Léopold Sédar Senghor's Revolution of 1889 and *Littérature-monde*: Awakening Intuition

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
French Language, Literatures and Linguistics

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Abstract

The goal of this dissertation is to legitimize and to bolster the validity of an intuitive epistemology. By using Léopold Sédar Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" as the foundation for deeper consideration of a movement towards an intuitive epistemology, I not only consider the meaning of intuition at a philosophical level, mainly through the works of Henri Bergson, but via the literature of Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Claudel as well. Henri Bergson, Senghor's "Spirit of 1889," describes how intuition is necessary for experiencing *la durée*, but notes that it is fleeting. To gain access, one is to reverse the habitual thought patterns and surrender to the constant ungraspable flux that is duration. Bergson refuses to concretely define intuition, for any attempts at defining it with denotative language will, at best, merely hint at intuition's intangibility. Language is important to this dissertation because it is both blamed for hindering faith in intuition as well as being championed as a potential means for expressing the unknown and the intangible, through more poetic language. Senghor chose to include Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Claudel in the revolution because they wrote poetry and prose that translated the deeper realms of the ungraspable, of the *inconnu* (the unknown) – be it of the psyche, of life or of experience in general– into language through stories, plays, poetry, letters and verse.

Intuition is the unbroken thread tying Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" to the emergence of *littérature-monde* in 2007. *Littérature-monde* calls for a return to literature that is vibrant, alive and that speaks to the intuitive knowing existing within us all. There is a failure within *literature-monde* to consider the unequal power dynamics caused by colonialism, but the main intention is to promote literature that can encourage hybridity and inter-cultural understanding. This thesis presents literature and art as having the potential to offer a wider and deeper understanding of reality with the aim of awakening intuition on a global scale, so we might return to the rhythm of life itself.

For Xavier and Terran, my Sonshines. Thank you for being the reason to my loving and for offering deep solace amidst the storms of life.

And for my parents, for always being there when I need you.

Acknowledgements

I am incredibly grateful for the vast array of opportunities that have been presented to me throughout my doctoral studies. This journey has provided me with immeasurable skills and insight, both in terms of academic life and with regard to self-understanding. There are countless people who have guided, inspired, motivated and helped me along the way.

Most importantly, I want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Daniel Laforest. His guidance and support have been invaluable. I am grateful for his sharp intellect and ability to synthesize complicated information. I thank him for providing careful and thoughtful commentary on my work, encouraging me to explore wider and deeper understandings of the subject matter. Even when I felt like I would never make it through this season of my life, he firmly but kindly reminded me why it was worth the effort to rise up and finish.

I also want to thank my committee members who all worked diligently and efficiently with me throughout this project. Dr. Marie-Ève Morin helped me to hone the philosophical clarity needed for grappling with and writing about intuition, which is an intangible term at best. Dr. Srilata Ravi brought invaluable expertise with regard to *littérature-monde* and postcolonial studies. I thank them both for their insightful comments and thoughts on my work. I thank Dr. Anne Malena and Dr. Albert Braz for their time, energy and efforts towards shaping and polishing my dissertation. They both offered important questions for me to consider and Dr. Braz provided a most useful, thoroughly edited copy that significantly helped me with final revisions. I am infinitely grateful to all.

I could not have persevered without the love and support of my family and friends. My sister, Rachelle Mumm, has taken care of my children various times and has provided me with so much laughter and perspective on life. My sons inspire me to be the fullest version of myself, so that I can be a lighthouse of love for both of them as they navigate their own journeys through life. And my parents, though my dad is not always able to name my degrees, love and support me without question.

I have had the honour and pleasure of sailing through these doctoral waters with a powerful and inspirational group of women. Each one of you–Marine Gheno, Mansoureh Modarres, Svitlana Panenko and Daria Polianska–exhibits such passion, power, wisdom and love that I, once again, have hope that we truly can change, and maybe even save, the world. Thank you for all the glorious times we have had together. From practicing yoga in the Student Lounge to teaching, painting, dancing and singing; from writing poetry to walking through nature and sharing our knowledge and ideas. I thank you all for shining with the effervescent light of *esprit.*

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Introduction: Revolutionary Connections

Léopold Sédar Senghor, poet, philosopher and statesman, identified a crucial moment in history; he called it: « La Révolution de 1889. » This nomenclature evokes a moment in time that encapsulates a powerful shift in philosophy, and within thought more generally, and that was, according to Senghor, set in motion by French philosopher Henri Bergson. The date coincides with the publication of Bergson's first work: *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*. Senghor also names Arthur Rimbaud, particularly his, *Une saison en enfer*, which was published in 1873. He mentions Paul Claudel as well, who wrote his work, *Tête d'or,* around 1889. But is this particular date in time, this year numbered as being 1889 years after the theoretical birth of Christ, intrinsic to Senghor's project? Souleymane Bachir Diagne explains that Senghor's choice of the date 1889 clearly juxtaposes the omnipotence of Cartesianism and of the analytic reason associated with Enlightenment thought that had reigned so firmly since 1789; symbolically, this date powerfully signifies a return to the intuitive way of being that was dealt such a powerful blow by Descartes and by the Enlightenment ideals of the French Revolution 100 years earlier. Diagne explains in his article « Senghor et la Révolution de 1889 »:

> S'il faut donc résumer ce que fut la Révolution de 1889, ce vrai début du XXe siècle dont Senghor se réclame, on dira donc, d'abord, qu'elle fut le contre-pied de celle de 1789. Pour Senghor, en effet, 1789 marque la victoire d'un cartésianisme identifié par lui à un triomphalisme de la raison analytique qui a tourné le dos au corps et à ce qu'il appelle, reprenant le concept de Claudel, notre *co-naissance au* monde, quand l'*Essai* de Bergson lui, met fin au positivisme aveugle. On dira ensuite qu'elle est vitaliste, qu'elle marque la victoire de la force vitale, du *logos humide et vibratoire* des Grecs (dont le verset claudélien retrouve le rhythme), sur la dure et sèche *ratio.* On dira enfin, mais tout cela

est lié, qu'elle promeut l'émotion artiste, celle qui crée, comme découverte du réel et voie de connaissance. (107-108)

Nevertheless, placing a date and naming a catalyst for a revolution that is meant to culminate in a utopian vision of cultural sharing which Senghor never saw come to fruition in his lifetime, and that has yet to solidify in any concrete way, creates space and imagination for a return rather than for an entirely new way of "being in the world," to use Heidegger's term. This revolution is meant to culminate in a utopian sharing of all that is fruitful from every culture around the globe, and is named the "Civilization of the Universal," wherein all cultures will engage in what Senghor calls, in honour of his friend and fellow poet Aimé Cesaire, the: « rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir. » And therein lies the conundrum, not simply with the problematic word "universal" and all the terrifying homogeneity that such a term evokes. Moreover, we are talking about a revolution that has yet to occur but that began more than 120 years ago.

The etymology of the word *revolution* does not imply moving forward though. It comes from the latin *revolvere* meaning: "to roll back." Senghor's revolution is indeed about a return, a rolling back, to a more balanced way of knowing. This balance between head and heart, between rationality and intuition, is crucial to our survival as a whole; a cultural awakening is imminently required: « En fait, l'avenir culturel du monde se trouve dans un équilibre entre ces deux modes de connaissance, tous également nécessaires, car, si l'intuition découvre et synthétise, l'intelligence discursive analyse en vue de l'utilisation pratique de la découverte » (*Liberté 5* 25). There is a quotation that is often accredited to Albert Einstein. It is as follows: "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift. The rational mind a faithful servant. We have created a society that worships the servant and has forgotten the gift." It was actually Bob Samples, writing about Albert Einstein, who explained the unfortunate mistake: "Albert Einstein called the intuitive or

metaphoric mind a sacred gift. He added that the rational mind was a faithful servant. It is paradoxical that in the context of modern life we have begun to worship the servant and defile the divine" (*The Metaphoric Mind* 26). Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" entails reinstating a balance whereby the "divine," the intuitive mind, returns to its place as leader.

Negritude posits that Black people are and have always maintained intuition as a valid way of understanding the world. As previously mentioned, Senghor envisioned a future where peoples, continents, races and cultures, would engage in dialogue together, ultimately finding the most fruitful ways of being. For this dialogue to occur, the freedom for language to evolve and vibrantly express must be paramount. The dominant paradigm of discursive reason has a powerful impact on the way in which world relations have commonly played out; systems of nationalism and Othering frequently lead to wars, refugee crises and even genocide. Senghor maintained throughout his vast oeuvre that all lasting change must occur at the level of culture: "independence of spirit, *cultural independence,* is the necessary precondition of all other forms of independence...political, economic and social." (*On African Socialism* 285). Language is the basic building block of culture. If we change our beliefs about how language works and what it is for, we can begin to usher in an age of interconnection and of mutual beneficence. An age where there is a return to Spirit, to an essence of an intangible force that moves through us and informs us, if we are open; an age of intuition.

More precisely, this dissertation aims to analyze the role that this dominant paradigm of discursive or analytical reason plays in maintaining a scientific and rationalistic worldview. This worldview is based upon the assumption that understanding is born of the separation, analysis and naming of component parts. Thus, in discussions concerning nation-states and globalisation, the fluid and intangible relationships between so-called minor and major cultures are eclipsed by

discourses based on tangible evidence, immediate visibility, and accountability. This project will address this imbalance by examining the genealogy and persistence of intuition between early-twentieth century France and the recent, controversial impact of the *Pour une littérature-monde* manifesto (Le Bris; Rouaud; Condé; Glissant: 2007) (along with the two collections of creative essays that it spawned: *Pour une littérature-monde*: 2007; *Je est un autre: Pour un identité-monde*: 2010), via Senghor's conceptualization of a « révolution de l'esprit. » The goal is to examine and highlight how the much-debated and hugely influential notion of Francophonie sprung forth, in large part, because of an initial desire to reject the homogenizing, pragmatic political models of nationalism and/or globalization, a desire that, I will argue, was driven not by a conscious will to counter political inequalities, but by an underlying intuitive rhythm. In the francophone context, this rhythm resonates, in all its infinite variety, throughout the global community of people writing, speaking and living in French: it is the *esprit* of the language. It cannot be easily analyzed or even grasped; *esprit* can be intuited, it can be felt.

As cross-cultural hybridity increases there will be a surge in the cross-pollination of discourses and a subsequent manner of understanding identity that is grounded in *esprit*. I will argue for the potential of human flourishing rather than for the violent clash of ideologies; ultimately, the signatories of the *littérature-monde* manifesto are heralding, defending and bolstering a space for this vibrant cacophony of subjective voices to be heard. To understand subjectivity in this way requires an appeal to a non-dualistic metaphysics; it requires an understanding of being that is grounded in intuition rather than in analytic, scientific reason. This dichotomy between the “head” and the “heart” informs Senghor's particular conception of Negritude, though a balance of these two alleged poles is the ultimate aim.

Senghor promoted intuition throughout his life and works. I intend to examine how

Senghor's thought draws upon three specific ideas of *intuition* in France around the turn of the twentieth century–Arthur Rimbaud's equation of poetry with *voyance*, Henri Bergson's philosophical conceptualization of intuition, and Paul Claudel's connection between poetry and faith– in order to show how this genealogy has determined contemporary literary trends towards globalizing *francophonie* studies. I focus on the emergence of the much debated 2007 Francophone *littérature-monde* (Le Bris/Rouaud), which I intend to show as being thematically, culturally, and philosophically indebted to the Senghorian "Civilization of the Universal" and its turn-of-the-century French predecessors. (Senghor, *Liberté 3,* « La Négritude est un Humanisme »).

Senghor dedicated the last years of his life to bringing about the Civilization of the Universal, which, according to him, has been in formation since the "Revolution of 1889." According to him, the catalyst of this particular revolution is the advancement of intuition as a valid, unifying and productive means for understanding the world: intuition as epistemology. Few Senghor scholars focus on the emphasis that he places on intuition; none have yet traced a connection to *littérature-monde,* the francophone response to literary globalization (Le Bris/Rouaud: 2007). Specifically, *littérature-monde* scholars overlook the correlation between the idea of intuition and the notion of *esprit* as it emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and focus on more recent unsettled postcolonial quandaries (Hargreaves, Forsdick and Murphy: 2010). I posit that this notion of *esprit* is the underlying thread that unites the diversity of voices comprising the poetic and creative theory of *littérature-monde.* The manifesto emphasizes not only the global nature of literary expressions written in the French language, but it also points to this underlying spiritual desire: to reach the depths of our unknown and most profound selves:

> Littérature-monde parce que, à l'évidence multiples, diverses, sont aujourd'hui les littératures de langue françaises de par le monde, formant un vaste ensemble dont les ramifications enlacent plusieurs continents. Mais littérature-monde, aussi, parce que partout celles-ci nous disent le monde qui devant nous émerge, et ce faisant retrouvent après des décennies d''interdit de la fiction' ce qui depuis toujours a été le fait des artistes, des romanciers, des créateurs : la tâche de donner voix et visage à l'inconnu du monde–et à l'inconnu en nous. (*Le Monde* manifesto)

In the collection of essays, *Pour une littérature-monde*, Le Bris again accentuates the power of literature to provide insight into the human condition: « Littérature-monde, très simplement, pour revenir à une idée plus large, plus forte de la littérature, retrouvant son ambition de dire le monde, de donner un sens à l'existence, d'interroger l'humaine condition, de reconduire chacun au plus secret de lui-même » (41). Literature in this context does not speak to "what is most secret" in us through the pathways of analytic or mimetic though. Through a specific idea of *esprit* it interrogates the francophone condition and awakens a desire to reveal the underlying layers of reality in order to make sense of cultural experiences in a common language yet in different worlds. Moreover, the elevated, often biblical, language comprising much of *Pour une littérature-monde* appeals not to the analytic post-colonial critic; rather, it demands a deeper, more profound and more fluid understanding. Consider the following quotation:

> L'écriture était ce flamboiement poétique qui se posait comme au jour de la Pentecôte sur les personnages du texte et les transformait en porte-parole universels de l'humaine condition [...] Et tout livre était une feuille volante du grand livre du monde. Mais la grande nouvelle [...] c'était que, dès lors, par la seule grâce du verbe, rien n'empêchait de faire d'un coin perdu de la Loire-Inférieure une terre promise au chant et à la louange. (Rouaud, *PLM*

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The desire is to return to literature that is vibrant, alive and that speaks to the intuitive knowing existing within us all; I say intuitive knowing because to spe3ak of a universal human condition amidst the diversity and multiplicity of being demands such an appeal. The felt recognition of unity within diversity occurs at the level of intuition. Perhaps ironically, the more one travels and bears witness to the infinite variation of rhythm and culture worldwide, the more one begins to sense the underlying thread of unity. The writers of the *littérature-monde* manifesto invoke this kind of power of language, though language that is freed from its ties to nationality, in the last line: « Le centre relégué au milieu d'autres centres, c'est à la formation d'une constellation que nous assistons, où la langue libérée de son pacte exclusif avec la nation, libre désormais de tout pouvoir autre que ceux de la poésie et de l'imaginaire, n'aura pour frontières que celles de l'esprit » (*Le Monde*). *Esprit* is accessed and integrated by our deeper more profound selves, via intuition.

As initially noted, Senghor traces the revival of intuition back to 1889, a time that marks the beginning of a great philosophical revolution. This paradigm shift, which was felt throughout Europe, reaffirmed alternatives to the seemingly omnipotent Age of Science and the Cartesianism that had reigned supreme throughout the preceding century. As Merleau-Ponty summarizes in *Signs*: "Absolute knowledge is not detachment; it is inherence. In 1889 it was a great novelty–and one which had a future–to present as the basis of philosophy not an *I think* and its immanent thoughts but a Being-self whose self-cohesion is also a tearing away from the self" (1964). This anti-*cogito* revolution began, as noted, with Henri Bergson's first published work, l'*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience,* along with Paul Claudel's first theatrical piece, *Tête d'or*, and Arthur Rimbaud's poetic verses. Senghor explains that Bergson « a redonné

sa place à la raison intuitive, comme c'était le cas en Égypte, en Afrique, ou l'avait retrouvée Platon » (*Ce que je crois* 210). Bergson is the "spirit of 1889" because his *Essai* powerfully reinstates intuitive knowledge as a valid means for conceptualizing the world. Intuition is a "mode of vital knowledge, for it can bring forth, in a single cognitive motion, instantaneous and immediate, a composition that, because it is living and not mechanical, cannot be destroyed" (Diagne, *African Art as Philosophy* 47). This instantaneous cognition occurs via the intuition and both allows *and* demands the release of our mental propensity to negotiate the world by trying to understand its component parts; in this way we are able to navigate the world in a way that emphasizes not interactions between separate entities, but that views the interrelations as already interconnected and thus leads to « la découverte de l'autre en soi » (Le Bris, *Je est un autre* 14). According to Le Bris, fiction provides the opportunity for non-analytic understanding and highlights the shortfalls of scientific understanding:

> La science, nécessairement, se déploie dans l'espace du Même puisqu'elle postule la répétition de l'expérience qui fonde la loi, mais comment l'Autre, sans l'artistique, autrement dit par le pouvoir de l'imaginaire, qui nous permet de connaitre l'Autre, sans le réduire au Même ? Par le poème, la fiction, la création artistique, autrement dit par le pouvoir de l'imaginaire, qui nous permet de connaitre l'Autre, non pas en 'l'expliquant', ou en 'l'analysant', ce qui le ferait aussitôt disparaitre, *mais en liant connaissance avec lui.* (17)

Le Bris, Rouaud and the various other signatories of the *littérature-monde* manifesto directly and indirectly appeal to what Senghor describes as a rhythmic dance that unveils the Other, revealing the universality of *esprit.* The term *littérature-monde* evolved from Michel Le Bris' 1992 collection, *Pour une littérature voyageuse.* Forty-four francophone writers further developed this

movement when they signed the original *littérature-monde* manifesto in *Le Monde* on 16 March 2007 (Benalil, 49). The manifesto aspires to trans-nationalize the French language and is considered by many critics to have the elimination of the French/Francophone dichotomy as its central aim. This dichotomy, arguably, has connotations of superiority and inferiority founded upon the Eurocentric notion that reason must be equated with Western civilization and linear models of progress and best be dissolved. But moreover, the proponents of *littérature-monde* are concerned with allowing literature to thrive in all its vibrancy and variation so that readers can discover cultures, worlds and people they will never otherwise know-and via the intangible, dare I say spiritual, power of literature, they will dis-cover themselves.

Thus, the question becomes: Can the emergence of *littérature-monde* be considered a continuation of the revitalization of intuition that began, according to Senghor, with the Revolution of 1889? And how can an intuitive approach change the way we as humans interact and live on this planet? My hypothesis is that the thread of intuition has continued throughout francophone literature and thought, and now resurfaces in the 2007 manifesto. With the publication of the manifesto, a global literary community of people writing and reading in French has been fomented, Francophonie as Senghor envisioned it is being pushed to the forefront and his works can be seen as an incitement and potentially as a blueprint for the recent phenomenon of *littérature-monde* and the controversial re-evaluation of Francophonie it carries.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the main tenets of Senghor's thought. The chapter begins by considering how Negritude was received, noting the criticism and the untapped potential still dormant therein. In brief, Senghor presents the value of engaging with the world through a rhythmic epistemology of intuition, leading to the celebration of hybridity. When one is open to the embrace of the Other, this contact leads to deeper and more complete

understanding; hence the fecundity of *métissage*. The final section of chapter one describes Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" in brief, introducing the Henri Bergson, Paul Claudel and Arthur Rimbaud.

Chapter two discusses Henri Bergson's philosophy surrounding intuition, since he is called the "spirit of 1889." There is consideration of the various ways his works have been interpreted, and even misinterpreted. The aim is to uncover what intuition is and how it can be achieved. The ultimate section explains that intuition is discovered at the depths of the self and that one must be willing to reverse the normal one-pointed workings of the mind and turn it back upon itself.

The third chapter moves away somewhat from the philosophical and turns towards the literary. The theory of Henri Meschonnic is presented in order to bolster what Senghor has already described with regard to rhythm. The next section extrapolates Senghor's understanding and even conversion of Paul Claudel, noting the importance of vibration and interrelating in such a way as to generate the new. Following that, there is a section that explores the verse of Arthur Rimbaud, concluding that to be the Other is to fall to the depths of the self and discover the answer to the eternal existential question: "Who am I?" The paradox of needing to embrace the Other in order to reveal the Self becomes clearer.

Chapter four moves through time all the way to the *littérature-monde* movement that came forth in 2007. To begin, there is a reminder that the space being created is one for a literary *esprit* to gain momentum. The openness to the world and this vision for a utopian polyphonic dialogue is akin to Senghor's hope for the Teilhardian "Civilisation of the Universal" to come into being. Following, there is a section describing how Senghor's 1960s vision of *Francophonie* is actually a precursor to the *littérature-monde* movement, which ironically calls for the death of *Francophonie*. The difficulty surrounding the term itself warrants a section that asks: "what is

Francophonie?" Finally, this chapter considers how a multicultural, diverse humanism can be incited.

The conclusory chapter intertwines the writers and theorists of the previous four chapters while concurrently exploring some of the essays and ideas found throughout the two *littérature-monde* collections (*Pour une littérature-monde* and *Pour une identité-monde: Je est un autre*). The focus is on the role of the poet, of the *voyant,* to reveal the power and usefulness of intuition. The third section of the final chapter explores how intuition opens us to the idea that there is language behind or beyond language. Ultimately, a post-postcolonial, global, planetary society can be constructed, and it is the artists, the poets and the intuitive humans who can help build something wholly new, and, as in the Kingdom of Childhood, ultimately remembered.

Chapter 1: Léopold Sédar Senghor: The Poet-Politician and Spokesman

I. Senghor's Critics: Identifying the Lacuna

> « Très souvent, l'on fait à Senghor un procès d'intention parce que l'on a pris ses paroles au pied de la lettre, parce qu'on n'est pas allé au-delà de l'expression, parce qu'on n'a pas compris que chez lui il faut casser la noix pour manger le noyau. » (Nyembwe Tshikumambila, « La négritude Senghorienne » 152)

Léopold Sédar Senghor is simultaneously the most praised and the most criticized West African author of the twentieth century. Often his critics condemn based on academic rumour and on second hand sources and they never fully delve into the depth of his enormous body of works. The automatic and uninvestigated reaction to the racial essentialism Senghor seems to present contributes to a regrettable failure to chew and to digest the beneficial meat of the various "nuts" of wisdom and understanding available throughout his oeuvre. His varied and illustrious career, however, is undisputed and he was the first African member of the prestigious Académie Française. When praised, it is often for his impressive body of works, for his intellect, his poetry, for his command of the French language and even for his efforts at demonstrating a more complete way of being alive. Josiane Nespoulous-Neuville, who asks that those readers who feel safer in the realm of the tangible and the immediately comprehensible let down their armour and recognize the inexplicable composes a significant and important part of our existence, calls Senghor a poet of freedom: « Car Senghor est par excellence le poète de la liberté, c'est à dire de la fidélité à la vie. Son projet est de nous conduire, par-delà la surface des présences, par-delà l'événement et le factuel, aux sources vives de l'être » (13). Despite examples of such extraordinary acclaim, he receives equally powerful disapproval. When condemned, it is generally because he was too French, too Eurocentric and a blatant essentialist:

"In attempting to refute the evaluation to which black reality had been subjected, Negritude adopted the Manichean European thought and inflicted it on a culture which is most radically anti-Manichean" (Soyinka, *Myth* 127). This reference to Manichean thought indicates the dichotomy of Black/White and of reason/emotion, which, upon a thorough reading of Senghor, becomes an intertwined dance of reciprocity rather than the seemingly apparent duality.

Whether praised or criticized, it is increasingly obvious that there is a dire need to give Senghor's works the careful consideration they have yet to receive. The first section will consider the criticisms surrounding Senghor and Negritude, while explaining the concept in more depth and showing that there is untapped potential even now. The next part of this chapter will discuss how intuition, when considered as an epistemology, involves, for Senghor, the rhythmic embrace of subject and other. Following that, his championing of hybridity is brought forth before finally introducing the focus of this dissertation: (re)awakening the intuition that is a continuation of "The Revolution of 1889."

Academically, there has been a resurgence in scholarship surrounding Senghor and Negritude. In 2010 a special issue of *Third Text* subtitled: *Negritude Beyond Negritude* was published. More recently, in 2015, the *Journal on African Philosophy* published an issue called *Negritude Reloaded,* wherein the editor introduces the common theme in the collection: "To put it simply, the contributors urge us to take the time to read Senghor's prolific yet largely ignored philosophical production in order to engage, more seriously, his largely ignored and frequently simplified *oeuvre*" (1). Whether presenting condemnation or praise, criticism or construction, those who engage with Senghor's fertile thought production are well advised to mindfully crack the dense nuts he offers, so as not to entirely pulverize the beneficial nut-meat that lies within.

More than any other aspect of Senghor's thought, the Negritude movement founded by Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas in Paris during the 1930s has been met with a variety of criticism, most of which simplifies and delimits Negritude by reading it solely as a reaction to colonialism. Scholars such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Marcien Towa and Wole Soyinka, who infamously stated: "A tiger does not proclaim his Tigritude, he pounces," limit Senghor's philosophy to the anticolonial conditions that birthed it.[1] Cheikh Thiam explains how "these scholars present it [Negritude] as nothing short of a moment condemned to be buried in the same grave as that which led to its birth: the colonial system" (*Kingdom* 2). Sartre has an all too common white privileged colonial gaze relationship with Negritude, for though he is acknowledged for supporting the birth of Negritude in *Black Orpheus*, Frantz Fanon credits him with destroying "black zeal":

> When I read that page [of 'Black Orpheus'], I felt that I had been robbed of my last chance. I said to my friends, 'The generation of the younger black poets has just suffered [an unforgiving blow].' Help had been sought from a friend of the colored peoples, and that friend had found no better response than to point out the relativity of what they were doing… Jean-Paul Sartre, in this work, has destroyed black zeal. (qtd. in Diagne 133-135)

Fanon saw the condescension and the relativizing effect Sartre's discussion surrounding Negritude had, and he expressed feeling as though "black zeal" had been destroyed. This affirms that there is something about Senghor's trope of the "Black Man" that resonates for Fanon. Negritude describes "black zeal" extensively; but Sartre took the concept, the movement, and

[1] Even Senghor's harshest critics end up praising him. Wole Soyinka published an article highlighting Senghor (and Senegal's) role in supporting independence in East Timor: "Senghor: Lessons in Power." *Research in African Literatures* v33 no4 1-2 Winter 2002.

concluded that Negritude is merely a means, not an end. In *Black Orpheus*, he writes: "Thus Negritude is *for* destroying itself, it is a 'crossing to' and not an 'arrival at,' a means and not an end" (49). As Fanon noted, before the Negritude movement was able to incite and reveal, Sartre quashed it.

For this reason, Souleymane Bachir Diagne calls Sartre's contribution a "kiss of death" (*L'Art africaine* 28). Arguably, Abiola Irele was the first scholar to consider Senghor's works as a complete philosophical project, though this did not occur until 1965-66. Negritude, from around that time until very recently, has remained untapped and only superficially understood. Yet, Irele published a new collection in 2011 (including two original essays from the 60s) wherein he states: "Indeed, the concept of Negritude has never, it seems, been more relevant than in our postcolonial age" (*The Negritude Moment* xi). Following in a similar direction regarding the importance of Negritude to the process of decolonization, Gary Wilder very recently published a thorough and thoughtful book called *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization and the Future of the World* (2015). The first line of the preface has Wilder admitting that the entire book was "born of an intuition," making it a veritable example of what it means to pay heed to the kind of reason Senghor expounds: intuitive reason. Wilder sees the potential for reimagining human interaction on a planetary scale in the writings of Senghor and Césaire; he declares that "they attempted to transcend conventional oppositions between realism and utopianism, materialism and idealism, objectivity and subjectivity, positivism and rationalism, singularity and universality, culture and humanity" (3). By demonstrating that binaries are useful but that by transcending them there is opportunity for fuller and deeper understandings to be accessed, Senghor's works open new spaces for moving beyond the current stalemates surrounding postcolonial theory.

In the wake of works by Irele, Diagne, Thiam and Wilder, I will consider how Negritude is an epistemology, and, moreover, how it presents a counter-narrative to the supremacy of discursive or analytical reason not by opposing it but by demonstrating how when left to stand alone, it is an incomplete way of understanding. I intend in this chapter to outline the basic tenets of Senghorian philosophical thought, particularly regarding rhythm, *esprit,* intuition, subject-object relationships (symbiosis), *métissage* and what Senghor's underlying intention in calling forth "the Revolution of 1889" might be. Rather than focusing solely on Senghor's connection to Bergsonian intuition, as Donna Jones and Souleymane Bachir Diagne have done in their excellent books (2012; 2011), I will also consider the important role that literary and even rhythmic and poetic intuition plays in Senghor's "Revolution." This emphasis on the capacity of poetic language to express the underlying *esprit* of existence is directly linked to the allegorical, metaphorical and even spiritual language used throughout the *littérature-monde* movement (2007; 2010). Much like the forerunners of *littérature-monde,* especially Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, Senghor's ultimate vision for what he labeled the "Civilization of the Universal," a concept that he borrowed from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, is that of a dialogue of cultures where all present engage in a reciprocal and mutually beneficial sharing of knowledge and wisdom.[2] One of the most important contributions, according to Senghor, offered by Black African culture is the gift of intuitive reason. This first chapter will delineate the multifaceted understanding of intuition that Senghor advances, which he positions in the works of Henri Bergson, Paul Claudel and Arthur Rimbaud. As Senghor explains in « Le dialogue des cultures, » their works signify « que les philosophes et écrivains français se détournaient du positivisme intellectualiste pour revenir [...] vers une symbiose qui privilégie l'intuition sensible sur le rationalisme

[2] Senghor calls this imagined utopian gathering the « rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir. »

unidimensionnel » (*Liberté 5* 208). Overall, this revalidation of intuition is the fulcrum upon which viewing Negritude as an epistemology is balanced.

In the recent scholarly trend of giving Senghor due credit and subsequently reading his œuvre as a complete philosophical system in and of itself, I draw from such important Negritude scholars as Abiola Irele, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Donna Jones, Messay Kebede, Gary Wilder and Cheikh Thiam. As Thiam notes in his work *Return to the Kingdom of Childhood,* though scholars such as Jones and Diagne have made great contributions to the Senghorian studies, they continue to view the philosophy of Negritude as a version of Bergsonian *lebensphilosophie and* have thus "not accorded a prominent role to the very African foundations of Senghor's philosophy" (6). This scholarly tendency means that there is yet to be "a truly decolonial reading of Negritude," which is what Thiam intends to accomplish in his book (6). Building upon Thiam's efforts to firmly root Negritude in its Afri-centered foundations, I intend to flesh out Negritude as a philosophy that is both beyond yet still connected to the space and time of decolonization; like the image of the Baobab with its bare branches that resemble vast root systems, I consider Negritude to be both rooted in the African soil that was the genesis of the movement while it continuously reaches to the four corners of the round earth, providing invaluable insight and a diversity of ways of knowing that offer the potential for balance and equilibrium (which, as Janet Vaillant notes in her homage to the great poet, were two of Senghor's favourite words).[3]

[3] She writes: "Here, as in all he did, Senghor was a person of 'both-and' rather than 'either-or.' He saw inclusion, métissage, and symbiosis as sources of strength, for himself and for societies. The challenge was to create equilibrium and balance, two of his favorite words. He refused to give up any part of his mixed heritage. He would renounce neither his love of France when it would have been politic to do so, nor his roots and inspiration from Africa. Indeed, he understood that his personal integrity depended on maintaining the equilibrium among his disparate experiences and sometimes conflicting tendencies. 'If this symbiosis could not be realized,' he once wrote, 'there would be nothing left for me but to take my own life' (Letter)." (17)

As mentioned, there is a perceptible resurgence of praise for Senghor with which I am in accordance, yet it is crucial that I also bring forth the very real criticisms and unpack the essentialist aspects of his discourse. The infamous phrase for which he is most heavily censured appears in « Ce que l'homme noir apporte » (1939), wherein Senghor states: « L'émotion est nègre, comme la raison hellène » (*Liberté 1* 24). When considering the phrase alone, Senghor's Negritude seems to present the binary opposition of Black and White, of emotion and reason. Through this simplistic understanding, the problems that coincide with such a statement are appallingly evident; both slavery and "*la mission civilisatrice*" occurred at least in part because of the terrifying notion that some races were less capable of being civilized due to an inaptitude for reason and logic. Yet Senghor never says that Black people are incapable of analytic or discursive reason. He writes: "Does this mean, as certain young people would like to interpret my remarks, that the Negro African lacks discursive reason, that he has never used any? I have never said so...No civilization can be built without using discursive reason and without techniques. Negro-African civilization is no exception to this rule" (*On African Socialism* 75). Nevertheless, As Souleymane Bachir Diagne notes in *African Art as Philosophy*, "Senghor has a tendency to negrify all that evokes for him the ontology of vital force. This approach...at times racializing to the point of absurdity... does not fail to irritate" (93). Yet, there is valuable insight to be extracted from the sometimes essentialist discourse; furthermore, according to Diagne, "this racialization ends up neutralizing and destroying itself" (93). The problem is that most fail to take sufficient time and effort to engage with Senghor's works for the assured destruction to be accomplished.

How does an essentialism that can at times seem so blatant and irritating end up neutralizing itself? How does, as Thiam asserts, Senghor "lay the groundwork for a non-

essentialist essentialism" (*Return* 7)? In the following passage, Diagne highlights the complexity of Senghor's thought:

> The language of essentialism is certainly present in Senghor's texts, probably more than in Césaire's. But the deconstruction of essentialism is also at work in them. [...] Negritude is not the ideology of separated identities that, despite his protestations, many critics of Senghor have taken it to be. Hybridity is always at work deconstructing his essentialist assertions and the Senghorian obsession with mixture is a Penelope ceaselessly making sure to undo fixed differences: 'the humanism of hybridity' could very well have been one of the poet's slogans. ("In Praise of the Post-racial" 247)

This hybridity is apparent throughout his works and is a much stronger and more pervading theme than the seeming essentialism. While section III discusses Senghor's thoughts surrounding *métissage* more thoroughly, it is important to note that for him, being *métis* was an opportunity to become more whole and to enrich oneself.[4] He was a huge proponent of bilingual education whereby foreign languages as well as the native languages (such as Wolof, Mandinka, Serer) were taught in the Senegalese education system. In this passage, that shows his passion for etymology, the humanism of his hybrid hopes is noticeable: « *Eduquer* signifie, au sens étymologique du mot, 'conduire hors de soi', hors de son milieu, transplanter. La vertu de l'éducation est de faire assimiler des richesses étrangères. Les valeurs latines, françaises, cartésiennes sont précisément à l'opposé des valeurs négro-africaines. De là leur *vertu* » (*Liberté 1* 229). Notice that the opportunity to integrate the values of other cultures is virtuous and enriching; hence the deconstruction of binaries, in a sense it is the marriage of duality, and the

[4] Senghor often wrote essays and gave speeches describing the benefits of *métissage,* including: « Du métissage biologique au métissage culturel, » « Asturias le métis, » « De la liberté de l'âme ou éloge du métissage » and « Chacun doit être métis à sa façon » to name a few (found in the *Liberté 1-5*).

subsequent potential for embracing hybridity and thus gaining a more complete set of tools for navigating the choppy waters of life.

It was the two years Senghor spent as a prisoner of war that provided ample time to meditate upon the uselessness and dangers of racism. It is interesting to note that Senghor has both been criticized for being essentialist in such a way as to maintain the inferiority brought about by colonial relations while others contend that he presents an anti-racist racism. In « La Négritude est un humanisme du XXe siècle, » he begins by asserting: « Or le même mot ne peut signifier, sans contradiction, 'racisme' et 'complexe d'infériorité' » (*Liberté 3* 69). And yet he admits that the early days of Negritude were flavoured by a racist dichotomy of Black/White:

> Il n'empêche, dans les premières années du mouvement, au Quartier latin, la Négritude a été, volontairement je le reconnais, une sorte de ghetto moral, ghetto teinté de racisme dans la mesure précise où, dans l'enthousiasme du retour aux sources et de la découverte du Graal noir, pour parler comme Sartre, nous trouvions insipides les valeurs albo-européenes : la raison discursive, avec sa logique rigide et sa froideur mathématique, avec sa nature plus vraie que nature et ses parallélismes symétriques, monotones. (*Liberté 5* 107).

However, his difficult confrontation with the effects of racism taken to the point of Nazism gave him a different outlook and shaped his views on the benefits of hybridity (107). He describes his experience as follows: « Une méditation de deux ans dans les *Frontstalags,* comme prisonier de guerre, m'en avait sorti: m'avait guéri du ghetto noir. Pendant deux ans donc, j'eus tout le loisir de méditer sur le 'miracle grec' » (107). It is the Greeks, according to Senghor, who to this day remain: « l'exemple le plus fécond de métissage culturel » (107). In this regard, Senghor's belief in the ultimate value of hybridity not only counters the essentialist claims against him, but it also

denies those who criticize him for being overly forgiving to the French or even for simply being too French himself. Wilder suggests considering that "Senghor's readiness to forgive historical crimes should recall his commitment to decolonization as a process of global restructuring wherein the fate of humanity and the future of the world were at stake" (59). Additional insight into the claim that Senghor was too forgiving or too French is to be found in an interview with Aimé Césaire (*L.S.S.: Genèse d'un imaginaire francophone*). Therein, when asked if Senghor was as violent about the colonial question, Césaire responds:

> Non, pas du tout. C'est un homme qui était beaucoup plus calme, doux, plus serein que moi. J'avais honte, je me sentais nerveux. Après, j'ai compris pourquoi. On était fort bien ensemble. Mais nous n'avions pas les mêmes réactions ; et n'employons pas le même langage. Tout ce que je pensais, il le pensait. Mais différemment : 'Ne t'en fais pas, on y arrivera !', disait-il. (223-24)

For those critics who admire Césaire's anti-colonial stance but discount Senghor for adopting European values, I propose delving into the discomfort of imagining a hybrid interaction of cultures rather than insisting on the narrow and deadlocked postcolonial view of victim and perpetrator; one of Negritude's greatest potential lies in its non-dualism and the re-imagining of spaces that are no longer simply either/or, no longer simply black/white.

And so: Negritude is not ultimately essentialist; however, it is strategically essentialist on the surface. The overall intention of Negritude is to move beyond essentialism while illustrating that essentialism lies within the framework of duality and, because Negritude is non-dualist, essentialism cannot ultimately fit into the Negritude worldview. The Negritude worldview is not afraid of creating space for the particularized individualities to work and to unite as a complex, vivid whole. Senghor even goes so far as to assuage the potential fears that the colonial culture

might have in terms of autonomy or of losing itself to the incoming diversity that hybridity requires; he does this by appealing to the promise of a more complete and harmonious unity, an orchestra if you will that, rather than having only a string section, opens itself to all the instruments that can play, mingle and create a melodious and vibrant rhythm all dancing together as one. To actively assimilate that which is fruitful rather than to be assimilated is what Senghor describes and requests in « Vues sur l'Afrique Noire », where he describes the mutual benefit of understanding one's own inherent roots as being the culture that has provided the values and ideas that form one's identity (essentialist) as well as being open to the values and ideas of those culture one comes into contact with, for they provide opportunity for knowing one's self even more completely because of an openness and willingness to grow and evolve. He writes:

> Ce système, on le voit, loin d'affaiblir l'autorité de la Métropole, ne ferait que la renforcer *puisqu'il la fonderait sur le consentement et l'amour d'hommes libérés, d'hommes libres ;* loin d'affaiblir l'unité de l'Empire, il la souderait puisque le chef d'orchestre aurait pour mission non d'étouffer, en les couvrant de sa voix, les voix des différents instruments, mais de les diriger dans l'unité et de permettre à la moindre flûte de brousse de jouer son rôle. (*Liberté 1* 60)

To be firmly rooted in one's soil and to be open to the diversity of the world: the baobab metaphor *is* Negritude. This is why, as aforementioned, Thiam explains that the groundwork for a "non-essential essentialism" has been laid. I will thus necessarily sift through Senghor's vast œuvre and present arguments that are based on solid research; to be inspired to do so, I have had to disregard the plethora of what Thiam calls, "intellectual gossip" (1). Upon reading through Senghor's eloquent, poetic and sometimes repetitive prose it becomes striking that, just as often as he makes the claim that Black people relate to the world in a certain way, he stresses the

importance for all humankind to adapt and to learn, to appreciate and share new and better ways of knowing and of being. The ultimate planetary goal of the "Civilization of the Universal" is directly linked to one's own emancipation and self-realization. This is why, as I quoted earlier, Nespoulous-Neuville calls him a « poète de la liberté » (13). Gary Wilder also comments on the emphasis Senghor placed on self-realization: "In both spheres [art and politics] he was concerned with human self-realization through creative acts" (65). These creative acts involve making something because of the inspiration that is birthed from being connected to the rhythmic energy that animates all of creation. Black Africans and the entire Black diaspora, according to Senghor, have not yet lost this connection to rhythm, to spirit, to life force.

