focusing on the hold, they make clear aesthetic and narrative choices such as using a subjective camera and a narrative approach that is both poetic and political as a way to follow the different steps that mark the physical and psychological deterioration of the captives during the crossing of the Atlantic from the island of Gorée to the Caribbean. The motions of the camera are reinforced by the commentary of the captive-narrator, a witness to the tragedy, who follows with a questioning gaze the rapes of women that will never be shown, the revolts of the captives, the bodies thrown overboard. Through a series of flashbacks, he reaches back to the raids of captives by slave traders, the exchange of captives for barrels of powder and knick-knacks. The narrator, who is also an archivist of sorts, keeps track of the duration of the crossing and his narration regularly informs us, as a leitmotiv, of the number of days that have elapsed since the ship left the island of Gorée. The story he tells is somewhat like a journal—a narrative space typical of the process of reconstructing forgotten events. As Deslauriers observes:

Tying together a documentary story with a fictional narrative allows me to reinforce the reality of many a scene and to push my dramatization further. There exist many written documents but very few images: a few engravings that do not transcribe the complete reality since they always present the gaze of the Other on the ship's hold. It seemed important to us to set up things differently: the *Middle Passage*

is a story that comes from the hold. It is the omniscient narration of a slave in his effort to reconstitute scenes seen from inside the hold.<sup>15</sup>

Besides, the narrator has a precise knowledge of the high number of captives in the hold, “more than 600 when the ship only had room for 300,” of the number of bodies thrown at sea, and of the number of the dying when the ship approaches the coast in the Caribbean. These precise remembrances are in contrast with the fact that he has forgotten the name of the slave ship that has taken him away from Africa, as well as the precise period of time when this event takes place. “The slave trade,” says the captive-narrator, “was the same time that stretches indefinitely. The period starts under the reign of Agadja, King of Dahomey, who sold me to the French.” These contrasting blanks and excesses of the narrator’s memories are remarkably underlined by the alternating images of the slow choreography of the bodies of the captives thrown overboard by the sailors and the slow, yet quick and jerky motion of the slaves being flailed in the hold by the sailors. The discourse of the narrator is not lyrical in itself. What seems to be lyrical in the sense that it contributes to the passionate and poetic expression of individual emotions is the way in which a collective and political message is transmitted with the function to fill in the blanks of the untold. What is left unsaid is the silence of the captive, dehumanized and voiceless. In that sense, Gilles Deleuze’s reflections on the function of myth and lying in non-Western cinema are pertinent here, insofar as such movie productions are “words in action or speech acts that produce collective statements capable of elevating misery, the intolerable, the unbearable to a strange positivity, the invention of a people” (*L’image-temps, Cinéma 2* 289). The story of the personal tragedy of the narrator is indeed poetic and political, but it is above all a speech in action or an act of non-lyrical speech because it can be interpreted as a conscious and collective memory of slavery whose objective is to disrupt the discourse of “masters” (Deleuze 289). As for repetitions, as signs of the confusions and certainties of memory, the constant return to the ship’s hold constitutes the most significant leitmotiv of the film. Most scenes have been spliced so that each one starts with several types of shots where the framing methodically isolates in a very suggestive way, chests, shoulders, a hand, an arm, part of a face. When Deslauriers approaches the bodies of the captives in a poetic fashion with his discreet camera—since one hears no cries of pain—he refuses to present them to the viewers as yet one more compact herd.

Text and image are not mutually cancelled by the repetitions; instead the camera extends the occasionally imprecise memory of the narrator through the repetition of the text and image interconnectedness. Indeed, the entire architecture of the film relies on the complementarity between the two. Deslauriers

uses the technique of lap dissolve, not only to have the end of a shot overlap with the beginning of the next shot, but also to have the story merge with the image and vice versa. For example, the story of the rapes of the women and the young girls is extended by their silence, by the slow motion over their empty gaze, by their bodies swaying with the pitching of the ship.

Unlike Haile Gerima who opted for a long, extremely disturbing<sup>16</sup> and graphic scene of the rape of a slave woman in *Sankofa*, Deslauriers tells us that showing the sexualized brutality against the women captives is less significant to him than the sexual traumatization that the ferocity of the rape has stitched within the mind of the young girls and the women in the hold. To me, this poetically crafted slow motion over their empty gazes is cinematically more effective than the representation of the destructive and uncontrollable force of the rape.