Senghor has been criticized for presenting a kind of strategic essentialism wherein Negritude is seen not simply to present « *l'ensemble des valeurs de civilisation du monde noir* » (his emphasis), as he explains in « La Négritude est un humanisme, » but to present Blacks as having a *superior* way of relating to the world (*Liberté 3* 69). Is there, or was there, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has stated, an implicit necessity for a strategic type of essentialism? In an interview with Elizabeth Grosz she stated, "I think it's absolutely on target to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism…But *strategically* we cannot" (11).

That the essentialism is strategic comes from the supposition that Negritude was invented to bolster Black pride and to present a different and better way of existing that would simultaneously account for the lack of technical and economic "progress" in Africa. For Senghor, this lack of technical prowess is due to the difference in *kinds* of reason. One kind of reason considers the self to be separate and holds all else at a distance, examining and scrutinizing the Other, and ultimately killing it (*Liberté 3* 92). The alternate kind of reason becomes the Other, knowing it intimately in its essence, maintaining no distinct boundary

between self and the object (or subject) in question (Nespoulous-Neuville 179). In his discussion with Mohamed Aziza in *Poésie de l'action* he explains this melding, this dance of love:

> Je vous renvoie aux pages admirables que le père Teilhard de Chardin a écrites sur le couple et l'amour. Dans l'amour, nous dit-il, il s'agit, pour chacun des deux êtres, de répondre à l'appel de l'Autre, d'aller sur les ondes de l'Autre, de s'identifier à l'Autre, de se perdre dans l'Autre, et, ce faisant, d'assimiler l'*être* de l'Autre. C'est ainsi que deux êtres se complètent, en s'enrichissant, se développant réciproquement. C'est ce que j'essaie d'exprimer dans mes poèmes. (152)

And this love embrace type of relating extends beyond human relationships, giving the Black African a more complete, because less dissected, understanding of the world with which they are in communion (rather than in contact).

Because of this interconnection inherent to the manner of responding to the call of the Other, to the reciprocity of the relationship, Senghor explains that Blacks have not lost their integral connection to feeling and interacting with the vibrations of nature (*Liberté 3* 92). There is a different approach to understanding at play; in short, there is a different kind of reason. The following quotation, though lengthy, describes the difference between White European *raison-œil* and Black African *raison-étreinte*:

> Le Nègre a les sens ouverts à tous les contacts, voire aux sollicitations les plus légères. Il sent avant que de voir, il réagit immédiatement au contact de l'objet, aux ondes qu'émet l'invisible. C'est sa puissance d'émotion, par quoi il prend connaissance de l'objet. Le Blanc européen tient l'objet à distance ; il le regarde, l'analyse, le tue – du moins le dompte – pour l'utiliser. Le Négro-Africain sent l'objet, en épouse les ondes et contours, puis, dans un acte d'amour, se l'assimile pour le connaître profondément. Là où la raison

> discursive, la *raison-œil* du Blanc s'arrête aux apparences de l'objet, la raison intuitive, la *raison-étreinte* du Nègre, par-delà le visible, va jusqu'à la sous-réalité de l'objet, pour, au-delà du signe, en saisir le sens. (*Liberté 3* 92)

In this passage we see very clearly the essentialist dichotomy that Senghor often presents. He admits that he is simplifying but nonetheless summarizes that « le Blanc européen est, d'abord, discursif ; le Négro-Africain, d'abord, intuitif » (92). He goes on to explain that both are men of reason, « *Homines sapientes, »* but notes that the manner and kind of reason varies (92). He equates the dry, calculated and clearly delineated *raison-oeil* with Cartesianism, but less with regard to Descartes' complete philosophy and more with regard to the presentation of the subject as the point from which knowledge emanates; Thiam explains that "the subject has, since Descartes, been considered the point of origin of knowledge" (49). Moreover, the timing of Rene Descartes' prominence and his influence on the Age of Enlightenment comprises the kind of worldview Senghor is criticizing and questioning.

This criticism of *raison-oeil*, of Western models of progress and analytic reason, is part of a movement in late nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophy. The optimistic rationalism of the time, including the science of Charles Darwin, the successful development of mathematics and mechanical causality, created immense potential, as G.C. Grogin notes: "It [the underlying philosophy] was optimistic because it believed that nothing lay outside the analytic purview of the scientific method – neither the psychology of human beings, nor the dynamics of society and government. Applied rigorously to any of these areas, even the most hidden truths would yield their secrets" (2). Yet, during the 1880s, the omnipotence of science that had been at the forefront since circa 1789 came undeniably into question. Josiane Nespoulous-Neuville notes that, though the Revolution of 1789 proclaimed liberty, equality and fraternity, slavery was not

abolished in the colonies until 1848 (56). Her criticism echoes Senghors: there is far too much emphasis placed upon the rationalist doctrines built upon Aristotelian and Cartesian traditions to the point that: « La raison apparut comme *la* faculté de connaître le réel » to a regrettable and enormous degree, such that the insatiable appetite for understanding becomes almost pathologically and obsessively methodical (57). Nespoulous-Neuville describes the negative effects of this overemphasis on methods, laws, scientific and technical application as follows:

> Si, d'une part, l'esprit humain a considérablement agrandi son champ de connaissances, il a, de l'autre, renié un mode de relation au monde, en condamnant, pour manque de rigueur, toute approche par l'intuition ou par le sentiment, et en rejetant le domaine de la foi, considéré dans cette optique comme l'expression d'une ignorance provisoire. Cette quête forcenée d'une connaissance purement intellectuelle – rationnelle, logique et sans bavure – a conduit l'Occident à se désintéresser des hommes au profit d'une conceptualisation de l'Homme, à partir de laquelle s'échafaudent les diverses doctrines qui prétendent désormais fonder les sociétés. (57)

What Negritude offers, then, by presenting a still vibrant and intuitive way of being, by presenting a relational participative reason that maintains humanity's contact with and relation to the world, is not the simple binary of intuition/reason, it is the marriage of the two: the sought-after balance or equilibrium that provides deeper understanding. And Senghor, in his identification of Bergson as the father of the "Revolution of 1889," is highlighting one of the several "spiritualist philosophers in the nineteenth century who prepared the theoretical bases for the attack against mechanistic determinism [who] were for the most part trying to seize the spiritual continuum of life which science ignored" (R.C. Grogin, 11). Senghor's Negritude, in describing a way of being that has not yet begun to ignore the "spiritual continuum," draws on

these anti-deterministic thinkers to bolster the claim that discursive reason is *not* superior to emotional or intuitive reason.

Nevertheless, Senghor does present an admittedly over-simplified binary. And yet, he simultaneously criticizes binary thinking. Senghor explains that the White European use of discursive reason causes them to consider everything as either true or false, as good or bad: « C'est le monde de la dichotomie et de l'opposition » (*Liberté 3* 93). Clearly, the world of dichotomy and opposition is not the kind of world Senghor envisions for his beloved "Civilization of the Universal," whereupon all cultures will engage in fruitful dialogue, bringing the very best offering to the *rendez-vous* of give and take. If Senghor is presenting an essentialist dichotomy while concurrently criticizing the type of reason that brings dichotomy forth, must we not question the strategy and the wisdom at play?

The kind of reason Senghor champions as forming Black ontology is useful for considering the complex whole rather than for analysing or determining rigid conclusions; it is a living reason in that it cannot be made separate from the self or from the object in consideration. It is an intuitive, an emotional, a rhythmic approach that engages in a sort of dance or embrace: hence Senghor's nomenclature of *raison-étreinte* (*Liberté 3* 92). In one often quoted passage from one of the few translations of his works, *On African Socialism,* Senghor makes the claim that intuitive reason, or *raison-étreinte,* is effectively the "best way to know": "The Negro-African could say, 'I feel, I dance the Other; I am.' To dance is to discover and to re-create, especially when it is a dance of love. In any event, it is the best way to know" (73). This symbiotic reciprocal relating is poetically juxtaposed with the Cartesian *cogito.* Senghor further goes on to defend himself against criticisms of having reduced "Negro-African knowledge to pure emotion" by explaining that the surrender to the Other is itself animated by reason (73). The

cultural beliefs and understandings that exist in a person's society as their intellect forms shapes their ontological foundations. That the way each person perceives reality varies enormously according to what ideas and ways of being they have been exposed to is not surprising. It is a measure of a powerful mind when a person can incorporate or even to entertain the possibility that alternative epistemological models might offer deeper or more complete understanding than previously available. Difference in exposure to ontological structures and cultural norms creates the accepted version of reason, automatically invalidating opposing forms, thus influencing the *way* a person reasons. When Senghor is presenting an essentialist view of Black reason while highlighting its superiority, is he not demonstrating the potential benefit for any individual to enlarge their mental faculties to include this intuitive approach?

Making available and illustrating a variety of ways of knowing, validating an epistemology of intuition that could be adopted by all people at least some of the time, is the underlying intention informing the strategy that Senghor employs. The following passage from « L'esthétique Négro-Africaine » displays a vision that is committed to universal human benefit: « On me dira que l'esprit de la Civilisation et les lois de la Culture négro-africaine, tels que je les ai exposés, ne sont pas du seul Négro-Africain, et qu'ils lui sont communs avec d'autres peuples. Je ne le nie pas. Chaque peuple réunit, en son visage, les divers traits de la condition humaine » (*Liberté 1* 216). The underlying assertion here, then, is that the "spirit" of what it means to be African is common to all people, yet there has been greater emphasis placed on intuitive reason throughout the Black cultural groups. When Senghor states that "[e]very people unites on its face the various features of the human condition," a human essentialism becomes apparent. Chike Jeffers, a philosopher of race, explains that, in this sense, "black people, who have cultivated intuitive reason (and, as indicated in the passage, a rhythmic attitude) do not therefore lack

rationality – they have merely placed less emphasis upon its use" (227). The lack of writing systems and of technical developments have historically been used as evidence or to support the racist ideas that Black people are less civilized. However, Black communities evolved and flourished by maintaining and encouraging a more intuitive ontology; there is no better or worse, there is simply an opportunity for all of humanity to become more fully human.

This appeal to what we might call *human essences* appears as often throughout Senghor's work as do the essentialist binaries, which are clearly demanding scrutiny because they obviously represent the epitome of Western *logos,* the discursive or *raison-oeil* whose superiority is discernibly on the chopping block. And that is what *raison-oeil* does most impressively: chops, dissects, analyses and separates. The gaze of discursive reason looks out from the subject, from the I, and sees all that it can identify as separate from the self. From that place of understanding, *raison-oeil* can categorize and methodically chart and graph reality; what it fails to see, however, is that there is an underlying rhythmic interaction between subject and object such that the attempts to understand via separation miss certain aspects of said reality. As mentioned, the desire is for the balance of *both* intuitive and discursive reason that have been developed to varying degrees by different civilizations and societies. For Senghor, the goal is for all civilizations to have a strong and rooted voice so that they may offer their most valuable insights at the utopian dialogue.

This is why Negritude is always offered as a humanism, so as to: « La présenter, au monde, comme une pierre d'angle dans l'édification de la *Civilisation de l'Universel*, qui sera l'œuvre commune de toutes les races, de toutes les civilisations différentes – ou ne sera pas » (*Liberté 1* 9). Worth noting is that, for Senghor, as for Césaire, the *Universal* does not imply homogeneity or intend an ultimate static goal. As Diagne explains in his article "In Praise of the

Post-Racial,"

> The universal here means what is produced by all human cultures in their convergence, as they are all different expressions of it: universality is not the nature of any given civilisation or culture, it is not, in particular, just another name for the *telos* of Western civilisation: universality is a process by which the humanisation of the earth is complete and humanism can be said to have become truly 'integral'. (246)

That the civilizations of the earth become truly "integral" is the underlying goal of Negritude.

As a final chapter of my MA thesis, I argued that Negritude is in alignment with environmental protection, with eco-criticism, and that to bolster and utilize *raison-étreinte* is to be in greater harmony with the earth.[5] Senghor states: « Le Nègre est l'homme de la nature. [..] Le Nègre a les sens ouverts à tous les contacts, voire aux sollicitations les plus légères. Il sent avant que de voir, il réagit immédiatement au contact de l'objet, aux ondes qu'émet l'invisible » (*Liberté 3* 92). This is because *raison-étreinte* is dependent upon the recognition that there is an underlying force, those invisible waves, that animate both subject and object; this force, sometimes called rhythm, sometimes called *esprit,* is the vessel upon which the embrace can traverse back and forth. Vitalism is a dominant aspect of Senghor's thought. But the animating or rather informing and invisible forces are ultimately God; hence, spirituality is paramount for Senghor. Intuition is the faculty that attunes to the invisible forces, and it is what Black ontology is founded upon:

> La raison intuitive est donc à la base de l'ontologie, de la vision nègre du monde. Les différentes apparences sensibles, constituées par les règnes animal, végétal et minéral, ne

[5] As far as I know, I am the first to make a connection to Senghor's thought and environmental protection. See chapter six of: "Senghor's Contribution to Development: Culture, Cosmopolitanism and Earth Wisdom. MA Thesis, Dalhousie University," 2011.

> sont que des manifestations matérielles d'une seule réalité fondamentale : l'Univers, réseau de forces diverses, qui sont l'expression des virtualités enfermées en Dieu, seule force réelle. (*Liberté 5* 18)

Of the many offerings Negritude potentiates, a return to spirit, to *esprit,* is vital. The alternative, the currently accepted societal norm of analytic *raison-oeil* being that upon which we establish most systems, institutions, research, how we make decisions, leaves humanity in a static and rigid state searching not just for deeper understanding, but for meaning in general. As Senghor warns:

> L'Europe, c'est la civilisation de la raison discursive : de l'analyse, de la mathématique, de la mécanique. Vos tentations, auxquelles vous avez parfois succombé, c'est la dichotomie et, partant, l'idéalisme et le matérialisme. Vous avez trop souvent opposé l'esprit et la matière, la raison au cœur, la science à la foi – ou à l'art – pour ne pas vous être aperçus du danger. Le danger de créer un monde de machines, sans âme, je veux dire sans chaleur humaine. (Senghor qtd. in Djian 101)

Matter and spirit need not be opposed; the danger of doing so is to exist in a world without soul. The language and importance Senghor unapologetically placed on rhythm and spirit as opposed to structure and methodical ways of creating is directly reflected in the language of *littérature-monde*, as will be evident in Chapter 4. Senghor's Negritude is about a rhythmic, spiritual dialogue founded upon intuitive reason. God has gifted vital force to all things: rocks, minerals, plants, humans (*Liberté 3* 93). And because the Black-African knows this as fact, they also know their own balance is tied to the innate dialogue with these forces. Such that *esprit* (vital force) is directly tied to dialogue: « Pour le Négro-Africain, toute chose, toute force est elle-même un nœud de forces plus élémentaires, dont la réalisation personnelle ne peut provenir que de

l'équilibre, de l'accord de ces éléments: de leur dialogue. Dialogue intérieur, *intra-personnel,* mais aussi dialogue *inter-personnel* entre des êtres complémentaires » (93). Dialogue, *raison-étreinte* and recognition of spiritual being-ness is crucial for self-enquiry and, eventually, self-realization or self-understanding.

Very few who comment on Senghor manage to crack the nut and understand that the meat of his aim is human awakening on a planetary scale. If Senghor repeatedly felt pressed to explain and rethink Negritude, it is both because it has been repeatedly misunderstood, or at least only partially understood. The "Civilization of the Universal" requires the fluidity and flux of cultural hybridity. At a conference in Montreal in 1966, Senghor laments that Negritude has yet to be understood. Near the beginning of the lecture entitled « Qu'est-ce que la Négritude, » he proclaims that Negritude is « rien d'autre qu'une volonté d'être soi-même pour s'épanouir » (*Liberté 3* 91). In a similar tone, Senghor describes, in « De la Négritude, » the ultimate goal of *being,* of existence, which he calls the *plus-être* (*Liberté 5* 25). He explains that through the understanding of radial energy and how it interacts with the chain of being, one can understand how a balance of these two complementary forms of reason results in personal freedom: « se réaliser en personne dans la liberté, c'est-à-dire dans le plus-être spirituel, par le développement harmonieux des deux éléments complémentaires de l'âme: le cœur et la tête, la raison intuitive et la raison discursive » (25). The theme of self-realization or of deep self-enquiry, which first uncovers then engenders access to and trust in one's intuitive reason, is central not only to Negritude and not only to those Senghor champions as revalidating intuition (Bergson, Claudel and Rimbaud) but also to the generators of the *littérature-monde* movement. Self-enquiry, then, uncovers a rhythmic intuitive connection to the world around you and the notion of *esprit* is essential to an epistemology of intuition.

This delving into the core of oneself is the essence of what Negritude is, according to Senghor in « La Négritude est un humanisme du XXe siècle »: « Elle est enracinement en soi et confirmation de soi: de son *être* » (69). With self-knowledge, with one's roots firmly grounded, the cross-fertilization of one's branches, even to the point of grafting completely foreign branches, like the branch of a fruit tree onto an oak, for example, ascertains the choice of what to adopt or to assimilate, rather than *being* assimilated, as in Senghor's 1945 speech: « Vues sur l'Afrique noir, ou assimiler, non être assimilé. » Senghor's ultimate vision is for all cultural groups to be firmly rooted while open to the offerings of other worldviews. First and foremost is Senghor's beloved "Civilisation of the Universal" and the absolute necessity that all groups can offer their very best. In conclusion to his 1959 report to congress on nationhood and the Party of African Federation in *On African Socialism,* Senghor confirms his universalist dream, while simultaneously affirming the critical role that should be played by Africa:

> *Man* remains our first consideration: He constitutes our *measure.* That is what the man on the flag of Mali represents, with is roots in the soil and his eye turned heavenward. I shall end by paraphrasing Dostoevsky, the Russian. A nation that refuses to keep its rendezvous with history, that does not believe it bears a unique message – that nation is finished, ready to be placed in a museum. The Negro African is not finished before he even gets started. Let him speak; above all, let him act. Let him bring, like a leaven, his message to the world in order to help build the "Civilisation of the Universal." (65)

Senghor had a vision for a fertile and interconnected world, where all groups and all individuals are a fruitful product of *métissage* in one way or another. His continuous praise for the benefits of cultural hybridity ultimately negates the charge of racial essentialism.

In this discussion concerning the question of essentialism in Senghor's works, it has been made clear that the essentialist quandary offers no simple "black and white" answer. Senghor's philosophy of Negritude is itself an example of thought that deconstructs and goes beyond binaries. It is both essentialist and not, at the same time. His essentialism undoes itself in his eloquent and admittedly utopian descriptions of hybridity and *métissage,* along with his simultaneous emphasis on individual self-reflection and a flourishing, diverse universal. A universal that is enriched by all the varied and vibrant particularities that form it; in the worldview informed by *raison-oeil,* a "diverse universal" would be an oxymoron. But the *raison-étreinte* can hold two seemingly opposed ideas together, thus reimagining duality. After all, F. Scott Fitzgerald declared that: "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." Senghor uses hyperbolic essentialism to undo the very binaries he seems to create. Negritude is grounded in African soil, yes, but like the baobab tree with branches reaching far and wide, it has a breadth and scope that spans the entire globe. My focus in what follows will be on the power of this image of firmly rooted branches to both criticize and offer an alternative to the destructive and incomplete dominant paradigm of Western reason, of *raison-œil* and to explore what an intuitive epistemology, following Senghor's propositions, could offer. Furthermore, Senghor's goal is fueled by a desire for intimate dialogue (by intimate I mean dialogue that is aligned with the openness and embrace of *raison-étreinte*, which is a form of reason that demands dialogue and interaction rather than simply observation from outside), highlighting the preeminence of language, poetry and spirit. In this regard, his entire project precedes and foreshadows the *littérature-monde* manifesto movement; opening the world of literature to the vibrancy and diversity of the fecundating *métissage* that encompasses cultural *francophonie*. In terms of the

specific virtues of the French language, Senghor expresses that it is the language of spiritual seekers: «En remontant le cours de l'histoire, on constate que le rôle de la langue française a toujours été de *donner forme et sens à ce qui se cherche,* de relier les peuples en témoignant pour l'*esprit* » (*Liberté 3* 187). The aesthetic of *littérature-monde* and the spiritual language used by its proponents serves as an example of the how the French language does play the role Senghor claimed. The strategy of hybridity and cultural dialogue that Negritude employs is used to make visible the alternatives to a detrimental overemphasis on Western discursive reason. Senghor's thought expresses that dialogue and cross-fertilization of cultures can bring a peaceful symbiotic and more complete way of being in the world, one that gives precedence to *esprit,* to rhythmic forces and to intuitive understanding.

II. A Rhythmic Epistemology of Intuition – "Dancing the Other"

> "The theory of a Negro intuitive epistemology, based on a particular vitalist ontology that ensues from Senghor's critique of the modern subject constitutes one of the foundations of the philosophy of Negritude. Yet, this aspect of Senghor's philosophy is too frequently ignored." (Thiam, *Return to the Kingdom of Childhood* 113)

It was during my MA program at Dalhousie university that my supervisor first asked me to read five of Senghor's plethora of essays, all found in his first collection of prose: *Liberté 1.* He asked that I simply read the works and make notes about what I found most intriguing, what ignited my passion. As I read Senghor's essays and speeches, I was completely engrossed and became very excited by the deep underlying philosophy informing his writing: that of rhythm and intuition. I returned to my supervisor and excitedly reported to him all the ideas that had been sparked by this vibrational rhythmic intuitive realm Senghor writes from. I was doing an

MA in International Development Studies though, and he calmly and very practically responded with: “That is great. But…what does that have to do with development?” I was able to work some ideas about intuition into my MA thesis, but for the most part, very few scholars focus on what Senghor has to say about intuition; as mentioned, those who do often limit his philosophy to a mere reproduction of Bergsonism. Senghor’s epistemology of intuition merits being considered in its own right; it differs from Bergson because of the emphasis on rhythm and the idea of relational participation.

For Senghor, “race” is not static because it is the effect, rather than the cause, of how particular groups of people *relate* to their surroundings and to each other. The *relating* is, ideally, symbiotic and there is interaction; it is, as Senghor often writes, a dance. This dance is not unique to any one cultural group; it is available to all. Of Negritude, Senghor explains: « Oui, elle est essentiellement relation avec et mouvement vers le monde, contact et participation avec les autres » (*Liberté 3* 70). For the contact to be most fruitful, it should be sensitive to the rhythmic forces that inform intuitive knowing. Thus, Senghor saw in Bergson, Rimbaud and Claudel (along with Frobenius, Nietzsche, Tempels, Teilhard de Chardin and others) an intuitive wisdom which affirmed what he already knew to be true and real because of his worldview. This intuitive wisdom ultimately transcends cultural and ethnic boundaries. In this respect, Negritude can, at first glance, seem to fall in line with many of the anti-rationalist philosophies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as phenomenology, existentialism, Whitehead process-philosophy and Teilhardism, causing critics to claim that Senghor merely copied the trends of Europe at the time. Es’kia Mphalele and Wole Soyinka, who publish and write in English, both criticize Negritude. Senghor responds to their criticism in « De la Négritude »:

« La vérité est que nos confrères anglophones se font les instruments d'un impérialisme qu'ils taisent : d'une vieille rivalité anglo-française, qui doit, aujourd'hui, être dépassée, en ce XXe siècle qui est celui de l'Universel » (16). Senghor points out that their criticisms may come from an unacknowledged rivalry between the two historically powerful colonies: France and England. Senghor observes that even though many Negritude poets write in some version of French, it is not a Eurocentric project. Rather, he expresses what has always been true in terms of African ontology via the French language: « Si loin que l'on remonte dans son passé, du Nord-Soudanien au Sud-Bantou, le Négro-Africain nous a, toujours et partout, présenté une conception du monde à l'opposé de la philosophie classique » which is, according to Senghor, essentially « statique, *ob-jective, dicho-tomique* et, partant, manichéenne » (*Liberté 3* 72). That Senghor expounds the virtues and qualities of the French language does not make him Eurocentric; rather, it is evidence that, for him, hybridity offers a richer and deeper existence that goes beyond the rigidity of classical thought.

Diagne, in his book, *African Art as Philosophy,* presents Senghor's thought as a comprehensive philosophy. In his analysis, Senghorian rhythm along with the way that Blacks relate to the world around them has everything to do with art, and Black African sculpture in particular (2011). Though Senghor has been criticized for constantly re-imagining the definition of Negritude throughout his lifetime, his emphasis on rhythm remains constant. As Diagne explains, for Senghor, "art is the evidence of African philosophy and, conversely, we do not attain full comprehension of African art without understanding the metaphysics from which it proceeds. This metaphysics, to present it in a word, is a metaphysics of *rhythm* which, according to Senghor, is at the core of African thought and experience" (55). The following excerpt provides an understanding of *rhythm* as it appears in one of Senghor's earliest works: « Ce que

l'homme noir apporte » (1939):

> Cette force ordinatrice qui fait le style nègre est le *rythme.* C'est la chose la plus sensible et la moins matérielle. C'est l'élément vital par excellence. Il est la condition première et le signe de l'art, comme la respiration de la vie ; la respiration qui se précipite ou ralentit, devient régulière ou spasmodique, suivant la tension de l'être, le degré et la qualité d'émotion. Tel est le rythme primitivement, dans sa pureté, tel il est dans les chefs-d'œuvre de l'art nègre, particulièrement de la sculpture […] Ce n'est pas la symétrie qui engendre la monotonie ; le rythme est vivant, il est libre […] C'est ainsi que le rythme agit sur ce qu'il y a de moins intellectuel en nous, despotiquement, pour nous faire pénétrer dans la *spiritualité de l'objet ;* et cette attitude d'abandon qui est nôtre est elle-même rythmique. (*Liberté 1* 35)

The claim that rhythm acts on "what is least intellectual in us" can rightfully be considered an aspect of the anti-intellectualism permeating certain philosophical circles in Europe. Yet, as I will elaborate further in the next chapter, Messay Kebede asserts that Senghor's understanding of intuition holds that it is not merely a completion of or addition to intelligence. According to Kebede, Senghor purports that "emotion is explicitly categorized as a sufficient form of knowledge and ranked above discursive reason" ("Beyond Bergson's" 17). This emotional way of being can be accessed by an "attitude of abandon," which is, as in the above quotation, rhythmic as well.

The attitude of abandon is inherently part of the dance, is intrinsically tied to the specific manner of relating to one's surroundings. The presentation of a non-aggressive and symbiotic way of being is what elevates Senghor's philosophy out of its essentialist moments because of the emphasis on hybridity and on deeper more complete understanding. In « L'Esthétique Négro-

Africaine, » Senghor clarifies that the way in which Black people interact, with regard to what is commonly understood as the subject-object dichotomy, is a superior way because it ultimately grants access to a deeper and more complete understanding of reality (*Liberté 1* 202-203). The interaction of subject and object, of self and other, is an abandonment, a death and rebirth, a vibrational willingness to let down the seeming borders of the self. This method of "being in the world," in the sense of Heidegger, is the result of intuitive participation with that which the self comes into contact with. Of the Black person, Senghor explains: « Il *sent* plus qu'il ne voit: il se sent. C'est en lui-même, dans sa chair, qu'il reçoit et ressent les radiations qu'émet tout existant-objet » (202). And it is upon the rhythmic waves of the other that one is able to come to a deeper understanding both of themselves and of the object or other in question: « *E-branlé,* il répond à l'appel et s'abandonne, allant du sujet à l'objet, du moi au Toi, sur les ondes de l'*Autre*. Il meurt à soi pour renaître dans l'Autre. Il n'est pas assimilé ; il s'assimile, il s'identifie à l'Autre, ce qui est la meilleure façon de le connaître » (202-203). This sympathetic mode of knowing does not limit and impoverish understanding; rather, it runs in the very veins of things « pour se loger au cœur vivant du réel » (203). Thus, with this participatory intuitive knowing, the Black African is able to see beyond the mere appearance of the object to the « réalité profonde » which Senghor calls *surréalité* (203).[6] After establishing this superior and complete or unified way of knowing and of being, Senghor supports his claim with a quotation from Einstein himself: « Il n'est pas sans intérêt que les savants contemporains eux-mêmes affirment la primauté de la connaissance intuitive par *sym-pathie.* 'La plus belle émotion que nous puissions éprouver, écrit Einstein, est

[6] Senghor often play with language and etymology to help make words mean even more than they do on the surface. His description of *surréalité/sous-réalité* involves the expansion of one's normal beliefs about the depth, breadth and height of reality. The word itself, and his emphasis on dimensionality, denotes the underlying vibration or rhythm of life that is to be accessed via intuitive participation with these invisible aspects of our multi-dimensional reality. (*Liberté 1* 203 and 208; *Liberté 3* 259; *Liberté 5* 186)

l'émotion mystique. C'est là le germe de tout art et de toute science véritable' » (203). Thus, being in connection with one's intuition and participating in life, rather than holding objects at a distance and trying to understand them with *raison-œil,* grants access to authentic discovery and creation.

An intuitive and rhythmic approach to life is what Senghor claims for the Black person, but it is also presented as a better and more complete ontological approach. As Diagne makes clear in his 2011 book, this is never more evident than it is in terms of art. In *Liberté 5*, Senghor writes: « L'art nègre tourne le dos au réel. Plus exactement, il le pénètre de son intuition, comme de rayons invisibles, pour, par-delà les apparences, éphémères, exprimer sa *sous-* ou *sur-réalité* : en tout cas, sa vie, palpitante et permanente » (186). This sensitivity to rhythm is what can grant access to the depths of the "sub-real;" for Senghor, this process is intuition and is at the core of Negritude: « Car c'est le *rythme,* précisément vertu majeure de la Négritude, qui donne à l'œuvre d'art sa beauté » (*Liberté 3* 78). If rhythm is the main virtue of Negritude, it is because it informs and even allows for an intuitive way of being. It is an attitude of participation and of symbiosis with all of life.

The rhythmic attitude is crucial not only for visual arts, but for poetry and literature as well. The link between art and poetry becomes clear in « Poésie française et poésie négro-africaine, » when Senghor says, « Si je dis 'art', en pensant 'poésie', c'est que la *poésie* est l'art majeur parce qu'art de la Parole » (*Liberté 3* 23). For Senghor, the creative impulse is something that comes from an external force, but one that penetrates all simultaneously; from the *élan vital*. Thus, all creative works are informed by rhythm. Of poetry, Senghor expounds that, more than any other art, « elle est *poïesis*: acte de faire, c'est à dire création à l'exemple de Dieu » (24). Senghor often invokes the Greek word *poïesis,* noting that its etymology simply denotes the

verb: to make. However, we are not here referring to any soulless act of fabrication. Not even God, according to Senghor who refers to African mythology, created *ex nihilo.* Rather, it was through His rhythmic Speech that all that is was released into being-ness from the potentiality where it lay dormant. Consider the following: « Si le poète plaît au cœur et à l'oreille, c'est qu'il nous saisit, soudain, à la racine de l'être, en répétant le geste créateur de Dieu. Comme lui, il s'empare de la chose dans son humidité première, quand elle est encore chaos et confusion. Par la parole rythmée, par l'image rythmée, il l'appelle à la vie, en l'ordonnant pour lui donner figure » (25). The poet, the artist, delves into the wild chaos of pre-genesis and, being able to feel the rhythms of the real, gives it meaningful and comprehensible essence. He exclaims that « tout art est poésie » because it is the expression of « une émotion-idée » (25). The artist is ultimately able to: « saisir le réel dans sa totalité » (25).

Because Senghor claims Rimbaud and Claudel, among others, as "Nègre," the term shifts to mean any person or artist who has this rhythmic attitude that engenders an understanding of the vibrational invisible force that animates life (*Liberté 5* 209). In « Poésie française et poésie négro-africaine, » Senghor explains what the role of the "Nègre" during the "panhuman convergence," will be: « l'apport du Nègre aura été de ramener l'artiste aux sources de l'art : *pré-temps* du monde quand la Parole rythmait, en forces cosmiques, les images archétypes déposées dans les profondeurs abyssales du cœur : de la mémoire humaine » (25). The appeal to rhythm is a call for awakening dormant intuitive ways of being; it is the foundation for an epistemology of intuition.

Senghor uses Bergson to add credence to what he already believes to be true about vital forces moving through all that is. He writes that, « Il [Bergson] montrait que les faits et la matière, objets de la raison discursive, n'étaient que la surface superficielle qu'il fallait dépasser,

par *l'intuition,* pour avoir une vision en profondeur du *réel* » (*Liberté 3* 70). Senghor's emphasis on rhythm as not only the "main virtue of Negritude" but also the underlying reason for artistic creation makes his philosophy of intuition unique for it is intuition that enables a participative relationship with the world that is informed and even upheld by rhythmic forces. An intuitive approach to life, then, provides a more complete and holistic vision of reality, for it goes beyond, or beneath, the surface reality to the deeper more vibrant and interactive *sous-réalité.* Normally, having been trained in and influenced by a worldview that values discursive reason above all else, the Westerner (for lack of a better term) does not understand or recognize this deep reality. In the words of Frederick Ochieng'-Odhiambo on this concept, "[t]he black man approaches each object gently, anxious and cautious not to harm it, eager to comprehend it holistically for he assumes that he shares with it and all else in the world certain essential qualities" (69). This holistic comprehension becomes particularly noticeable regarding artistic production.

In terms of Black African art, Senghor explains how it goes far beyond mere imitation and reproduction all the way to: « imitation corrigée », because art serves as an explanation and an understanding of the world (*Liberté 1* 208). This comes from the « *participation sensible à la réalité* qui sous-tend l'univers, à la *surréalité,* plus exactement aux forces vitales qui animent l'univers » (*Liberté 1* 208). Thus, there is no "image-équation," but "*image-analogie*" (210). This is because the object in question does not signify what it represents; rather it means what it suggests, what it brings to creation. This underlying non-dualistic symbolism is dependent on the kind of rhythm Senghor continuously describes. What is rhythm in this sense, then?

> C'est l'architecture de l'être, le dynamisme interne qui lui donne forme, le système d'ondes qu'il émet à l'adresse des *Autres*, l'expression pure de la Force vitale. Le rythme, c'est le choc vibratoire, la force qui, à travers les sens, nous saisit à la racine de l'*être.* Il

> s'exprime par les moyens les plus matériels, les plus sensuels : lignes, surfaces, couleurs, volumes en architecture, sculpture et peinture ; accents en poésie et musique ; mouvements dans la danse. (212, his emphasis)

This pure expression of vital force is felt and understood by going beyond the Euro-centric mechanistic subject/object dichotomy. It is accessed by being open to the rhythm and is felt intuitively.

However, this is not merely intuition as the opposite of rationalism or reason. It is seen by Senghor as a kind of deeper more complete and unified reason: « *La raison européenne est analytique par utilisation, la raison nègre, intuitive par participation* » (203, his emphasis). This participative form of reason comes from an emphasis on being sensitive to invisible forces (rhythm and vibration) and is no way a call for irrationalism. As Thiam pointedly remarks by quoting Martin Stein: Senghor, "'who is a thoroughly trained grammarian, who reads Virgil and Plato in their original idiom, who devises quadrennial plans for a country of six million people, who at moments of leisure translates Hopkins into French,' does not call for irrationality as an alternative to reason" (*Return* 67). Rather, Senghor is both critiquing and illustrating an alternative to the limited paradigm of European rationality, of *raison-œil,* by demonstrating the more complete understanding of being that comes from an intuitive epistemology. As Diagne explains: "The immediate embrace of an undivided whole is an act of sheer intuition: this is how embrace-reason operates" (*African Art* 101). Though many critics, including Diagne to some degree, have read Senghorian intuition as a mere replica of Bergsonian intuition, this is not the case, as I will detail further in chapter two. As Messay Kebede explains, for Senghor: "emotion is explicitly categorized as a sufficient form of knowledge and ranked above discursive reason. Refusing the dichotomy between spirit and matter that Bergson maintained, Senghor posited one

reality, that of the vital force accessible in its depths only to intuition" ("Negritude and Bergsonism" 17). An epistemology of intuition that inherently deconstructs binaries and that blurs duality allows space for rhythms that bring forth « *l'unité dans la diversité*, » which is why Senghorian philosophy can be both a non-essentialist essentialism and a theory of *métissage* or hybridity.

III. *Métissage*: Senghor as the "Poet of Hybridity"

> « L'humanisme de l'universel peut être défini comme l'unité dans la diversité de tous les peuples de la terre qui, mus par l'amour, reconnaissent mutuellement leur humanité et leur filiation divine, et qui se fécondent réciproquement. Il en résulte une symbiose, un métissage enrichissant, et un autre rapport à l'homme et au monde. » (André-Patient Bokiba, *Le siècle Senghor* 228)
>
> « Chacun dois être métis à sa façon. » (Senghor, *Liberté 5* 46)

There is more to Senghor than his often misunderstood essentialism, as has been made clear in the preceding sections. One of the most overlooked foundations of his thought is his celebration and insistence on *métissage.* In his article, "From Metissage to Relation," Cheikh Thiam argues that Senghor's philosophy "functions as a critique of modernity rooted in a philosophy of *métissage*" (6). Senghor's develops this theory of *métissage* throughout his immense body of work, both in his poetry and prose essays. It can be understood by the aforementioned metaphor of the ancient enormous Baobab trees standing tall amidst the African Savannah, with roots firmly entrenched in African soil but with branches reaching far and wide, open to the skies and to all that is fruitful from humanity at large. In *Liberté 3,* Senghor describes Negritude as : « enracinement dans les vertus des peuples noirs, croissance et floraison, avant

d'être ouverture aux pollens fécondants des autres peuples et civilisations. Pour pouvoir *devenir* en s'enrichissant aux richesses des Autres, il nous faut auparavant être nous-mêmes, et fortement » (469-70). Again, affirmation of self is a precursor to the fruitful outcomes of non-assimilatory *métissage*. The mental freedom that comes from the age-old spiritual, even biblical, pursuit to « know thyself » provides the space for a non-binary understanding to propagate. In this regard, Messay Kebede explains that, "the priority of mental liberation establishes the primacy of deconstruction: when Western concepts are deconstructed, the affirmation of difference without hierarchy or opposition becomes possible" (124). Self-knowledge or self-understanding is thus paramount for each individual so that cultural hybridity or *métissage* does not lead to a dissolution of one's roots.