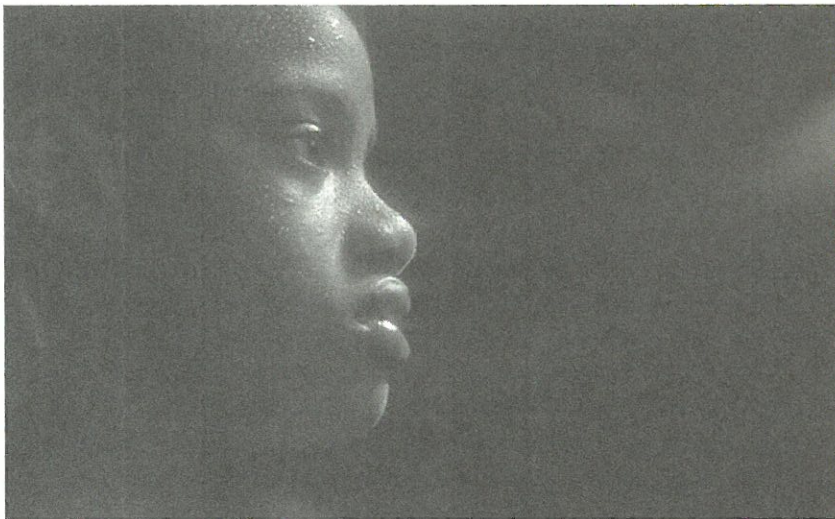
The three images above are the cinematic representations of the rape of the girls from Deslauriers’s perspective. The following lines appear at the fifteenth minute of the film, and are then repeated at the thirty-fourth minute:

Allow me to evoke only in the light of day what happens during the night. We don’t like to think about it. We turn our thoughts away from it. . . . The lecherous sailors laboring on top of the women and underage girls . . .

The third image where the little girls raises her head toward the shackles hanging from the ceiling of the ship’s hold is powerful as the slow movement of their gaze







at the shackles is accompanied during twenty-three seconds by the sound of the shackles that resembles that of wind chimes. Through this cinematic technique, Deslauriers insightfully shows how the girl's innocence and childhood have been stolen by the traumatic experience of the rape. Here, the wind chimes normally symbolizing peacefulness and safety have been transformed into the shackles of shame and dehumanization. This is a poignant moment where Deslauriers ultimately creates a female captive presence in the film. He does not give the young girls a real voice, there is no female voice-over sharing the narration with

the male captive narrator in order to tell the horrific experiences of rape, and the bodies thrown overboard are only male captive bodies. Instead, Deslauriers chooses to build a multiple voice dynamic by giving the underage girls a symbolic voice through their silence and the slow motion of their bodies.

It is important to remember that the narrator commits suicide when the ship nears the coast of the Caribbean. The narrator diving in the sea is a significant ending because it allows him to join the other dead captives so that together, he says, "we may form an army that will forever disturb the peace of the ocean." Therefore the entire narrative is articulated by a narrator/archivist who recalls the entire crossing from the bottom of the ocean. In addition, anxious as he is to find out how much the child who appears at the beginning of the film, and by extension any descendant of a slave, know about their own history, the unnamed captive also becomes a storyteller who tells the child the history of the Middle Passage by taking him "back in time."

In the last minutes of the film, the young boy reappears. He is now watching with curiosity a cruise boat being fitted out in a port of the Caribbean. The film ends in a sort of coda, with the repetition of a scene from the beginning where that same boy is walking along the beach. The memory of the young boy, "impeached" and "manipulated" (Ricoeur 575–76), is revived by this reminder since the captive-narrator gave him the resources necessary to fight against forgetting. So the traces that lay dormant in the unconscious mind of the child at the beginning of the film are now participating in the process of irrigating memory and allowing the boy, now made aware of the slave trade, to question, at the end of the film, which links may exist between the cruise boat and the slave ship.

#### TRANSMITTING THE TRAUMA OF SLAVERY

As previously mentioned, Walter Mosley took the liberty to change the original scenario by Chamoiseau and Chonville. Here, in order to analyze the distinction between Mosley's text and the original version, I will focus on two moments of the film: the opening scene and the closing scene when the narrator addresses the young boy. Several questions arise as we notice the intensity of Mosley's specific vocabulary that contrasts with the subdued pace of Deslaurier's account of the violence of the slave trade. In an interview with Rhonda Stewart in *The Crisis*, Mosley declares:

I was hired by HBO a while ago to basically rewrite the voice-over of Patrick Chamoiseau's extraordinary film *The Middle Passage*. It's as if you went back 300 years and got on a slave ship with a video camera. It's like a documentary. (49)

Later in the interview Mosley explains how rewriting the voice-over gave him the impetus to write *47* (2006), a book for children and young adults about slavery. Thus, one can wonder if Mosley was not strongly encouraged by HBO to reconfigure Deslauriers's poetic rumination so that the film could attract a larger North American audience. Indeed, HBO's acquisition and programming of the film was part of the HBO's 2002 Black History Month campaign. Because of its "realistic look at the horrors of the trans-Atlantic slave trade," it was chosen for a programming dynamics that "not only explores the historical relationship between Africa and America, but is also reflective of the African-American culture today." Similarly, HBO created local community outreach efforts,<sup>17</sup> and students from Texas Southern University, Clark University, Temple University, and Howard University were given the opportunity to participate in screenings of *The Middle Passage* and panel discussions featuring academics and celebrities.

Likewise, is Mosley ideologically convinced that the Martinican filmmaker and scriptwriters did not succeed in using the appropriate narrative tenets to adequately address the memory and trauma of slavery, and its after-effects in the African Diasporas? While HBO's and Mosley's intentions are somewhat intertwined as regards the impact of the film on a North American audience, I argue that while the first ones are pedagogical and also may be aimed at profit, Mosley's is profoundly related to the transmissibility of the trauma of slavery to generations of North American spectators.

## OPENING SCENE

### *Original Version*

The child coming this morning to the sea could not imagine the horrors its waters have witnessed. He would never believe what took place there with the help of the trade winds and sea currents. Were it not for the raging tsunami, we would never know the magnitude of an earthquake, the memory of which lies deep beneath the waves. To explain it to the child, you must go back over the ocean, back over to the other shore of time, to run straight into the beginning. And yet, it wasn't so long ago. . . . For me, it was only yesterday.

### *Mosley's Narration*

The child who looks out over this ocean cannot imagine the horror it holds. It is beyond him to understand what took place on these waters. No hurricane or mythological sea-demon can compare to the dreadful fate visited upon the black skin of the humanity across this

bloody sea. When it comes time for us to teach our children about this malevolent age, we must be willing to remember the holocaust in its entirety. This will prove to be a difficult task. Many of us seek to forget or even deny the monumental genocide and enslavement of these millions. For others it may seem like some long forgotten past, but for me it was only like yesterday.

The words "genocide" and "holocaust" do not appear in the original version; similarly, the four metaphorical layers, namely "trade winds," "sea currents," "tsunami," and "earthquake" are absent from Mosley's narration. Thus, while the original text suggests that slave rebellions and the subsequent abolition of slavery can be compared to a tsunami, and the slave trade and slavery to an earthquake, Mosley's text relies on the terms genocide and holocaust, well known by the North American audience, to render the horrors of the historical event. Mosley's distance from the original version is already visible in the historical "post-it" I have analyzed earlier, since he describes more explicitly the triangular slave trade and names the various regions of the Americas that have imported slaves from Africa. To me, in Mosley's perspective, the eco-poetical metaphors of the tsunami and the earthquake are a strategy of avoidance, and are useless for the didactic purpose of the film, hence his desire to move away from the poetic tone of Chonville's and Chamoiseau's narration. I see Mosley's use of the terms "genocide" and "holocaust" at the beginning of the film as a way to create a parallel between two systems of dehumanization: the Holocaust and slavery. It sets the preconditions that are necessary to unravel amnesia and craft a process of individual and collective healing in a post-Civil Rights U.S. society that has not yet put an end to the racial divide but has reconfigured it.

## CLOSING SCENE

### *Original Version*

Child, is it still time to search for who was responsible? Was the kingdom of France more to blame than the kingdom of Abomey? Is Africa that has lost its population for no profit more innocent than Europe that made all the profit? When there are too many culprits, you should fear that justice shall never be rendered in the tribunal of humans and that responsibilities shall be dissolved between wave and wind like letters of indulgence, leaving on our lips only the taste of salt and bitterness.

Mariner, the first of your dreams, the one no one ever remembers, will forever be haunted by an accursed slave ship. The crew is not made up

of European sailors, but of disheveled negroes who raise to the skies their broken chains. They have massacred the crew and not knowing how to sail, they wander aimlessly onto the ocean of your nights.

### *Mosley's Narration*

Child, is this time to seek out who is to blame for this monumental crime? Should the criminals and their beneficiaries be given amnesty? Or should the guilt be shared by the European slavers, the New World nations, and by the kings of Africa who betrayed their people and their continent? There are no innocents here except for those millions of souls lost at sea or enslaved in foreign lands, those born into servitude without knowledge of their ancestors or their gods. And there are the children of the children of slaves born into the world of their grandsires' masters robbed of the light we knew. The victims of these crimes call out for justice. Their silent cries echo throughout the world on the bitter desiccated lips of the dead and in the impoverished hovels and cold prisons that house the descendants of slavery and attempted genocide. Will justice ever be done in the courthouse of humanity? Or will all responsibility evaporate on the waves and the wind, like letters of indulgence, leaving nothing on our lips but the taste of salt and bitterness? Until this dark history has been brought to light, our world will be haunted by an ill-fated slave ship. On that ship, the crew is not made up of European sailors, but of bushy-haired Negroes raising their broken chains to the sky. With no knowledge of sailing, they roam endlessly on the ocean of our eternal night.