In this way, Senghor's vision for *métissage,* perhaps more effectively than any other aspect of his philosophy, works to deconstruct the essentialism of Negritude. Thiam describes how "the entire Senghorian oeuvre [from1937-1988] can be read as a long movement toward the formation of a 'Humanism of the twentieth century,' which announces the realization of *Métissage* at the *Rendez-Vous de Donner et du Recevoir*" (*Return* 70). In *Liberté 1,* there is a short essay that was first published in 1950 in *Liberté de l'esprit* called « De la liberté de l'âme ou éloge de la métissage » (98). During this time, not long after the war to end all wars, at a moment when the great colonial empires were becoming increasingly aware that they could no longer sustain or justify the colonial project, Senghor boldly criticizes France for its blatant superiority complex. He says, of the French, that there is not a civilisation more tyrannically devoted in their love of "Mankind." Tongue in cheek, he writes: « [Le peuple français] veut le pain pour tous, la culture pour tous, la liberté pour tous ; mais cette liberté, cette culture, ce pain seront *français.* L'universalisme même de ce peuple est français » (98). In another example

Senghor describes an encounter with a Frenchman who, in proper colonial style, wants Senghor to justify the civilizing mission: « 'Avouez, enfin, que nous vous avez apporté la Civilisation.' Et Senghor : 'Pas précisément. Vous nous avez apporté *votre* civilisation. Laissez-nous y prendre ce qu'il y a de meilleure, de fécondant, et souffrez que nous vous rendions le reste' » (*Liberté 1* 40). Hence the emphasis planting one's roots deeply into the soil of one's own culture first.

This juxtaposition between Europe and Africa does not demand antagonism or for one continent to dominate the other: « C'est la greffe de celle-ci sur celle-là que doit naître notre liberté » (*Liberté 1* 103). *Métissage* is not simply strategic or an effort to have the best of both worlds. No. It is much more than that; *métissage* is about choice, and within that choice lies freedom. This freedom of choice, this active assimilation rather than the victimization of being assimilated, is at the heart of Senghor's theory of *métissage.* Everyone can make that choice for themselves: « Supériorité, parce que liberté, du *Métis,* qui choisit, où il veut, ce qu'il veut pour faire, des éléments réconciliées, une œuvre exquise et forte » (103). It is not simply a question of walking the thin line between too much assimilation and not being assimilated enough. Rather, it is a matter of the very liberty of one's self. And so, Senghor concludes: « En face des nationalismes, des racismes, des académismes, c'est le combat pour la *liberté de l'Âme* – de l'Homme » (103). *Métissage* is not just the pleasant cultural blends that produced such culinary delights as Vietnamese sandwiches or such gripping music as jazz-rock fusion; *métissage* is a battle for openly informed cultural autonomy and freedom.

The freedom and benefits that come from *métissage* lead Senghor to claim that « chacun doit être métis à sa façon » (*Liberté 5* 46). In this welcoming address that was given as the first stone was placed in construction of the Gaston-Berger University in St. Louis, Senegal, Senghor uses the French-Senegalese intellectual, Gaston Berger, to illustrate the benefits of *métissage.* He

describes the Berger family because they are the « exemplaire même du métissage franco-sénégalais : biologique, mais, et c'est plus important, culturel » (47). For Senghor, *métissage* brings forth not only certain new ways of understanding or of being; it builds a system of thought that leads to a fuller person, an integral being (48). He explains that Berger's interest in both discursive and intuitive reason is due to his *métissage*: « Si, tout au long de sa vie, comme nous allons le voir, Berger a toujours répondu au double appel de la raison discursive et de la raison intuitive, c'est qu'il était conscient de sa double hérédité et que le Métis entendait rester également fidèle à ses deux origines » (48). Senghor equates Berger's embrace of both the French and Senegalese cultures as providing him with access to a balance of reason, granting him access to both intuitive and discursive faculties.

Berger's prospective philosophy provides Senghor with the perfect example of the "happy hybridity," as Diagne calls it, of *métissage* since "prospective itself is symbiosis between the "hard" science that performs analyses and extrapolations and the intuitive science that imagines and dreams the future" (*African Art* 191-192). As he emphasizes in his speech, the establishment of a Senegalese university, the Gaston Berger University being only the second one, is essential to the construction of « une civilisation nouvelle, plus civilisée parce que plus totale et sociale » which is the "Civilization of the Universal" (52). *Métissage* is a crucial aspect of the ideal and complete "Civilization of the Universal." All voices are to be heard, all ways of being and knowing to be considered so that the "mixture which is foundation becomes horizon as well as the final end: the civilization of the universal" (Diagne, *African Art* 195). This hybrid universalism does not privilege European or French culture above any other culture, which is why there is a profound need for all cultures to be firmly rooted in their own soil. As Thiam explains: "*Métissage* does not correspond to a moment when Western influences on other races

are celebrated. It is the prospective yearning for a moment of dialogue, where every culture participates is 'giving and taking' what they, and 'others,' have to offer" (79). Senghor uses the metaphor of roots to explain the need to be open to new ways of being, while being secure in the validity of one's own cultural wisdom and knowing. His conclusion to « De la négritude » places the emphasis on what culture really and truly is, noting that openness must first be grounded firmly in self-understanding:

> La véritable culture est enracinement et déracinement. Enracinement au plus profond de la terre natale : dans son héritage spiritual. Mais déracinement : ouverture à la pluie et au soleil, aux apports fécondants des civilisations étrangères. Dans la difficile construction de l'Afrique du XXe siècle, nous avons besoin du meilleur de la *francité*. Comme j'aime à le dire, il est temps que nous retournions à Descartes : à l'esprit de méthode et d'organisation. Mais il n'est pas moins nécessaire que nous restions enracinés dans notre sol. La clarté cartésienne doit éclairer, mais essentiellement nos richesses. (*Liberté 5* 25-26)

Senghor's deconstruction of duality in this passage by asking that one be simultaneously rooted and unrooted again works to undermine the essentialism sometimes present in his discourse. Diagne affirms that the fluidity of hybridity that is ubiquitous throughout Senghor's oeuvre effectively de-racializes the apparent racial essentialism: "A theory of fluid cultural combinations is always present in Senghor's work; it surfaces here and there from beneath a generally essentialist discourse, resulting in a more nuanced racialism or perhaps even de-racializing his thought" (*African Art* 196). The foundational theory of *métissage* and hybridity is always at play, working to deconstruct binaries and re-imagine the potential for something more fruitful than essentialism.

One prime example where praise of *métissage* functions to de-racialize Senghor's thought is in his adoption of certain Europeans as *Nègres*. He does this with Claudel, Rimbaud, Bergson and, as in the following instance, with Marc Chagall, the Russian-Jewish painter. Chagall is considered one of the most important artists of the twentieth century. His works sometimes reflect avant-garde movements, such as Cubism, Suprematism and Surrealism, yet his style remained independent throughout his long and prolific career. He was heavily influenced by Parisian modernists, but he always maintained aspects of his Russian-Jewish roots, as is evident in his works. Interestingly, Senghor, in his address at the opening of the Chagall exhibit in Dakar in 1971, takes the opportunity to discuss how Chagall's work is similar to *l'art Nègre* (*Liberté 3* 257-260). He explains that Chagall's is "a subjective art, like Negro art, sentimental" (258). This is because Chagall uses symbols, vivid colours and metaphorical or allegorical scenes that evoke a kind of intuitive response.

The images Chagall uses are not the idealized imitations of nature as in traditional European art; rather, « ce sont des *images-symboles,* ces amoureux, ces ouvriers, ces prophètes » (258). Senghor thinks that *l'art Nègre* works the same way, noting that this rhythmic subjective art, which Chagall also produces, « ne détruit pas la réalité, il ne l'atomise pas avant de le reconstruire, ce qui serait une opération de l'intellect. Mais, parce qu'il est directement saisi par la réalité, il se contente de la *dé-former* en le sentant, en retour, intuitivement » (258). Senghor goes on to explain that Chagall's works fall outside of classifiable schools because he is truly a *métis* (259). He notes various similarities to *l'art Nègre* deeming that, ultimately, it is a sensitivity to the *sous-réel* that allows for such vibrant and rhythmic productions. Yet, he also notes that there is difference. Chagall produces work that is « odorant et souriant, tendre et délicat, quand l'Africain est austère et rude, direct et rythmé » (260). Chagall represents the

fruitful aspects of hybridity, for, in his work Senghor sees *creation* as in the appearance of something really and truly *new,* and that owes its being to *métissage*: « il s'agit, ici et là, d'un *nouvel humanisme* » (his emphasis, 260). *Métissage* is also about a fuller and deeper understanding of humans in general. In Thiam's words, "in the same vein as Glissant's theory of rhizome and relation, Senghor claims, through his theory of *métissage*, the impossibility to understand humans without taking into consideration their fluid pluralities ("From Métissage to Relation" 14). Understanding and celebrating the fluid pluralities represents this new non-antagonistic humanism that is precisely what Senghor is hoping the "Revolution of 1889" will bring forth.

IV. Building an Epistemology of Intuition: What is "The Revolution of 1889"?

> « Il est temps de conclure mon *Ce que je crois.* Je le ferai d'un mot, en réaffirmant ma foi en la *Civilisation de l'Universel,* à laquelle je consacre le peu d'années qui me restent à vivre. » (Senghor, *Ce que je crois* 231).

Few scholars have placed much emphasis on Senghor's "Revolution of 1889." Souleymane Bachir Diagne has published one article dealing with the aforementioned revolution; it is also discussed briefly in both of his books (*Bergson Postcolonial; African Art as Philosophy*). Yet, as Cheikh Thiam mentions, Diagne does consider Bergson's *lebensphilosophie* as the foundation for Senghor's theory, thus "falling short of a truly decolonial reading of Negritude" (6). Senghor himself only extrapolates on this paradigmatic cultural and philosophical historic shift in a few of his works, and as is often the case with him, there is

considerable fluidity in the definition.[7] He adopts many philosophers, writers and artists into the effort; the one qualification being that they somehow revalidate and champion an intuitive, rhythmic and emotional way of being in the world. The main requirement is that they present an alternative to discursive or technical reason. Such thinkers as Friedrich Nietzsche, Leo Frobenius, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Henri Bergson, Paul Claudel and Arthur Rimbaud join the brotherhood of the founding fathers of this, dare I say, metaphoric or even allegorical revolution. In the present context, I will delimit my inquiry, in part because of the focus on *francophonie,* to considering just three of these figures: Bergson, Rimbaud and Claudel. But before moving to a discussion of their works, let me first clarify what the "Revolution of 1889" meant for Senghor.

In his article, « Senghor et la Révolution de 1889, » Diagne focuses on the aforementioned three French intellectuals, including Nietzsche as more of a precursor to this paradigm shift. He provides brief explanations of what each of these figures represents; I will, however, explore their contributions in much greater detail in the following two chapters. In brief, what Diagne concisely demonstrates is that each writer represents a manner of accessing the "real" that goes beyond positivism and discursive reason and that this method calls upon intuition (106). Diagne labels this alternative « manière de viser le réel » as Bergsonian intuition (106). Yet, in his description of what this is, he paraphrases Senghor's many terms used to explain the sympathetic and in-depth interrelating of subject and object:

> De l'intuition bergsonienne comme approche privilégiée du réel, par quoi se trouve abolie la distance qui usuellement se creuse entre l'objet et la *raison-œil* qui le perçoit (la distance qui, précisément, le constitue comme objet), Senghor a fait un emploi constant

[7] The final chapter in Senghor's last publication, *Ce que je crois,* is called: « La Révolution de 1889 et la Civilisation de l'Universel. » He also wrote "The Revolution of 1889 and Leo Frobenius" and mentions the revolution in « La Négritude est un humanisme… » and in « Le dialogue des cultures. »

> dans son œuvre, l'appelant aussi *raison-étreinte* ou émotion ; l'é-motion (sortir de soi pour embrasser l'autre). (106)

This embrace of the Other is not exactly like Bergsonian intuition, which is less about relating and has more to do with deep reflection and instantaneous understanding that is somehow pre-verbal. In *The Creative Mind,* Bergson concisely explains that "intuition is what attains the spirit, duration, pure change" (21). As Diagne illuminates, the reason why Senghor's intuition is not a mere replica is precisely because of rhythm. Diagne, in a markedly Senghorian tone, explains that intuition is what allows us to enter the very heart of the object, or even, « au cœur du rythme qui le constitue et nous fait épouser son flux » (106). He then notes that we can thus understand why Senghor calls intuition a dance. This dance is first and foremost and understanding and knowing of the "real," which is, in Senghor's oeuvre, most rhythmically accessible to artists. The anti-Cartesian revolution of 1889, exemplified by Bergson's *Essai,* Claudel's *Tête d'or* and Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer,* deals the positivism of their own century a serious blow. As noted in the introduction, Diagne summarizes: « On dira ensuite qu'elle est vitaliste, qu'elle marque la victoire de la force vitale, du *logos humide et vibratoire* des Grecs (dont le verset claudélien retrouve le rythme), sur la dure et sèche *ratio.* On dira enfin, mais tout cela est lié, qu'elle promeut l'émotion artiste, celle qui crée, comme découverte du réel et voie de connaissance » (108). The dry positivism that reigned supreme throughout the nineteenth century begins to crack and slowly turn to dust as Bergson, Claudel and Rimbaud reassert a rhythmic and intuitive aspect to the intellect.

The Revolution of 1889, then, is about discovering the real by going beyond analytic rationality, by becoming sensitive to rhythmic forces and vibrations. Moreover, it is from the development of intuitive faculties, which is garnered by opening to the said sensitivity, that one

reaches a depth of understanding that potentiates creation. But not just any creation, creation that negates separation. As Senghor often explains, the approach to understanding the "real" (or "sub-real") requires sympathy or symbiosis. Thus, creation is always unified: « la création est toujours création de l'unité lorsqu'elle fait se compénétrer dans une forme des éléments qui sont alors dans une symbiose où s'exprime le rythme vital, le mouvement même de la vie » (Diagne, « Senghor et la Révolution de 1889 » 109). Senghor is talking about gaining access to the very movement and rhythm of life itself. The "Revolution of 1889" is about awakening a sensitivity to life itself: to its vibrations, essences and depths. The method to gaining such access is to be firmly rooted in one's innate being such that there is such strength in one's foundations that an openness to the other is no longer dangerous or vulnerable but enriching and illuminating.

According to Senghor, Africans and the Black diaspora never lost this intuitive approach. Therefore, the Revolution of 1889 is included as an aspect Negritude, for, as Senghor explains in « La culture face à la crise, »: « La Révolution de 1889 a consisté à revenir à la voie des Africains » (*Liberté 5* 195). Intuition in Africa was not lost during the positivist century and what preceded. Access to this aspect of reason can be found by returning to the route taken by Africa. Senghor makes this statement in Paris at a conference on culture and development; the concern, as he extrapolates at the beginning of his 1983 lecture, is not just financial, though he does assert that the over 500 million dollars of debt that developing countries then owed the IMF and the World Bank should be carefully considered (194). He goes on to explain that, even if the IMF and Western countries were to double resources lent to developing countries, it would only make things worse: « Même si le gouvernement français, en accord avec les autres gouvernements européens que voilà, s'engageait, en concurrence amicale avec les États-Unis, dans la voie de la révolution technologique et informatique, la crise ne ferait qu'empirer » (194). I argued

elsewhere that Senghor's emphasis is on cultural change, for no lasting political change can occur unless there is a concurrent cultural shift. Thus, policies implemented from outside and systems applied haphazardly upon groups that are unable to comprehend their usefulness will never work. This particular crisis, according to Senghor, is no different and can only be resolved by a cultural revolution: « Encore une fois, celle-ci ne peut être surmontée, mieux, résolue que par une révolution culturelle, qui s'étendrait, en même temps, au Nord et au Sud, aux nations faussement développées comme aux sous-développées » (194). Senghor then shares the good news. This revolution has already been in existence for almost a century: « Je l'appelle: la *Révolution de 1889* » (194). For the better part of a century, movement towards embracing and bringing forth intuitive reason have been tentatively approached, particularly in the realms of art, poetry, cinema, philosophy and literature.

Thus, the revolution is a cultural one. Senghor explains that 1889 is an important date in the history of philosophy, literature and the arts. He mentions the importance of Claudel and Bergson's 1889 publications. In particular, he explains that « l'œuvre d'Arthur Rimbaud, intitulée *Une saison en enfer,* qui les annonçait, pour ainsi dire, dès 1873 » (194). The reason that Senghor fixes the date on 1889 is to counter the revolution of 1789, which:

> Procédait bien du rationalisme cartésien, mais à travers les encyclopédies, dont le *Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* avait pour but avoué de soumettre toutes les activités des hommes–la religion et la morale comme les lettres et les arts–au contrôle rigoureux, quasi mathématique, de la raison discursive. (194-195)

It is against the perception of a regimented, cold and sterile way of being that the "Revolution of 1889" battles. Let us mention that this kind of rigidity and control regarding literature is precisely what Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud counter in the contemporary context of *Pour une*

littérature-monde as will be shown in chapter four. Senghor explains that the forefathers were producing works in reaction Cartesian rationalism and its rigorous controls (195). But, though it might be easy to assume that the Revolution of 1889 is primarily oppositional, Senghor sees it as complementary.

The Revolution of 1889 is a cultural revolution. Cultures evolve over time. Thus, there is no static or linear time into which we can mold the intuition revolution: it is ongoing and should be celebrated and praised in Senghor's perspective. The benefits are available to all peoples everywhere:

> En effet, c'est au XXe siècle, et tout au long de celui-ci, que la Révolution de 1889 déroulera ses effets. C'est, d'une part, l'influence de l'art négro-africain, et partant de l'esthétique, sur l'Euramérique et le monde. C'est, d'autre part, comme conséquence de se fait majeur, la réalisation progressive de cette *Civilisation de l'Universel* qu'annonçait, au milieu de ce siècle, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin pour l'aube du troisième millénaire » (*Liberté 5* 196).

The Senghorian Revolution of 1889, then, is about opening up to a more complete way of being; a way that generates a fruitful dialogue between all cultures and all groups. Essentially, the Revolution of 1889 is both a precursor to and the very sentiment that brings the utopian "Civilization of the Universal." This will come from the fruitful complementarity of technical progress and artistic creation, both of which can provide insight into being and the very meaning of life. Senghor explains that there have been enormous leaps in science but that: « Toutes ces inventions, en accroissant, comme jamais, les forces de production, vont accroître en même temps, avec les loisirs, la puissance imaginante, poétique, je dis *créatrice* de l'homme » (198).

Again, rather than antagonism or duality, we see the ultimate balance of complementarity advocated by Senghor.

The Revolution of 1889 is both international and individual. On the individual level, the way to become fully human is for « la *psyché* se hausse en conscience pour se faire et s'exprimer dans la *liberté »* (*Liberté 3* 72). What Senghor means by the reflexive use of *to make* (« se faire ») is that consciousness *realizes* itself: « se réaliser par, mais au-delà du *bien-être* matériel, dans le *plus-être* spirituel » (72). The way to such self-realization is to transcend dualism and dichotomy. As Senghor further explains: « *Se réaliser*, je veux dire développer harmonieusement les deux éléments complémentaires de l'âme : le cœur et la tête, la raison intuitive et la raison discursive » (72). Senghor's philosophy is never about either/or; it is a philosophy that dances above, beneath and ultimately beyond duality. To follow his thought, one must access the intuitive faculties that, because they do not operate upon the principles of categorization or binary understandings, offer a more complete and rhythmic way to be human. Or in the words of Thiam: « Pour comprendre Senghor, il est nécessaire de ne pas rester fidèle aux terres déjà apprivoisées, de mettre les pieds hors des territoires traditionnels du langage et de la rationalité héritée de la tradition philosophique occidentale, afin d'atteindre les hauteurs dangereuses de l'intuition » (« La Négritude est une épistémologie » 124). The dangerous heights of intuition are only a threat to an oversimplified and incomplete way of being and understanding the one's *raison d'être.* As Diagne so aptly summarizes, "Emotion or intuition or even *connaissance* (concepts which for Senghor translate the same non-analytic approach to reality) attain an intensity that reminds the human of the promise of a more complete humanity" (*African Art* 122). That, then, is what the "Revolution of 1889" can offer, both globally and individually: "a more complete humanity." In the following chapters, by considering three of Senghor's founding

fathers of the Revolution, Bergson, Rimbaud and Claudel, what this more complete humanity entails will be elucidated.

V. Conclusion

The vast oeuvre that Senghor produced during his 95 years on earth contains a plethora of wisdom and insight; to discard it or misunderstand the depth of the socio-political gems found therein is almost blasphemous. Of course, as Senghor himself is a huge proponent of dialogue, the critiques of Negritude have provided invaluable contemplation for Senghor scholars. Of utmost importance is noting how the very essentialist binaries he seems to present are tactics to help the reader understand the function of intuition: to bring an understanding of the whole, which inevitably includes the entire gambit of possible polarities. Merleau-Ponty, in his essay called "Bergson in the Making" aptly explains this idea: "It is by taking opposites to their extreme difference that intuition perceives their reunion" (*Signs* 185). Senghor employed the strategy of showing the extreme differences of possible forms of reason so as to ascertain the need to integrate both forms in order to achieve a balanced intellect. Once moving past the condemnation of ill-informed critics, the nutritious nut-meat of the cracked shell is revealed: rhythmic symbiosis, *métissage* and the intuitive reawakening that Senghor called the Revolution of 1889.

In Senghor's theory of Negritude there is a rhythmic epistemology of intuition. This is based upon the way in which Senghor believes Black people interact and participate existentially: they do so with a "rhythmic attitude." Negritude scholar Sylvia Ba describes this interaction: "The extreme sensitivity on the part of the Black man to everything that presents itself to his consciousness and senses is the distinctive trait of one who perceives the universe

through sensuous participation, through a sort of physical intuition" (74-74). For Senghor this rhythmic attitude or "physical intuition" involves engaging in a symbiotic type of dance, so that subject and object, so that self and other, though they appear to be separate, share a vibrational or rhythmic understanding and thus come to know one another intimately. Being open to such a transformational encounter requires a participatory intuitive approach to life. By developing one's intuition, one can grow more as an individual for it is via contact – with other languages, cultures, people, lands, books, art, etc. – that one approaches self-realization. Having a deep sense of self also increases the benefits of hybridity or *métissage,* for the deeper and steadier are one's roots, the wider and higher one can reach their branches. An intuitive approach to life, then, opens one up for dialogue and hybridity on an individual level. As individuals make up societies, a dialogue of cultures is the goal of the "Revolution of 1889," whereby all the best of each culture can be raised to the forefront and, rather than maintaining static separation and rigidity, we might begin to understand and develop ways to live in balance and equilibrium – with each other and with the planet.

The "Revolution of 1889" is ongoing. Not only does Senghor's vision for this revolution offer promise for people to live more harmoniously, it also offers wisdom that can garner more respect and love for the earth. Fritjof Capra, a deep ecologist, echoes the philosophy and aim of Negritude. He writes:

> The shift to a new worldview and a new mode of thinking goes hand in hand with a profound change in values. What is so fascinating about these changes, to me, is a striking connection between the change of thinking and the change of values. Both can be seen as a shift from self-assertion to integration. As far as thinking is concerned, we can observe a shift from the rational to the intuitive, from analysis to synthesis, from reductionism to

> holism, from linear to nonlinear thinking. I want to emphasize that the aim is not to replace one mode by the other, but rather to shift from the overemphasis of one mode to a greater balance between the two.

Balance and equilibrium: two of Senghor's favourite words. I propose we propagate Senghor's principles to increase the intuitive propensity of all people; maybe the "Civilization of the Universal" is not merely a utopian dream, and, even if it is, it is certainly one worth striving for. To quote one of Senghor's most beloved writers, Teilhard de Chardin: "It is finally the Utopians, not the "realists," who make scientific sense. They at least, though their flights of fancy may cause us to smile, have a feeling for the true dimensions of the phenomenon of [Humankind]" (*Building the Earth* 67). These "true" dimensions involve *subreal* depths, rhythmic symbiotic dances, non-dualism, hybridity, intuitive insights and a version of time that is less linear and much more elastic than most imagine.

Chapter 2: The Birth and Rebirth of Bergsonian Intuition

> « Certains esprits possèdent une puissance mystérieuse de rayonnement. Dès la première rencontre, ils nous impriment une sorte de touche qui ébranle notre vie secrète, suspend toutes nos préoccupations particulières, et nous invite à pénétrer dans un monde plus lumineux et plus pur où les choses perdent leur pesanteur et reçoivent une transparence spirituelle. Henri Bergson était un de ces esprits privilégiés. » (Louis Lavelle, *La philosophie française entre les deux guerres* 90-91)

Henri Bergson is often considered to be one of the most revolutionary philosophers of the early twentieth century; because of his ground-breaking ideas surrounding the nature of time, space, evolution and, most importantly–intuition, Senghor named him the "spirit of 1889." As the opening quotation describes, according to his student, Louis Lavelle, Bergson's presence provided a kind of illumination for those who were fortunate enough to learn from him or even encounter him. Senghor likely experienced the same enlightening clarity upon reading Bergson's works because they helped him to remember the wisdom and presence he experienced early in life, with his animist Uncle Toko Waly, before colonial education led him to the accepted paradigm of rationalism and positivism. Perhaps the most radical aspect of Bergson's thought was the way, beginning audaciously with his first published work, he effectively began to dismantle the foundations of the dominant modern philosophical presuppositions that time is linear and space divisible. Moreover, Bergson chose to go farther than mechanistic positivism and materialism was capable of going. Bergson was part of a movement that wanted to bring "philosophy more in touch with reality" and in order to do so "mechanism had to be attacked, its postulates had to be proved false, and it had to be relegated to its own sphere in the physical

world, the only world it was truly capable of comprehending" (Grogin 11).[8] There was a return to mysticism, to esoteric faith and to occultism in the years leading up to the first world war.

For Senghor, Henri Bergson's works gave credence and validity to the way in which Black Africans, and subsequently the Black diaspora, view and understand the world. Bergson's hypothesis of *la durée* ultimately contributed to putting a world back together that had been heretofore divided into increasingly smaller component parts, essentially destroying any recognition of the vibrational life force of being known by Bergson as *élan vital* and which Senghor often simply calls *rhythm.* Intuition is that which allows access to the underlying spiritual force, a force that is infinitely creative and that endures regardless of whether or not analysis or positivistic science is at play. Without intuition, awareness of *la durée* remains buried. As Diagne explains in his article, « Senghor et la Révolution de 1889, »

> La rupture qu'accomplit l'*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* est donc, avant tout, anti-positiviste car anticartésienne. Descartes avait reconstruit le monde, après la fin du paradigme cosmologique aristotélicien, sur la base de la science mécaniste qui, pour comprendre le tout, commence par l'analyser en ses parties. La rupture avec ce paradigme cartésien proviendra des sciences de la vie dont le développement, au XIX siècle, sera précisément conditionné par le rejet de la mathématisme mécaniste. (105)

Bergson played a major role in the rejection of the mechanistic and positivistic thought paradigm. Because *la durée* is made up of a series of moments that are all within each other, all inextricably linked, to access it one must give up the normal linear workings of the mind and instantaneously experience the totality. As described in the first chapter, Senghor presents Black people as having a natural aptitude for this kind of non-dualistic approach to experiencing life,

[8] Philosophers who spawned the spiritualist movement include Félix Ravaisson, Jules Lachelier and Emile Boutroux, to name a few of the most prominent.

and in particular, to interacting with the Other. Yet Senghor's naming and championing of the "Revolution of 1889," along with his praise for Bergson, does not occur until the late 1960s. The first mention of Bergson that I have been able to trace occurs in 1966 in the essay "Negritude is a Humanism of the Twentieth Century." It was presented at an international conference in Beirut and Senghor's choice to back Negritude with a well-known French philosopher would likely have been influenced by knowing his audience. Furthermore, that Bergson was not strategically incorporated earlier in Senghor's writings on Negritude and African Socialism likely means that Senghor did not encounter his works during the 1930s when he studied in Paris and, if this is accurate, it is because of the contentious nature of Bergson's works and because Senghor, like many other academics during the 1920s and 1930s, was swept up in the dialectics of Hegel and Marx. There is evidence for this supposition in that Senghor does not present a personal reflection regarding how Bergson's works heavily influenced or impacted him (which he does do for both Claudel and Rimbaud, as illustrated in chapter three). Senghor's Bergson may very well have been formed during the 1960s, and it might be that Senghor discovered Bergson through Vladimir Jankélévitch's 1959 re-publication since Jankélévitch emphasizes the spirituality in Bergson's works. This work was recently translated into English (2015). For example, he describes the method Bergson presents: "The method, thus, is already true knowing. Far from preparing a doctrinal deduction of concepts, it comes into being by degrees as spiritual progress unfolds, a progress of which the method, in sum, is nothing but the physiognomy and internal rhythm" (4). That true knowledge is made up as the spiritual process unfolds and that it coincides with one's interior rhythm is definitely a reading that Senghor, based on his thought, would have connected with.

Bergson was highly praised and heavily censored. His life as a philosopher, writer and

academic was interspersed with periods of fame and periods of disregard; reception of his oeuvre ranged the full gamut, from high praise and major criticism (banning of his books by the Catholic Church circa 1914). R.C. Grogin claims: "Between 1907 and 1914 he became the most controversial philosopher in the world and the first in the twentieth century to become an international celebrity" (ix). But by the time of his death in 1941, he had in many circles been all but forgotten in part because of the tidal-wave like passage of existentialism over the landscape of continental philosophy beginning in the 1930s. The influence he had on philosophy during his lifetime spread beyond the Francophone world. He was received with great enthusiasm in America in 1913. His warm reception was in part because William James had urged his audience to read Bergson (Guerlac, 11). Donna Jones claims that he was the first "celebrity" philosopher, declaring: "Bergson's philosophical influence was unparalleled in the first quarter of the twentieth century;" however, near contemporaries seem to disagree (77). For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty laments: "If we had been careful readers of Bergson, and if more thought had been given to him, we would have been drawn to a much more concrete philosophy [...] But since Bergson was hardly read by my contemporaries, it is certain that we had to wait for the philosophies of existence in order to be able to learn much of what he would have been able to teach us" ("The Philosophy of Existence" 132). But since Jankélévitch published the second revised and expanded edition of *Henri Bergson* in 1959, it has been continuously in print. The intermittence of Bergson's influence is due in part to the fact that his thought was more readily accepted by the public than by the philosophical community. He never taught at the Sorbonne. The Collège de France, where he did teach, though it did have high academic standards, required that all lectures be open to the general public. This meant that, as Suzanne Guerlac points out, "Bergson did not have the equivalent of graduate students who might have become rigorous

interpreters of his thought" (10). Because Bergson himself claimed to follow no particular system, thus producing a body of work that is very open to interpretation, much of what he wrote was "borrowed piecemeal and altered by enthusiastic admirers" (10). Not to mention that the onslaught of the popularity and fame of Hegel in France during the 1920s all but displaced Bergson from popular and academic philosophical circles.

Though Bergson did win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927, he also made enemies of both science *and* religion. The works of such logical positivists as Ernest Renan, Hippolyte Taine and Herbert Spencer would be brought under scrutiny by Bergson's thought. Bertrand Russell, in his usual contempt for Continental Philosophy, accused Bergson of being "a committed enemy of rational thought," likening his philosophy to a "heaving sea of intuition" (qtd. in Guerlac 12). Julien Benda is reported to have said that "he would happily have killed Bergson if this was the only way to destroy his influence" (Grogin, ix). The Catholic Church put his three most influential works on index in 1914 for fear the anti-intellectualism would lead to unacceptable "unleashing of instincts" and that the "notion of duration would put into question the traditional idea of God" (qtd. in Guerlac 29). As Gilles Deleuze later remarked, perhaps with great admiration, "There is something unassimilable about him, object of so many hatreds" (29). Perhaps the "hatred" generated was due to the discomfort felt when one does not understand a new theory, especially if that theory goes counter to that which one previously believed to be true.

Deleuze's admiration and, perhaps, slight appropriation and subsequent alteration of Bergson's work, in his 1966 work *Le Bergsonisme,* has much to do with the renewed interest in his thought at the time. Arguably, it was not until the late 1950s, when such thinkers as Deleuze and Jankélévitch slowly began to rekindle an interest in Bergson's vitalist philosophy, that

Bergson's influence was able to sprout again, burgeoning into academic circles little by little. The near-ubiquitous Affect theory of today assures that Bergson's works are still vibrating, albeit at times unrecognizably or as free-floating divided atoms, amidst the works of critics and theorists alike (Massumi, 2002; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). And yet, despite the interest in Bergson, there seems to be very little in the way of agreement regarding how to interpret his works.[9] Guerlac notes that only recently has French philosopher and scholar, Frédéric Worms, renewed Bergson scholarship in France with the *Le Choc Bergson* new editions of his works. However, Guerlac explains that, throughout the ages, "the proliferation of Bergsonisms blurred the contours of Bergson's thought and imposed undue, and conflictual, ideological burdens on the philosopher's thinking. To this extent we could say that both too much and too little have been said about Bergson" (13). Sifting through Bergsonian scholarship demands careful scrutiny and a willingness to let go of analytic, deterministic interpretations in order to gain any inkling of accuracy. Better yet, one must return to his original works and become open to reading backwards, to "thinking in time" and to understanding how one might "consider a level of experience that is immediate in that it is not mediated through the language or quantitative notation, an experience of the 'real,' we could say, that resists symbolizations" (Guerlac, 43). Intuition is not a faculty that understands or grasps this "real;" rather, it is a direct aspect of the "real." To read Bergson is to entertain this recognition and Worms describes it as several "apprentissages." Moreover, he summarizes: « C'est l'apprentissage de soi, parce que, même dans son unité, il est une recherche, et reste lui aussi multiple, dans ses sources et dans ses

[9] There are various collections analyzing Bergson's works. They range from: Bergson as a spiritualist: *Bergson: La vie et l'action.* Dir. Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron. Paris: Éditions de Félin, 2007. Bergson as viewed by Mediterranean academics: *Henri Bergson: esprit et langage.* Dir. Claudia Stancati. Bruxelles : Mardaga, 2001. As well as the thorough leave-no-Bergsonian-stone-unturned project headed by Frédéric Worms, which has both online and print sources including re-editions of his works as well as collections of critical essays on Bergson (*Lire Bergson, Annales bergsoniennes*).

relations, qui continuera à reconduire vers la lecture de Bergson » (*Lire Bergson* 20). Thus, reading Bergson becomes a living or revivifying experience, or, at the very least, the act of reading Bergson can be a kind of self-reflexive study.

I. Henri Bergson as Senghor's "Spirit of 1889"

> « Quant à Bergson, remontant jusqu'aux sources spiritualistes de la philosophie grecque, à la *théoria,* il a redonné sa place à la raison intuitive. » (Senghor, *Ce que crois* 210).

Senghor credits Bergson with restoring intuition. The question, then, becomes: what, according to Senghor, is the rightful place for intuitive reason? And how did Bergson return due validity to this way of knowing? Senghor did not present a diminished version of Bergsonism by altering or borrowing piecemeal from Bergson's philosophy; what he did is use his philosophy to support and bolster his claim that Black Africans could offer an alternative to the mechanistic Cartesian reason that Bergson too was calling into question. Despite claims of Senghor's Eurocentrism and regardless of his decision to back his philosophy with the works of Western thinkers, his thought does not steal or simply build upon Bergson's philosophy; in many ways it differs significantly. Rather, he claims Bergson, as he does Claudel and Rimbaud, as being culturally "nègre" and posits their works as examples of Negritude, for they produce works that are in alignment with "sum of the cultural values of the Black world," ("Negritude is a Humanism" 28). Thus, in « La culture face à la crise, » Senghor declares: « La Révolution de 1889 a consisté à revenir à la voie des Africains » (*Liberté 5* 195). Rather than removing all agency from Senghor and reducing his thought to a replica or version of some kind of Bergsonism, I will consider why Senghor adopted Bergson's thought as a positive example of

Negritude.

In *Ce que je crois,* Senghor claims that Bergson's first publication, the *Essai,* along with Claudel's theatrical work, *Tête d'Or,* function both as catalysts for and as evidence of a major cultural shift: The Revolution of 1889. Of these two works he writes: « Ici et là, c'étaient les premières réactions majeures et convaincantes au *Cogito, ergo sum* : aussi bien au rationalisme discursif qu'au positivisme matérialiste » (210). The "Revolution of 1889" is fueled by a reaction to Cartesianism and to the belief that the world can be best understood by separation and by breaking down matter into the smallest component parts; it is also a celebration of the rebirth of an alternative way of knowing, one that is complementary to analysis: that of intuition. Bergson promotes intuition as being the method by which one can attain an absolute understanding of life itself and, according to Grogin, he "believed that intuition was his main contribution to philosophy" (28). Yet Bergson does not create a binary of philosophy and science. Philosophical intuition is presented as a method that can further and deepen scientific understanding, such that Bergson states:

> Philosophy then must be able to model itself upon science, and an idea of so-called intuitive origin which could not manage, by dividing itself and subdividing its divisions, to cover the facts observed outwardly and the laws by which science joins them to each other, which would not be capable even of correcting certain generalizations and of rectifying certain observations, would be fantasy; it would have nothing in common with intuition. But on the other hand, the idea which succeeds in fitting perfectly this dispersion of itself upon the facts and laws, was not obtained by a unification of external experience; for the philosopher did not arrive at unity, he started from it. (*CM* 103)

Senghor explains that Bergson provided a timely alternative to scientism:

> Depuis la Renaissance, les valeurs de la civilisation européenne avaient reposé essentiellement sur la *raison discursive* et les *faits*, sur la *logique* et la *matière.* Bergson, avec une subtilité toute dialectique, aller combler l'attente d'un public lassé de scientisme et de naturalisme. Il montrait que les faits et la matière, objets de la raison discursive, n'étaient que la surface superficielle qu'il fallait dépasser, par l'*intuition,* pour avoir une vision en profondeur du *réel*. (*Liberté 3* 70)

Though this brief explanation noting the effects of Bergson's work is not entirely inaccurate, Senghor is not interested in providing an in-depth study of Bergson's philosophy and thus oversimplifies the method of Bergsonian intuition. Ultimately, Senghor uses Bergson to champion something he has been voicing all along: intuition provides us with deeper knowing than analytic reason can.

Though Senghor gives Bergson much credit on the surface as being an important figure for "The Revolution of 1889," direct mentions of him and his works are minimal, and he never goes into any detailed study of his texts. In « La culture face à la crise, » he uses Bergson to note that the intuition revolution is, indeed, a return to an African way of knowing. Again, he claims that Bergson provides a contrast to discursive reason, to the « contrôle rigoureux, quasi mathématique, de la raison discursive » (*Liberté 5* 195). Discursive, analytic, Cartesian and mechanistic are all adjectives that Senghor uses to describe the European *raison-oeil* described in chapter one. This kind of reason that analyzes, immobilizes, separates and even figuratively *kills*, as already noted in the first chapter, is, according to Senghor, countered by several philosophers such as Johann Fichte, Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, who he calls theoreticians of the *Surhomme.* Senghor defines what *Surhomme* denotes: « plus important pour l'homme, ce n'est pas la recherche de la vérité, mais celle de la Vie ou, mieux, du sens de la Vie. Il est

question, sur la tombe ancienne et, partant, décadente du rationalisme, de faire pousser les valeurs nouvelles de la volonté libre » (*Liberté 5* 195). Bergson, according to Senghor, advances in the direction of the new values of free-will through the conception and writing of his *Essai.* But Senghor makes a very feeble link from Bergson to Nietzsche, noting simply that they had surely both read Aristotle. He quotes Aristotle's famous phrase from *Nicomachean Ethics*: « Or il y a, dans l'âme, trois facteurs dominants qui déterminent l'action et la vérité : la sensation (*aïthésis*), l'esprit (*noûs*) et le désir (*oréxis*) » (195). He then uses this moment as an opportunity to present what he deems a more accurate translation of the Greek *noûs,* something he also does in *Ce que je crois* and « La Révolution de 1889 et Leo Frobenius. »

The word *noûs* must certainly not be translated as "intellect," he warns that, « le *noûs,* c'était pour les anciens Grecs, la symbiose de la raison discursive et la raison intuitive » (195). This symbiosis of the head and the heart, if you will, composes the ideal etymological balance in Senghor's view, but the world has fallen incredibly out of balance since the time of the Ancient Greeks and particularly, since the Age of Enlightenment Reason. The shift that Senghor identifies is remarkable. Up until the point when Bergson published his first work, around the same time when Rimbaud and Claudel were also writing and publishing, Senghor explains: « les Albo-Européens avaient privilégié la discursion, et non précisément le 'désir', avec la volonté, quand les Africains, du Nord comme du Sud, l'avaient fait de la sensation et de l'intuition » (195). For Senghor, Bergson represents a turn of thought, a way of being and understanding that has always been at the forefront of African life. And so, he reminds the listener and the reader that, « La Révolution de 1889 a consisté à revenir à la voie des Africains » (195). The customary habits of thought for Black people, according to Senghor's Negritude, are akin to the intuitive faculties Bergson presents as being non-habitual and difficult to even want to attain (*CM* 58-61).

And yet, as previously noted, there are those who view Senghor's philosophy as a version of Bergsonism (Diagne, 2011; Jones, 2012), while others are more interested in explaining how Senghor's philosophy differs from Bergson's (Thiam, 2014; Kebede, 2013). The brief moments where Senghor mentions Bergson are nonspecific and sparse. Bergson functions as a symbol for Senghor, and the date, 1889, nicely juxtaposes its opposing antecedent of a century earlier. Diagne and Jones draw parallels between the vitalism present in both Bergson and Senghor while Thiam demonstrates how this Afri-centered vitalism comes directly from Senghor's childhood growing up in an animist culture with his Uncle Toko Waly as a guide and caregiver. Kebede, in his article "Negritude and Bergsonism," explains that Senghor maintained an "absolute monism" throughout his philosophy, and Bergson maintained the dualism between matter and spirit (17). However, the strategy of presenting one's philosophy via the expected framework of duality while simultaneously crushing the false simplicity of binaries is something that Senghor, as previously illustrated in the first chapter, and Bergson both do, albeit to varying degrees and producing variant conclusions.

Bergson often sets up simple binaries as he introduces the concepts that make up his philosophy. He clearly sets up a dichotomy of two ways of knowing throughout his works. Indeed, Bergson consistently brings forth dualities: time and space, interiority and exteriority in the *Essai*; body and spirit, past and present, perception and memory in *Matière et mémoire*; evolution and creation–the very title of *L'évolution créatrice* evokes two aspects of reality running through his philosophy; and, in the essays comprising *The Creative Mind,* Bergson reiterates the duality between philosophy and science, between intuition and analysis. He uses concepts, symbols, extended metaphors and thought experiments showing how such linguistic and communicative devices will never fully express the unity that is made up of multiplicity.

Bergson thus sees all systems and schools of thought that approach metaphysics through a wide array of lenses and uses various mechanics to describe reality as games: "Either metaphysics is only this game of ideas, or else, if it is a serious occupation of the mind, it must transcend concepts to arrive at intuition" (*CM* 141). The concepts are necessary to the overall function and communicability of metaphysics, but one ought not be confused by believing that intuition can be represented conceptually. Of metaphysics, he explains: "It is strictly itself only when it goes beyond the concept, or at least when it frees itself of the inflexible and ready-made concepts and creates others very different from those we usually handle, I mean flexible, mobile, almost fluid representations, always ready to mould themselves on the fleeting forms of intuition" (141).
In his essay, "Breaking the Circle: *Élan Vital* as Performative Metaphysics," John Mullarkey describes the way in which metaphysics and intuition are inextricably linked for Bergson. He writes: "Intuition is in fact anti-representational: it is a thinking that is an immanent *part* of the Real rather than a point of view that *represents* the Real" (his emphasis - 596). And yet the effort must be made to try to get as close as possible to describing, explaining, symbolizing the "fleeting forms of intuition" (*CM* 141). To approach communicating a process that cannot ultimately be represented, Bergson often uses the binary opposites, such as multiple and one, and asks that the reader see the way in which the seeming duality is actually inseparable, making his work sometimes seem dualist.

Though Bergson at times uses the language of dichotomies, the overall intuited effect is the sense of an underlying unity and flow to life and to being. Simply put: « La réalité coule; nous coulons avec elle, » as Bergson famously states near the end of *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (1446). A more detailed example of Bergson's monism is expressed in *The Creative Mind*:

> But if, instead of claiming to analyze duration (that is, in reality, to make a synthesis of it with concepts), one first installs oneself in it by an effort of intuition, one has the feeling of a certain well-defined tension, whose very definiteness seems like a choice between and infinity of possible durations. This being so, one perceives any number of durations, all very different from one another, even though each one of them, reduced to concepts, that is to say, considered externally from two opposite points of view, is always brought back to the indefinable combination of the multiple and the one. (156)

This "indefinable combination" is an example of the kind of language and descriptions that prompt Jean Hyppolite to write, in his 1949 essay on Bergson, "The finite spirit that we are is even nothing but the effort to unify itself, despite this duality that is always present within it" (120). One of the principal dualisms present in Bergson, particularly evident in *Matière et mémoire*, is that between the mind and the body. As the subtitle of this text implies, *Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit,* Bergson aims to bring the body and the mind, or spirit, into union; Gilles Deleuze explains that, for Bergson, "[d]ualism is therefore only a moment, which must lead to the re-formation of a monism" (29). I propose that, in much the same way that Bergson criticizes the very language and concepts he must unavoidably use as he relentlessly tries to communicate notions like *la durée* and *intuition*, he purposely presents dualist philosophy so that he can, from this usual mental habit of comparison or dichotomization, strategically bring the reader towards the unity and the indivisibility both of time and of the real.

The ultimate understanding to be gained from his philosophy, then, is a non-dualist one. Jankélévitch describes the lucidity that Bergson accomplishes by never losing sight of the unified whole:

> That said, Bergson's philosophy will happen to speak in terms of dualist philosophy, just as we, even after Copernicus, happen to speak of the sun setting although it is the earth that turns. With implacable lucidity, Bergson detects the alloys or, as he says, the exchanges that take place among contrary realities; but the peculiarity of Bergson's philosophy is that it never loses sight of the amalgam being an amalgam, of the Concrete also being the Impure. (161)

Bergson, as he tries to train the reader to upturn their customary ways of thinking, which are inevitably shaped and fomented into static symbols and concepts by language, presents us with our habitual dualistic way of conceiving the world only to further ask that we might dilate our understanding by unifying what was, in reality, always a false dichotomy. His project, his aim, is to teach the art of philosophizing, and, "to philosophize means to reverse the normal direction of the workings of thought" (*CM* 160). By undoing what he perceives to be the grave mistake of imagining time within space, and by inserting ourselves into *la durée,* we can become free from false dichotomies. As Frédéric Worms notes in the « Présentation » of the *Essai*: « L'unité que redécouvrira la lecture, ce sera pourtant d'abord celle d'une écriture et d'une intuition » (13). All of this melding of seemingly dualistic ideas throughout Bergson's works is accomplished by one method: that of intuition. Or as Merleau-Ponty states in "Bergson in the Making," wherein he is much less critical of Bergson's thought than he is during his lectures at the École Normale Supérieure: "It is by taking opposites to their extreme difference that intuition perceives their reunion" (*IS* 185). In order to show both that Senghor and Bergson vary in their respective conceptions of intuition, and to also show that Bergson both picks up and strengthens the nearly lost thread of spirit and intuition that will ultimately be linked to the *littérature-monde* movement in the fourth chapter of this text, let us now consider what Bergson meant by intuition.

II. In Search of the "the Multiple and the One:" Navigating the Ocean of Bergsonisms

> "Is it possible for us to recapture this intuition itself? We have just two means of expression, concept and image. It is in concepts that the system develops; it is into an image that it contracts when it is driven back to the intuition from which it comes: so that, if one wishes to go beyond the image by rising above it, one necessarily falls back on concepts, and on concepts more general and more vague, even more general than those from which one started in search of the image and the intuition." (Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind* 98)

When language fails, the creative and poetic genesis of expression is expanded, played with and set forth to do the very best it can to continuously approach defining the indefinable. Both Senghor and Bergson are known for theorizing intuition; for Senghor intuition is a rhythmic unity with being and for Bergson it is a difficult act of self-inquiry and reflexivity. Senghor's continual variation of using similar concepts to express difficult notions and his use of etymological games (such as *sous-réalité* and *sur-réalité* as discussed in chapter one) are examples of trying to approach "what oft is felt" but is not easy to adequately express. Many have critically evaluated and presented what the method of achieving intuition is for Bergson. However, there is little said regarding the seemingly simple, but extremely challenging, act of turning the mind back upon itself in order to access intuition. Bergson concretely states: "The direct vision of the mind by the mind is the chief function of intuition, as I understand it" (*CM* 29). With regard to differentiating between Senghor and Bergson, Messay Kebede explains that their different conceptions of intuition warrant allowing the two philosophers each to stand on their own. He states: "As far as Bergson was concerned, intuition by itself does not provide knowledge; it must be informed by discursive reason and purified by science" ("Negritude and

Bergsonism" 17). Kebede asserts that Senghor's understanding of intuition is of near omnipotence, claiming that he "had no job for reason" and accepts only the "absolute monism" of intuition (17). As discussed in the first chapter, Senghor does consider the importance and validity of reason, though he does promote emotion or intuition, sympathy or the *raison-étreinte* as superior, noting that a balance between the two is ideal. Yet Kebede is not entirely inaccurate for noting that there is difference between Bergsonism and Negritude, as Jean Paul Sartre did in *Black Orpheus,* when he wrote that the intuition of Negritude was "far from the chaste and asexual intuition of Bergson" (46). Care should be taken to not oversimplify and delimit Negritude *or* Bergsonian intuition by merely seeing them as two versions of the same idea.

Though Senghor utilizes Bergson's first publication to coincide nicely with the date he chooses to symbolize the paradigm shift identified, the actual term "intuition" is barely used throughout the *Essai.* The concept of *la durée* is brought forth and it is through the method of intuition that we can insert ourselves into this malleable, elastic, non-divisible homogenous version of time. Bergson pairs the words "immediate" and "intuition" as he asks the reader to understand that this immediacy shows us that time exists outside of space: « Pourquoi recourir à une hypothèse métaphysique, si ingénieuse soit-elle, sur la nature de l'espace, du temps et du mouvement, alors que l'intuition immédiate nous montre le mouvement dans la durée, et la durée en dehors de l'espace ? » (85). In Bergson's first work, then, intuition was the faculty that could bring forth an understanding of or a belief in *la durée*; intuition surpasses the limitations of language precisely because it is pre-verbal and immediate.

In the *Essai*, the method of intuition is not at the forefront of Bergson's thought; intuition is, however, inextricably linked to *la durée* and to a more elastic version of space and time; intuition is required in order to consider the underlying indivisibility of that which is normally

considered divisible. For example, Bergson asks that we consider our propensity to separate moments of time into linear space, noting that ultimately, all number is unified, is one: « Quand nous affirmons que le nombre est un, nous entendons par là que nous nous le représentons dans sa totalité par une intuition simple et indivisible de l'esprit: cette unité renferme donc une multiplicité, puisque c'est l'unité d'un tout » (59-60). It is not until after 1903, in his text *Introduction to Metaphysics,* that Bergson attempts to delineate the importance of intuition as a method.

What of the method of intuition? In the essays and lectures that make up *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics,* Bergson's method of intuition, along with its juxtaposition with analysis, becomes clearer. All of this melding of seemingly dualistic ideas throughout Bergson's works is accomplished by one method: that of intuition. Intuition is a starting point, an immediate knowing that is whole and unified and that can provide knowledge and understanding that is deeply real. Philosophy and science, then, should join forces in order to gain and put forth the most complete understanding of reality possible. To the scientists who think they have it all figured out, the philosopher would reply: "The knowledge you bring me unfinished, I shall complete. What you put before me in bits I shall put together" (101). The tactic of opposing philosophical intuition to scientific analysis, then, is to invoke a mutually beneficial complementarity; "philosophy will become complementary to science in practice as well as in speculation" (106). This is the promise of philosophical intuition, for "an absolute can only be given to an *intuition,* while all the rest has to do with *analysis*" (135). Intuition is therefore what is able to sympathize with and become the object or things it is in contact with; it is a simple act that, when reflected upon, can be grasped, though only momentarily and it will not survive solidification by symbolization (or language). And yet, the task of the intellect is to

somehow translate the understanding that is gained via intuition into language. How? It cannot be done precisely but attempts are most successful when metaphor and poetic language are employed (which will be illustrated through the emphasis on poetry in the next chapter). Though Bergson denounces language for being in part responsible for the human tendency to think in terms of the linear and to thus label, name, separate and divide, he notes that extended metaphors and taking the reader through thought-experiments are most apt for getting beyond the static deadlock that language evokes. Critics sometimes condemn Bergson for being vague or imprecise; John Mullarkey explains that "Bergson's own language of vagueness and vague language, his use of metaphors across all his works, is absolutely essential to expressing duration" (594). It is not that he outright condemns language for being incompetent; rather, Bergson asks that we generate new modes of expressing ourselves to help move beyond the static symbolization of regular syntax. Mullarkey agrees: "But the truth is that he argues for new languages of thought, for the constant invention of metaphor, simile, and adjective in order to provide the thick descriptions that will restore to the Real the novelty and concrete specificity extracted by the immobilizing general concept" (595). To do so we must get past our initial instinct to immobilize concepts so that they might be expressed in language. For example, in *Time and Free Will,* Bergson explains that the mind prefers the feeling of understanding and thus:

> We instinctively tend to solidify our impressions in order to express them in language. Hence, we confuse the feeling itself, which is in a perpetual state of becoming, with its permanent external object, and especially with the word which expresses this object. In the same way as the fleeting duration of our ego is fixed by its projection in homogenous space, our constantly changing impressions, wrapping themselves round the external

object which is their cause, take on its definite outlines and its immobility. (130)

Words impose a kind of stability to what is actually a world always in flux, of which we and all our processes are a part. Bergson then describes how a "bold novelist," for example, is capable of bringing us "back into our presence" because the essence and the manner he expresses allows us to "put aside for an instant the veil which we interposed between our consciousness and ourselves" (134). The meaning of arranged words is more than each word separately could connote. Paola Scarpelli describes how Bergson offers a more-than-what-it-seems side of language: « L'alternative bergsonienne à la nature statique du langage est à chercher dans un usage différent du langage lui-même: ce n'est pas la réalité qui doit se déformer pour rentrer dans des catégories, mais la parole qui doit se former à partir de la réalité saisie par l'intuition » (68). Language can be used in harmony with intuition insofar as the reader or listener is not fooled by the habitual workings of their linear, thought-riddled minds.

Intuition is the method necessary for conceiving of the Real (as in "Durée Réelle" *Essai,* 131-165 and/or "The Possible and the Real" *CM* 73-86). But it is also somehow consciousness: "Intuition, then, signifies first of all consciousness, but immediate consciousness, a vision which is scarcely distinguishable from the object seen, a knowledge which is contact" (*CM* 20). This intuitive sympathizing with matter does give some weight to the material world, but the fulcrum of his philosophy balances on *la durée*, which is ultimately spiritual: "In short, pure change, real duration, is a thing spiritual or impregnated with spirituality. *Intuition is what attains the spirit, duration, pure change*" (21- my emphasis). With this connection to spirit, it is hardly surprising that by the time Bergson wrote *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, those who had wished to dismiss him as a mystic or anti-intellectual found the grounds to do so therein.

Admittedly, reading Bergson's oeuvre can be illuminating and even meditative whereas writing about it can be an exercise in frustration. The limitations of language to definitively describe the interiority that is intuition or *la durée* creates a disjunction between the feeling that one understands these concepts and the certainty that one could precisely explain them in words. Merleau-Ponty, with regard to this ineffable interiority, writes: "The return to the 'immediate givens of consciousness' thus become a hopeless operation since the philosophical gaze sought to *be* what it could not in principle *see*" (58). But Bergson does not ask that we *see* anything; rather, he alerts us to our propensity to separate and label and asks that the philosopher try to insert ourselves into something indivisible and unified, though simultaneously always evolving and new.[10] And he pushes us to go deeper into ourselves, or, to "open us up," as Deleuze explains:

> Bergson is not one of those philosophers who ascribes a properly human wisdom and equilibrium to philosophy. To open us up to the inhuman and superhuman (*durations* which are inferior or superior to our own), to go beyond the human condition: This is the meaning of philosophy, in so far as our condition condemns us to live among badly analyzed composites, and to be badly analyzed composites ourselves. (*Bergsonism* 28)

With regard to speaking of and writing about "the things themselves," Merleau-Ponty is right; Bergson himself often seems to indicate that we cannot adequately describe intuition or *la durée.*

In the introduction to *The Creative Mind* Bergson requests: "Let no one ask me for a simple and geometrical definition of intuition" (21). The difficulty with defining is in part because "for intuition the essential is change" (22). In the following passage Bergson describes

[10] The role of the philosopher in transcending the usual compartmentalizing tendencies of mind and bringing forth the truly new is described particularly in "Philosophical Intuition" (*CM* 87-107).

the way in which thought (which is made up of concrete symbolic language) and intuition differ, illuminating the indescribability of intuition:

> Thought ordinarily pictures to itself the new as a new arrangement of pre-existing elements; nothing is ever lost for it, nothing is ever created. Intuition, bound up to a duration which is growth, perceives in it an uninterrupted continuity of unforeseeable novelty; it sees, it knows that the mind draws from itself more than it has, that spirituality consists in just that, and that reality, impregnated with spirit, is creation. The habitual labor of thought is easy and can be prolonged at will. Intuition is arduous and cannot last. (*CM* 22)

Because intuition is fleeting and accessed by surrendering to the constant flux that is duration, any attempts at defining it will only hint at its intangibility. In his excellent study, *Exprimer l'esprit: Temps et langage chez Bergson,* Axel Cherniavsky concludes: « Bergson lui-même semble indiquer que l'intuition est, au sens stricte, indicible » (178). Though intuition is in some sense indescribable, it is also simple and instantaneous as well as part of the enduring consciousness of life.

In terms of "immediate data," it is not that immediate data are given *to* a consciousness but, rather, they are *of* a consciousness that unifies them intuitively. As Bergson introduces the concept of the *élan vital* throughout *Évolution créatrice,* the challenge of harnessing "real life" is brought to light. He notes: « notre pensée, sous sa forme purement logique, est incapable de représenter la vraie nature de la vie, la signification profonde du mouvement évolutif » (*EC* vi). Our analytical, logical thought misses something. However, an intuitive and reflective intelligence that is aware of its participation in the unfolding of life is able to touch something of the absolute: « Mais une intelligence tendue vers l'action qui s'accomplira et vers la réaction qui

s'ensuivra, palpant son objet pour en recevoir à chaque instant l'impression mobile, est une intelligence qui touche quelque chose de l'absolu » (*EC* vii). An intelligence that is immediate and totally present, pre-reflective and pre-verbal, can attain the absolute, but only momentarily. As soon as the experience is remembered, is placed in linear time and considered, and especially as we write or talk about the experience of the absolute, it is diminished. However, the challenge of inserting oneself into *la durée* is wholly worthwhile, because through this difficult act we can unlearn the mistaken assumptions we have made and hold the knowing of a unified and inseparable reality in order to bring humility and openness to the way we think and act in this world. The reception of his ideas thus poses not only a challenge, but also a threat to the accepted or normal way of perceiving; Bergson knew this and thus stated about the hypothetical acceptance of his philosophy:

> It would have meant tearing oneself away from deeply-rooted habits, veritable extensions of nature. All our ways of speaking, thinking, perceiving imply in effect that immobility and immutability are there by right, that movement and change are superadded, like accidents, to things which, by themselves, do not move and, in themselves, do not change. (*CM* 52-53)

To tear oneself from this way of being is painful, is difficult and requires intense effort. The difficulty of turning the mind back upon itself is in stark contrast to the easy dance-like descriptions of the intuitive embrace described in Senghor's Negritude.

Even though intuition is said to be achieved through a simple act, learning to hear or understand intuitive understanding is not easy. The effort required for achieving intuition is anything but ordinary and Bergson goes so far as to say that the desire to attempt such an interconnected experiential contact with life comes very seldom. This is because, according to

him, “We are at ease only in the discontinuous, in the immobile, in the dead” (*CM* 182). He does say that intuition and immersion in the flux of duration is an effort that we should become consciously aware of, but notes that such an act is for “privileged souls:” “through the extension and revivification of our faculty of perceiving, perhaps also through a prolongation which privileged souls will give to intuition, we should re-establish continuity in our knowledge as a whole, –a continuity which would no longer be hypothetical and constructed, but experienced and lived” (*CM* 118). The later, more spiritual, writings of Bergson, such as in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion,* present the “privileged souls” as being those to whom God “effectively reveals Himself, who illuminates and warms privileged souls with His presence” (214). It is a living philosophy that is experiential and to be lived from each instantaneous moment to the next. Though the kinds and degrees of intuition vary, stepping upon the road to “philosophical intuition” is well-worth the effort and the effective or true philosopher must engage in such activity, else, according to Bergson, nothing new can burst forth. This newness is what Deleuze identified in his interpretation of “privileged soul,” whereby human intelligence at play in societal pressures leads to “creative emotion” (111). According to Deleuze via his understanding of Bergson, this “creative emotion” is granted only to “privileged souls”:

> And what is this creative emotion, if not precisely a cosmic Memory, that actualizes all the levels at the same time, that liberates man from the plane (*plan*) or the level that is proper to him, in order to make him a creator, adequate to the whole movement of creation? This liberation, this embodiment of cosmic memory in creative emotions, undoubtedly only takes place in privileged souls. (111)

Deleuze’s interpretation is based on the section in *Les deux sources* subtitled « Création et amour » where Bergson explains that God needs humans just as much as we need him, because,

for the philosopher: « La Création lui apparaîtra comme une entreprise de Dieu pour créer des créateurs, pour s'adjoindre des êtres dignes de son amour » (1192). Because intuition is what can bring about the truly new there is perhaps less difference between Bergson's earlier philosophical intuition and his later mystical intuition than one might initially think. Both versions of intuition are accessed by experiencing life directly without translating said experience into concepts or symbols and both generate newness: intuition is creative.

The method to returning to intuition is described by Bergson; journeying along this path is accomplished by bringing the mind back to *la durée*:

> Intuition doubtless admits of many degrees of intensity, and philosophy many degrees of depth; but the mind once brought back to real duration will already be alive with intuitive life and its knowledge of things will already be philosophy. Instead of a discontinuity of moments replacing one another in an infinitely divided time, it will perceive the continuous fluidity which flows along, indivisible. Instead of surface states covering successively some neutral stuff and maintaining with it a mysterious relationship of phenomenon to substance, it will seize upon one identical change which keeps ever lengthening as in a melody where everything is becoming, being itself substantial, has no need of support. No more inert states, no more dead things; nothing but the mobility of which the stability of life is made. A vision of this kind, where reality appears as continuous and indivisible, is on the road which leads to philosophical intuition. (*CM* 105)

In this lengthy, poetic quotation the reader is made aware of what exercising the intuitive method can ultimately realize: ever-shifting, flowing mobility that creates the very stability of life; indivisible reality where all that is in a constant state of flux, of becoming; and, a deep

understanding of the interrelation between matter and existence. The living, indivisible fluidity of life that Bergson evokes here is an excellent example of what Senghor praised him for. And this unified vision occurs because the mind, once it is inserted or brought back to *la durée,* is already teeming with or is a vibrant receptor for, intuitive life. Thus, Bergson explains that to achieve intuition, one does not, as Kant mistakenly believed, have to be transported "outside the domain of the senses and of consciousness" (105). We must undo our ordinary workings of thought and "bring our perceptions back to our origins" (106). That the intuitive approach requires a focus on self-realization is a thread that unites Senghor to Bergson and will be further elaborated in the final section of this chapter; for now, both in an attempt to more securely grasp the ungraspable concept of intuition and to show the myriad ways Bergson has been interpreted, let us explore the understandings of several prominent Bergsonian scholars with regard to intuition.

III. Intuition as Method? As Reflection? The Audacious and the Borrowed

> "Bergsonian intuition, always total and undivided, simple and whole, grows continually in a single organic thrust. In this sense Bergson's philosophy is as complete in the eighteen pages of the essay on "The Possible and the Real" as it is in the four hundred pages of *Creative Evolution.*" (Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Henri Bergson* 1-2)

Interpretations of Bergson vary greatly. In the chapter of *Signs* devoted to Bergson, Maurice Merleau-Ponty explains that this "philosopher of freedom" could almost be known as a *philosophe maudit* (182). This label is due to the already mentioned impressive number and variety of enemies Bergson incurred. Merleau-Ponty then goes on to ponder how Bergson went from upsetting all the norms to becoming a near canonical author. He concludes that Bergson has

not changed at all, but that "there are two Bergsonisms. There is that audacious one, when Bergson's philosophy fought and, Péguy says, fought well. And there is that one after the victory, persuaded in advance about what Bergson took a long time to find, and already provided with concepts while Bergson himself created his own" (183). What Bergson accomplished in philosophy required daring risk taking and the breaking of new ground. In this poignant passage, Merleau-Ponty both describes the difference between the two Bergsonisms while simultaneously delineating the audacity required of philosophers and philosophy in general:

> We cannot have truth without risks. If we begin our search for truth with an eye for conclusions, there is no more philosophy. The philosopher does not look for shortcuts; he goes all the way. Established Bergsonism distorts Bergson. Bergson disturbed; it reassures. Bergson was a conquest; Bergsonism defends and justifies Bergson. Bergson was a contact with things; Bergsonism is a collection of accepted opinions. Reconciliations and celebrations ought not to make us forget the path Bergson traced out alone and never renounced. They ought not to make us forget that direct, sober, immediate, unusual way of reconstructing philosophy, seeking the profound in appearances and the absolute beneath our eyes. Forget, in short, the spirit of discovery which, underneath the most extreme propriety, is Bergsonism's primary source. (183)

I quote this at length to serve as a word of caution to those of us who would read the many interpretations of Bergson's works and find in them something solid to back pre-fabricated claims we might have. The disturbance in Bergson concerns the inability of language to concretely express the depth of reality about which he writes, along with his creative ability to engender the sense in the reader that, though we may not be able to concretely replicate what has come to be understood, our entire worldview has nevertheless shifted.

Because of the necessity to use metaphor and thought experiments throughout his work, there are, perhaps, as many interpretations of Bergson as there are scholars who have dared try to write about his thought. As an exploration throughout the realms of both the audacious *and* the minimized Bergson, I will now turn to some interpretations and studies of his work, including those by Vladimir Jankélévitch, 1959; Gilles Deleuze, 1966; Suzanne Guerlac, 2006; Leonard Lawlor, 2003; and Elisabeth Grosz, 2004. By exploring what the meaning of the method and term "intuition" signified for Bergson, and ultimately how it is linked to freedom, we can both gain a clearer understanding of how Bergson and Senghor differed while simultaneously showing that Senghor's choice to use Bergson as a symbol for this paradigmatic shift in philosophy is relevant to the spirit of intuition that continues to influence literature today via the *littérature-monde* movement.

Vladimir Jankélévitch's study on Bergson was first published in 1931 but he later republished it in 1959 with three additional chapters as well as a new introduction and conclusion to include Bergson's later works. As mentioned, it has never been out of print and as of 2015 there is an English translation by Nils F. Schott (Duke University Press). Jankélévitch was a friend of Bergson and his study covers all aspects of his thought, including the more mystical or at least metaphysical aspects that Deleuze overlooks. He focuses more on the spiritual aspects informing Bergsonian concepts, noting that: "Because the spiritual is in many respects more 'elastic' than it is malleable, that is to say, because it records and perpetuates all the modifications of which it is the theater, it also tends to reconstitute at each moment its own totality: at every moment, we may say, it remains organically complete" (6). What this spiritual approach brings to time and space, to duration, to memory and simplicity, to joy and even to love is an underlying unity or totality. This totality is, according to Jankélévitch, part of recognizing

that the inner world and our subconscious experience is already always unified. He writes, "the totality of an inner world is present here and it acts here, surrounding, as it were, the humblest of our gestures with a halo of spirituality" (9). This halo of spirituality, according to Jankélévitch, is prominent throughout all of Bergson's works.

One novel, if not courageous, feature of the second edition of Jankélévitch's study on Bergson is that he includes commentary and critique regarding Bergson's entire oeuvre. He explains that Bergson's philosophical intuition demands an internal reform that provokes not just a new way to know but a new way to be:

> Bergson's philosophy is, after all, a conception of life that calls for an internal reform. An entirely new method, that is what the demanding philosophical intuition is. Bergson always said that philosophy is not an ordering of concepts but an original intuition. What is at stake is the function of the philosophical act. To the extent that it demands an internal renovation, Bergson's philosophy is a kind of wisdom, a conception of life. Intuition is not only a new mode of knowledge but a new mode of being and of essential union with other beings. It gives answers to the questions asked in life. (253)

Jankélévitch's description of the crux of Bergson's philosophy in the above quotation aligns with Senghor's understandings of how intuitive reason necessarily merges with the Other, as described in chapter one, as well as the way in which, rather than isolate and solidify, intuition opens the way for a living unified participation with life.

That Bergson breaks with the usual philosophical axioms for the past two thousand years, and is therefore an apt founding father of the Revolution of 1889, is also expressed by Jankélévitch. He writes: "Philosophy is thus no longer, as it is in Plato, a synoptic panorama of the macrocosm; rather, it is a subterraneous dig and an intense deepening of particular realities"

(10-11). Of Bergson's effect on the platonic philosophical tradition, William James, over a century ago in the Hibbert lectures which were collected in *A Pluralistic Universe*, exclaims: "Professor Bergson thus inverts the traditional platonic doctrine absolutely" (252). Bergson does this by asking his reader to: "Dive back into the flux itself […] if you wish to *know* reality, that flux which Platonism, in its strange belief that only the immutable is excellent, has always spurned; turn your face toward sensation, that flesh bound thing which rationalism has always loaded with abuse" (252). Jankélévitch's book is informed by this anti-intellectualist Bergsonian conceptual framework as its foundation and is presented and understood in the "spirit of Bergson" himself. In fact, in 1930 after reading the work, Bergson wrote a letter to Jankélévitch praising his interpretations:

> You have done me the honor of dedicating a work to the whole of my writings. I have read it closely, and I want you to know the interest I took in reading it and the delight it has given me. Not only is your account exact and precise; not only is it informed by such a complete and extended textual study that the citations seem to answer, all by themselves, the call of ideas; above all, it also demonstrates a remarkable deepening of the theory and an intellectual sympathy that led you to discover the stages I went through, the paths I followed, and sometimes the terms I would have used had I expounded what remained implicit. (Letter in 2015 translated edition of *Henri Bergson* 248-249)

Thus, reading Jankélévitch's *Henri Bergson* furthers understanding of Bergsonian concepts and ideas while also ascertaining that Bergson contribution to philosophy goes beyond renewing philosophical metaphysics; he also "convincingly portrays Bergson as a philosopher who strives to effect a personal or "existential" transformation in his readers (Lefebvre, "Introduction" xvi). This is certainly the effect I experienced when I found myself increasingly tightening my fist

while in the middle of a busy cafeteria or when trying to concretely identify and separate emotional states (*Essai,* « Chapitre premier »). Deleuze was certainly inspired by Bergson's works and his work, *Le Bergsonisme*, had an undeniable impact in terms of renewing interest in Bergson worldwide.

In his study of Bergson, which was translated into English and published in 1966, essentially introducing Bergson to English speaking academics, Deleuze turns Bergson's intuition into a communicable method, overlooking the spiritual and experimental aspects of Bergson's thought. The methodological system that he creates out of Bergsonian philosophy is admirable, if not somewhat self-serving, for Bergson himself claimed that he did not use any system other than that of *la durée*, which he continuously made efforts to elucidate. To set the tone for the first chapter, titled, "Intuition as Method," Deleuze explains that: "Intuition is neither a feeling, an inspiration, nor a disorderly sympathy, but a fully developed method, one of the most fully developed methods in philosophy" (13). According to Deleuze, Bergson felt that the conclusions he reached regarding *la durée* implied the necessity of raising intuition to the level of a philosophical method; however, the use of the term "intuition" initially caused him some degree of consternation (13). And yet, the very method of intuition *is* what makes the intangible notion of *la durée* accessible and "precise." Thus, "without the methodical thread of intuition, the relationships between Duration, Memory and *Élan Vital* would themselves remain indeterminate from the point of view of knowledge" (14). Deleuze then describes a trifecta of acts that are required to achieve the method of intuition, which will ultimately lead to "fundamental meaning."

These three distinct sets of acts, which in turn determine the method, are summarized as follows: "The first concerns the stating and creating of problems; the second, the discovery of

genuine differences in kind; the third, the apprehension of real time" (14). For this first rule, the challenge lies in avoiding circular arguments by learning to apply the test of true and false not to solutions, but to the problems themselves. Bergson clearly believes that intelligence is the faculty that can state problems in general, but it tends to see differences in degree rather than differences in kind; "only intuition decides between the true and the false in the problems that are stated, even if this means driving the intelligence to turn back against itself" (21). Again, there is a call for the rigorous return of the mind upon the mind.

The second rule builds upon the first, requiring that illusion be dispelled by rediscovering the real; this is achieved by understanding differences in *kind* rather than in degree (21). Deleuze notes that Bergson is aware of the reality that all is mixed, and experience offers nothing but composites, yet the difficulty is that we no longer understand how to distinguish in *kind* the composites of such seemingly integrated elements as time and space, or memory and perception; "in short, we measure the mixtures with a unit that is itself impure and already mixed. We have lost the ground of composites" (22). Representation itself is already a mixture and can be divided into two directions that differ in kind; these two "pure presences" of perception and memory place us into either matter or mind respectively (26). The issue does not lie in the inevitable mixture, for it is our experience itself. The problem is that we fail to "go beyond experience toward the conditions of experience, toward the articulations of the real" (26). Intuition, which needs to be specific to each experience, sometimes requires a broadening of vision and sometimes a narrowing of vision. It is what "leads us to go beyond the state of experience toward the conditions of experience" (27). Ultimately, the narrowing and the broadening are both required and "Truth itself," according to Bergson, can be reached at the point where the two seemingly dichotomous directions intersect (29).

The third rule is the one which gives the "fundamental meaning" of intuition: "State problems and solve them in terms of time rather than of space" (31). This final rule has entirely to do with the necessity for intuition to presuppose *la durée.* We are asked to consider the underlying Bergsonian division: that between *la durée* and space because "all the other divisions, all the other dualism involve it, derive from it, or result in it" (31). Duration, or *la durée,* itself, is that within which all difference in kind occur or are found. Space, contrastingly, is the environment which houses the differences in degree (32). It is notable that duration and intuition are not interchangeable: "Intuition is rather the movement by which we emerge from our own duration, by which we make use of our own duration to affirm and immediately to recognize the existence of other durations, above or below us" (33). Thus, without the method of intuition, duration would remain but a simple psychological experience. Without the interplay between the two, intuition would not be capable of achieving this method as outlined by the three rules just presented, which provide an understanding of "true problems" and of "genuine differences in kind" (33). With this delineated trifecta, which also includes sub-criteria, making it more of a five-fecta, Deleuze confidently states that intuition forms a method. The following chapter in Deleuze's study explains how it is that intuition presupposes duration in the first place, which involves the reconciliation between the Multiple and the One (multiplicity being that which creates unity; indeed, is unity differentiated because of our mental habit of placing time inside of space).

Suzanne Guerlac provides a thorough reading of Bergson's first two works, the *Essai* and *Matière et mémoire,* wherein she asks the scholar of Bergson to "think in time" along with Bergson in order to uncover the depths of his philosophy. *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* carefully tries to avoid the appropriation and/or misinterpretation so common

amongst Bergsonian scholars, by providing close readings of each chapter. Though this method may not provide the best opportunity for evocative prose, she does help to clarify many of his concepts and ideas. On the subject of intuition, however, she writes less than a page. This is not entirely surprising considering that the term "intuition" did not feature heavily in Bergson's earlier works. She does explain that the reason Bergson's thought can be summarized as a "philosophy of intuition" is because the idea under investigation is *la durée,* which is inaccessible to reflective consciousness since it exists completely outside of space: "Duration can only be lived" (63). Though we cannot not properly *think* duration, Bergson attempts to "write" it. His entire philosophy, then, is trying to uncover the reality that has been sheathed by thought. Or, as Guerlac writes: "This is what Bergson is trying to do: to bring to philosophical awareness what has been absolutely supressed by thought and is structurally inaccessible to it: the radical force of the time of becoming" (63). The strategies he uses to write the inexpressible involve presenting thought experiments and deconstructing the propensity humans have to divide and fragment space and time in order to analyze and create order. This is all done "in an effort to stimulate the reader's intuition of that which cannot be presented discursively through concepts" (63). Bergson does appeal to the reader's intuition, asking that the propensity to analyze and separate be left behind and that the reader instead allow their being to live, moment to moment, without creating a divide between the present and the past. This requires a "vigorous effort of abstraction" and is, according to Guerlac, "no sloppy matter" (64).

Leonard Lawlor takes Bergson's philosophy and removes any trace of "sloppy" or even less than tangible notions from his work. A careful and well written study, *The Challenge of Bergsonism,* reads as though it was written to remove those disturbing aspects of Bergsonism, presenting Bergson's concepts, and the challenges that they pose, in very concrete ways. Though

this may not be in the spirit of Bergson himself, it provides a useful framework for understanding. Lawlor brings forth an important distinction between Bergsonian intuition and that of Levinas or Derrida, for example (61). His comparison between Levinas and Bergson illustrates, "that important consequences follow from prioritizing intuition over language" as is the case with Bergson (not so for Levinas or Derrida) (61). Philosophy that is based in language is, according to Bergson, relative and mediate whereas it ought to be absolute and immediate: "this can be achieved only through intuition; only intuition can give us 'immediate consciousness' or the 'immediate data of consciousness' " (61-62). Lawlor creates a concise formula whereby the prioritization of language over intuition leads to a philosophy of transcendence and the prioritization of intuition over language equivocates to a philosophy of immanence (62). Because language, and Bergson's thematization of it, is so important to the concept of intuition according to Lawlor, he attempts to create a kind of Bergsonian philosophy of language that provides insight into the understanding of intuition as a concept, arguing that "intuition is not language, because intuition is the continuity of duration, while language is the division of words" (70). The idea that Bergson did, speckled throughout his works, create a theory of language that demonstrates the limits of language along with its propensity to make thinking *la durée* extremely challenging, is of utmost importance. The limits of this thesis do not permit delving deeply into the specifics of Bergson's theory of language, though more will be said about it later in this chapter. Unearthing a solid theory of intuition must be given priority.

Lawlor notes that the theory and concept of intuition is not well-developed in Bergson until later in his career. Bergson himself explains, in a letter to Harald Hoffding, that "the theory of intuition, upon which you insist a lot more than upon the theory of duration, became clear to me only a long time after the theory of duration" (qtd. in Lawlor 63). Lawlor begins by

delineating the aim or the intention of intuition: “the attempt to experience directly or immediately the flow of my own interior life” (63). This aim is congruent with what Bergson writes about intuition. From this point, Lawlor courageously tackles the primacy of memory in Bergson, ultimately concluding that intuition therefore is “an intuition of memory” (63). This may seem unlikely at first, but by considering Bergsonian memory in depth, including the meaning behind the inverted cone image, it becomes clear that intuition is inherently connected to the “soul memory” described.