In the section addressed to the mariner, Chamoiseau and Chonville anchor the duty of memory in a metonymic perspective. The concept that is brought forward is that of the European *sailor* haunted by a cursed slave ship taken hostage by captives wandering on "the ocean of [his] nights" (the sailor's). Using such a referent, the *part* (the sailor) evokes and questions the *whole* that is us, a you that each viewer of the film is in need to identify. However, the word *sailor* is not present in Mosley's text. So, the camera lens moves from a metonymic focal point toward a whole, identified as the world ("our world will be haunted by a slave ship . . . roaming endlessly the ocean of our eternal night"). Mosley's narration is like an apocalyptic ultimatum declaimed in front of the entire world. One can feel urgency in his text. If dark history is not brought to light, the world will be plunged into an eternal night. By contrast, the rhetoric proposed by Chamoiseau and Chonville remains poetic while keeping the text within the context of sailing, of the Middle Passage. In that particular frame, the mysterious mariner is the one who is called to witness, which is not the case with Mosley's

text. So, as far as the act of contrition of the peoples responsible for the slave trade is concerned, the rhetoric of the metonymy works on the viewers' minds differently from the non-poetic discourse chosen by Mosley.

Paying close attention to the specific distinctions between Mosley's narration and Chamoiseau's and Chonville's text, one notices that in the first sentence, Mosley recasts the idea of "*responsabilités*" [responsibilities] present in the original script, into that of a "monumental crime." He insists on the idea of criminality by wondering whether criminals and their beneficiaries will be given amnesty, thus adding a question and using two terms, "criminals" and "amnesty," that are not used in the original text. Furthermore, while the HBO version ignores the direct reference to the kingdom of Abomey as one of the major locations of the slave trade, it makes it a point to bring together all who participated in the slave trade: the kings of Africa, the European slave traders, as well as nations of the New World.<sup>18</sup> In Mosley's text "the slave-trading African kings who betrayed their people and their continents," the words "betrayal," "criminality," "amnesty," "robbery" and "attempted genocide" not only constitute a whole range of meaningful terms that are not part of the vocabulary used in the French version, but also inscribe the HBO version in clear opposition to the original poetic rumination, and Deslauriers's smooth cinematic approach. In addition, the HBO version is more explicit on the necessity that justice be rendered, and on the need for the boy to observe the repercussions of the slave trade on the descendants of slaves, at the economic, social and psychological levels (this passage does not appear in the original version).

When considering the two versions, it is important to point to the fact that the public targeted by the HBO version is a North American English-speaking public, while the targeted audience for the original version is primarily Caribbean, Franco-French, European, and ultimately global. Could therefore the two versions complement each other as a double narrative that calls on two types of viewers coming from different post-slavery dynamics in order to build a memory of the slave trade and slavery?

The end of the original text invites the viewer to consider a peaceful process of re-appropriating memory; using a different text as a detour, with the intention of nourishing in different ways the memory of the boy to whom the film is addressed, as well as the memory of the viewer, Walter Mosley modifies the original meaning of the film by short-circuiting the rhetoric of a poetic serenity present in the original version. Then one can say that Mosley not only explicitly fills in the blanks of history, but also what he perceives as the blanks of what remains implicit, incomplete, unsaid in the original text. The reasons why Chamoiseau and Chonville approach the situation with a rhetoric that is different from Mosley's have to be apprehended in a socio-historical context that is specific to each society where the

cultural heritage is not the same and the psychic ramifications, the consequences, and repercussions of slavery, are intertwined differently in the collective unconscious and inscribed in dynamics that reveal postcolonial and post-segregationist interferences. As a result of these two different contexts, the approach to the deconstruction of mainstream discourses that reflect each post-emancipation mentality differs significantly. While Mosley puts in place an aggressive counter-discourse that takes place within a post-segregationist North American nation, Chonville and Chamoiseau choose a poetic and symbolic path within the framework of a Martinican society in a situation of postcontact with regards to the French nation. In order to give substantial meaning to the story of the captive in the film, and in order to build a post-Civil Rights memory of slavery in the U.S., Mosley feels the need to shun the poetic rhetoric of the original version of the film. This is because the twenty-first century descendants of the captives of the Middle Passage still inhabit the scars left by slavery. For Mosley, a pattern of disenfranchisement of African American communities is the key after-effect of slavery in the United States, and the conclusion of the film is the ideal space to address this issue. In Mosley's narration, "impoverished hovels" refers to government-sanctioned racial oppression, supporting race-based segregation, racial profiling, and a high unemployment rate. Similarly, the phrase "cold prisons that house the descendants of slavery and attempted genocide" refers to the disproportionate incarceration of African American males that Michelle Alexander metaphorically calls the New Jim Crow. Indeed, for Alexander, "a facially race-neutral system of laws has operated to create a racial caste system" (201). In Mosley's perception, this is what the conversation between the young boy and the captive narrator in the film needs to focus on. As the correlation between the slave ship and the cruise ship does not sufficiently trigger the emotional states to remember the slave trade, for Mosley a specific post-Middle Passage narration, with specific excess in the narration, is necessary for the post-victim of the slave trade.

#### A TIDALECTICAL CINEMA

I would like to return to the notion of "transmissibility" discussed above to articulate some concluding remarks on the dis/similarity between the 1999 and 2003 versions of *Passage du milieu*. A key paradigm in Trauma studies, the concept of transmissibility has generated insightful debates among trauma theorists, and the major question that stands out in this debate is whether or not trauma can accurately be represented, and how. In other words, these debates question the way literary or cinematic narratives, with their aesthetic specificity and original-

ity, fictionalize and transform the historical events and the traumatic experience they represented for the real victims who were the first to be affected.

Indeed, in his critical perspective on "elucidating trauma" and its after-effects in cultures and on people, Dominick LaCapra observes that using "concepts derived from psychoanalysis should not obscure the difference between victims of traumatic historical events and others not directly experiencing them" (*Writing History, Writing Trauma* ix). Commenting on LaCapra's observation, Irene Visser remarks that in "obscuring differences and collapsing distinctions the broad usage of transmissibility risks the trivialization of trauma" (275). She further states that to avoid the confusion between direct and indirect victims, trauma should be defined as "the memory of an overwhelming and violent wounding directly incurred as a first-hand experience in order to differentiate it from secondary or vicarious traumatization" (275).

Differentiating between direct and indirect victims for LaCapra, or discussing how, according to Cathy Caruth, the moving and sorrowful *voix* is released through the wound, are critical positionings that Deslaurier's film insightfully invites us to revisit. Similarly, Caruth's criticized<sup>19</sup> discussion of latency that consists not in the forgetting of a reality that can hence never be fully known, but in an inherent latency within the experience itself (*Unclaimed Experience* 17), leads me to contend that these debates in Trauma studies are at the core of *Passage du milieu*. They help to unravel the subsequent tidalectical conversation between Mosley, Deslauriers, Chamoiseau and Chonville who carve out the adequate rhetorical strategies and methodological tools to represent the horrors of the slave trade, from their own mindset.

Transmissibility and the unforgettable history of colonization are the fundamental epistemological task at the core of the field of Postcolonial studies since, by historicizing the Sea, it has articulated its specific discussion on memory and trauma. By constantly reworking the unforgettable, Postcolonial studies have indeed encapsulated the Middle Passage—"the packed cries, the bone soldered by coral to bone, . . . the bones ground by windmills, . . . the drowned women," (Walcott, "Sea is History")—as the foundational locus of memory from where to re-craft a Black Atlantic imaginary. Such an historicization of the Atlantic may have certainly fueled the imagination of many, including myself, who automatically related Jason de Caires Taylor's first underwater sculpture park "Vicissitudes"<sup>20</sup> located off the coasts of Grenada, to the Middle Passage.

When Aimé Césaire pairs memory to blood in the following stanza, his poetic intention in 1939 is a significant prelude to the epistemological weight of trauma in Postcolonial studies:

How much blood in my memory, how many lagoons! They are covered with death's-heads. They are not covered with water lilies. Lagoons in my memory. No sashes of women on their banks. My memory is circled with blood. My remembrance is girdled with corpses! (*Return to my Native Land* 90)

Thus, Toni Morrison's notion of rememory that helps her characters in *Be-loved* to problematize the recovery of the past, and the difficulty of processing the opacity that lies underneath the acts of interpreting, concealing, avoiding, healing, and crying, directly speaks to Aimé Césaire's blood-stained memory. The multilayered grammatical dimensions of Morrison's rememory (a noun and verb in *Be-loved*) and its extension through the verb "to disremember," when they are excavated from the context of Morrison's novel and applied to the problematics I deal with in this study, work on the unconscious. They allow me to interrogate the after-effects of slavery from diverse angles, that of the young boy in the film standing on the wharf and looking at the cruise ship, or walking on the beach and gazing at the horizontal line of the sea, but also that of any viewer from the African Diaspora or from any communities in the world. Morrison's rememory is a circular grammar of a conscience that tackles the opacity of trauma and the entangled movements of healing and remembering 400 years later, and as such "rememory" sits within Marianne Hirsch's larger paradigm of postmemory. It is significant to remark that even though Hirsch conceptualizes postmemory from the context of the Holocaust and from personal experience, she invites us, as cultural theorists, to disseminate postmemory into various opaque trauma realities where the "generation after" relates to and remembers the collective and personal trauma experienced by the previous generation. The relational process is actualized by an "imaginative investment, projection and creation," and for Hirsch, "all of us share certain qualities and symptoms that make us a *postgeneration* since "postmemory reflects an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture" (4-6).