Lawlor begins the second chapter by stating: “We now enter into a discussion of extremely difficult, maybe the most difficult, material in *Matter and Memory*: Bergson’s concept of memory” (27). Much of the difficulty arises because there are two forms of memory, each with a different nature or with different characteristics: “a memory of the body and a memory of the soul” or “a material memory and a spiritual memory” (31). It is also of crucial importance to remember that, as Bergson states in *Matter and Memory*, “*to imagine is not to remember*” (278/135, his emphasis). Memory is, then, part of the past that exists or survives “in itself” (*MM* 290/149). Lawlor explains that since the past is whole unto itself “it cannot therefore be part of something else” (45). Much greater specificity and consideration is required to deeply comprehend the image of the cone and what it represents in Bergson, but for this dissertation it is important to note that, as Lawlor states, “the cone really symbolizes a dynamic process” (47). In this way, Bergson moves to a kind of memory that is always progressive rather than regressive, and that is always informed by the dynamic present (48-49). Thus, the movement of memory, between action and contemplation, is intuitive, as Lawlor states. The unconscious, or the past, is always conditioning the present: “The cone image implies a fundamental doubling of the present with the past (and therefore of consciousness with the unconscious)” (Lawlor, 58). Intuition can

hold the paradox of conscious and unconscious without needing to solidify meaning into rigid conclusions.

Further ideas presented by Lawlor about intuition include that intuition is neither instinct nor feeling. Neither is intuition a passive occurrence. It requires great intellectual effort; for Bergson, all thinking worthy of philosophy begins with intuition (64). As Bergson writes in *Creative Mind*: "Intuition will be communicated only by intelligence" (29). Lawlor warns that we must not, however, consider intuition to be "some sort of special faculty above or outside the senses; it is a particularly difficult way of sensing, *sentir*" (64). The difficulty is, once again, because it is counter to our habitual and more comfortable way of thinking the world. This difficult way of sensing is summarized when Bergson explains the necessity to redirect the regular workings of thought: "To philosophize is to invert the customary direction of thought" (*CM* 160). Lawlor explains that this inversion leads to the simple, in that it is continuous, idea of *la durée*, noting that, "if our intuition is complex or complicated, then we have not inverted the customary direction of thought" (64). Lawlor then links this simplicity to vision or sight, which in turn leads him to explain how vision or sight leads to the idea that intuition is reflection (because of its connection to light), which he then links to Bergson's inverted cone (64-65). While Lawlor convincingly takes one aspect of Bergson's thought logically to another, lining them up in the usual direction that language and thought seems to function, and while this method does remove some of the original "disturbance" caused by Bergson, in that it provides the mind with comforting feeling of understanding, the argumentation Lawlor uses, at times, is precisely not metaphorical or comparative; it is linear and concrete. As Bergson explains in *The Creative Mind,* intuition requires "comparisons and metaphors" to "suggest what cannot be expressed" (29). Thus, Lawlor must admit that, though intuition is vision or sight, it is also

touch, which Bergson calls contact (65). Understand, this is not bad scholarship; Lawlor cites examples and uses direct quotations from amidst the wide breadth of Bergson's oeuvre. Yet, I daresay that he himself, in his admirable attempts to pin down the concrete meaning of Bergsonian concepts, though they provide some deeply longed for tangibility, fails to invert the normal habits of the mind.

Nevertheless, one of the very useful warnings that Lawlor provides in his understanding of Bergsonian intuition has to do with the often-accepted notion of intuition as sympathy, an idea that at first glance would bolster the claim that Senghor's philosophy is highly indebted to Bergson. Bergson often characterizes intuition as a kind of sympathy; sympathy normally implies inter-subjectivity. And therein lies the danger; Lawlor warns: "intuition understood as a kind of intense listening, in harmony with touch and vision, like a doctor's intuition, does not mean that we have a relation to the other in intuition, that intuition is a sort of intersubjective experience" (66). Sympathy for Bergson implies self-sympathy and involves grasping reality from within: "There is at least one reality that we grasp entirely from within, through intuition. […] It is our own person flowing across time. It is our self which endures. We can sympathize intellectually or rather spiritually with nothing else. But we sympathize surely with ourselves" (*CM* 136). Sympathy, in this passage, becomes a self-reflexive act, leading again to the claim that Bergson himself makes when he writes: "my intuition is reflection" (*CM* 70). This is far from the philosophical intuition, emotion or *raison-étreinte* of Senghor, which can be described as a rhythmic dance between subject and object, between Self and Other.[11] Ultimately, Lawlor's

[11] As in the quotation from *On African Socialism:*

> Thus, the Negro African *sympathizes* (in French *sym-pathise*, literally "feels with"), abandons his personality to become identified with the Other, dies to be reborn in the Other. He does not assimilate; he is assimilated. He lives a life common with the Other. He lives in symbiosis. […] The Negro-African could say, "I feel, I dance the Other; I

conclusion of Bergsonian intuition, despite the ironic linear path he takes to reach it, is on point, though not yet complete. His summary is as follows:

> Bergson's philosophical method can be characterized as an 'intuitionism' or an 'empiricism,' in which intuition or experience is not understood as a sort of easy instinct or feeling; it is an intellectual effort in which I put my senses in continuity with one another, in which I especially listen to my own interior life. […] In order to obtain this intuition – here is the effort – I must turn away from the fragmented and discontinuous experience of social life and inhabit a, so to speak, 'world without others.'" (70)

Listening to one's own interior life is certainly part of Bergsonian intuition. Before moving to discuss the primacy of self-study, or of the mind learning how to know itself, in Bergsonian intuition, let me first consider the relationship between intelligence, instinct and intuition, noting that intuition is not instinct, though Jones claims that, in Bergson, "the difference between instinct and intuition remains vexed" (96). And yet, Bergson himself vehemently questions: "How could certain people have mistaken my meaning? To say nothing of the kind of person who would insist that my "intuition" was instinct or feeling. Not one line of what I have written could lend itself to such an interpretation" (69). Elizabeth Grosz does much to clarify the differences between these three Is: intuition, intelligence and instinct.

In her 2004 book entitled *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely,* Grosz devotes an entire section (three chapters) to Bergsonian thought. Therein, she succinctly describes the differences between instinct, intelligence and intuition while also showing how they relate to and necessitate one another. Grosz explains that, for Bergson, instinct and

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> am." To dance is to discover and to re-create, especially when it is a dance of love. In any event, it is the best way to know. (73)

intelligence have evolved from the same origin, and are thus both tendencies rather than accomplishments and both movements rather than faculty or property (227). They share in some things, but instinct is "a non-cognitive awareness of life. […] If instinct insinuates itself into the details of life, intelligence directs itself outward to the regulation and ordering of the material world" (227-228). But intelligence itself is limited in its very nature, and is incapable of adequately dealing with continuity, with evolution, with life, with *la durée.* Intelligence is not the site of grasping newness, for: "What is new escapes it, for it strives only to extend what it knows, not to question how it knows; intelligence projects onto the unknown what it has already confirmed, what is capable of being extended or elaborated, what has knowable consequences, what is able to be repeated, controlled, predicted" (232). Whereas intelligence can learn and be honed, within the limits described above, instinct does not learn. As life evolved on this planet, instinct and intelligence took separate trajectories. Grosz describes intelligence as a turning outwards to space. She describes matter, objects and instinct as an orientation inwards, though not through reflection or introspection, but via a survivalist agenda that directs it towards the relevant elements of life (233). Grosz expounds that Bergson seeks to return instinct to intelligence and vice versa; he wishes to: "find some principle between the two, which derives from intelligence its capacity for abstraction and generalization, and from instinct its sympathetic apprehension of and an openness to life. He calls this knowledge intuition" (234). Interesting that readers and critics, such as Grosz in this case, are willing to define intuition on a linear scale where intelligence is at one end and instinct at the other, though Bergson himself knew that intuition could not be pinned down in such a way.

But Grosz understands the fluidity of the concept and gives intuition a task or job. She sees Bergsonian intuition as a linking force or a kind of translator that allows for communication

between instinct and intelligence, describing intuition as: “the close, intimate, internal comprehension of and immersion in the durational qualities of life” (234). This understanding is in line with Bergson’s requirement that intuition is necessary for gaining any comprehension of duration. She is careful to maintain that intuition is not to be equated with instinct or intelligence, though she describes it as “their orientation in different directions” (234). As is evident in Bergson’s works, intuition is the method that is able to grasp and acknowledge the continuous fluidity of being and of the world, as opposed to the usual divisive propensity of intelligence. Or, as she adequately summarizes: “Intuition returns to the real the fullness and interconnectedness that intelligence subtracts from it” (235). This is why it is the method necessary for philosophy; because it can apprehend the absolute and is thus the necessary tool for metaphysics. Because intuition is the proper method necessary for comprehending duration, and because duration is where the “realness” of existence occurs, intuition is needed to understand life itself. As I will discuss further, the comprehension of life requires that mind, or intellect, is properly understood by the Self. Grosz describes the two ways to know, as presented by Bergson:

> One, intellectual, immobilizes and isolates, facilitates practical action and use but thereby moves from the real to its schematization; the other, intuitive, seeks continuity, indiscernibility, flow, and duration, immobilizes practical action but brings us directly into connection with the dynamism of the real. The first reveals itself most clearly in its manipulations of matter; the second expresses itself most directly in the subject’s own inner cohesion. (239)

This inner cohesion is an aspect of Bergsonian intuition that both holds the key to understanding how intuition is performed and, yet, is most often overlooked or ignored. Though Grosz’ succinct descriptions regarding the differences between the three Is are extremely useful and

though her discussion surrounding Bergsonian intuition brings greater clarity to an often muddled concept, it is, nevertheless, as yet incomplete. She concludes the section on intuition by stating: “Intuition is not the reconciliation of the contrary impulses of instinct and intellect; it is the generation of a new series of impulses which may help modify our relations to the world” (240). The modification of how one relates to the world, though, is the inherent outcome of evolving one’s relationship with Self: intuition is primarily reflective and has entirely to do with the mind’s understanding of its own inner workings.

Throughout these various discussions surrounding the plethora of interpretations of Bergsonian intuition that are out there, a deeper look at *how* to achieve “intuition” has yet to surface. Is the capacity for intuition available to all? Donna Jones states that “Bergson seems never to have suggested that intuition was available to a select few” (86). Except that he did say just that. In an explanation of how the great difficulty of achieving intuition might occur, Bergson does indeed imply that it is not a faculty available to all: "through the extension and revivification of our faculty of perceiving, perhaps also through a prolongation which *privileged souls* will give to intuition, we should re-establish continuity in our knowledge as a whole, –a continuity which would no longer be hypothetical and constructed, but experienced and lived" (*CM* 118–my emphasis). Intuition is, by the time Bergson writes *The Two Sources,* inextricably linked to mysticism, and the privileged or predestined souls have access to intuitive creative instants; Jankélévitch explains: “Mysticism has realized itself somewhere in certain predestined souls who, bearers of a supernatural message, had almost found the center of the creative impulse” (164). Senghor does not speak of predestined souls, but does see the creative act, and thus poets, artists and “makers,” as being better at intuition than non-creative individuals. And, as is expounded in Negritude, Black people allow for more emphasis to be placed on intuitive

reason. However, Senghor attests that intuition or an emotional and rhythmic way of being is available to all people; it is the way of being and knowing that Black people are able to offer by example as a gift to the rest of the world. For Bergson, though, intuition requires a complete rewiring of mental activities. Thus, there is great emphasis on self-reflection or self-study in Bergsonian intuition: "The direct vision of the mind by the mind is the chief function of intuition, as I understand it" (29). This is why writers such as Jankélévitch and Grosz notice that reading Bergson incites self-reflection; Jankélévitch goes so far as to label Bergson a poet of sorts: "It is in this sense that philosophy is poetry and that Bergson himself is a kind of poet" (257). I mention this here to foreshadow what Arthur Rimbaud says about the need to descend into the deepest wildest place within in order to be a true poet,[12] which is akin to reworking our normal thought processes. And the reversal of our regular thought patterns is not simple, but is worth the effort; or, as Jankélévitch describes: "This twisting implies a violent and radical reformation of our habits, an inversion of the conceptual method and, in sum, a true internal renewal" (255). Access to intuition demands that one become aware of and understand the normal or habitual workings of their mind so that they might begin to reverse them.

IV. Intuition as a Journey from the self to the Self

> "There is at least one reality which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own person in its flowing through time, the self which endures. With no other thing can we sympathize intellectually, or if you like, spiritually. But one thing is sure: we sympathize with ourselves." (Henri Bergson, *Creative Mind* 136)

[12] The poet as *Voyant* is discussed further in the next chapter. Rimbaud stated: « Le Poète se fait *voyant* par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement* de *tous les sens*" (*Oeuvres* 348).

Not only does the above quotation reveal a crucial difference between Senghor's ideas surrounding sympathy and those of Bergson, it also brings attention to an idea that was being developed even in Bergson's earliest work: there exist, metaphorically, two selves. Since the oneself is unrecognizable without positing the other self, because they are two sides of the same coin, we can see the indivisibility of duality: the multiplicity that is truly unity. Only intuition can bring us to an understanding that difference is actually what creates the One. Or, in other words: separation and categorization necessitate the whole, else there would be no method for seeing the whole at all.

In much the same way, that we have an essence or underlying self along with a more superficial and identifiable self ultimately points to the solidarity of being; we can't have one without the other, and, without the other, we can't have the one either. These two selves are brought forth in the *Essai* when Bergson is extrapolating on the notion of *la durée.* He explains that the self which is capable of existing in this amorphous non-linear version of time is the fundamental self. The « moi » that can let go of categorizing, of naming and of separating is the « moi-fondamental » or the « moi-intérieur, » rather than the « moi-superficiel » (92). The self that interacts with the exterior world via its surface objectively characterizes and identifies static states, moments and objects (93). Yet, the deeper we descend into our consciousness, the more obvious the symbolism of this habit of representation becomes. In the depths we discover: « le moi intérieur, celui qui sent et se passionne, celui qui délibère et se décide, est une force dont les états et modifications se pénètrent intimement, et subissent une altération profonde dès qu'on les sépare les un uns des autres pour les dérouler dans l'espace » (93). This differentiation between selves is, again, obviously dualistic but is also most simply and intuitively a thought experiment or a strategy to alert the reader to the non-duality underlying the plethora of dualities our surface

mind normally utilizes. As Bergson points out, « comme ce moi plus profond ne fait qu'une seule et même personne avec le moi superficiel, ils paraissent nécessairement durer de la même manière » (93). Bergson contrasts the superficial self with the profound self to show that, ultimately, the self that exists in the realm of *la durée* is the true self, the self we must reclaim and recognize as real. The substitution of the real self for its symbolic representation leads to misunderstandings surrounding causality, freedom and personality; Bergson attributes all of these problems to the absurd hypothesis that time develops or unfolds in space (104). To achieve liberty, we must reinsert our true selves into *la durée,* into which, however, we are already inevitably inserted…but we forget this most of the time and we cannot remain aware of being there for long: it is immediate (174).

If channelling deeper insight and thus becoming aware of the immediate givens of consciousness brings about liberty, we must consider that Bergson claims we are seldom tempted to delve into this realm. Thus, the moments when one purposefully turns the mind back on itself in deep and arduous, albeit simple, reflection, are rare. Once in a while, through the disciplined act of self-study, of learning to understand the mind for what it is, or of simply letting go of verbal thinking, we re-seize ourselves: « Mais le moment où nous nous ressaisissons ainsi nous-mêmes sont rares, et c'est pourquoi nous sommes rarement libres. [...] Agir librement, c'est reprendre possession de soi, c'est se replacer dans la pure durée » (*Essai* 174). To place oneself back in pure duration, which is where we really are anyway, is to let go of the belief or the thought that we are, rather, existing in divisible space and time (which is also true, in a way, but less real).

The real comprises both multiplicity and oneness. This paradox presents many thinkers with the difficult conceptualization of non-dualism. Bergson describes the conundrum of

accepting *either* endless multiplicity *or* unity as composing the real in "Introduction to Metaphysics." In his purview, those schools of thought that reject the idea of duration are apt to attribute importance to either multiplicity or unity, choosing one over the other:

> Certain of them are drawn to the point of view of the multiple; they set up as concrete reality the distinct moments of a time which they have, so to speak, pulverized; they consider as being far more artificial the unity which makes a powder of these grains. The others, on the contrary, set up the unity of duration as concrete reality. They place themselves in the eternal. (*CM* 157)

Both systems close themselves off from the limitless potential of realizing that both metaphysics can and do co-exist. Bergson likens both systems to rivers flowing madly and incomprehensibly along without banks or bottoms. If these rivers "regain possession of themselves, they congeal this flowing either into an immense solid sheet, or into an infinity of crystalized needles" (157). Neither of these options allows for the fluidity of creation or for the harmony of immediate understanding. Thus, Bergson asserts: "It is altogether different if one places oneself directly, by an effort of intuition, in the concrete flowing of duration" (157). Is it then intuition that allows for the mind to entertain a fluidity that is simultaneously concrete?

In the first chapter of his book, *Early Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy,* Leonard Lawlor describes the ways in which Bergson's "Introduction to Metaphysics" moves philosophy to a place that is beyond Platonism. Lawlor explains that, for Bergson, analysis, which stems from the faculty of the intellect, is something that must be overcome in order for metaphysics to be possible (15). Of course, the means to overcome analysis is via another faculty, that of intuition. Thus: "Based in intuition, and not in symbolization, knowledge is immediate and absolute. Through intuition, then, metaphysics is possible once again" (15). This,

as previously discussed, is possible because of duration.

Lawlor clarifies that the reversal of Platonism in Bergson, this "break" from analysis, is complete not merely because the soul is elevated above the idea but because understanding is made dependent on direct experience (28). Bergson takes us beyond analysis because, in his works, "experience is *immanent* subjective experience reconceived as the duration. The duration completes the reversal of Platonism and shows the true meaning of the modern elevation of the soul" (28). But this immanent subjective direct experience that opens up the intuitive faculty, strangely enough, does not simply occur without effort. Lawlor, in this text, notes Bergson's prerequisite that intuition is achieved by turning the mind back on itself. The difficulty of really experiencing direct experience, of experiencing it intuitively, requires an expansion or opening that transcends one's usual mental habits.

As noted, Bergson defines intuition as "the direct vision of the mind by the mind" in *The Creative Mind* (29). Bergson describes this expansive process as an opening up or a making wider. In "The Perception of Change," also found in *The Creative Mind,* Bergson describes this process. The initial mistake of philosophers lies in their attempts to complete perception with the faculties of conception–of reasoning and analysis. He asks: "But suppose that instead of trying to rise above our perception of things we were to plunge into it for the purpose of deepening and widening it. Suppose that we were to insert our will into it, and that this will, expanding, were to expand our vision of things" (111). The product of this "exceptional effort" of the senses and of consciousness would be the "unity of a doctrine capable of reconciling all thinkers in the same perception" which would grow increasingly large through the collaborative efforts of many philosophers working in a common direction (111). Against the predicted counterargument that such an enlargement would be impossible, Bergson says, nonsense: "For hundreds of years, in

fact, there have been men whose function has been precisely to see and to make us see what we do not naturally perceive. They are the artists" (112). Senghor also believes that artists, poets and creators in general offer deeper visions of reality, as discussed in chapter one via the term *sous-réel.*[13]

Because of these "artists," we are able to understand how we might begin to enlarge our perception in order to grasp the fuller reality of duration. But Bergson describes artists as some sort of nonchalant meandering wanderers, "privileged individuals" though, for whom "nature has forgotten to attach their faculty of perceiving to their faculty of acting" (114). Their detachment from outcomes is presented as something artists are born with and with it comes a kind of selflessness; "when they look at a thing, they see it for itself, and not for themselves" (114). Because of this detachment, there is an enlargement of possibility in terms of seeing and perceiving, resulting in a more direct vision than the mundane vision of most mortals. Indeed, the reversal of the habitual workings of thought for the artist, according to Bergson, come from a blithe disregard or a carefree kind of trust that all is unfolding as is; interference is not necessary. He concludes: "It is therefore a much more direct vision of reality that we find in the different arts; and it is because the artist is less intent on utilizing his perception that he perceives a greater number of things" (114). The suggestion is that the philosophical community could learn from the artists by letting go of narrow tunnel vision concepts, in a way. By a certain displacement of attention, Bergson believes that the philosophical community would gain "a completer perception of reality" (114). Senghor, more than adopting the feeling of Bergson's intuition, certainly mirrors his ideas around the importance of understanding reality in depth, or *sub specie durationis* (132). For Senghor, the artists especially have access to this deeper reality, and they

[13] For a detailed discussion on this notion see Souleymane Bachir Diagne's book: *African Art as Philosophy: Senghor, Bergson and the Idea of Negritude.* Trans. Chike Jeffers. London; New York: Seagull Books, 2011. Print.

represent it throughout their works: « L'art nègre tourne le dos au réel. Plus exactement, il le pénètre de son intuition, comme de rayons invisibles, pour, par-delà les apparences, éphémères, exprimer sa *sous-* ou *sur-réalité* : en tout cas, sa vie, palpitante et permanente » (*Liberté 5* 186). Bergson believes that philosophy can "already give us joy" by revealing this vibrating permanency of duration. How are we to access it? Bergson writes: "Let us grasp afresh the external world as it really is, not superficially, in the present, but in depth, with the immediate past crowding upon it and imprinting upon it its impetus; *sub specie durationis:* immediately in our galvanized perception what is taut becomes relaxed, what is dormant awakens, what is dead comes to life again" (*CM* 106). To awaken what is dormant, we must understand that the "practical" is a hindrance to philosophy. How to displace attention appropriately? Bergson elucidates: "It would be a question of turning this attention *aside* from the part of the universe which interests us from a practical viewpoint and *turning it back* toward what serves no practical purpose. This conversion of the attention would be philosophy itself" (115). And the question remains still: how does one accomplish such a conversion?

In the second lecture Bergson promises to clarify whether or not such a conversion is possible. He explains what is required and then moves through various thought experiments. This will be done by returning to "the direct perception of change and mobility" (118). Considering mobility and change in terms of duration establishes that: "*all change, all movement, is absolutely indivisible*" (118). But, before he goes through lengthy thought experiments that will hopefully bring the listeners closer to the direct experience of *la durée,* he makes a simple but challenging request: "I am going to ask you to make a strenuous effort to put aside some of the artificial schema we interpose unknowingly between reality and us" (118). We know that there is strenuous effort required to reach the expansive faculty of intuition. We know

that the mind must turn upon itself in non-habitual reflection, but not for the sake of practicality. The aim or goal of widening perception in this way is that we can "re-establish continuity in our knowledge as a whole, –a continuity which would no longer be hypothetical and constructed, but experienced and lived" (118). By recognizing the indivisibility of change and movement, by inserting oneself into duration, knowledge is ever-deepened. There is always more duration. As Bergson attempts to undo firmly cemented mental habits, he returns again, to art, this time noting that art can widen but that it fails to deepen. This is why we need philosophy: "Art enables us, no doubt, to discover in things, more qualities and more shades than we naturally perceive. It dilates our perception, but on the surface rather than in depth" (131).[14] Philosophy that is born from the method of intuition can provide the vibrational depth that has been missing because of analysis and the immobilization of reality. In this new light, "reality no longer appears then in the static state, in its manner of being; it affirms itself dynamically, in the continuity and variability of its tendency. What was frozen and immobile in our perception is warmed and set in motion. Everything comes to life around us, everything is revivified in us" (131-132). The effect of perceiving and thinking all things "*sub specie durationus*" is an increase in life vitality for the expanded intuitive perceiver (132). This way of knowing is life itself, and one must strive to regain the intuitive vitality of being in motion with all that is. In this tone, Bergson concludes "Perception of Change" poetically: "And the more we immerse ourselves in it [*la durée*], the more we set ourselves back in the direction of the principle, though it be transcendent, in which

[14] In this distinction between the ability of the artist to grasp reality and that of the philosopher, we clearly see a drastic difference between Senghor and Bergson. Senghor believed that the Black African artist, and sculptor in particular, was able to directly portray the deep "sous-réel" vibrations of life via their works. For more on art representing Reality, see: Diagne, Souleymane Bachir. *African Art as Philosophy: Senghor, Bergson and the Idea of Negritude.* Trans. Chike Jeffers. London; New York: Seagull Books, 2011. Print. And: Mumm, Shanna. "The Dialogue of Creative Expression: Of Rhythm and the Flesh," *Journal on African Philosophy,* Special issue: *Negritude Reloaded*, May 2015, edited by Azuka Nzegwu and Cheikh Thiam.

we participate and whose eternity is not to be an eternity of immutability, but an eternity of life: how, otherwise, could we live and move in it? *In ea vivimus et movemur et sumus*" (132).[15] Participation and immersion in the eternity of life; we cannot escape it, and yet, our habitual thought processes keep us from present awareness.

Our being, our existence, simply *is*, and in it we live, we happen. Like the ocean does not actually produce waves that are separate from it but, rather, the ocean waves (wave being a transitive verb) and crashes then recedes all over again, all as one fluid entity. Our existence and our minds are akin to the interconnected wobbling giant mass that is an ocean. But we must let go of normal thinking to experience this slightly unnerving fluid ever-changing reality. How do we think differently than we have been programmed to think? Is the reversal of our habitual thought a release? A surrender? How can we move beyond the artificial schema that we unknowingly erect between reality and ourselves? We don't know that we are doing it. Yet, Bergson makes us aware of our usual immobilization of life and reality. He asks that we know and understand duration as existing beneath and beyond our perception. For him, language poses a problem, for it automatically separates and defines that which is indivisible. Or as Jankélévitch aptly summarizes: "He [Bergson] often said that the eye is both the organ of and an obstacle to vision; that the brain is both instrument of and impediment to memory; that language, finally, only expresses thought by preventing and distorting it" (206). Strenuous effort is required recognize the limitations of our senses, our brains and our mode of expression, yes, but what exactly is the method to overcoming said limitations and achieving intuition? Deleuze, as described earlier in this chapter, formulates "intuition as method" out of Bergson's works, which provides insight but ignores the importance of self-reflection. Despite the many and varied

[15] *"In it we live and move and have our being."*

interpretations of Bergson's work presented here, as we move forward (and backwards to, so as not to impose linearity), we will delve deeper into this notion of intuition as a self-reflective act. To achieve intuition and thus more fully comprehend what it means to exist, one might reverse the regular, often mechanical workings of the mind. Turning the mind upon itself may be enough, if one can trust that the mind will recognize the patterns that inhibit intuition. Maybe it really is that simple: "What is required is that we should break with certain habits of thinking and perceiving that have become natural to us" (118). Simply break the habits by no longer doing what one usually does.

V. Conclusion

> "For certainly, my friend, the attempt to separate all existences from one another is a barbarism and utterly unworthy of an educated or philosophical mind." (Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato* 395)

Bergson's works, when read with an openness to believing what he is saying, remove the illusion that reality is something that can be separated and compartmentalized for the comfort of habitual thought. It is through intuition, and by propelling oneself fully into *la durée*, that one can begin to comprehend the fluidity and interconnectivity of time, space and all of reality. And that understanding will be instantaneous and barely communicable. Nevertheless, it will reverse the normal assumptions and thus have the potential for changing everything. For Bergson, this effort is necessary for philosophers and especially for anyone who aims to offer anything new to the study of metaphysics (*CM* 90-91). According to Senghor, intuitive and emotional sympathy, or the utilization of *la raison-étreinte*, which recognizes the interconnectivity of existence, is the

normal way of thinking and perceiving for Black Africans. The further one investigates what intuition means for Bergson and Senghor, the more varied the various extrapolations become. This is partly because both of their oeuvres are muddled when taken apart or when presented piecemeal. In considering, during the second section of this chapter, whether or not Bergson's philosophy is dualist, it became clear that it only appears to be that way but what the amalgam of his works offers is proof of the force (duration) that makes the separation of time and of space deceptive. Achieving this understanding is done by engaging intuitively and by turning one's mind back upon itself. Because of the difficulty Bergson faces writing about something that can only be glimpsed momentarily, and because of the added difficulty of interpreting what he was trying to show us, we are left with many varying and often contradictory commentaries on Bergson's work. Some of these studies attempt to make what he wrote more concrete and thus comfortable to digest, whereas some try to maintain the spirit of vibration and fluidity he set forth. One undeniable conclusion is that all who read Bergson will be transformed in some way, though they may struggle to determine and express just what the said transformation consisted of. This transformative effect is noted by Lefebvre as he describes Jankélévitch's accomplishment via his study of Bergson: "He [Jankélévitch] convincingly portrays Bergson as a philosopher who strives to effect a personal or 'existential' transformation in his readers just as much as he seeks to furnish a theoretical discourse to explain reality" (xvi). Senghor, though, presents Bergson's works as validating a Black way of life, described in the philosophy of Negritude, that never fully accepted the concretizing rational thought paradigms of post-platonic times.

Senghor saw Bergson as a revolutionary figure who shifted the Platonic-Cartesian worldview of the Forms to the recognition of a reality that is never static. Senghor names

Bergson as one of the fathers of "The Revolution of 1889" because his thought counters traditional philosophy up until that point, yet their respective presentations of intuition vary. Still, the spirit of what is essential for both writers does resonate: moving beyond language, self-reflection, understanding the vibrating and rhythmic depths of reality and opening to a spiritual way of being. As a bridge for the poetic revelations of the following chapter, it is particularly fruitful to consider Senghor's rhythmic creative impulse in conjunction with Bergson's reversal of mind or self-reflection to see how it provides a rich and full spring board for launching to the heights of poetry, which is able to reveal the depths of the real.

Just as Bergson and Senghor both brought forth the archetype of the artist to illustrate the possibility of an expanded and intuitive way of seeing a more complete vision of reality, the next chapter will focus on creativity, looking to poetry as a means of expressing the inexpressible. Senghor was a poet before he became a philosopher and statesmen, and Bergson is deemed a kind of poet by his friend and student, Jankélévitch: "It is in this sense that philosophy is poetry and that Bergson himself is a kind of poet" (257). Poetic expression is akin to evoking meaning *au-delà* and also *en deçà* of what regular semantics are capable of; in this sense, poetry is an intuitive art, both in terms of writing and reading, for it touches and reveals the infinite that Bergson sometimes calls duration (which is informed by *élan*). Senghor sees in the works of Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Claudel a similar expression of intuition and thus claims them both as *Nègres,* making them the literary founding fathers of the "Revolution of 1889."

Much like Bergson recommends a reversal of the regular workings of the mind, Arthur Rimbaud described a method for poets to follow, one that would peel away the layers of mind-self that had been erected by years of expectation and experience and thus become a *voyant*: « Le Poète se fait *voyant* par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement* de *tous les sens* » (Rimbaud,

Œuvres 348). The next chapter will consider why Senghor adopted Claudel and Rimbaud as honorary members of Negritude and, through consideration of poetry and creative prose, we can deepen this discussion of what intuition has to offer not only philosophy, but art and literature as well, for, as Lawlor notes in "Beyond Platonism," "The duration is always creative" (36).

Chapter 3: Rimbaud and Claudel: Gazing through the Lens of Literary Intuition

> « La vraie critique est celle qui arrache les croyances dernières et qui détruit les évidences les plus profondes et les plus insurmontables, au point qu'il faut se détruire d'abord et renaître avec un esprit nouveau pour pouvoir la comprendre. Et cela au nom d'une évidence qui n'est pas encore, mais qui se fait. »
> (Georges Politzer, *La fin d'une parade philosophique : le bergsonisme*, p. 80)

Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Claudel, born in 1854 and 1868 respectively, began their creative endeavours during the turbulent times of mid-nineteenth century France. Senghor chooses 1889 as the date for the revolution of intuition not only because of the dates of Bergson, Claudel and Rimbaud's publications, but also because the bohemian and even occult tendencies in Europe were beginning to disperse throughout popular culture. Claudel and Rimbaud were born into the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution which, as literary critic John MacCombie noted back in the 1970s, "brought with it the materialistic philosophies of expanding empires and colonialism, the pragmatism of evolving socialistic doctrines, the impact of agnostic scientific viewpoints perpetuated by adherents to the theories of Darwinism and late-nineteenth-century skepticism and the revolutionary fervor of republicanism coming into its own" (xi). This time of heightened emphasis on rationality and the mechanistic sciences is what Senghor intends to bring into question and to ultimately destabilize by presenting those figures who rebelled against it. Rimbaud and Claudel both reacted, in their own ways, in opposition to the zeitgeist into which they were born. Thus, while Senghor credits Henri Bergson with being the philosophical father of the Revolution of 1889, he deems Rimbaud and Claudel the genius-poets who bring an emotional, rhythmic and "sub-realist" turn to French literature. By "sub-real" I am referring to

Senghor's description of the ability of the artist–be it sculptor, painter, poet–to expose the *sous-réel*, which is a layer of reality that is more real than real because it contains the vibrational vital forces that make up life.[16] Moreover, both Claudel and Rimbaud "envisioned recognition of the broad cosmic implications of the universe as a means of reaction against materialism's subjugation of the individual and its destruction of spiritual realities" (MacCombie, xi). A return to spirit, to *esprit,* is tantamount to Senghor's project, which involves the recognition and awareness of "spiritual realities," particularly that an underlying force which he calls *rhythm* informs subject-object, or essentially *all*, relationships. Though Senghor is referring to the rhythm that vibrates amidst the various aspects of reality (rock, plants, trees, animals, rivers, etc.), it is useful to delimit the concept of or theory of *rhythm* in this chapter by focusing on what it can bring to the understanding of literature and of poetry more specifically.

I. The Rhythmic Real

> "The method, thus, is already true knowing. Far from preparing a doctrinal deduction of concepts, it comes into being by degrees as spiritual progress unfolds, a progress of which the method, in sum, is nothing but the physiognomy and internal rhythm."
> (Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Henri Bergson* 4)

Is there also an internal rhythm informing intuition in terms of literature in general and poetry in particular? Literary *esprit* or literary intuition, can be better illuminated by understanding the function of rhythm. As a lens through which we can better understand literary intuition, let us consider a more recent and comprehensive theory of rhythm as found in the

[16] This notion of a deeper reality than is revealed by eyesight and Senghor's word play is expanded and discussed in the second section of chapter one of this dissertation.

works of Henri Meschonnic. Meschonnic's theory of *le rythme* highlights the same basic tenets that Senghor expounds throughout his works: simplistic dualism is a mistake and meaning is generated by something deeper than analysis can grasp. Meschonnic discusses the subtle vibrations of meaning-making more specifically by focusing on language and literature. His works reveal that there is an intrinsic sense or meaning vibrating beyond the structures and/or systems of language: the uncommunicated is part of the communicated, and this is why « le rythme, qui n'est dans aucun mot séparément mais dans tous ensemble, est le goût du sens » (*La rime et la vie* 15). Mistaking the parts for the whole is the primary mistake of scientific or mechanistic reasoning. Just as Senghor, and Bergson before him, brings linear understandings of time and space into question, Meschonnic notes the regrettable limitations of linear analysis:

> Analyses linéaires (pour ne rien dire provisoirement de l'illusion quantitative, ni de l'illusion voisine de l'exhaustivité) qui étudient des éléments et non les relations entre ces éléments ni leur principe unificateur, elles confondent the style et la grammaire ; sauf pour les études thématiques qui tombent dans un excès inverse, elles confinent le style au système linguistique ; elles procèdent de la forme au contenu, et ce dualisme est déjà tout l'échec. (*Pour la poétique* 15)

What Senghor claims as the usual non-dualistic approach offered by Negritude is also visible in Meschonnic's approach to literature.

Senghor writes of the subject figuratively becoming the object in his differentiations between the *raison-œil* (rationality) of Enlightenment Reason and the *raison-étreinte* (intuition) of Negritude. Meschonnic asks the critic to eliminate the scientific approach by relating to the text in a way that is akin to the Negritude reciprocity: « Il faut que le critique soit homogène à son objet, un objet non-objet, puisqu'il est le lieu de la valeur. Situer ainsi la poétique élimine le

scientisme, scientisme qui n'est qu'une face (révulsée) du subjectivisme » (*Pour la poétique* 152). By merging with the object of study, the critic can step away from the limited understanding of subjectivism and begin to dance on the brink of *rhythm*.[17] This act is one of discovery rather than one of methodological systematization. Senghor wants to clearly illuminate the downfalls and limits of scientific reason and of Descartes subjectivism; Meschonnic also notes how this dominant philosophical paradigm reduces literary understanding. According to Meschonnic, « la tentation du scientisme, ou du subjectif, n'existe que si l'on pose l'œuvre uniquement comme objet, ou sujet. Faux problème : l'existence de l'œuvre postule celle du lecteur. La lecture est découverte, et non invention, du système » (*Pour la poétique* 28). The reading reveals the system, even discovers it; the reading is not a product of the system used to analyse it.

Meschonnic's theory of language, which promotes the more holistic approach defined by *la poétique* - (published in the early 1970s)- informs his more recent theory of *rhythm* (*Critique du rythme,* 1982; *Le rythme et la lumière*, 2000; *La rime et la vie*, 1990). Any attempts to quickly and thus blithely interpret an idea that he writes prolifically about over the course of two decades will, at best, only bring partial understanding of the depth of his thought surrounding *rhythm.* However, let us keep in mind that, as Daiane Neumann summarizes, « le rythme est le laboratoire de nouveaux sens » (296). This idea emphasizes that the underlying meaning evoked every time the object (poem, speech, literature) is encountered (heard, read, interpreted), the creative act ensues: something new is born. This newness already exists in that it is comprised of aspects of the unified totality; this totality is the resting place of *rhythm* ready to be manifested into visible or tangible existence. The poet is able to experience *rhythm* and express a deep

[17] Henceforth I will italicize the English word *rhythm* to denote Meschonnic's *le rythme.*

understanding of the subtler elements of experience via poetry. As Senghor claims, « ce n'est pas la connaissance discursive des savants qui est approfondissant, totalisante, mais la vision intuitive et *poïétique* des poètes, parce que vécue et j'oserai dire *sensuelle* »[18] (*Liberté 3* 351). And of course, not all poets are created equal: there are requirements for a poet to be considered worthy of that name. In a very concise section (less than one page) of *La rime et la vie,* Meschonnic begins by quoting Percy Byshe Shelley's *Defence of Poetry:* "The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error" (101). According to Meschonnic, the poet is the one for whom poetry is always ahead, never behind. Those who look to the past are merely mistaking the history of poetry for poetry: «Ils sont plus prêtre que poètes. Ils ne risquent rien » (101). Though many would-be poets try to imitate the required risk, it is up to the reader (not the critic-for Meschonnic the critic does not exist) to determine the difference. For poets to be deemed as such, their work must have the power of self-rejuvenation: good poetry is always and continuously new. Meschonnic explains, « Les poètes sont ceux par qui la poésie se renouvelle. Ils sont donc toujours jeunes, s'ils ont l'âge de leurs poèmes. Leur aventure n'est pas un plus ou moins de vers ou de prose. Elle est dans ce que transforme une lucidité qui n'est propre qu'au poème. C'est à cela, quels que soient les temps, qu'ils sont bons. Le reste… » (102). And the small section ends with the ellipses, leaving silence and infinite potential for interpretation, for critical thought regarding "the rest…". In the daring, courageous poetry, the potential for newness and for regeneration exists because of the interaction between the reader and the work; the meaning that is evoked as it bubbles to the surface from its vibrational potential beneath the

[18] Senghor is referring to the Greek meaning of *poïesis,* which denotes any creative endeavor, for it translates as "to make." In his use of this word he is emphasizing the generative and creative potential that humans have. According to Senghor, the meaning of being human is found in our creative potential, in our ability to make something new out of what already exists; in our power of creation we mimic the god-force and ultimately realize that we are god-force. Hence the link to self-realization and understanding.

seemingly obvious words is born of *rhythm.* It is a dance not unlike the embracing dance between subject and object that Senghor champions as one of the principles of Negritude.