Therefore, when Irene Visser remarks that trauma theory is "increasingly critiqued as inadequate to the research agenda of postcolonial studies," and when she argues for developing "possible directions in which to expand trauma's conceptual framework in order to respond more adequately to postcolonial ways of understanding history, memory and trauma" (270), she overlooks Hirsch's incisive bridging between some of the tenets of trauma theory and postcolonial theory. As Hirsch recalls, postmemory "shares the layering and belatedness of the other posts" (postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonial, which does not mean the end of the colonial but its troubling continuity), and "aligns itself with

the practices of citation and supplementarity that characterize them" (5). Thus Visser's and LaCapra's discussion of the necessary differentiation between first-hand experience of trauma and vicarious traumatization, and Visser's call for "the openness of trauma theory to non-western and non-Eurocentric models of prolonged and cumulative traumatization," can find in postmemory, "a structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience" (6). Hirsch's postmemory astutely dialogues, then, with Françoise Lionnet's and Shuh-mei Shih's intellectual project that they label the "creolization of theory" where the anthropological and sociolinguistic concept of creolization becomes essential to rethinking modes of theorizing cultural, literary, political and historical issues.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, Visser omits a discussion of how postcolonial studies, through the work of psychiatrist and postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon, had already pioneered the necessary interconnectedness between Trauma studies and Postcolonial studies. In his analysis of the psychological effects of colonization, racism, and colonial wars, while dislocating Eurocentric psychoanalysis and ethnopsychiatry, he tackles essential disorders such as individual and collective alienation, *lactification*, *éretisme affectif* (affective erethism) or pathological hypersensitivity, neurosis, psychological splitting, to name a few. One might be tempted to wonder whether Fanon is more a Trauma theorist than a postcolonial theorist; nevertheless, I think that the most accurate remark to be made is that Fanon's work has insightfully showed the necessity to bridge both fields in critical analyses of the after-effects of slavery.

At the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*, as Fanon, with a Sartrean and existentialist tone, seeks "endlessly to create himself in the world he's heading for," and as he disputes the relevance to "ask today's white men to answer for the slave traders of the seventeenth century," he declares:

I am a black man, and tons of chains, squalls of lashes, and rivers of spit stream over my shoulders. But . . . I have not the right to admit the slightest patch of being into my existence. I have not the right to become mired by the determinations of the past. I am not a slave to slavery that dehumanized my ancestors. (204-5)

This now famous declaration "I am not a slave to slavery" encompasses harassing, yet fundamental questions: how to inherit from a horrific historical past, how to fight against cultural collective amnesia, and carve out critical awareness and radical agency in order to fruitfully manoeuvre around the ghosts of Manichean categories such as slave-masters, colonizers-colonized.

To me Fanon's 1952 pioneering discussion for an interconnectedness between what would later become Trauma studies and Postcolonial studies is central to the ongoing criticism of Western Trauma theory for having shaped a critical apparatus that is too Eurocentric, that refers heavily to the Holocaust, that does not acknowledge the sufferings of non-Western and minority groups, and as Stef Craps argues, that "has failed to live up to the promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement" (46). Craps contends that because founding figures of Trauma theory such as Caruth, Felman, Hartman, LaCapra, or Laub "tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of the Western history of modernity . . . trauma theory risks assisting in the perpetuation of the very beliefs, practices, and structures that maintain existing injustices and inequalities" (46). Craps's assertions echo Roberto Beneduce<sup>22</sup> and Michela Borzaga's critiques of PTSD (Post traumatic stress disorder), the widely used formulation elaborated by the American Psychiatric Association upon which trauma theorists heavily rely, and that does not consider the daily aspects of trauma in the life of disenfranchised, persecuted, tortured, and disempowered people. While Beneduce strongly argues that PTSD is "an hegemonic category that linearizes, rationalizes and domesticates what often belongs to the realm of the incomprehensible and the chaotic" (*Archeologie del trauma* 29), Tariana Turia, former New Zealand member of Parliament and co-leader of the Maori Party, proposes the term "postcolonial traumatic stress disorder," and Alvin Poussaint and Amy Alexander craft the term "post-traumatic slavery syndrome."

In Deslauriers's film the symbolic interaction between the child and the captive-narrator embodies these zones of entanglements discussed above. The boy whom we assume is Martinican, interrogates and revises through his individual narrative what he has been told about slavery, and what he has ultimately internalized. The geography, the beach, the harbor, and the cruise ship sustain the boy's narrative, and although they do not contain any visible traces of trauma, they are elected by Deslauriers as the perfect spaces that trigger the meanders of memory. Caribbean nature has camouflaged the painful traces of the transatlantic slave trade, and Deslauriers builds a lucid eye for his camera and for the boy. These eyes are transgenerational in the sense that they need serenity and inquisitiveness to see beyond the visible reality.

Yet, these seascapes do not correspond to Mosley's geography, and when he re-appropriates Deslauriers's film and makes it his own, his lucid eye needs to rely on another type of transgenerational memory. That is why the "impoverished hovels and cold prisons that house the descendants of slavery" are important in his mindscape. At the beginning of the film, when Mosley re-appropriates

and expands the term "holocaust," I see how he echoes Hirsch's assertion that "Holocaust can no longer serve simply as a conceptual limit case in the discussion of historical trauma, memory, and forgetting," and how her discussion of postmemory is "in dialogue with numerous contexts of traumatic transfer" (18).

Drawing from Brathwaite's remark that in the Caribbean "our psychology is not successfully dialectical in the way Western philosophy has assumed people's lives should be, but tidalectic" (34), I contend that the triangular structure—horror, victim, viewer—(Kaplan and Wang 10), the multiple layers of memory and historical consciousness that the horrors of the slave trade require, the crosscutting techniques often used in the film to bridge the present and the past, collectively carve out a tidalectical conversation between the 1999 and the 2003 versions of *Passage du milieu*. Both versions interrogate the unwarranted comforting cure at the end of the film, the vicariously traumatized experience of the viewers, and their key position as witnesses who ultimately carve out an agency in order to be transformed by the film.

## CONCLUSION

The film is dedicated to "Africa the Crucified, to the slaves of yesterday, and their descendants of today in Mauritania, Sudan and elsewhere . . ." With the mention of Mauritania and Sudan, the original version insightfully links the tragic fate of a global community of modern slaves to that of the slaves transported across the Atlantic Ocean from the sixteenth century onward. Thus the film is inscribed within this immediacy and this contemporaneity that may be necessary, as I suggested at the beginning of this study, in order to disentangle the thick temporality of slavery that would make it an event that happened too long ago to remember. Walter Mosley did not connect the Middle Passage to contemporary and ongoing modes of modern slavery "in Mauritania, Sudan and elsewhere . . ." His dedication says: "To Africa, the Crucified . . . To the slaves of yesterday, and their descendants today . . ."

The specificity of Deslaurier's film is that the voice-over and the cinematic effects poetically complement each other. Thus, when Mosley rewrites the narration of the captive, can we conclude that we have ultimately two different films? Since the images and the cinematic techniques have not been modified, the film keeps its aesthetic particularity. However, the poetic vein that characterizes it, that is maintained until the very end of the film, and reinforced through the heartrending a cappella chorus that one hears as the film's credits unfold, is at odds with the tense tone of the narration reconfigured by Mosley.

Nevertheless, the “process of intergenerational transmission” (Hirsh 18) and the tidalectical conversation that is at play in the film between the Martinican and American artists, between the viewers and the victims of the Middle Passage, are to me an astute case study in our effort to be transnational producers of a “convincing theory” of the cinema of slavery, and in our constant efforts to refine our analysis of trauma, “rememory,” “disremembering,” and silence in this era of memory.<sup>23</sup>

### Notes

1. Olivier Barlet, *Africultures* 23, December 1999.
2. Esther Iverem, founder and editor of SeeingBlack.com remarks that Deslauriers “treats the action on the ship in a fairly benign way, and that for such a visceral experience, there is an odd and somber detachment in the film.” She further observes that “the poetic meditation lends an air of calm to the story and a sense of passivity to the captives who seem to offer their wrists to be shackled.” Along that same vein, for Wendy Knepper, while “the concept of the film is intriguing, it fails to rise to the challenge of depicting events that have become part of the collective trauma of history because the film’s plodding pace and strangely pacific tone are at odds with the representation of the horrors and violence of enslavement.” The meditative reverie, she explains, does not create any strong effect on the screen, but projects on the contrary, a distancing effect (188).
3. Mosley is the author of a mystery series, science fiction novels, and political monographs.
4. Bureau pour le développement des migrations intéressant les départements d’Outre-mer [Bureau for the development of the migrations of people from the French Overseas Departments]. For an analysis of this migration phenomenon in a documentary film, see my article “Utopies du BUMIDOM: Construire l’avenir dans un là-bas post-contact,” [Utopia of the BUMIDOM: to Build a Future in a Postcontact Overseas].
5. Here I refer to Marianne Hirsch’s expansion of Rosalind Morris’s suggestion that in this era of “posts,” (“postcolonial,” “posttraumatic,” “postsecular,” “postracial”) the post “functions as a Post-it that adheres to the surface of texts and concepts, adding to them and thereby transforming them in the form of a Derridean supplement” (*The Generation of Postmemory* 5). My use of the term “post it” insists on the value of the text that appears on the screen, and reinforces the strong meaning of the complex layers of memory that are meshed in the film’s subjective account of the slave trade, through the memory of an imagined dead slave-captive.
6. The excerpts quoted throughout my study are the English subtitles from the French original version.