One of the main tenets of Senghor's Negritude is that the Black African can offer the example of a way of relating that is sensitive to underlying, unspoken or even unseen aspects of potential meaning. Meschonnic's *rhythm* is a similar invisible informing principle in language, noting: « Parce-que ce qui transforme les mots se passe entre les mots » (*La rime* 57). The poem creates itself or reveals itself within the silence of the sign and in so doing, the poem allows the silence of the subject to be heard, to be understood (58). The poem is the vehicle for being able to hear the unspoken, the unsaid…the un-writable (that is, nevertheless, paradoxically presented via the medium of the written, the composed):

> C'est pourquoi le poème fait entendre, dans le bruit du monde et du mondain, le silence du sujet. C'est sa fragilité et sa force. Il est l'allégorie de ce que le signe ne pourra jamais dire. De ce qu'on n'entend pas, qui est plus important de ce qu'on entend. Ce qu'est le rythme. Où une pause, qui est du silence, peut compter plus que les mots. En quoi, loin de s'opposer au langage ordinaire, le poème en est le représentant le plus visible. C'est par lui que, comme dans *Exode* (XX, 18), 'tout le peuple voit les voix'. (58)

Meschonnic's decision to quote *Exodus* and to use the specific analogy of sight brings to mind Senghor's differentiation between the two types of reason: *raison-œil* and *raison-étreinte.* Meschonnic is describing how the poem is a kind of bridge between those two faculties, for the poem makes the intangible tangible, makes the invisible visible.

This ability to recognize the power of meaning evoked by that which informs and relates the signs and cadence together, by knowing that « ce qui transforme les mots se passe entre les mots, » was something both Claudel and Rimbaud understood and expressed through their

writing (Meschonnic, *La rime* 57).

This understanding arguably comes from a deep appreciation for the intelligence of nature and from communion with it. For example, in his poem « Sensations, » Rimbaud conveys that, for him, a feeling of ecstasy comes about by releasing thought and speech and by simply resting into the depth of Nature (note the capitalization of Nature, which deifies or at least denotes a worshipful quality):

> Je ne parlerai pas, je ne penserai rien :
>
> Mais l'amour infini me montera dans l'âme,
>
> Et j'irai loin, bien loin, comme un bohémien,
>
> Par la Nature, – heureux comme avec une femme. (*Œuvres complètes* 39)

Rimbaud expresses the feeling of infinite love rising within his soul; this love seems to come when he refrains from speaking and ceases thinking, when he journeys to a far-off place that is beyond linear understanding. Claudel also thematically expounds the power of nature along with the necessity to express in a way that is beyond or that offers more than discursive language is able. In the opening scene of *Tête d'or,* Cébès exclaims: « La parole n'est qu'un bruit et les livres ne sont que du papier. » He then describes the scene around him, the trees and the air, noting that they speak to him « avec un discours sans mots » (9-10). This integration with the natural world is crucial in order for the emergence of the *rhythmic* expression to take place. In Meschonnic's *La rythme et la lumière* he states that this is so simply and concisely: « Le sans langage, comme un avant du langage, c'est la communion avec la nature » (39). Communion with nature is the precursor to *rhythmic* or "true" poetic expression. By "true" poetic expression I am referring to the kind of discourse that Meschonnic describes as having the potential to access the infinite and the unknown. This drive to explore the possibility that meaning exists beyond the sign and

symbol of language is the underlying feature of literary intuition.

If intuition can be defined at all, one must begin by stressing the need to leave language and static or rigid modes of expression behind. This makes a discussion surrounding the aforementioned "literary" intuition rather challenging: how does one use language to argue that the traditional understanding of how language works is inadequate? One way is to focus on the text (poem, speech, prose, utterance) as a whole: forget about the individual trees and be still and silent as you vibrate amidst the entire forest. Both Senghor and Bergson agree that moving away from the rigidity of the linear also means coming to terms with the unified nature of existence, or, as Bergson states, it is to be "brought back to the indefinable combination of the multiple and the one" (*CM* 156). What Meschonnic prescribes through his thorough and detailed discussions of *rhythm* is the recognition that one requires an acceptance of the intangible, invisible meaning-producing elements of language in order to experience the infinite possibility born of *rhythm.* Bergson discusses the crux of the issue: language reduces the experience of intuition, a term which is arguably akin to or perhaps informs Meschonnic's *rhythm*. Bergson writes:

> Is it possible for us to recapture this intuition itself? We have just two means of expression, concept and image. It is in concepts that the system develops; it is into an image that it contracts when it is driven back to the intuition from which it comes: so that, if one wishes to go beyond the image by rising above it, one necessarily falls back on concepts, and on concepts more general and more vague, even more general than those from which one started in search of the image and the intuition. (*CM* 98)

And yet we are not left hopeless in our attempts to communicate the richer, deeper rhythmic depths that intuition can access. The sign and the subsequent belief that language is made up of little pieces of meaning all stuck together (but also separable) hinders intuitive understanding and

denies the importance of *rhythm.* Mathematical formulations applied to language, whereby words have equivalences and become static and rigid, are at best incomplete. Words must be allowed to vibrate and interrelate, to change and to grow, based on their surroundings and based on those who encounter and interact with them. Meschonnic presents the dichotomy of totality versus infinity to show the vivid potentiality of *rhythm:* « Le signe est une totalité. Il enferme tout successivement dans une anthropologie de la totalité. Le rythme, le discours ouvrent une anthropologie de l'infini. L'infini du langage, l'infini du sujet » (*La rime* 67). Infinite potential is gained by freeing meaning from the rigid structures our minds wish to impose and by opening to a unified, non-linear epistemological approach.

Just as Bergson argues that true metaphysics requires a willingness to think in terms of complex unified interrelated circularity and to be done with separating existence into increasingly miniscule component parts, Meschonnic asks that this approach be used when considering literature. For Bergson, it is about the philosopher making whole what the scientist has distorted by separating it. I remind that he addresses the hypothetical scientist as follows: "The knowledge you bring me unfinished, I shall complete. What you put before me in bits I shall put together" (*CM* 101). In terms of approaching literature, Meschonnic presents a very similar understanding regarding the prolificacy of beginning from the unified text:

> L'étude isolée d'un type de phénomènes (le vocabulaire, la phrase, l'image ; encore plus, l'image d'un certain thème ; les yeux, les mains, l'arbre ou la feuille, le poisson, les oiseaux, etc.) mène à une cécité partielle sur l'objet même de la recherche et sur le tout de l'œuvre. Il faut la démarche inverse : du Tout aux catégories stylistiques de ce Tout. Ni les procédés ni les thèmes ne font l'œuvre. (*Pour la poétique* 14)

Begin with the whole. Whether it be with regard to philosophy, to literature or to life in general,

there is something tragic and even dangerous about ignorantly reducing one's experience of being. In Senghor's Negritude, in Bergson's intuition and in Meschonnic's *rhythm* and *poétique* we encounter the same thematic request: be open to the unspoken, to the intangible, to the in between rather than diminishing the understanding that can be gleaned by what is ultimately an intuitive approach. When one dismantles the whole, those intangible vibrational affective meaning producers evaporate, fall through the cracks or are simply overlooked. Meschonnic asks that we begin to abandon the logocentric tendencies that have ruled since Plato (*Pour la poétique* 152). This task of revealing the deceit of duality is given to *la poétique*: « Élaborer un langage critique moniste et non dualiste, contre deux mille ans de pensée dualiste et spiritualiste, semble la tâche de cette poétique » (152). Countering logocentric tendencies is very similar to the task Senghor sets intuition loose upon.

The danger, according to both Senghor and Meschonnic, and to Bergson as well, is in the reduction of understanding caused by dualism and by mechanistic reasoning. The risk is that the static and rigid confines placed on the potential for infinite possibilities of becoming will limit and even destroy the richness that an epistemology of intuition is capable of offering. Meschonnic notes that the discourse on writing often appears to be « une variété du vieux réalisme logique » (*La rime* 238). He notes : « De Platon à Derrida, ce bruit de fond qu'est le signe, avec son paradigme obligé. Ce cortège est une vraie danse des morts » (238). Rather, as Senghor would have it, the dance of knowing, not only in terms of writing and literature, should be vibrating with potential and opportunity for infinite discovery; this is the way which, according to him, Black people relate to that which they encounter, whether it be a piece of literature, another person or even an object:

Le Négro-Africain sent l'objet, en épouse les ondes et contours, puis, dans un acte

> d'amour, se l'assimile pour le connaître profondément. Là où la raison discursive, la *raison-œil* du Blanc s'arrête aux apparences de l'objet, la raison intuitive, la *raison-étreinte* du Nègre, par-delà le visible, va jusqu'à la sous-réalité de l'objet, pour, au-delà du signe, en saisir le sens. (*Liberté 3* 92)

There is more to understanding than can be conceived by the eye and there is more to literature than the arbitrary sign can encompass. Going beyond the sign to the depths of being is what Senghor espouses and what Meschonnic offers as an optimal approach to literature. In *La rime et la vie* he argues that poetry is « intolérable au signe, à sa raison, qui est raison technique » (210). Just as the sum-total of Black cultural values can free understanding from the grips of the technical mechanistic *raison-œil* of the White European, according to Senghor, for Meschonnic, poetry can open language far beyond the dry rigidity of the signified/signifier duality. Arguably, the writings of Paul Claudel and Arthur Rimbaud evoke an intuitive approach to understanding and encountering their works: hence we have reason to consider how Senghor's ideas and Meschonnic's theories inform the basis of what I am calling literary intuition.

Literary intuition involves admitting and being open to, and then considering, the channels that allow meaning to flow in a way that expresses more than written language generally seems capable of. As Meschonnic claims of *la rime:* « Elle est dans les mots, mais elle n'est pas les mots » (*La rime* 210). The question then becomes: is it possible to express the intangibility and the silence of intuition through language at all? This is the task, and the art, of the writer:

> En réalité, l'art de l'écrivain consiste surtout à nous faire oublier qu'il emploie des mots. L'harmonie qu'il cherche est une certaine correspondance entre les allées et venues de son esprit et celles de son discours, correspondance si parfaite que, portées par la phrase, les

> ondulations de sa pensée se communiquent à la nôtre et qu'alors chacun des mots, pris individuellement, ne compte plus : il n'y a plus rien que le sens mouvant qui traverse les mots, plus rien que deux esprits qui semblent vibrer directement, sans intermédiaire, à l'unisson l'un de l'autre. (Henri Bergson, *L'énergie spirituelle* 29)

Bergson, the philosopher, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927. The above quotation has more to do with the power of literature, for the art of the writer is to sweep the reader away in a rhythmic coalescence of meaning that is beyond the seemingly simple words of the text. He also shows us the experience described in the quotation above via his own exquisitely crafted works.

What Bergson summarizes as the art of the writer includes aspects of both Meschonnic and Senghor: the call to the Other, the consideration of the words as inseparable and the rhythmic distribution of meaning that flows seamlessly. Meschonnic, in *La rime et la vie,* says that writing is, paradoxically, the best illustration of orality (235). Furthermore, «l'oralité est un travail, de soi sur soi et vers les autres. Le rythme, alors, une mission du sujet » (235). In order to achieve the skill of the artist who can communicate their deepest experiences via language yet making us forget they are using words, the writer must engage in self-study or self-work. In so doing, in knowing one's self intimately, the expression of one's inner world reaches the depths of shared experience. *Rhythm* is the mission of the subject. And lived experience is best understood when in reciprocity and communication with the Other. Senghor describes what he attempts via his poetry:

> Dans l'amour […] il s'agit, pour chacun des deux êtres, de répondre à l'appel de l'Autre, d'aller sur les ondes de l'Autre, de s'identifier à l'Autre, de se perdre dans l'Autre, et, ce faisant, d'assimiler l'*être* de l'Autre. C'est ainsi que deux êtres se complètent, en

> s'enrichissant, se développant réciproquement. C'est ce que j'essaie d'exprimer dans mes poèmes. (*La poésie de l'action* 152)

He explains that it is love that naturally generates the kind of openness and merging with the Other described, but he also says that he tries to recreate or at least express this dance through his poems.

To call and respond to the Other seamlessly and maybe even *rhythmically*, it is imperative to have engaged in deep self-reflection. This is what Rimbaud expresses as he exclaims that the true poet must first become the *voyant.* This self-study brings about a deeper aptitude or sensitivity to *rhythm* and to understandings gained via intuition. Much in line with the desire to turn the mind back upon itself, whereby Bergson states that "the direct vision of the mind by the mind is the chief function of intuition," a contemporary of Senghor, Jean-Paul Sartre, illuminates the responsibility of the writing subject to engage in deep self-reflection. He does so in *Black Orpheus,* noting that the "relation of the self with the Self; [is] the source of all poetry" (20). In Rimbaud's letter to Paul Demeny, he too illustrates the fecundity of self-study:

> La première étude de l'homme qui veut être poète est sa propre connaissance, entière; il cherche son âme, il l'inspecte, il la tente, l'apprend. Dès qu'il la sait, il doit la cultiver; cela semble simple: en tout cerveau s'accomplit un développement naturel; tant d'*égoïstes* se proclament auteurs; il en est bien d'autres qui s'attribuent leur progrès intellectuel! – Mais il s'agit de faire l'âme monstrueuse. (*Œuvres* 348)

The understanding of one's own soul brings forth more powerful language use. Meschonnic describes the intensity of the "mot poétique" as being doubly linked–both to immediate context and to far-off memory–and that means what it means *because* of the interconnected relationality it has for the specific writer using the specific word: « Et ces mots poétiques […] ils ne sont une

exploration du langage que parce qu'ils sont recherche d'*un* homme » (*Pour la poétique* 60-62 – his emphasis). Without delving too deeply into the psychological reasoning behind that which brings forth self-understanding, a writer who has engaged in self-reflection, which paradoxically becomes increasingly clear in relationship to the Other, is able to express a more poignant work than someone who remains blithely unaware of their own inner workings. In considering Claudel and Rimbaud's works, let the focus be on how they were able to share a deep rhythmic expression of being. As we consider that poetry and literature truly *can* present an intuitive understanding, this chapter will demonstrate that Claudel and Rimbaud do just that and will make clear why Senghor identified them as being two of the fathers of "The Revolution of 1889."

II. Senghor's (con)Version of Claudel: Co-naissance and Vibration

As literary examples of intuition, Senghor claimed Rimbaud and Claudel for "The Revolution of 1889" precisely because, for him, their works expressed something that was deeper than the sterile reality of ordinary language and expression. Paul Claudel (1868-1955) was most famous for his verse dramas, though he was also a poet and a diplomat. He was known for being a devout Catholic but he went through a trying loss of faith during his formative years. He credits his impetus to reconsider the more ethereal or supernatural elements of existence to Arthur Rimbaud. Claudel himself notes as much in his prose work, *Ma conversion*. While Claudel's faith and spirituality are important to Senghor, this is not precisely why he claims him as one of the founding fathers of the intuition revolution – rather, the influence of symbolism on Claudel's verse-form and the rhythm of his written work, writing that thematically and stylistically rejected modern materialistic and/or mechanistic worldviews, explains why Senghor

highlighted his works as being part of the revolution that he hopes will re-pave the way for intuition. Though it is far beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a detailed discussion of the immense and varied oeuvre written by Claudel – a man who was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature eight times[19] – the following description by Bernard Halda gives some insight into the breadth and depth of Claudel's body of works:

> Enfin Claudel qui n'est l'homme ni d'un seul livre ni d'une école, n'est pas, non plus, prisonnier d'une formule artistique. Il est poète et il est dramaturge. Il est essayiste en même temps que philosophe. Par là son œuvre résiste aux intrusions profanes, aux analyses partielles, à ces jugements sommaires … Mais si elle déroute certains, cette œuvre remarquablement dense, elle ne cesse d'attirer grâce à sa puissance vitale, à son rayonnement spirituel, à sa chaleur organique. (99-100)

For the purpose of this dissertation, the focus will remain on why and how Senghor adopted the powerfully vital, spiritual and organic energy of Claudel's works and adopted them. For Senghor, Claudel's works belong both to the theory of Negritude and to "The Revolution of 1889."

In Senghor's *Ce que je crois,* he proclaims that Claudel's *Tête d'or* (along with Bergson's *Essai*), are among the first powerful and convincing reactions against Descartes' *cogito* (210). We might want to point out that, this work, though admittedly powerful, is not exactly the best example of where Claudel effectively turns Cartesian reason on its head. *Art poétique,* first published in 1907, expresses a variety of thematic similarities to Senghor's works, including: the notion of an omnipresent animating force; the inseparability of experience; and, the importance of interaction with the Other, to name a few (1984). Senghor most likely chose *Tête d'or* because

[19] For years nominated and to see who he was nominated by, see the following Nobel Prize nomination database: https://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/archive/show_people.php?id=1831

of its publication date, fitting it into the 1889 theme. However, Claudel's entire body of work arguably vibrates with intuitive resonance. Through his creative writing, he attempted to demonstrate something of the infinite, of the absolute, as Senghor explains: « Dès sa première pièce de théâtre, Claudel animait la drame français de ce souffle lyrique, poétique, par lequel il aspirait à l'absolu » (*Ce que je crois* 210). With regard to the birth of the Negritude movement, Senghor asserts that he, Aimé Césaire, Léon-Gontran Damas and Alioune Diop could swear by none other than Paul Claudel and Charles Péguy (210). Moreover, he states, « nous les avons négrifiés en les présentant comme les modèles des 'Poètes nègres' que nous voulions être » (210). In this sense, Senghor is admitting that he, Césaire, Damas and Diop (the founders of the Negritude movement) had to look outside of themselves and the culture they were born into, to remember the themes and rhythm of their inner selves: ultimately, to *negrify* is to reinsert oneself into a deeper rhythmic or vibratory realm that exists irrespective of our mental awareness of it. As I have argued elsewhere:

> Senghor wished to reinforce and validate an African way of being-in-the-world before it became crushed by the analytic, technical, and all too powerful and rigid Cartesian reason. Race is part of Senghor's philosophy because he experienced the world, and witnessed other Black Africans experiencing the world, in a different way than the White Europeans he encountered in Europe (particularly Paris). ("Dialogue" 23)

Furthermore, for Senghor, Claudel evokes the same worldview, free from duality and static subjectivism, that is described throughout his works on Negritude. The Black African– or as I am arguing for their similarities–the Claudelian, worldview thematically requires a return to the recognition of *esprit,* which, might I remind, is recognizing oneself as participating in and being part of the rhythmic forces that inform all of experience, which has now been defined in terms of

rhythm in writing. By *rhythm* I am indicating a deeper vison than the eye can see, or an interiority, that is expressed by the poet and by the artist in general. Moving beyond mimetic representation, the artist expresses a complex and spiritually resonant experience. Senghor summarizes as follows: « Qu'exprimera donc l'artiste? Non plus la *matière-objet,* mais *l'esprit-sujet,* c'est-à-dire sa propre intériorité, sa spiritualité et, par-delà, celle de son époque » (*Liberté 3* 75). The period of time leading up to the turn of the century in Europe, circa 1889, began to see a shift away from the mechanistic rigidity of purely scientific reason making space once again for less tangible, even spiritual, understandings. Since the time of Enlightenment Reason, the West, with its over-emphasis on thought, with the general accepted static dichotomy of signifier/signified and with its mechanistic reasoning, generated static works, void of the sweetness of rhythmic resonance. The shift in Europe towards intuition, via Bergson, Claudel and Rimbaud, causes Senghor to explain: « En vérité, la contribution de la Négritude à la Civilisation de l'Universel ne date pas d'aujourd'hui. Dans le domaine des lettres et des arts, elle est contemporaine de la Révolution de 1889. Arthur Rimbaud s'était déjà réclamé de la Négritude » (75). Senghor "negrifies" Rimbaud and Claudel because he feels that their works express a deeper more spiritual experience than that of their Western contemporaries; and expression which is, according to him, akin to Black-African or, as he would say, "Negro" expression.

Senghor likens his experience of "negrifying" Claudel to the freedom Claudel gained by reading Rimbaud, as is described in Claudel's *Ma conversion* (*Ce que je crois* 211). The encounter allowed Senghor to burst free from the limiting beliefs of individualism and the concrete banality of a materialistic and mechanistic worldview, just as Claudel himself had to break the same limiting mental confines (211). In *Ma conversion*, which depicts Claudel's

decision to attend Christmas mass at Notre-Dame Cathedral in 1886, he describes his confusion at feeling drawn to partake, for his self-proclaimed state upon journeying toward the holy event, was that of a non-believer. Upon encountering Rimbaud, Claudel describes his understanding as having been co-opted by the mechanistic worldview that dominated Europe:

> À dix-huit ans, je croyais donc ce que croyaient la plupart des gens dits cultivés de ce temps. La forte idée de l'individuel et du concret était obscurcie en moi. J'acceptais l'hypothèse moniste et mécaniste dans toute sa rigueur, je croyais que tout était soumis aux « lois », et que ce monde était un enchainement dur d'effets et de causes que la science allait arriver après-demain à débrouiller parfaitement. (12)

This worldview seemed to him very depressing and incredibly boring. He explains how the works of Rimbaud were the cause for his agnosticism, but he also gives him credit for breaking him open and beginning to free him from the monotonous tyranny of materialism:

> La première lueur de vérité me fut donnée par la rencontre des livres d'un grand poète, à qui je dois une éternelle reconnaissance, et qui a eu dans la formation de ma pensée une part prépondérante, Arthur Rimbaud. La lecture des *Illuminations*, puis, quelques mois après, d' *Une saison en enfer*, fut pour moi un événement capital. Pour la première fois, ces livres ouvraient une fissure dans mon bagne matérialiste et me donnaient l'impression vivante et presque physique du surnaturel. Mais mon état habituel d'asphyxie et de désespoir restait le même. J'avais complètement oublié la religion et j'étais à son égard d'une ignorance de *sauvage*. (12-13)[20]

[20] The idea of remaining *savage* or *wild* is of interest thematically. Senghor notes a similar generative quality of wildness in *Liberté 3.* He writes about a time he passed Picasso in a doorway. Picasso purportedly said, "We must remain savages." To which Senghor replied, "We must remain Negro." Picasso laughs because, according to Senghor, they understand the deeper meaning of these terms (*Liberté 3* 221- 22). The terms "savage" and "Negro" in this episode speak to the importance of maintaining the gift of emotion, of intuition, and of being open to the understandings such faculties can provide, along with the ability to see a deeper more intricate reality that comes

The remembrance of religion and spirituality, or, Claudel's powerful return to deep and lasting Faith, occurred during Vespers. He is quite simply and deeply touched by the incredible *is*-ness that he chooses to understand under the auspices of the Catholic tradition and thus call God. He expounds: « En un instant mon cœur fut touché et *je crus* » (13, his emphasis). He believed in that instant, but it took him four more years of resistance before adopting the Catholic faith officially (15).

For Senghor, it was not a moment during mass, but rather his journeys through literature, not unlike Claudel's first encounters with Rimbaud's works, that had profound effects on his psyche. This European worldview, to him, now seemed incredibly boring and sad: stagnant or even dead. Through the rhythm and vitality of these writers he encountered, he was re-gifted the impression of a vital, thriving, animated and interconnected reality.[21] As Janet Vaillant describes in her biography of Senghor: "In Claudel Senghor found a sensitivity to each and every object in God's creation that was not only Christian, he thought, but profoundly similar to that of the African" (79). This is because of Claudel's emphasis on vibration, which is akin to Senghor's ideas surrounding the rhythm of objects, people, flora, fauna and even ancestors.

Claudel influenced Senghor, according to the latter, by inspiring him to return to the deep underlying sources of Negritude (*Ce que je crois* 213). In 1972, at an international congress, Senghor had the opportunity to show how: « par-delà de la *co-naissance,* l'esthétique, mieux, la *poïétique* de Claudel rejoint celle des Négro-Africains, voire des Négro-Américains » (214). In what ways? Why does Senghor consider Claudel to be this unifying force that ultimately brings

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along with the refusal to be blinded by a blithe or even blind adoption of Cartesian reason.

[21] I say "re-gifted" because of his childhood with his animist Uncle Toko Waly. It was in his presence and amidst the natural wonder of the Sahel that Senghor spent the first seven years of his life. This period, the "kingdom of childhood," was characterized by an intuitive way-of-being for the young Senghor.

poetry and literature back to a Black African voice or aesthetic? The following brief description of Claudel's poetic and literary devices, found in *Ce que je crois,* begins to shed some light on these questions*:*

> Dans ses poèmes comme dans ses drames, Paul Claudel, après Arthur Rimbaud, revient à l'esthétique de la parole négro-africaine, et d'abord à la multivalence dynamique, *parce que spirituelle*, de ses images. Parce qu'il en est ainsi, en rencontre rarement des comparaisons, mais presque toujours des métaphores, métonymies et autres catachrèses. Puisque j'ai parlé souvent « des répétitions qui ne se répètent pas », on trouvera, dans les poèmes de Claudel, à côté des inversions, des anacoluthes ou ruptures de construction. (214, my emphasis)

The emphasis on the spiritual is key to understanding Senghor's arguments surrounding why each civilization must bring the best of what it has to offer to the "rendez-vous." According to Senghor, life without spirit is both devoid of meaning and depth as well as wrong and inaccurate, for all of life is animated by spiritual force, by rhythm or by the "élan vital." It is the responsibility of humankind to reinforce this underlying universal dynamism. In *Ce que je crois* he writes:

> Revenons donc à l'Homme puisque la philosophie africaine est *Humanisme.* À l'homme, centre actif du cosmos. Sa fonction essentielle et, pour tout dire, humaine, est de capter toutes les forces éparses qui sous-tendent la matière. Plus exactement, tous les aspects, les formes et les couleurs, odeurs et mouvements, sons, bruits, frémissements, et silences de l'univers. Il lui appartient de renforcer leur vie en renforçant leur force. (113)

In Senghor's purview, Claudel fulfilled his human role as "active centre of the cosmos" through his written works. Senghor was given the opportunity to further his discussion surrounding

Claudel's refreshing and invigorating literary practices at a conference in Brangues, where Claudel had lived.[22] In the forty-page written transcript of the lecture he gave on Claudel in 1972, Senghor offers an in-depth discussion and comparison of « La parole chez Paul Claudel et chez les Négro-Africains » (*Liberté 3* 348-387).[23]

He begins by charmingly and eloquently admitting to the great influence Claudel's works had upon his own writings, noting it was from him that he adopted the *verset* form, for: « C'est le poète Paul Claudel qui m'a le plus *charmé*, partant, influencé » (348). Yet he simultaneously takes this opportunity to silence his would-be critics, especially those who would charge him with being Eurocentric and who frequently claim he merely copied and borrowed from Western writers and thinkers. How does he accomplish this tour-de-force? Senghor, once again, claims Claudel as being the most « *nègre* ». He asks his readers to consider the following:

> Cependant, l'on n'imite que celui à qui l'on ressemble […] La vérité est que j'ai subi, en même temps, les influences complémentaires, mais d'abord et profondément convergentes, de la poésie négro-africaine et d'une certaine poésie française, issue de la *Révolution de 1888*[24] – celle de Bergson – , dont Claudel était, au temps que j'étais *khâgneux,* la voix la plus puissante – j'allais dire : la plus « *nègre ».* (348)

We only imitate that which we most resemble already. Senghor then likens Claudel's poetry (along with that of Charles Péguy and Saint-John Perse) to the *danses nègres* of French

[22] These yearly gatherings, the first having been the one Senghor spoke at, are ongoing. The project is called: « Nouvelles Rencontres en Brangues. » The aim of the group is as follows: « L'association a pour objet de poursuivre et de développer la création, la recherche, l'animation et la formation dans le domaine de la poésie dramatique. À l'image du théâtre de Paul Claudel, de portée universelle, elle aspire à s'ouvrir sur le monde, à ses langues et à ses traditions scéniques, dans le but de les faire dialoguer. » web : http://rencontres-brangues.fr

[23] The French word *parole* can mean "word" (as in the phrase "you have my word") but it is more akin to "oral speech." Yet, in the sense Senghor uses it, it includes more than that. It implies the entire speech or word act, including the rhythm and cadence. *La parole* is more alive and vibrant than any English translation is capable of providing and is similar to Henri Meschonnic's *rythme*. Thus, I will leave *parole* in italics, untranslated.

[24] This is the only example I came across where the Revolution is 1888 rather than the usual 1889.

choreographer Maurice Béjart, which, according to him, give a powerful sense of *déja-vu.* As a student, as a professor and as a poet, Senghor certainly analysed Claudel's works in the academic sense. However, that was not enough for him to gain a deep understanding of his poetry. He explains: « Mais, si j'ai cru la comprendre, si j'ai pu l'*assimiler,* c'est en me référant, essentiellement, à la Parole négro-africaine, telle qu'elle s'exprime dans les poèmes » (349). What is it about Claudel's style that Senghor equates with an African ontology? According to Senghor, the Black person has much to offer: « En ce siècle de la « convergence panhumaine », l'apport du Nègre aura été de ramener l'artiste aux sources de l'art : *pré-temps* du monde quand la Parole rythmait, en forces cosmiques, les images archétypes déposées dans les profondeurs abyssales du cœur : de la mémoire humaine. C'est peu, et c'est beaucoup » (*Liberté 3* 25). The Black African ontology pays heed to the very spiritual source of existence. Claudel also, throughout his huge corpus, reaches into the depths of the very source of art and creativity. The "Revolution of 1889" is a return to the voice of and spirit of Africa *and* Senghor chooses to name Europeans as its fathers to show how their works express a rhythm and a depth that Black people have never lost sight of.

The first similarity Senghor notes is a thematic one. In his view, the *paroles* of both Claudel and Black Africans are born of a unifying and total vision of the world – which is to say, they both present a complete ontology (350). Senghor defines ontology as « une science de l'*être,* un ensemble cohérent de principes et d'idées, qui explique, par-delà la nature des êtres, la structure du monde et les relations entre les êtres, voire entre leurs éléments, comme la matière et l'esprit » (350). After citing various ethnological examples that illustrate the existence of what he deems to be a complete and vivid African ontology, Senghor summates that all agree upon the "unity" and "coherence" of said ontology (351). His plan is thus to analyse and compare the

Claudelian ontology and the African ontology so as to discover their convergences. He describes his proposed method: « Nous le ferons en commençant par les cosmogonies, en poursuivant par la nature des êtres et leurs relations, pour finir par la place et le rôle de l'homme dans l'univers » (351). He then notes that only after this comparison will we be able to meaningfully discuss the nature and the role of *la Parole* in Black-African expression and in the works of Claudel (351).

Through lengthy quotations and rhetorical developments, Senghor establishes that, unlike the run of the mill Catholic view of the relationship between God and humankind, wherein God is omnipotent and we are weak, Claudel gives a much more active role to humanity. Senghor equates this active role with « la *Création* négro-africaine, où l'Homme intervient si activement » (353). He gives the example of Claudel's poem: *Les Muses,* wherein we are advised to repeat creation, « en trouvant travail et joie – le but même de notre vie » (352). Senghor describes Claudel as presenting a more vibrant humanity, similar to Black Africans descriptions of human society and life. Secondly, Senghor asserts: « En contradiction apparente avec son orthodoxie catholique, le poète Paul Claudel n'a pas une vision statique des choses: logique, dichotomique, classique en un mot » (354). Because Claudel focuses on *quality* and because the primary and common quality of all beings is liberty*,* Senghor claims that he presents a harmonious and coherent composition of the world, where all is "vibration," "wave," "movement" (354). Senghor quotes "Traité de la Co-naissance" to back his claim, wherein Claudel writes: « Rien dans la nature ne se trouve à l'état d'inertie » (*Art poétique* 73). The following line from Claudel's *La Maison fermée* illustrates the united coherence of this rhythmic and vibrational world in which we live: « O point de toutes parts autour de moi où s'ajustent les indivisibles! univers indéchirable! ô monde inépuisable et fermé! » (*Cinq grandes odes* 96). Or, more precisely as Claudel describes in his prose work (« Traité de la Co-naissance »): « Je

constate seulement que le monde et moi sommes animés de la même force géométrisante, que je retrouve indifféremment et commodément en moi ou hors de moi. […] Nous faisons partie d'un ensemble homogène, et comme nous co-naissons à toute la *nature,* c'est ainsi que nous la connaissons » (70). The purposeful alteration of spelling, the addition of a simple dash, demonstrates a main tenet of Claudel's thought : that we have a symbiotic relationship with nature and with being. This symbiosis is not exactly biological but essential or even spiritual. Knowing is equivalent to being, and nothing is complete in itself: « Connaître donc, c'est être: cela qui manque à tout le reste. Rien ne s'achève sur soi seul ; tout est dessiné, aussi bien que du dedans par lui-même, du dehors par le vide qu'y tracerait absente sa forme, comme chaque trait est commandé par les autres » (71). To view the world, its life forms, and the universe as rhythmically interconnected is, according to Senghor, akin to Black African ontology.

Resonating throughout Claudel's most influential work, *Art poétique,* are the central themes of rhythm, silence and vibration. Senghor mentions that he was struck, upon rereading the work, by « la similitude des idées et des principes sur lesquels reposent les deux ontologies: la claudélienne et la négro-africaine, » noting that this similarity extends even to the vocabulary used (355). All that is praised in Claudel–imagery, repetition, etymological word play–is also characteristic of Black African poetry and verse in Senghor's reading. Senghor has worked hard to prove that Black Africa also has « sa *poétique* avec ses 'figures' et 'tropes' » (375). Consequently, he states: « Tout ce qui caractérise la langue de Claudel – emploi étymologique des mots, raccourcis et, d'une façon générale, économie des moyens, répétitions et ruptures – se trouve chez les Négro-Africains, que leurs poèmes soient oraux ou écrits » (375). Senghor's comparison expresses that Claudel writes with the style and language that has heretofore been considered characteristically and culturally akin to Black African poetry and expression.

As an example of the stated concurrence, Senghor discusses the notion of solidarity: « Je commencerai par l'idée principe de *solidarité* » (355). Though his explanation involves various specific grammatical examples from Bantou, Wolof and Peul language groups, it soon becomes clear that this *solidarity* to which he is referring involves the various language groups capacity to remain distinguishable and unique while still interrelating and influencing both the other languages and also within each specific language. This is apparent in the way all aspects of being influence and affect all others. To extrapolate upon this interconnectedness, Senghor quotes the Belgian missionary famous for writing *Bantu Philosophy,* Father Placide Tempels, to illustrate the give and take to which he is referring: « Le monde des forces se tient comme une toile d'araignée dont on ne peut faire vibrer un seul fil sans ébranler toutes les mailles » (qtd. on 355). The vibration of one aspect causes a chain reaction in all the rest. Senghor explains that being is force in action, it is *liberty* and *movement* (355-his emphasis). This emphasis on movement coincides with the primacy of vibration throughout *Art poétique* and directly coincides with Meschonnic's theory of *rhythm* in terms of expressing the meaning that is informed by deeper than surface or static signifiers. Senghor states as much by first noting what *Being* is according to Black African ontology and then stating how similar this belief is to Claudel's own philosophy: « C'est pourquoi Dieu est l'*Être* en soi ou, mieux, la plénitude de l'Être, qui a créé l'Homme et toutes choses, et il les maintient en vie: en mouvement. Rapprochement curieux : comme pour Claudel, le mouvement originaire de l'être est 'vibration' » (355-356). Indeed, the very thesis of *Art poétique* is that life consists of eternal vibrations.

Not only do vibrations inform our human reality, but they are inextinguishable. Claudel poses the following question in the section of *Art poétique* called « L'homme après sa mort»: « Quel est donc ce mouvement que vous voulez qui survive au corps qu'il anime, et la rotation,

par exemple, à la roue? » (124). He goes on to explain that all movement can increase infinitely and is limited only by its own cessation. The following passage explains the special place of humankind within this vibrational reality and echoes the humanism that inform Senghor's Negritude:

> L'existence d'un mouvement n'est limitée que par sa fin, par le dessein de la nature et par le dessein de Dieu ; celle de l'animal par sa connaissance sensible et celle de l'homme par sa connaissance intelligible, laquelle est éternel comme Dieu même sous les images sensibles qui en forment l'objet. Que l'homme, ayant à connaître les choses matérielles, s'approvisionne autour de lui, à la manière des animaux, du mouvement qui lui est nécessaire pour co-naître, cela n'a rien d'étrange, mais ce mouvement, il le digère et le transforme, il lui imprime la commotion, l'intention qui lui est propre, il le met en communication avec la source continue qu'il contient en lui de son être : son geste n'est plus que la traduction dans l'univers matériel du sanglot de l'origine. Cela qui reçoit ce rythme premier, que les organes d'amplification construits et entretenus par lui subsistent ou non, est éternel comme sa fin. (124)

The primary rhythm is eternal and humankind comes to know itself by partaking in this dance of energy; moreover, humanity makes this underlying essence known and more accessible through their created works, which in turn engenders self-knowledge.

In his preface to *Art poétique*, editor Gilbert Gaddofre warns against delimiting Claudel's work and rendering him classifiable, noting that many critics marginalise him:

> L'explication personnalisée a ses chances, elle aussi, dans la mesure où les admirateurs du poète aussi bien que ses détracteurs deviennent soudain complices quand il s'agit de marginaliser Claudel en l'internant dans un ghetto confessionnel, dans une excentricité

> aberrante et d'ailleurs allogène, dans une excentricité aberrante et d'ailleurs allogène, dans une originalité géniale ou absurde qui ne devrait pas plus aux contemporains qu'aux prédécesseurs. (8)

Because Claudel, in a letter to André Gide, expresses that he wishes he would have prefaced *Art poétique* in the same way Edgar Allan Poe prefaced *Eureka*–"Nevertheless it is as a Poem only that I wish this work to be judged after I am dead"– we know that Claudel considers this specific work to be poetry (*Claudel Gide* 71). In another letter to Gide, Claudel describes the specificity and detail with which he purposefully formed his oeuvre, complaining that it was not printed correctly, and noting the importance of spacing and font as he asks Gide to proofread:

> I need not tell you that in its new form the book is quite unworthily printed. What I should like, at the least, is: –
>
> that the titles should be set in strong black characters;
>
> that they should be separated from the text by several blank lines;
>
> that each poem should begin on a fresh page. (59)

And then in a later request for proofreading:

> Dear Gide,
>
> I am sending to-day to the *Mercure* a parcel with the proofs of *l'Art poétique.* I hardly like to ask if you would be good enough to read the next set. Who else could do it? The text is so very difficult and needs to be exactly right. I should have liked to use a lay-out which I tried, I think with success, in *Partage de midi.* It comprises a *pause*–that is to say, a blank space of two or three letters. Commas and full-stops only indicate a rough and purely logical articulation of the phrase. Yet there are pauses and halts in my text which owe nothing to the grammar and are yet absolutely indispensable to the verse. But

how can one try to get the typesetters to see the point of them? (60)

If the comma and full-stop are only capable of indicating a "purely logical articulation" what is Claudel insinuating that the blank spaces are capable of indicating? Perhaps the very *rhythm* that Meschonnic will theoretically establish decades later, and that Senghor sees in the works of all the forefathers of the "Revolution of 1889." Pauses and halts that speak volumes, providing an example of the *rhythm* that is « ce qu'on n'entend pas, qui est plus important que ce qu'on entend » (*La rime et la vie* 58). The unheard space between where potential vibrates is what poetry can set loose upon our senses, if we are able to break down the walls of positivist science and philosophical paradigms.

Much like Senghor, Claudel demanded to be free from the rigid thought systems of the dominant nineteenth century philosophical paradigm. Solidifying the primacy of vibration, Gaddofre claims that « *Art poétique* est l'expression la plus formalisée, ont des retombées sur l'ensemble du livre, et en particulier sur l'aménagement de la théorie des vibrations » (23). Upon reading this work, it becomes clear that Senghor's amalgamation of Claudel, Rimbaud and Bergson is not solely due to the auspicious date of 1889: the quality of thought presented breaks new grounds and effectively, as well as poetically, questions the rigidity of Cartesian reason. Many see common themes throughout Bergson's *Matière et mémoire* and Claudel's *Art poétique,* though Claudel did not read *Matière* until after 1906. Claudel admits to similarities but notes that their respective visions of space differ; this having to do with the imaginary of *infinity* (for Bergson) and *eternity* (for Claudel). Claudel explains that, for Bergson: « l'espace est illimité, il est donc animé par un mouvement sans origine ni terme, alors que dans *l'Art poétique* le mouvement créateur est une vibration entre son origine et son terme » (Gaddofre, 23-24). Because this generative creative force that is vibration necessarily exists in the in between, it is

that which allows us to know and be known. It is the communicating essence of reciprocity and understanding that ultimately leads to self-knowing; it is through interaction with the other that we come to know ourselves. As we increase self-understanding, we increase our sensitivity to hearing and acknowledging our intuitive faculties.

Returning to the notion that intuition is a faculty that requires deep self-study and knowledge of one's inner self, we can see that both Claudel and Senghor imply that self-knowledge is a direct result of our interactions and interrelations with that which we encounter. We learn and understand who we are through our relationships with all else. In other words, our various and intertwined encounters with the world around us is what allows us to discover who and what we are. Claudel describes this interplay throughout *Art poétique.* He illuminate's humankind's necessity to know itself via knowledge of God:[25]

> Se connaître, c'est se produire en corrélation. De même que la matière se connaît par le moyen de son œuvre et de l'image qu'elle exécute, de même l'animal se connaît en tant que cause, selon la perfonction de son rôle et selon le geste que sa construction lui impose et que le circonstant lui tire, de même l'homme aussi se connaît selon son mode, il se produit dans sa corrélation avec Dieu, il se connaît, engendré, dans sa corrélation avec le générateur. (*Art poétique* 116)

To know oneself is to actively construct oneself in correlation with God, according to Claudel. Senghor describes the ways in which language can denote a similar recognition of divinity but as it expresses in communication with the other. As a recognition of each individual's divine essence, Senghor analyzes language as he expounds the Black African values of salutations, whereby the direct translation of one common greeting in Dakar, using Wolof, would mean:

[25] In the spirit of word play I hereby rewrite this in English as *know-in,* for, as Christians say, the "kingdom of heaven is within."

« respirer pour soi », « sentir », « prendre en considération », « honorer » (*Liberté 3* 360). The fecundity of interaction is what Claudel achieves via his play on the word *co-naître,* which Senghor explains as meaning "born with" or even, "born together" as in the idea of simultaneous birthing or co-discovery (360). That we come to know ourselves by actively participating and relating with aspects of existence occurs because of interactions with and in the world:

> Parce-que nous sommes avec les animaux, les plantes, les minéraux, tous les phénomènes de la nature, nous pouvons les connaître, aux frontières de notre être, par notre mouvement en même temps que par leur *mouvement.* En d'autres termes, par nos sens. Nos *sens,* car nous avons été créés, par analogie, à l'image de Dieu. Nous sommes un double microcosme de Dieu et du monde. (360)

This inter-friction that penetrates through both and through all simultaneously provides the opportunity for a reciprocity of understanding. Of course, as Claudel explains, there is no simple cause and effect, as scientific thought might have us believe, for there are but causes (plural) and those are inseparable: « Un adage assourdissant, réductible au seul bruit, emplit la feuille de tous les livres: *Pas d'effet sans cause!* Mais, oserais-tu, ô creuse cigale, moduler aussi bien, entre mes doigts : *Point de cause sans effet ?* Je ne l'attends point, mais je souris seulement, et je répète après toi : Oui, point d'effet sans *causes.* Sans *causes* au pluriel » (*Art poétique* 38-39). Here we see the thematic link to Bergson's notion that all multiplicity is truly unified. And Claudel states it even more simply himself: « *le tout ne saurait être sans ses parties* » (75). And how can such a dissolution of ordinary binary thought hold any truth? What could the unifying factor be? Claudel might say God, but he also emphasizes vibration. Bergson might say *élan vital*. Senghor would say it is rhythm. In all instances, it is an intangible force that underlies and informs the manifested reality we experience and perceive.

If we focus on his conception of literature and poetry, then we can safely state that which creates a thematic unity throughout the vast and diverse body of work written by Claudel is vibration. As I already noted, Gaddofre calls *Art poétique* an arrangement of the theory of vibration. The poet, the writer, the sculptor and the artist, they all have one thing in common: they are able to tune themselves, their art, their creations, to this vibratory reality. They are no longer fooled by believing that they are merely their thoughts. Ultimately, this is what *la parole* is for Senghor. It is an act of both listening and speaking, or, rather, it is the space in between the two. Within that in-between space, vibration and the *élan vital* throb as a potential for creative output, or art. Through the bringing forth of this sub-real rhythmic pulsation, the artist is able to depict a deeper truth than that which our perceived reality normally offers. In Senghor's words: « Ici et là, il s'agit, toujours, de refaire l'univers plus vrai, et Dieu plus Dieu, par le moyen de la parole. Mais qu'est-ce que la *Parole ?* » (370). He immediately provides his answer:

La Parole est tout

Elle coupe, écorche.

Elle modèle, module.

Elle perturbe, rend fou.

Elle guérit ou tue net.

Elle amplifie, abaisse selon sa charge.

Elle excite au calme les âmes. (371)[26]

The Senghorian *parole* is the powerful potentiality that always IS. It is Being itself, but before Being becomes. To say before is even inaccurate, since *parole* is outside of time. It is pure potential always and timelessly prepared to vibrate into existence. But *parole* needs a vessel to

[26] This verse quoted by Senghor is from a song by Malian singer Komo-Dibi and can be found in *Les religions d'Afrique noire,* p. 18.

bring it forth. In this sense, Senghor explains that, « le Christ nous a rachetés, mais nous restons libres. En sorte que le Christ n'a pas précisément rétabli l'ancien ordre divin de l'univers, mais nous a donné la possibilité de le faire » (370). In Claudel and in Senghor's views, this is what the poets are able to do because of their sensitivity not simply to the energy that is *parole, élan vital, rythme* –but because of their efforts to strengthen their own inner being via their interconnections with the world.

If *parole* is directly related to the "ontological tissue" of the universe, as Senghor asserts, the poet and/or artist can draw from it and bring forth what they deem to be a resonant truth (371). Thus, the creative act does not merely affirm a physical reality, as in words on a page or clay molded into masks, it also reinforces the spiritual aspects of a person's existence (because creation is essentially spiritual, according to Senghor). Senghor warns us against forgetting the essence of *parole*: « Il reste l'essentiel: que l'intelligence de la Parole n'est pas seulement opératoire, pratique, mais créatrice. Au sens physique, nous l'avons dit, mais surtout au sens spirituel, *poïétique* » (372). Once again in brief, the similarity between Claudel's work and that of Black Africans is in the expression of *la Parole*, whereby the intuitive and spiritual truths are not lost, as is so often the case when we render experience concrete through language. Through the use of symbolic and analogical imagery, through metonymy and through metaphor, in both Black African languages and in Claudel's verse, the overarching aim is to discover truth. Senghor states: « les images vont dans le même sens, ne sont que des variables de la même constante réalité: vérité » (379). And yet, if the truth is relative, it remains unattainable. Claudel takes the purpose of creation even further, into the realm of catalyzing recognizable or intelligible speech:

J'inventai ce vers qui n'avait ni rime ni mètre,

Et je définissais dans le secret de mon cœur cette fonction double et réciproque

Par laquelle l'homme absorbe la vie et restitue, dans l'acte suprême de l'expiration,

Une parole intelligible. (*La ville,* Acte III)

By dis-covering (removing that which blinds us to the underlying forces) and then expressing *la Parole,* which is synonymous with *Force* and with *Being*, in a way that makes the normally intangible realms of rhythmic vibration, along with the potential for it, understandable, Claudel appeals to the universality of humankind.

It is only humans who have been given the gift of *parole:* in the second act of *Tête d'or* the main character Cébès, upon hearing the song of a bird, remarks: « Que dis-tu, oiseau? Mais tu n'es qu'une voix et non pas une parole » (59). However, for humankind, intelligible speech is not merely a given: it is our unique responsibility to develop so that the truth of being can be felt and lived. In Claudel's ode, *L'Esprit et l'eau*, he requests purification so he might achieve and share the *parole* that is a direct reflection of Spirit or of God:

> Ainsi la voix avec qui de vous je fais des mots éternels ! je ne puis rien nommer que d'éternel.
>
> La feuille jaunit et le fruit tombe, mais la feuille dans mes vers ne périt pas.
>
> Ni le fruit mûr, ni la rose entre les roses !
>
> Elle périt, mais son nom dans l'esprit qui est mon esprit ne périt plus. La voici qui échappe au temps.
>
> Et moi qui fais les choses éternelles avec ma voix, faites que je sois tout entier
>
> Cette voix, une parole totalement intelligible !
>
> Libérez-moi de l'esclavage et du poids de cette matière inerte !
>
> Clarifiez-moi donc ! dépouillez-moi de ces ténèbres exécrables et faites que je sois enfin
>
> Toute cette chose en moi obscurément désirée.
>
> Vivifiez-moi, selon que l'air aspiré par notre machine fait le briller notre intelligence comme une braise !

Dieu qui avez soufflé sur le chaos, séparant le sec de l'humide,
Sur la Mer Rouge, et elle s'est divisée devant Moïse et Aaron,
Sur la terre mouillée, et voici l'homme,
Vous commandez de même à mes eaux, vous avez mis dans mes narines le même esprit de création et de figure. (*Cinq grandes odes* 45)

Here creation is not merely an occupation or a forced mechanistic act. It is the Universe–or God, or energy, or potential–freely exploring the diversity and multiplicity that can burst forth through the creative expression of humankind. Birds have only voices, not speech, animals can use tools but do not possess the gift of creation. Claudel's work serves as a reminder that the mechanistic worldview of cause and effect does not comprise the whole picture of what it means to be alive. Access to the whole picture comes from attuning to intuition by releasing dependence upon the "knowing" that comes from mechanistic reasoning. Senghor sees the tenets of Negritude operating in Claudel's works. According to him returning to intuition, and the underlying recognition of an inner self that attunes to a spiritual force, is precisely what the Black African can offer the world. Hence his explicit positioning of Negritude as an alternative and better humanism for the twentieth century.

One of the main tenets of Negritude, as described in the first chapter, is the reciprocity or interrelating, whereby the Other is no longer separate from but rather informs and "dances" with the subject. As Senghor writes, all encounters with the Other become: "a dance of Love" (*On African socialism* 73). We now see that this non-competitive and harmonious way of relating, according to Senghor, is a direct result of the development of the inner self (akin to Bergson's "moi-fondamental" and "moi-superficiel," mentioned in the second chapter. It is of importance to note that Bergson describes that the rediscovery of the "fundamental self" requires vigorous effort: « Pour retrouver ce moi fondamental, tel qu'une conscience inaltérée l'apercevrait, un

effort vigoureux d'analyse est nécessaire, par lequel on isolera les faits psychologiques internes et vivants de leur image d'abord réfractée, ensuite solidifiée dans l'espace homogène » (*Essai* 96). It is social life in general, and language in particular, that refracts and subdivides the fundamental self in favour of the superficial self (96). Both Bergson and Claudel prioritize the necessity to continuously bolster the interior, fundamental self because the interior self is more prised. It is through the awareness and development of the inner self that one comes to understand the depth of Love, which, according to Senghor, is ultimately about a mystical marriage to *esprit*. This total and complete love comes from the recognition of "God" in all things; as in, the Divine in me recognizes the Divine in you. With this kind of union there is « un amour total, corps et âme, relié au monde, mais, par-delà, à Dieu » (364). One way in which Claudel metaphorically presented this total love was through the idea of the layers and interconnection that is music.

Claudel famously wrote: "*Ne impedias musicam"* meaning do not stop the music. When the self becomes quiet and a person becomes conscious of their own inner expansiveness, of their *durée,* that is music too: « Mais quand l'homme ferme les yeux et devient conscient en lui-même de sa propre durée, alors cela s'appelle la musique, qui commence par un certain sentiment linéaire de la basse, comme l'eau qui fuit à la poursuite de son propre poids » (*Contacts et circonstances* 130). Technically speaking, music can be perceived as sacred mathematics in that the notes and chords, the time and metre, the mixture of all that creates song, is not understood by breaking it down into its component parts as mechanistic and positivistic sciences would have us do. A note all alone is simply that. Without its relation to the other notes, without the interplay, there could be no rhythm, no dance. All beings in existence create the song of life together, and there is no stopping the music. To stop the music would be to kill the rhythm. Such

a *co-naissance* and a *co-munion* is at the heart of Claudel's works and it is the fulcrum, according the Senghor, upon which Black African thought balances. Thus, he summarizes:

> Dans ce système de vases communicants, dans cette *co-munion* et *co-opération* des étants dans l'ÉTRE, encore une fois, chacun est solidaire de l'autre : du fétu de paille à Dieu. Dès lors, l'Homme a le pouvoir, s'il a la connaissance des lois que voilà, de se servir du dictionnaire des signes et des images, de jouer sur toute l'étendue du clavier. Nous aussi nous disons : *Ne impedias musicam,* comme Paul Claudel. (367)

Don't stop the music; that such an affront to the vibration of life could even be thought possible speaks directly to the imbalance of rationality and intuition. So what is the way to a deep understanding of interconnected vibration that is Being? Becoming silent with one's Self. By waging war against the over-trusted trickery of cause and effect type logic. As Eric Touya de Marenne says of the poet, of Claudel specifically: « Et si le poète fait silence en soi-même, s'il est à 1'ecoute, c'est pour être attentif à cette voix divine qui lui demande de ne pas empêcher la musique car l'être humain porte en lui l'origine et les fins du monde, et cette composition dont il s'agit de saisir la signification » (76). The music that represents life contains the origin, the end, and every other potential in between. The "Revolution of 1889" is not merely a paradigm shift–it is a return to *esprit* through the disciplined and arduous path that leads to the inner self.

Senghor claims that the poet is « maître de l'univers après Dieu » (*Liberté 3* 367). And what is it that the poet achieves in this respect? How is it that, through language–which I have identified in the present context as at least partially responsible for causing obscurity and misunderstanding–the poet is able to bring forth that deeper vibrational reality? Claudel too gives the poet great credence when he proclaims: « Le poète qui a le magistère de tous les mots, et dont l'art est de les employer, est habile par une savante disposition des objets qu'ils

représentent, à provoquer en nous un état d'intelligence harmonieux et intense, juste et fort » (qtd on 367). A harmonious intelligence implies the balance between reason and intuition. It is an intelligence that is intense and equitable because it requires self-knowledge. In this line of thought, self-knowledge brings a strength and thus an ability to express the often deemed inexpressible. Arthur Rimbaud declares of this spiritual journey to the Self that such a path is not an easy or comfortable one: « le combat spirituel est aussi brutal que la bataille d'hommes » (*Œuvres* 241). As he famously stated, the poet must undergo a transformation and become more than an ordinary human: the poet must become the *voyant.* How? : « Le Poète se fait *voyant* par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement* de *tous les sens*" (348). Claudel recognized that Rimbaud had effectively purified himself of the belief systems and thought structures related to reason; he called him a « mystique à l'état sauvage » and, as mentioned, credited him with provoking an internal paradigm shift: « ces livres ouvraient une fissure dans mon bagne matérialiste et me donnaient l'impression vivante et presque physique du surnaturel » (« Ma conversion» 13). Once the crack through which the light enters begins to rupture, there seemingly can be no stopping the transformation.

The great influence that Rimbaud had on Claudel has been the subject of many critical studies (MacCombie, 1972; Paliyenko, 1997). Claudel himself, in a letter to André Gide, admits: "I have always wanted to write on Rimbaud, but my attempts have never satisfied me; it's difficult to express oneself, otherwise than in pagan parlance! […] The least phrase of Rimbaud has a tremendous effect upon me" (184). Claudel saw spirituality in Rimbaud's works, though Christianity was certainly not Rimbaud's avenue. Despite the difference in religious beliefs, Claudel and Rimbaud both "envisioned recognition of the broad cosmic implications of the universe as a means of reaction against materialism's subjugation of the individual and its

destruction of spiritual realities" (MacCombie, xi). Claudel, upon reading Rimbaud's works, felt a deep spiritual affinity with Rimbaud which lasted throughout Claudel's entire lifetime. In a letter to Gide dated 21st June, 1911, Claudel goes so far as to call Rimbaud his "spiritual ancestor" noting that he holds him "in the highest regard" (165). And yet Rimbaud was the "enfant terrible" who lived a life of what Christians would certainly call sin, even today.

Rimbaud's influence on Claudel comes from the spirituality that is self-discovery. Ultimately, there is nothing outside of oneself needed in order to express the vibrational essence (or "quintessences," as Rimbaud called them) of life and of being. Claudel, like Senghor, interprets the rhythmic meaning in Rimbaud's verse as evidence of spirit. Claudel often viewed him as an "untamed mystic;" the first time this nomenclature appears in print is in the preface to Paterne Berrichon's 1912 edition of Rimbaud's works: « Arthur Rimbaud fut un mystique à l'état sauvage, une source perdue qui ressort d'un sol saturé. Sa vie, un malentendu, la tentative en vain par la fuite d'échapper à cette voix qui le sollicite et le relance, et qu'il ne veut pas reconnaître : jusqu'à ce qu'enfin, réduit, la jambe tranchée, sur ce lit d'hôpital à Marseille, il sache ! » (7-8) Though Claudel might wish to claim Rimbaud as a reformed Catholic, it is hardly the case considering his life and actions. However, Rimbaud's works pulse with religious sensitivity and mysticism; his works evoke *esprit.* Claudel writes: « Rimbaud n'est pas un poète, il n'est pas un homme de lettres. Il est un prophète sur qui l'Esprit est tombé » ("Un dernier salut à Arthur Rimbaud" 17). Claudel was overtly Catholic, and Rimbaud chose to live a life that was deemed illegal at the time, yet both exhibit the spirit of Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" in their works.

III. When « Je est un Autre »: The Absolute Modernity of Arthur Rimbaud

Senghor not only amalgamates Rimbaud with the Negritude movement, as he did with Claudel, but Rimbaud effectually claimed Blackness for himself: « Oui, j'ai les yeux fermés à votre lumière. Je suis une bête, un nègre. Mais je puis être sauvé » (*Œuvres* 217). Each time Senghor discusses Rimbaud and the "Revolution of 1889," he quotes that line. In the opening quotation, there is commentary on the failure of science to restore original innocence; the brilliance of Enlightenment Reason is a light Rimbaud chooses to turn away from. Much like Claudel, Senghor was highly impacted by reading Rimbaud's verse. He was able to find a resonance and even kinship in Rimbaud's work, ascertaining for him what he had come to believe: Negritude had much to offer against the sterile and mechanistic European way of being. Moreover, Rimbaud's return to an intuitive openness via the imagery and spiritual symbolism of his verse pulled Senghor out of an existential angst while simultaneously offering hope that a reawakening of intuition is possible for all of humankind. Before exploring how Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer* supports the claim that self-realization tunes and strengthens the inner voice of intuition, we first need to establish why Senghor claims Rimbaud for his "Revolution of 1889."

Senghor did not write an essay or speech entirely devoted to Rimbaud's works. He does, however, mention him almost every time he discusses the "Revolution of 1889," though in his most famous essay "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century"/ « La Négritude est un humanisme du XXe siècle » (which is more well-known partly because it has been translated into English), he only briefly mentions the nineteenth century poet. There he explains that the contribution Negritude offers to the "Civilisation of the Universal" is hardly recent. He then notes: « Dans le domaine des lettres et des arts, elle est contemporaine de la Révolution de 1889. Arthur Rimbaud s'était déjà réclamé de la Négritude » (*Liberté 3* 75). What, according to Senghor, had Rimbaud demanded of Negritude upon writing *Une saison en enfer*? In « Qu'est-ce

que la Négritude » Senghor describes how Rimbaud's verse is an embodiment of the principles of Negritude more completely:

> Dans le domaine littéraire, Arthur Rimbaud allait se réclamer de la Négritude. 'Je suis nègre', s'écrira-t-il dans *Une saison en enfer,* en tournant le dos à l'Europe, à sa littérature, à son art : d'un mot, à sa raison discursive. C'est à une poétique, à une nouvelle esthétique que rêve le précurseur lointain du surréalisme : 'Je réglai la forme et le mouvement de chaque consonne, et, avec des *rythmes instinctifs,* je me flattai d'inventer un verbe poétique, accessible, un jour ou l'autre, à *tous les sens.*' 'Rythmes instinctifs', 'tous les sens' : c'est moi qui souligne. (*Liberté 3* 97-98)

What Senghor is emphasizing about Rimbaud is precisely what he claims the Negritude movement offers and can continue to offer: rhythmic interconnection and an appeal to all the senses. Or as Senghor claims: "une attitude rythmique, » which is an emotional way of being (*Liberté 1* 24). This "emotion" or intuition is even responsible for scientific discoveries.[27] Senghor notes that Einstein himself went so far as to emphasize the role of mystical emotion or of intuition in the discovery of the theory of relativity and of conceptualizing quantum science (*Liberté 3* 98). Of course, Rimbaud's verse, his appeal to the senses and his rhythmic chaotic imagery are and certainly not intelligible from the standpoint of the analytic mind. Instead, Rimbaud's work must be felt, ingested, even integrated on a level of intuitive reciprocity.

As previously mentioned, the influence of Rimbaud on Claudel was enormous; the same is true for Senghor. Both Senghor and Claudel claim that upon reading Rimbaud's works, they were freed from the banality and inertia of materialism and positivism. Senghor notes that even if one only reads *Lettre du voyant, Illuminations* and especially *Une saison en enfer,* they will be

[27] As Bergson describes in "Philosophical Intuition."

thoroughly convinced that Rimbaud's works were both a product of and a catalyst for the "Revolution of 1889" (*Ce que je crois* 212). Of *Une saison en enfer,* Senghor writes: « Ce texte de Rimbaud est d'une importance capitale. D'autant qu'il proclame, avec son art poétique, l'esthétique du XXe siècle, qui n'est rien d'autre que l'esthétique négro-africaine, qu'il s'agisse de poésie ou de musique, d'art plastique ou de danse » (212). The Senghorian Black African aesthetic is a harmonious ensemble of images that are arranged in a melodious and rhythmic way. Senghor states that Rimbaud achieves this aesthetic through the melody of his verses: « C'est à dire des allitérations, assonances et autres paronomases. Toutes choses que Rimbaud désigne par des expressions telles que 'la couleur des voyelles' et 'la forme et mouvement de chaque consonne' » (213). This verse also coincides with Senghor's emphasis on "rhythm" as the defining tenet of Negritude: « Quant au second élément, le rythme, composé de répétitions qui ne se répètent pas, comme j'aime à le dire, Rimbaud l'a désigné comme participant des 'rythmes instinctifs' africains » (213). Finally, if the Black African aesthetic can be defined as: « Une image ou un ensemble d'images analogiques, mélodieuses et rythmées », then *Une saison en enfer* has such an aesthetic as its very essence: « Cette analogie symbolique est le substrat même d'*Une saison en enfer,* qu'elle sous-tend et éclaire à la fois dans tous les sens parce que par tous les sens » (213). This appeal to all of the senses evokes Bergson's notion that unity is multiplicity, that « unité renferme donc une multiplicité, puisque c'est l'unité d'un tout » (*Essai* 62-63). Through the complete deregulation of all our senses, as Rimbaud states, we can come to rest in our deepest selves, free from the added layers of experience and memory.

Senghor calls Arthur Rimbaud: « un modèle parfait de poète symboliste, et moderne » (217). But this modernity Senghor refers to arose in Rimbaud because of a distaste for European bourgeoisie values and from a love of what Senghor calls, though he names and describes it later

than Rimbaud first embraced it, Negritude (217). Rimbaud himself famously claimed that "one must be absolutely modern" near the end of *Une saison en enfer* (241). This modernity, in the *absolute* sense, has little to do with trends or geographical quandaries or even with time at all. Here it involves being ever present to the plethora of creative potential that exists in every moment and all at once. To be absolutely modern is to be the *voyant,* to be free from all conditioning and programming. Following the reading tradition heralded by Senghor, to be absolutely modern thus means to be open to intuition, which here comes to designate the spontaneous release, which is also found at the heart of Negritude, whereby truly *new* thought can arise.

Unpacking "meaning" and then describing what has been understood through language is risky at the best of times. When discussing Rimbaud, it becomes almost absurd. But, much like the critic Pierre Brunel, « je ne crois pas à 'l'illisibilité' de Rimbaud » (6). Though we must proceed with caution here, for Rimbaud himself warned, in a letter to Izambard: « Vous ne comprendrez pas du tout, et je ne saurais presque vous expliquer » (*Œuvres* 345). In this particular instance, Rimbaud is describing the method he uses to arrive at the unknown, « à l'inconnu, » which is tied up with his desire to be a visionary poet. Thus, when considering the meaning behind the phrase « il faut être absolument moderne, » we must also go through a « dérèglement de tous les sens, » as Rimbaud attempted to do. In terms of the phrase in question– what can it mean to be "absolutely modern?" –Henri Meschonnic enigmatically ends a small section of *Modernité, modernité* by noting, without specifying what they are, the plethora of misunderstandings: « Il me semble bien, pourtant, qu'il y a eu un malentendu. Rimbaud n'a pas écrit 'il faut être absolument moderne'. Au sens où on l'a pris. D'Adorno à René Char » (122).

What then, in terms of intuition and Senghor's "Revolution of 1889," could it mean when Rimbaud claims the need for absolute modernity? Modernity, at best, is an incessant journey.

This particular journey descends into hell. Welcome aboard. Fear not, it will last but a season. And the return to earth could be bright and glorious. To begin, Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer* is a powerful, symbolic and complicated work. Marcelin Pleynet writes the following: «*Une saison en enfer,* c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire, fait le point sur le traversée du siècle» (*Rimbaud en son temps* 35). Yet, Rimbaud's evaluation of the nineteenth century is highly personalized and is not clearly a commentary on society; clarity is simply not what Rimbaud intends. Or as Paul Valéry once stated: "All known literature is written in the language of *common sense*—except Rimbaud's" (qtd. in Robb, xiv). Common sense could be equated to Senghor's *raison-oeil* and, in order to infer meaning from Rimbaud's words, one could try the *raison-étreinte* Senghor describes. As we focus on the intuitive aspect that exudes from Rimbaud's verse, thus making him one of the heroes of Senghor's "Revolution of 1889," it is worthwhile incorporating the same method Rimbaud adopted in order to be a poet, and a *voyant* at that. As a reminder: « Le Poète se fait *voyant* par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement* de *tous les sens* » (Rimbaud*, Œuvres* 348). But how did our senses first become regulated and conditioned? How could one begin to undo the mental programming that inevitably and necessarily occurs throughout life? To understand that one's way of thinking consists of the accumulation of patterns and habits, one can begin to return to a less static and rigid way of understanding. One can transform to a more spontaneous and intuitive projection of mind. In this sense, *Une saison en enfer* is primarily a journey to self-realization and that to be modern, in the absolute sense, is to be oneself and nothing more, nothing less.

The *je* in Rimbaud's text undergoes a rigorous and dichotomous battery of trying on contrasting ideas, belief systems, ways of thinking–and then rejecting them for their discomfort and falsity. The dualism of West versus East or of Occident versus Orient causes many critics to see the rejection of Western progress as evidence that Rimbaud's "absolutely modern" is actually a narrative of counter-modernity. Rimbaud does admittedly criticize and question the notions of science and of progress: « La science, la nouvelle noblesse! Le progrès. Le monde marche! Pourquoi ne tournerait-il pas? » (*Une saison* 214). The world is turning, but according to Rimbaud, most people imagine progress in the false but more linear way evoked by the verb *marcher*, which implies taking step after step but also means to function, to work. If the world doesn't seem to be turning, are we understanding the depth of experienced, both conscious and sub-conscious, reality? Or is the idea that we are mistakenly focused on the march forward rather than reveling in the cyclic duration explanation for Rimbaud's claim: « Décidément, nous sommes hors du monde » (222)? If we are outside of the world, how do we get back in?

The subject of Rimbaud's work, in his quest to gain entrance to the *festin ancien*, where he might regain his appetite for life, professes that he is a beast (216). Civilization, European Enlightenment…these are mistakes: « Oui, j'ai les yeux fermés à votre lumière. Je suis une bête, un nègre. Mais je puis être sauvé » (217). This line in particular grants Senghor the opportunity to claim Rimbaud as a poet of Negritude, though the stylistic and thematic aspects of Rimbaud's oeuvre already give him that rhythmic deeper-than-analysis edge Senghor promotes. For example, in *Ce que je crois,* Senghor claims that, according to Rimbaud, the first element of the poetry of "modernity" is: « la musique, plus exactement, la mélodie des vers ou des versets, c'est-à-dire des allitérations, assonances et autres paronomases » (213). These aspects of Rimbaldian verse are glaringly obvious in his poem « Voyelles », which begins as follows:

A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu: voyelles,

Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes :

A, noir corset velu des mouches éclatantes

Qui bobinent autour des puanteurs cruelles (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 140)

By granting colours to the vowels and by describing the energy that they all expose, Rimbaud evokes the rhythmic deeper-than-surface meaning that both Meschonnic and Senghor theorize throughout their works. He says as much in the section of *Une saison en enfer* entitled « Alchimie du verbe »: « J'inventai la couleur des voyelles! […] Je réglai la forme et le mouvement de chaque consonne, et, avec des rythmes instinctifs, je me flattai d'inventer un verbe poétique accessible, un jour ou l'autre, à tous les sens. […] J'écrivais des silences, des nuits, je notais l'inexprimable » (284-286). The "instinctive rhythms" that open his writing to being able to write silences and record the inexpressible are, according to Senghor, a proclamation of the twentieth century aesthetic, which is essentially that of the Black African: « D'autant qu'il proclame, avec son art poétique, l'esthétique du XXème siècle, qui n'est rien d'autre que l'esthétique négro-africaine, qu'il s'agisse de poésie ou de musique, d'art plastique ou de danse. Cette esthétique qu'au chapitre 3 j'ai définie : 'une image ou un ensemble d'images analogiques, mélodieuses et rythmées' » (*Ce que je crois* 213). Recognition of this twentieth century aesthetic, one that is melodious and rhythmic, requires being open to the vibrations that provide the deeper meaning. Engaging with intuition and opening to the deeper vibrations of the world are acts that offer "salvation" from what is perceived as the false linear narrative of Enlightenment Reason. And how will the poet achieve this salvation? By tumbling into the void; by knowing himself; by dancing and surrendering to the rhythm and omnipotence of nature; by leaving words behind:

> Connais-je encore la nature? Me connais-je? – *Plus de mots.* J'ensevelis les morts dans mon ventre. Cris, tambour, danse, danse, danse, danse! Je ne vois même pas l'heure où, les blancs débarquant, je tomberai au néant.
>
> Faim, soif, cris, danse, danse, danse, danse! (*Une saison en enfer, Rimbaud: Complete Works* 217)

Rhythm; dance; drums; ancestors; spirituality: these are all of the main tenets of Negritude. In « De la Négritude, » Senghor incorporates African American writers to support the freedom of authentic expression that is rhythmic and primary. The following is a verse from Langston Hughes, translated by Senghor. Its similarity to Rimbaud's verse is striking:

> *Tous le tam-tams de la brousse battent dans mon sang,*
>
> *Toutes les lunes sauvages et ferventes de la brousse brillent dans mon âme.*
>
> *J'ai peur de cette civilisation*
>
> *Si dure*
>
> *Si forte*
>
> *Si froide.* (*Liberté 5* 15)

How to counter the harshness of Western civilization? A return to spirituality is what will save global humanity from the ravages of the overuse of analytic reason. In his homage to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Senghor asserts what he believes to be the ultimate goal of humankind: « Donc, au-delà du bien-être matériel, le 'plus-être' spirituel, épanouissement de l'intelligence et du cœur, est confirmé comme le but ultime de l' 'activité générique' de l'Homme, pour employer l'expression de Marx » (*Liberté 5* 11).[28] Once again, a similar thematic resonance is to be found

[28] In *On African Socialism* Senghor explains that Marxism is lacking a spiritual dimension and will undergo a "sifting process" (48). He also concludes that "we had already achieved socialism before the coming of the European. We would conclude that our duty is to renew it by helping it to regain its spiritual dimensions" (49).

in Rimbaud, whereby the poet seeks escape from the clouded insanity of the continent so he can leave behind those whose limited–and limiting–ways of being he deems contemptible: « Le plus malin est de quitter ce continent, où la folie rôde pour pourvoir d'otages ces misérables » (217). The poet will no longer be held hostage; to be absolutely modern is also to be absolutely free.

But before freedom there must be a rediscovery of oneself, of conflicting impulses being ultimately rejected until there is nothing left but the essential self. Literary critic Gerald Macklin, who views *Une saison en enfer* as a diary of a madman, notes that within it: "There is a movement between calmness and agitation, clarity of thought and purpose and a contradictory voice which rejects all definitive thoughts and beliefs" ("Madness and Modernity" 380). Is Rimbaud not putting the reader through the very *dérèglement* of the senses that he claims is necessary to gain the visionary status of Poet? If, *Une saison en enfer* is all about uncertainty, contradiction and paradox as the stumbling narrative voice moves erratically towards some kind of coherence and resolution, then we must ask: to what end?

The culmination of the ecstatic season into Rimbaud's Hell, sung out from the highest towers, is to grow embittered and turn away from the world. The poem called « Chanson de la plus haute Tour » within *Une saison en enfer* is one of the ways that, « Je disais adieu au monde dans d'espèces de romances » :

> Qu'il vienne, qu'il vienne,
> Le temps dont on s'éprenne.
>
> J'ai tant fait patience
> Qu'à jamais j'oublie.
> Craintes et souffrances
> Aux cieux sont parties.
> Et la soif malsaine
> Obscurcit mes veines.
>
> Qu'il vienne, qu'il vienne.
> Le temps dont on s'éprenne. (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 288)

Wishing to finally arrive at that point, the time that we will undeniably fall in love with, having patiently waited and then becoming finally free from the illusions of his former self, leads the poet next to a celebration of nature where his eternal soul is able to rediscover eternity, which is: « la mer mêlée/ Au soleil » (292). The celebratory nature and positivity of the section entitled « Délires II » comes because, through the negation of all that the poet is not, the *je* has come to understand the eternal nature of his soul. As Macklin explains: "The splintered self craves unity, lucidity, serenity. Yet in this very process, a magical poeticization of language occurs—the beautiful aesthetic by-product of the tortured mind" (384). The claim that the subject's search for serenity results in a powerful poetic journey is accurate, though the conclusion of madness and of a tortured mind is questionable. The madness, rather, comes from the separation of the head from the heart; it comes from believing one can analyze the complexity of experience with their limited mental faculties. Rimbaldian Madness is believing that one can understand and control their life and the world around them while only trusting and implementing a small portion of their immense potential for "pure perception," to use Bergson's term.[29]

If the poet projects a tortured mind, it is a purposefully self-inflicted torture that frees him of pre-established systems of thought or belief. For example, when the poet states: « J'ai horreur de tous les métiers, » Macklin sees that as evidence that the *je* "is not at all sure of who he really is" (381). However, this can more deeply be read as a statement evidencing that the poet is certain he is not buying into Western ideologies or norms, such as the need for one to identify with a socially acceptable profession, or with a productive form of work. This rejection of the Occident is further deemed by Macklin, as it has been by several other critics, to ascertain

[29] Bergson develops the notion of "pure perception" throughout the third chapter of *Matière et mémoire* and summarizes that this kind of perception exists in the realm of *esprit:* « En passant de perception pure à la mémoire, nous quittions définitivement la matière pour l'esprit » (265).

Rimbaud's fascination for or idealization of the Orient. But it is ultimately a pagan ideal that Rimbaud champions: « Le sang païen revient! L'Esprit est proche, pourquoi Christ ne m'aide-t-il pas, en donnant à mon âme noblesse et liberté » (*Rimbaud: Complete Works* 215). Liberty comes, for the poet, upon the rejection of all dogmatic or unexamined ways of being in the world. That Rimbaud mentions Christ but finds no solace or help therein is evidence of Rimbaud's aforementioned spiritual sensitivity while simultaneously criticizing the Christian doctrine of seeking salvation outside of one's self. Rather, the Orient holds, for him, the initial and eternal wisdom he seeks: « je retournais à l'Orient et à la sagesse première et éternelle » (236). For the poet, a return to the East brings about a deeper and more complete way of being, of understanding. This openness to geographical, and eventually cultural otherness intersects with what Senghor means when he writes: "One must be Métis in some way." That being said, Senghor's conclusion to « De la Négritude » offers a different wisdom that Rimbaud evokes throughout *Une saison en enfer*. Rimbaud illustrates the ways in which experiencing ways of being that are outside of one's comfort or normal day to day is liberating and illuminating while completely rejecting his cultural origins. Of culture, Senghor writes: « La véritable culture est enracinement et déracinement. Enracinement au plus profond de la terre natale : dans son héritage spirituel. Mais déracinement : ouverture à la pluie et au soleil, aux apports fécondants des civilisations étrangères » (*Liberté 5* 25). Rather than a complete rejection of the cultural influence that a person comes into contact with, Senghor wishes for a spiritual embrace of the best each culture has to offer. This voyageur spirit of reciprocity and spirit-infused literature is precisely what the *littérature-monde* proponents endorse. This is not to say that Rimbaud –even the Senghorian Rimbaud– does not overtly criticize the West and its ideologies of progress and

science; however, the phrase « il faut être absolument moderne » is not simply a paradoxical statement that ultimately criticizes modernity.

It is in the section of *Une saison en enfer* titled « Adieu » where the Rimbaldian poet bids farewell to his conflicted and self-seeking counterpart. Therein we find him ultimately convinced of his truth, his « liberté libre. »[30] How did he find it? He stripped himself of everything that he was not in essence and tried to create newness: « de nouvelles fleurs, de nouveaux astres, de nouvelles chairs, de nouvelles langues » (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 302). The poet managed to embrace the harsh surface of reality: « Moi! moi qui me suis dit mage ou ange, dispensé de toute morale, je suis rendu au sol, avec un devoir à chercher, et la réalité rugueuse à étreindre! » (302). And upon achieving this arduous understanding, for let it be known that, « le combat spirituel est aussi brutal que la bataille d'hommes, » the poet notes how all former hellish agonies and memories are now fading (302). Thus, when Rimbaud states: « Il faut être absolument moderne, » he is ideally speaking from a place of having relinquished all false notions of identity, and any rumination that might come from reminiscing about what it took to get to this place of newness, and of freedom. Or as Pierre Brunel notes: « En jouant avec la folie, le poète a joué avec lui-même, jusqu'à la limite d'un possible effacement de son moi » (*Arthur Rimbaud* 151). *Une saison en enfer* is the internal dialogue describing the uncomfortable search for truth, and for what is eternal in human beings.

The poet's willingness to experience this descent into hell has provided him with an understanding of being human, of having recognized the somewhat torturous existence that we are "half dust, half deity,"[31] staying ever-new and painfully and arduously rejecting unexamined

[30] In a letter to Georges Izambard, dated 2 November, 1870, Rimbaud writes: « Que voulez-vous, je m'entête affreusement à adorer la liberté libre » (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 368).

[31] Here I am alluding to a quotation from the Romantic poet Lord Byron: "But we, who name/ ourselves its sovereigns, we,/ Half dust, half deity, alike unfit/ To sink or soar" (*Manfred,* Act I, Scene II).

ways of existing provides the subject with the ultimate freedom to both sink (into hell) and soar (back out again): « Et il me sera loisible de *posséder la vérité dans une âme et un corps* » (241). The poet has deemed himself worthy of possessing the truth. The new dawn at the end of the poem is one free from falsity and illusion, as Pierre Brunel explains: « À la veillée, propice à des visions fantasmatiques de départ, se substitue la veille d'un départ véritable avec des forces qui doivent être celle de l'être, non-le mouvement trompeur des illusions » (39). These real forces, this unveiling of the *real* leads Robert Greer Cohn to write: "to plunge into the whirling drift of Rimbaud's peripeties is to know the giddy experience of truth" (401). Ultimately, Michel Foucault perhaps most effectively summarizes the modernity at play in *Une saison en enfer*: « Être moderne, ce n'est pas [...] accepter ce mouvement perpétuel, c'est au contraire prendre une certaine attitude à l'égard de ce mouvement; et cette attitude volontaire, difficile, consiste à ressaisir quelque chose d'éternel qui n'est pas au-delà de l'instant présent [...] mais en lui » (569). Although the discourse of counter-modernity is at play throughout all of Rimbaud's work, the requirement that one be "absolutely modern" applies to subjectivity, to dis-covering the *je* until all that is left is the eternal something that must be so painfully and strenuously revealed.