7. I refer here to the U.S. and French slave trade since Deslauriers, Chonville, Chamoiseau, and Mosley reconfigure a memory of the slave trade from these two different dynamics. Although France had occasionally transported slaves across the Atlantic from 1643 to 1669, a massive uninterrupted slave trade started in 1670. For the USA in 1645 and in 1650 a small number of slaves were transported, and a steady trade started in 1678. One should bear in mind that illegal slave trade considerably supplied the plantation system, since the slave trade was officially abolished in 1817 for France, and in 1807 for the USA.
8. Toni Morrison’s concept of rememory will be examined later in my analysis of Deslauriers’s film.
9. [www.raphia.fr/images/films/passage.html](http://www.raphia.fr/images/films/passage.html) last accessed January 2015. (French and English versions of the background notes).
10. Articles 1 and 2 of Decree # 2006–388 of March 31, 2006 stipulate that the ceremonies will be organized “in Paris and in each metropolitan department at the initiative of the prefect as well as in the *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory] of slavery and the slave trade.”
11. <http://memorial.nantes.fr/en/le-memorial/une-volonte-politique/> last accessed April 2015.
12. In September 1991, the statue of Empress Joséphine was beheaded in La Savane, a city park in Fort-de-France, Martinique. No one has claimed responsibility for the beheading, the head has never been replaced, and the event continuously generates compelling debates among intellectuals, contemporary artists, politicians, and the general population of Martinique. While some Martinicans see Joséphine as the pride of the island as the Empress of the French, many remain vehemently critical, and associate her solely with her supposed role in the reinstatement of slavery in 1802. Thus, the beheading of the statue, and its various symbolic defacements relocate Joséphine within the entanglements between the repressed memory of slavery by official History, and the need to reconfigure this official History. For a thorough analysis, see my article, “Of Naked Body and Beheaded Statue: Performing Conflicting History in Fort-de-France.”
13. It would be relevant to do a comparative analysis of how the museum ultimately inscribes these historical events in the city’s memory and Caryl Phillips’s reflections in *The Atlantic Sound* where Liverpool is described as “a place where history is so physically present, yet so glaringly absent from people’s consciousness.” Phillips observes: “But where is it any different? May be this is the modern condition, and Liverpool is merely acting out this reality with an honest vigour” (117).
14. The Cap 110 Memorial at Anse Caffard, inaugurated in 1998 in the town of Diamant on the southwestern coast of Martinique, The Ark of Return, inaugurated in Washington DC in 2015, and the Memorial ACTe inaugurated in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe in 2015 are meaningful loci of memory.

15. "Le point de vue des captifs." Interview of Guy Deslauriers by Olivier Barlet, *Africultures* 8, mars 1998. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
16. To this effect Gerima observes: "To me, if I indulged in graphically filming the rape scene, I would be going against my purpose. I think I did not shoot that scene graphically. I shot it to show that white men's relationship to black women was like an outright treatment of an animal. It's not this love story. I wanted to show that he rapes her the way he would rape a cow or an animal. He was not having a human relationship with this African woman. And so, to me, I don't see it as graphic. Graphic, to me, is going into the elements of sex. For example, in that scene I don't even show him; I don't even care to show him. I only show the map of the idea of what I wanted to express.
17. Similarly after its debut on HBO, *The Middle Passage* was "screened at various museums which included the Apex Museum in Atlanta, Dusable Museum in Chicago, South Dallas Cultural Center in Dallas, California African-American Museum in Los Angeles, the Anacostia Museum in Washington, DC, and the Studio Museum of Harlem in New York City. Furthermore, through a sweepstakes, consumers were given the opportunity to win a trip for two to the African continent by answering trivia questions on HBO programming." <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/hbo-commemorates-black-history-month-with-journey-to-today-campaign-75586347.html> last accessed February 2016.
18. Here, I may question Steven Spielberg's vision in *Amistad* in which the kings of Spain were more to blame than American slavers.
19. For example, see Alan Gibbs, *Contemporary American Trauma Narratives*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
20. "Vicissitudes" represents a circle of children of diverse ethnic groups holding hands. After the sculpture was interpreted as being anchored within the tragedies of the Middle Passage, Jason de Caires Taylor subsequently explained that it was not his intention to relate "Vicissitudes" to the transatlantic slave trade. "I am very encouraged how it has resonated differently within various communities and feel it is working as an art piece by questioning our identity, history and stimulating debate." For an interesting discussion about this palimpsestic reading of the sculpture, see Davide Carozza's post: <https://sites.duke.edu/blackatlantic/sample-page/depictions-of-the-middle-passage-and-the-slave-trade-in-visual-art/levitate-windward-coast-and-vicissitudes-curatorial-statement/jason-de-caires-taylor-vicissitudes/> last accessed February 2016.
21. For Lionnet and Shih, as a notion that has embodied since the fifteenth century the rigid borders but also the fissures between hegemonic, subaltern groups and ethno-classes, creolization contains the flexibility and porosity that are necessary to disarticulate our academic division of labor that generally fails to account for

- the degree to which our politics of knowledge, the genealogies of our specialized disciplines, and our disciplinary formations are mutually constituted.
22. Roberto Beneduce, a psychiatrist and medical anthropologist, founded in 1996 and currently heads the Frantz Fanon Center in Turin. A leading center in ethnopsychiatry, it "provides support services, counseling, psychotherapy and psychosocial support to immigrants, refugees, victims of torture, asylum seekers, foreign women victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation and unaccompanied minors."
23. Hoffman, Eva. 2004. *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*. New York: Public Affairs, (203).

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