This eternal aspect of the self in Rimbaud is akin to the rhythm of the *sous-réel* that Senghor brings forth throughout his discussions of Negritude. It is a way of existing that involves more than the monolithic reliance on analytic reason. As the Rimbaldian poet came to ultimate liberty, so too does Senghor express that self-realization brings about freedom:

> Dans le vivant, la conscience se développe de plus en plus, à mesure de l'accroissement de la complexité. C'est ainsi qu'on monte de la plante à l'Homme. Celui-ci a vocation de se réaliser en personne dans la liberté, c'est à dire dans le plus-être spirituel, par le

développement harmonieux des deux éléments complémentaires de l'âme : le cœur et la tête, la raison intuitive et la raison discursive. (*Liberté 5* 25)

The subject in Rimbaud's work achieved this liberty in part by partaking in the *métissage* Senghor commends. He became "absolutely modern" and thus open to the intuitive and rhythmic potential that exists beneath and/or beyond that which is comprehended analytically or discursively. This is also partly what it means to become the *voyant,* to become the *homme-poète*, and be thus able to reveal – through rhythm, imagery, symbols and metaphor – the underlying potential of existence. As I initially described at the outset of this chapter, Henri Meschonnic renders poetry, and the poet, capable of providing critique like nothing else can. He explains that the poet can offer lucidity: « Il y a une critique du regard, une intelligence du voir, et du voir à travers, comme on dit lire entre les lignes, du voir ce que c'est que voir, que seule peut faire la poésie » (*La rime* 177). The following section places the cap upon this chapter, effectively encasing it in Meschonnic's theories, conclusively focusing on modernity and subjectivity with regard to Rimbaud's works.

IV. A Return to Rhythmic Modernity

« Les calculs de côté, l'inévitable descente
du ciel et la visite des souvenirs et la séance
des rythmes occupent la demeure, la tête et
le monde de l'esprit »
(Rimbaud, « Jeunesse », *Illuminations, Rimbaud : Complete Works* 354)

Henri Meschonnic, with whose theory of rhythm we opened this chapter, was also influenced by Rimbaud. For Meschonnic, *because* of the interrelationship of the subject to modernity, to be modern will be a constant state of becoming. Thus, he commences his book *Modernité, modernité* by explaining: « La modernité est un combat. Sans cesse recommençant.

Parce qu'elle est un état naissant, indéfiniment naissant, du sujet, de son histoire, de sons sens » (9). In his contemplation surrounding the meaning of modernity, Meschonnic understood that « elle [est] le sujet en nous » (9). However, the subjects that make up the world have, for the most part, not undergone the strenuous transformation that the subject in *Une saison en enfer* went through. One must consider, as Meschonnic does, what do we mean by subject (12)? His work, then, is as much a search for the speaking poetic subject, as previously discussed in terms of *la parole*, as it is trying to locate modernity. Of the subject, he says: « Je le cherche, en cherchant ce qu'est la modernité » (12). His intertwined search includes important consideration of Rimbaud's work.

The wild, dichotomous, circular, colourful and affective amalgamation of words that Rimbaud presented as poetry and as prose has led to a plethora of interpretations. It is no surprise that Meschonnic believes that Rimbaud has been misunderstood, as I already noted. But Meschonnic also imposes a certain kind of meaning on that infamous fragment, seeing the phrase as an acceptance, though a bitter one, of the modern world (*Modernité* 126-127). He also claims that it is a crucial phrase that turns us towards the real world: « 'Il faut être absolument moderne' est une phrase pivotale, qui bascule vers le monde réel » (126). For Meschonnic, the phrase is about the acceptance of the reality of modernity, which is inevitably ever evolving and thus eternally under construction.

Une saison en enfer opens with Beauty seated upon the knee of the *je*: the speaking subject finds her bitter and does her insult (211). Meschonnic, in his summary of this complex phrase, also considers the role of beauty: « Mais la beauté, toute d'effet proche, effet du texte sur le sens des mots, beauté fragile de cette phrase fameuse, est d'autant plus forte, poétique mais tout autre, que celle d'un slogan, simplificateur et simplifié, maladie infantile de la modernité,

mis dans la bouche du plus juvénile de ses héros » (*Modernité* 127). The phrase itself is not beautiful, and whether or not Meschonnic is being sarcastic, Rimbaud is certainly not juvenile, though he undeniably composed his works when he was young in body. The beauty is that of the transformation of the subject. Thus, we can argue that Meschonnic is more accurate about the meaning of modernity when he explains: « Être moderne c'est faire le travail du Voyant » (122). The *voyant* is able to grasp and to *see* reality accurately, though the visions will not last. To be modern is to understand this never-ending process of becoming, whereby the subject is shaped by society while simultaneously shaping society, and vice versa. The *voyant* has long since released the seeming safety of rigid identification with self or with personality and is at ease in the ever-shifting notion of being "modern." And then Meschonnic complicates things by explaining that an individual alone is not modern: « L'individu est le contemporain. Le sujet est le moderne » (130). He goes on to say that the modern has a desire for extremes, noting: « Ce qui est très moderne: le moderne a un penchant pour l'extrême » (130). In this realm of extremes, all is in flux: ever-changing, always transforming and constantly becoming.

In the following passage, the influence of Rimbaud's ideas on Meschonnic are unmistakeable: « Et c'est bien à une saisie de l'insaisissable, de l'indéfinissable qu'on a à faire. Seul le dogmatisme, et l'éclectisme, traitent avec des concepts tout faits. Pour la poétique de la modernité, oui les concepts 'tremblent'. Ce sont des états naissant des concepts, ou des états finissants. Tous instables. Se transformant » (*Modernité* 131). The subject is tied to modernity and to modern poetry because the subject necessitates change and transformation; they are intertwined. Meschonnic explains that this is why what occurs in art and literature is worth more than what the so-called "specialists" can offer. He summarizes: « Faisant partie de ce qui transforme le présent. L'inconnu, en ce moment même » (131). This is the same *inconnu* that the

subject in Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer* reveals, the same *inconnu* that leads Rimbaud to exclaim: "Je est un Autre" (*Rimbaud: Complete Works* 347). And as Meschonnic explains, the vital and direct link between the various modernities is the subject itself. He writes: « Entre la modernité Baudelaire, l'inconnu Rimbaud, la modernité de l'art et de la littérature modernes, la modernité-raison, la modernité-critique-de-la-raison, la modernité technique, celle des rejets de la technique, certains aussi distantes entre elles par leurs sens que par leur périodisation, il y a un rapport, étroit, vital. Ce rapport est le sujet » (*Modernité* 139). But as we saw with Rimbaud, the subject has a difficult task of transformation; one must work to become a subject. Meschonnic explains that it is therein that utopia lies within modernity: « Ainsi, ce qu'il y a de plus moderne au monde est le sujet. Il commence à être moderne, il travaille à être un sujet, quand il ne se reconnaît plus dans le présent passé, et s'il oppose, à tout ce qui maintient la théorie et la société traditionnelles, sont refus » (301). This is precisely what the *je* in *Une saison en enfer* goes through, and what Rimbaud recommends for being able to recognize the real.

The interrelation of the subject and of modernity and the subsequent incessant process that comprises the modern leads to the difficulty of discussing the concept at all, for it is never static. In *La rime et la vie,* Meschonnic writes: « Pourtant, reconnaître le *je* apparaît comme la question même de la modernité » (315). Thus, the poet, who already knows his or her own self intimately, is arguably an important figure for helping to shed light on the fluid vibration that informs and transforms the modern. This rhythmic realm ties in with the *inconnu*, with the refusal of pre-established and historically imbued theories and ideologies and with the role and power of the poet. To illustrate this, we can quote the passage found in his letter to Paul Demeny more extensively, wherein Rimbaud emphatically explains how to become *voyant*:

> Je dis qu'il faut être *voyant,* se faire *voyant.*

> Le Poète se fait *voyant* par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement* de *tous les sens*. Toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences. Ineffable torture où il a besoin de toute la foi, de toute la force surhumaine, où il devient entre tout le grand malade, le grand criminel, le grand maudit, – et le suprême Savant! – Car il arrive à l'*inconnu*! Puisqu'il a cultivé son âme, déjà riche, plus qu'aucun! Il arrive à l'*inconnu,* et quand, affolé, il finirait par perdre l'intelligence de ses visions, il les a vues! (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 376)

Once arrived at this *inconnu*, once having become the supreme *Savant*, what then does the poet do with their wisdom? How do they express that which has been seen but also lost? We falsely believe that we are defined by reason, that we think and therefore are, that we fit into basic historical and chronologically linear patterns; this is not so, for « nous sommes dans des rythmes » (Meschonnic, *Modernité* 304). It is precisely rhythm that ascertains the incessant formation of subject, and thus, of modernity. The poet become *voyant* is able to capture something of this vibrational reality and transfer, through poetry, at least a sense of the real. Meschonnic states as much about the power of writing in *La rime et la vie:* « Si l'écriture est ce qui advient quand quelque chose se fait dans le langage par un sujet et qui ne s'était jamais fait ainsi jusque-là, alors l'écriture participe de l'inconnu. C'est à dire du rythme. Elle commence là où s'arrête le savoir » (237). It is via rhythm, our own rhythms as well as those of language, that we are able to feel the *inconnu*, and thus glimpse reality.

Rhythm is what is left once the subject has been stripped clean of all adopted identities, as discussed at the inception of this chapter. Writing and poetry can make this evident: « Écriture, et critique, quand il n'y a plus de *moi,* rien que du *je.* Alors, le rythme » (*La rime* 17).

In this sense, the subject is no longer a surface or social dialectic between the *je* and the *me,* for there are many factors influencing and shifting this rhythm. This flux is also the crux of modernity, which makes it a difficult concept to pin down: « Le difficile: la modernité. Le tenue réciproque entre le langage, le poème, l'éthique et l'histoire. Difficile, le sujet. Il n'y a plus de *pour qui.* Le sujet est cette réciprocité, ce passage » (Meschonnic, *La rime* 98). And this reciprocity and interplay is ongoing, even infinite.

In a letter to Paul Demeny, Rimbaud writes about the future of poetry. He is critical of the game of rhyme, especially after Racine, when « le je moisit,» though he also exclaims that nobody has properly judged the Romantics, for the critics could not have possibly since the Romantics already put forth much more than the critics could gauge: « Les romantiques, qui prouvent si bien que la chanson est si peu souvent l'œuvre, c'est-à-dire la pensée chantée *et comprise* du chanteur? » (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 374). But so many, Rimbaud laments, have purported falsity because of an inability to transcend the ego, leaving a mess of « millions de squelettes qui, depuis un temps infini!, ont accumulé les produits de leur intelligence borgnesse, en s'en clamant les auteurs! » (374). To become a real author, a real poet, one must understand that “Je est un Autre" and then gain mastery of one's interrelated being: « J’assiste à l'éclosion de ma pensée: je la regarde, je l'écoute: je lance un coup d'archet: la symphonie fait son remuement dans les profondeurs, ou vient d'un bond sur la scène » (374). The Rimbaldian poet has recognized the core of his being, and that allows him to master his mind, his thoughts, rather than to believe in the fallacy that he *is* his thought:

> La première étude de l'homme qui veut être poète est sa propre connaissance, entière; il cherche son âme, il l'inspecte, il la tente, l'apprend. Dès qu'il la sait, il doit la cultiver; cela semble simple: en tout cerveau s'accomplit un développement

> naturel; tant d'*égoïstes* se proclament auteurs; il en est bien d'autres qui *s'*attribuent leur progrès intellectuel! – Mais il s'agit de faire l'âme monstrueuse. (374-378, his emphasis)

The poet who can recognize his own self – his own rhythm so to speak – can write from a place of understanding that unveils the unknown. This is because the individual soul is inevitably in contact with the "universal soul;" from this contact, new-ness, progress or modernity comes to be. For Rimbaud, the poet is extremely powerful and brings about transformation: « Le poète définirait la quantité d'inconnu s'éveillant en son temps dans l'âme universelle: il donnerait plus – que la formule de sa pensée, que la notation de *sa marche au Progrès!* Énormité devenant norme, absorbée par tous, il serait vraiment *un multiplicateur de progrès!* » (378). The capability of the poet to access the "universal soul" and then to transform by shedding light on reality and by rhythmically reproducing the universe is something Meschonnic affirms. He quotes the romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, as having said that poetry throws itself "into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy," and then he summarizes as follows: « La poésie reproduit l'univers » (*Modernité* 187). Poetry reproduces the subtle unknown or unnoticed elements of the universe. By doing so, poetry transforms. Take the subject of Rimbaud's famous poem *Le bateau ivre:*

> Et dès lors, je me suis baigné dans le Poème
> De la Mer, infusé d'astres, et lactescent,
> Dévorant les azurs verts; où flottaison blême
> Et ravie, un noyé pensif parfois descend;
>
> Où, teignant tout à coup les bleuités, délires
> Et rythmes lents sous les rutilements du jour,
> Plus fortes que l'alcool, plus vastes que nos lyres
> Fermentent les rousseurs amères de l'amour!
> (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 129)

The subject throws himself to bathe in the sea of the Poem, when he offers himself to be battered and beaten, to be awed and terrified by the rolling incessant rhythm of the sea, he is indubitably transformed. The sympathetic reader notes the transformative power of the poem. Poetry has the power to transform life. For poetry is unlike fiction, in that it does not invent another world:

> Elle transforme le rapport qu'on a avec celui-ci. Les poèmes, étant inséparablement un jeu de langage et une forme de vie, et l'invention de l'un par l'autre, pour eux il n'y a plus des thèmes ou des sentiments d'un côté, des formes de l'autre. Mais une subjectivisation, une historicité de tout le langage. C'est cela qui change les rapports aux autres, à soi-même et au monde. La rime et la vie se transformant l'une par l'autre. (*La rime* 108)

« La rime » here is not merely rhyme scheme but the meaning that lives and vibrates within and throughout, beneath and beyond, the words themselves. Or as already noted, Meschonnic explains: « Elle est dans les mots, mais elle n'est pas les mots » (210). It is the quintessential force that the poet is specially tuned into and thus able to transmute into language.

The poet is able to create something new by expressing the unknown, the inexpressible. Silence: « Dans le bruit du monde, le silence du sujet. Ce silence est ce que le poème donne à entendre » (*La rime* 108). This is exactly what the subject in *Une saison en enfer* claims to have done: « J'écrivais des silences, des nuits, je notais l'inexprimable » (228). The subject, the self who has, through a process of negation or even of debauchery, of a « dérèglement de tous les sens » *dis*-covered their soul, can express the inexpressible; can write silence. Never stagnant, ever new: rhythm. More than words: « De ce qu'on n'entend pas, qui est plus important que ce qu'on entend. Ce qu'est le rythme. Où une pause, qui est du silence, peut compter plus que des mots » (*La rime* 58). Can we still resonate with this vibrational silence?

V. Conclusion

> « Au revoir ici, n'importe où. Conscrits du bon vouloir, nous aurons la philosophie féroce ; ignorants pour la science, roués pour le confort ; la crevaison pour le monde qui va. C'est la vraie marche. En avant, route ! » (Arthur Rimbaud, « Démocratie », *Illuminations, Rimbaud : Complete Works* 350).

Listening to the silence becomes simpler once the distracting assumptions of society and culture are tested and then cast aside. What remains in the end, and that can be recorded through literature, is the experience of one human in contact with, in relationship to, whatever it is that is being encountered. The resonance of Self and Other, the dance of becoming and of reciprocity, does occur. The question is better stated: can we make this sub-conscious rhythm conscious? When Rimbaud famously states: « Je est un Autre » he effectively deconstructs duality. Senghor claims that Europeans think in terms of binaries, but that Black Africans recognize the commonality and the togetherness of experience. Thus, as stated in the first chapter, his strategic juxtaposition of intuitive reason with discursive reason engenders the subject to do the soul-searching work of becoming fully Human. Embracing one's intuition provides an opening to a subtler and truer, because more complete, understanding of being. Senghor presents these diverse ways of being in the spirit of hope for the future: « En fait, l'avenir culturel du monde se trouve dans un équilibre entre ces deux modes de connaissance, tous également nécessaires, car, si l'intuition découvre et synthétise, l'intelligence discursive analyse en vue de l'utilisation pratique de la découverte » (*Liberté 5* 25). Intuition is strengthened and honed through deep self-study. Thus, spirituality undoes binaries, for as Claudel wrote in *La Muse qui est la Grâce,* « Et si tu cherches la raison, il n'en est point que / Cet amour qu'il y a entre toi et moi » (*Cinq grandes*

odes 88). And within each one of us, through *co-munion* with all of existence, via an openness to the Other, there is opportunity to recognize union with the Divine, with a rhythmic vibration, with *élan vital.*

In naming Claudel and Rimbaud as two of the fathers of his "Revolution of 1889," Senghor draws attention to an essential quality of their writing which is that it displays or reveals an inherent spirituality. Claudel is fervently Catholic, yet the tone of his works is not unlike the vibrational, nature-imbued quasi-pagan one radiated by Rimbaud's oeuvre. In many ways, the literary examples Senghor employed as comprising the "Revolution of 1889" embody, through their works, a zeitgeist that is very much akin to the recent propulsion of *littérature-monde,* along with the 2007 manifesto. There is, in the manifesto and the two collections, a return to spirituality along with a celebration of rhythm and vibrancy. The language of the *littérature-monde* manifesto evokes the senses and emotions, with words like "incandescence" and "effervescence." The document calls for an aesthetic renovation of literature. This reinvigoration of literature will occur by being open to the richness that the diversity of the world has to offer. The second collection is entitled *Je est un Autre: Pour une identité monde,* after Rimbaud's famous phrase. Of note is that, approximately one century earlier, Claudel credits Rimbaud with transforming, or perhaps reinstating, French poetry with vibrancy and life force, noting that he has given back "the inventiveness, the power, the passion, the eloquence, the dreams, the verve, the color, the spontaneous music and everything that has been thought of as essential in poetry since the time of Homer" (*Positions et propositions 1* 54-55). The essential in poetry expresses the deeper spiritual aspect of life and of existence.

The *esprit* that Senghor identifies as being revivified by the poetry of Rimbaud and Claudel, as well as by Bergson's philosophy, is essential to the *littérature-monde* movement for

it is precisely what its proponents see as missing from contemporary French literature. Those francophone writers who can bring back (again?) the verve, spontaneity, vibrancy and life to French literature are most often those whose voyageur peripheral to the hexagon experiences have instilled an openness and a depth of understanding not unlike that gained by Rimbaud and Claudel through their own experiences outside of France.[32] That the precursor to *littérature-monde* is the idea of a *littérature-voyageuse* is no coincidence, for it aligns directly to Senghor's rooted cosmopolitanism and to the idea that, as Meschonnic explains it: « L'identité se fait par l'altérité. Le regard de l'autre nous apprend sur nous ce que nous ne pouvons ou ne voulons pas voir » (*La rime* 152). The next chapter, among other themes, will ultimately demonstrate how creative writing, how literature in general, can have the power to open oneself up to the Other, so one might begin to recognize that we are all both "I" and "Other" simultaneously, as Paliyenko notes: "The modern poetic subject in Rimbaud illustrates that creativity involves an ambiguous speaking subject, an inherently dialogic subject, at once I and Other, personal and impersonal, conscious and unconscious" (62). Becoming "absolutely modern" has been a call to arms against the overemphasis of analytic scientific reason and the banality of structuralism since Rimbaud wrote it more than a century ago. That call to arms is still sounding today; it is the cry of newness, the cry of originality and the genesis of creative reciprocity. In short, it is the cry of the ever-present "now." Those who have recently sounded the alarm for a return to intuitive creation and to revealing the *esprit* of lived experience through literature are the protagonists of *littérature-monde.*

[32] Though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delve into the fascinating biographical information surrounding Rimbaud and Claudel, it is of note that they both lived abroad during their lifetimes, though Rimbaud's travels mostly took place after he ceased writing at the age of 21. Since Claudel was a diplomat, he lived abroad in various locations, including America and Asia.

Chapter 4: Of Hyphens and Hyperbole: Unpacking the Paradox of the Global-National within the Littérature-monde Movement

"A hyphen is never enough to conceal
protests, cries of anger or suffering, the
noise of weapons, airplanes, bombs."
(Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other* 11)

"Only a paradox comes close to representing
the fullness of life." (Carl Jung)

At a conference hosted by Édouard Glissant at Louisiana State University in 1992, Jacques Derrida first delivered the lecture quoted above, illuminating not only the inadequacy of a mere hyphen but also poignantly stating: "I only have one language. It is not mine" (*Monolingualism* 1). The text quoted here has been translated from its original French and the international, bilingual conference entitled "Echoes from Elsewhere"/ "*Renvois d'ailleurs*" aimed to "deal with problems of *francophonie* outside France, problems of linguistics or literature, politics or culture" (i). Fifteen years later, the manifesto « Pour une littérature-monde en français » appeared in the French newspaper *Le Monde*. Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud headed the movement that birthed the manifesto, which was signed by forty-four well-known francophone authors from all around the world. The appearance of and the subsequent reactions to the manifesto incited many of the same unanswered questions and problematics surrounding Francophonie that Glissant's conference had already roused. There really is no unequivocal definition of Francophonie. The use of the hyphen as a way to encourage and increase creative potential, diversity, vibrancy and complexity echoes much of what Glissant had already theorized in his work on *Tout-monde, Chaos-monde* and *Échos-monde*, whereby the vivacious reality of all potential particularity created by contact is espoused and championed and where

that infinite particularity is balanced by an all-inclusive universal[33] (*Tout-monde: roman,* 1993; *Traité du tout-monde,* 1997). In *Traité du tout-monde,* Glissant describes his notion of *Chaos-monde*:

> J'appelle *Chaos-monde* le choc actuel de tant de cultures qui s'embrassent, se repoussent, disparaissent, subsistent pourtant, s'endorment ou se transforment, lentement ou à vitesse foudroyante : ces éclats, ces éclatements dont nous n'avons pas commencé de saisir le principe ni l'économie et dont nous ne pouvons pas prévoir l'emportement. Le Tout-monde, qui est totalisant, n'est pas (pour nous) total. (22)

The openness to alterity and the acceptance that is not possible to predict or define what the contact of cultures might bring is evident in the *littérature-monde* manifesto when they call for a dissolution of borders and a return to the illuminating power of literature:

> Ce désir nouveau de retrouver les voies du monde, ce retour aux puissances d'incandescence de la littérature, cette urgence ressentie d'une 'littérature-monde', nous les pouvons dater : ils sont concomitants de l'effondrement des grandes idéologies sous les coups de boutoir, précisément... du sujet, du sens, de l'Histoire, faisant retour sur la scène du monde - entendez : de l'effervescence des mouvements antitotalitaires, à l'Ouest comme à l'Est, qui bientôt allaient effondrer le mur de Berlin. (Le Bris et al. *Le Monde*)

The emphasis on the potential vibrancy of contact has been embraced long before the manifesto of 2007, both by Senghor and Glissant. Senghor sees contact as potential and back in 1945, he professed: « Contact *de deux civilisations,* cela me semble être la définition meilleure du problème » (*Liberté 1* 40). Eric Prieto notes that, not only did Glissant sign the manifesto as well

[33] Glissant's theories, which are akin to the global-thinking that is envisioned by Senghor and the *littérature-monde* movement can be considered, as Eric Prieto explains in "Edouard Glissant, *Littérature-monde* and *Tout-monde,*" to be examples of "post-postcolonial" thought (114).

as contribute to the first collection of essays, but that there is a "close parentage between Glissant's thought and the littérature-monde project" (113). This parentage has to do with consideration of the dialogue or conversation that occurs between and amidst world cultures, which Glissant has been theorizing at least since 1990, when *Poétique de la relation* was published. Therein he describes the rhizomatic diversity of contact: « La notion du rhizome serait au principe de ce que j'appelle une poétique de la Relation, selon laquelle toute identité s'étend dans un rapport à l'Autre » (23). And Le Bris, in his *Pour une littérature-monde* essay, identifies the same issue still at play: « l'enjeu est aujourd'hui, abolies les barrières de la 'francophonie,' d'entamer un nouveau dialogue » (45). The contact of cultures and the potential dialogues and conversations have long been theorized. Thus, the criticism that the tenets of *littérature-monde* are being recycled is a valid claim. *Littérature-monde* does not present an entirely new problematic, but it does prove that the underlying "incandescent power of literature" has yet to be adequately considered and validated. The potential of literature is being overlooked because the focus regrettably remains on the political rather than on the cultural.

The specific choice of hyphenating *littérature* and *monde* and then adding *en français* evokes a complicated paradox: how can a literature be both global and yet preserve the colonial language that is undeniably tied to the nation state? Derrida's assertion about the power, or affront, of the hyphen denotes the practice of hyphenating nationalities, such as Franco-Mahgrebian, more than ten years before the manifesto appeared. He warns that: "The silence of that hyphen does not pacify or appease anything, not a single torment, not a single torture. It will never silence their memory. It could even worsen the terror, the lesions, and the wounds" (11). Le Bris defines *littérature-monde*, including the importance of the hyphen, as follows: « C'est pourtant simple: deux mots, 'littérature' et 'monde', avec, entre les deux, un trait d'union. À

inventer par chaque écrivain, puisque ce trait est l'espace même de l'œuvre » (« Monde en crise» 2009). The hyphen that Le Bris so contritely describes as a space of unparalleled opportunity and creative potential, without paying heed to colonial injustice, alerts many scholars to consider the dangers and problems associated with blatant universalism. Many critics see this blithe celebration of diversity as a failure to acknowledge the legacy of colonialism by keeping postcolonial studies at the forefront of literary and critical production. Charles J. Sugnet, in his article "*Pour une littérature-monde en francais*: manifesto retro?" deems the manifesto and the movement futile at best and highly problematic in general. He notes: "Much of the real and urgent work to be done by French artists and intellectuals involves unthinking the legacies of nineteenth century colonialism, racism and slavery; unfortunately, this backward-looking manifesto is not going to help with that" (250). If the manifesto is backward looking, could there be elements of the past that are indeed still relevant today and that, though they have yet been given the chance, could actually help to reinterpret postcolonial legacies?

I. Creating Space for Literary *Esprit*

> « La littérature reste la plus belle des aventures, pour peu qu'on ait encore l'audace de créer des mondes où se risquer le cœur battant, pour peu qu'on garde l'ambition de le dire, le monde, d'en restituer la parole vive en la portant jusqu'à l'incandescence, pour peu qu'on ose encore des livres-mondes, vastes, généreux et terribles, comme la vie. » (Michel Le Bris, *PLM* 28)

The creative space that Le Bris champions in the above quotation, whereby the valiant writer is capable of reinstating the living word, even the spirit, of the world, has the underlying

aim of inciting the kind of dialogue that celebrates diversity and thus is aligned with the same underlying spirit of intuition that Senghor identified in the works of Bergson, Claudel and Rimbaud at the turn of the twentieth century in France. As established in the third chapter, Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" is defined by the underlying spiritual force that makes meaning meaningful. Or, in terms of the theory of Henri Meschonnic combined with Senghor's ideas, the core of this not-yet-manifested revolution is the recognition and the illumination of rhythmic poetics. The first section of chapter three considers the theory of Henri Meschonnic. Throughout his works, rhythm brings forth and makes visible that which can oft go unnoticed: « Ce qu'est le rythme. Où une pause, qui est du silence, peut compter plus que les mots. En quoi, loin de s'opposer au langage ordinaire, le poème en est le représentant le plus visible » (*La rime* 58). Le Bris also quotes Meschonnic's *Critique du rythme* in his essay, noting that « Un linguiste ne peut plus cacher qu'il échoue devant la poésie » (qtd. in *PLM* 26). Thus, poetry has something more than that which can be understood by the analysis of linguistics: that something is called rhythm by Meschonnic, and within *littérature-monde* it is often called *esprit. Littérature-monde* employs this rhythmic poetics, incorporating a linguistic, even Biblical, spiritualism that is more concerned with self-realization and does leave tangible postcolonial concerns like borders, spaces and inequalities to the wayside.

For example, in his essay, « *Mort d'une certaine idée,* » found at the beginning of the *Pour une littérature-monde* collection, Jean Rouaud describes the effect that Wiechert's oeuvre had upon him (10). It is reminiscent of reading Paul Claudel's « Ma conversion, » where he credits Arthur Rimbaud with restoring his faith in a reality that is more vibrant than that imagined by analytic reason; in both passages, the reader finds the meaning that they were missing through the act of reading. Rouaud explains that it is precisely the « tonalité biblique »

and the « langue lyrique, incantoire » that opens him up to a reality that extends far beyond the individual, all the way to the universal (10-11). He extrapolates about the human condition and the enlightening power of poetics in the following:

> L'écriture était ce flamboiement poétique qui se sait comme au jour de la Pentecôte sur les personnages du texte et les transformait en porte-parole universels de l'humaine condition [...] Tout livre était une feuille volante du grand livre du monde. Mais la grande nouvelle [...] c'était que, dès lors, par la seule grâce du verbe, rien n'empêchait de faire d'un coin perdu de la Loire-Inférieure une terre promise au chant et à la louange. (11)

Yes, universalizing tendencies can be problematic. And yet, the world needs the hope of a promise land. In the spirit of non-dualism, exhibited by Senghor's championing of these authors as well as his push for a return to dialectic reasoning, I propose that we consider both the problematic essentialism that is evoked by the notion of a "human condition" and still leave space for the poetics of this movement to influence and inspire. By grappling with both ends of the seeming dichotomy, there is ample opportunity for the fruitful mining of the un-extracted gems that many critics of the *littérature-monde* movement have missed.

To be clear, the *littérature-monde* movement emerged in 2007 inciting uproars and celebrations, condemnation and praise. Various critics have raised the turbulent waters of disregard for or lack of post-colonial awareness, which is further discussed in sections 4.4 and 4.6 of this chapter (Sugnet, 2009; Forsdick, 2010; Combe, 2010). The debates surrounding *littérature-monde* have mostly been framed within the context of Francophone Studies, and mostly within North American institutions. Paying heed to the pervasive and disconcerting detritus of colonial legacies is of utmost importance, and the third section of this chapter goes into their criticisms in more detail. In brief, the general criticism of the *littérature-monde*

movement is produced by viewing it through the lens of postcolonial criticism and globalisation studies. The *littérature-monde* movement is aptly deemed a "movement" for two reasons. The first, because there is no claim to an entirely new school of thought from the proponents of said movement. And second, because it reiterates and draws on theories that have already been presented. As Thérèse Migraine-George notes in her thoughtful and insightful book, *From Francophonie to World Literature in French,* "littérature-monde in fact draws its strength precisely from the fact that it is not a program but rather an energizing battle cry–a manifesto–against some of the prescriptive claims of Francophonie" (xxi-xxii). Nevertheless, the movement brings forth the critical importance and potential of writing in a common language, yet it does little to remedy the unjust hierarchical relationship between France and its former colonies, a relationship that is directly tied to the notion of Francophonie and its "prescriptive claims." The impetus for such strong and even defensive reactions to this movement offer a moment of pause and consideration: what combination of factors are ultimately at play?

A perhaps unintended consequence of the manifesto is the now inevitable admittance that Francophonie is an ill-defined and ill-understood term at best. However, despite the meticulous criticism and vague confusion surrounding this movement, there is an untapped aspect of *littérature-monde* that may have been overlooked: the call for a return to rhythm, to the poetic freedom of creative language, and to the intuitive vibration that informs creative expression. The beginning of the final chapter will offer analysis and portrayal of how this creative expression, that both Senghor and *littérature-monde* identify with *esprit,* operates. The link between Senghor's fathers of the "Revolution of 1889" and the *littérature-monde* movement is precisely the continuance of a non-colonial universalism. This universalism is beyond duality and even beyond space, as is evident in Bergson's thought, and it comes from the search for the truth of

what it is to be a human in contact with the world. This contact, when considered rather than analyzed away, hinges on the connections that are inevitably tied to spirit, to *esprit.* There is a demand that each writer have the freedom to express the very spirit of who they are, to share their innermost voice. This takes an openness and willingness to engage in self-realization. The opening to the second collection, *Je est un autre,* continues to envision a literary space where the poetic voice can finally be heard: « Les romanciers qui ont appris à composer avec toutes ces voix de l'intérieur, discordantes, foisonnantes, paralysantes, entraînantes, qui se moquent des langues et des frontières, ont évidemment leur mot – poétique – à dire » (9). The writers who have opened to the spiritual connection of their inner selves must be shared, read, heard and integrated; they understand something that many have yet to consider. Through contact with such writings, the reader finds those aspects of themselves that they have yet to discover: in this sense, « Je est un Autre. »

Fundamentally, literature allows a person to live the experience of the Other, thus opening access for better knowing the self. What is the novel, after all? Le Bris answers in his contribution to *Je est un autre*:

> Qu'est-ce qu'on effet le roman, sinon création de mondes, entrecroisements de voix multiples, remise en cause, dans son mouvement même, des certitudes de l'identité ? Formes, certes, mais *ouverte,* à la différence du concept, et pour cela à la naissance même de « l'être-ensemble », articulant l'Un et le multiple, effort obstiné de tenir le pari d'une pensée nomade dans cet espace fluide où se déploie l'expérience de la réversibilité du dehors et du dedans, de la dépossession et de la recomposition de soi. (26)

The strange paradox that is our interconnected affective reality alongside our complete and utter isolation within our own minds can be felt and incorporated through novels, stories, poetry and

art. It is through our interaction with the Other that we come to know and understand our own place in this world: literature that is open to the global is already in the process of building the world that awaits us. Is it exoticism to be open to incorporating the lived experience of the Other through literature? Senghor not only had a vision for inciting egalitarian global dialogue, his poetry offered the very insight into another way of being that he hopes to validate. Lilyan Kesteloot, in her book called *Senghor et Césaire: Un pont sur l'Atlantique,* quotes a great compliment given to Senghor by Alain Bosquet:

> Je découvrais une vibration inconnue pour moi, un vocabulaire qui roulait ses rocs et ses écorces, un esprit qui ne correspondait pas à celui de mes latitudes, (mais) comme vous écriviez dans ma langue je n'avais aucun mal à assimiler vos soucis et vos enthousiasmes […]. Vous me forciez de me désincarner un peu pour m'incarner en ce que vous êtes […]. C'est donc l'Afrique tout entière qui me vient en poèmes. (103)

Senghor's poetry forced this Ukrainian born French poet to release his own identity while adopting that of Senghor the poet. Yes, it is essentializing and inaccurate to consider that *all* of Africa magically became accessible to Bosquet because of Senghor's poetry; and yet, the essence, the rhythm, one could say the *esprit* moved through the poetry, transforming the reader in some way.

The connection between *esprit* and how it moves through literature entails what I already mentioned throughout chapter three: intuition is honed by seeking self-realization. Literature, through the encounter with Other, offers a space for self-inquiry. Le Bris notes as much in *Je est un autre*: « Le plus étonnant, dans l'affaire, est que le poème puisse ainsi résonner en moi, me parler, éveiller au plus profond de moi des échos où, mystérieusement, je me reconnais » (16). This mysterious power that comes from creative works–be they poetry, prose or art–is due to the

recognition or the stirring of something within that is also beyond duality: this something is nothing if not spiritual. Le Bris explains that *l'imaginaire* gives the chance to think of another knowing other than rationality: « Le fictif, donc, échappant à l'opposition du vrai et du faux, oblige à penser une autre forme de connaissance que la connaissance rationnelle, qui serait le propre de l'imaginaire » (17). Just like in Senghor, there is a call for another way of thinking and understanding: this other way consists of *esprit.* As discussed in the third chapter, the French theorist and poet, Henri Meschonnic, has promulgated the same valorization of spiritual poetics and even asks that we begin to question logocentric ideals (*Pour la poétique* 152). According to Meschonnic, *la poétique* is capable of illuminating the incomplete understanding that is linked to simplistic duality: « Élaborer un langage critique moniste et non dualiste, contre deux mille ans de pensée dualiste et spiritualiste, semble la tâche de cette poétique » (152). The task of literature, according to the *littérature-monde* movement, is to free the underlying *rythme*, the transformative *esprit* and the awakening *imaginaire* of literature in order to increase the potential for remembering the deeper spiritual truth of who we are. Le Bris mentions the strike and the crisis in Guadeloupe back in 2009 then states that humanity is being called to remember that « les grévistes n'étaient pas réductibles à des statuts de producteurs ou de consommateurs, qu'il est en homme, en tout homme, une dimension poétique qui fonde son existence, lui donne sens, l'ouvre à l'humanité entière » (17). This statement relies on the notable focus on the *esprit* of literature, whereby there is a common underlying *poétique* that gives meaning and that intertwines. Inevitably, by turning the focus to spirituality, which is common to all people, whether or not they accept such spirituality, does invoke an essentialist and universalising claim.

However, is this essentialism strategic, in the way that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak noted?[34] And since it is attempting to move beyond duality, does it not transcend the deadlock within postcolonial studies?

The reimagining of defensive postcolonial rigidity of *Us vs. Them* (or even Us helping Them?)[35] perspectives, theories and politics, is necessary in order to return to the *esprit* of this increasingly interconnected world and thus foster mutually enriched relationships rather than maintaining the victim/perpetrator dichotomy. Even if this dichotomy is partly true, it has yet to prove useful or fruitful. The return to *esprit* associated with *littérature-monde* is a continuation of Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" and the intuitive reawakening that he declared. The discomfort many critics have with dialectic thinking becomes apparent in *littérature-monde* criticism in much the same way it did with Negritude. Senghor asked how Negritude could be both considered anti-racist and racist at the same time, to which he explains: « Or le même mot ne peut signifier, sans contradiction, 'racisme' et 'complexe d'infériorité' » (*Liberté 3* 69). Migraine-George points out similar contradictory claims with regard to *littérature-monde*: "Interestingly critics seem to fall into their own contradictory wishful thinking, reproaching the manifesto for lacking a specific agenda while also condemning it for its universalizing claims. This, in a sense, might betray the critics' own frustrations at being able to box the signatories' intentions into a systematic program or theory" (xxi). According to Senghor, as quoted in the

[34] I remind here that, in an interview with Elizabeth Grosz she stated, "I think it's absolutely on target to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism…But *strategically* we cannot" (11). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with Ellen Rooney. "In a word. *Interview." The Essential Difference.* Eds. Naomi Schor & Elizabeth Weed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, pp. 151-184.

[35] Dambisa Moyo's 2009 book *Dead Aid* argues that the entire aid industry to Africa is not only ineffective but it is actually very harmful. (Penguin Books, London)

first chapter, there is a great danger in dichotomy and in trying to box meaning into rigid oppositional structures. He wrote:

> L'Europe, c'est la civilisation de la raison discursive : de l'analyse, de la mathématique, de la mécanique. Vos tentations, auxquelles vous avez parfois succombé, c'est la dichotomie et, partant, l'idéalisme et le matérialisme. Vous avez trop souvent opposé l'esprit et la matière, la raison au cœur, la science à la foi – ou à l'art – pour ne pas vous être aperçus du danger. Le danger de créer un monde de machines, sans âme, je veux dire sans chaleur humaine. (qtd. in Djian, 101)

The critics of *littérature-monde* have the same discursive reason practices and employ dualistic thought processes. This is not necessarily wrong–language all but demands such communication. Yet, opening space for the spirit of literature, whereby the vibrancy of the soul and of human warmth can still find its expression, is what the authors of the *littérature-monde* movement are calling for as they demand an end to the French/Francophone dichotomy.

There is a connection to be made with regard to exoticization in both *littérature-monde* and Negritude, which surfaces as racial essentialism. Charles Sugnet, without stating the term 'Negritude,' posits a direct correlation between racial essentialism and *littérature-monde:*

> There is a clear implication throughout the manifesto that darker people from formerly colonized places are supposed to bring more physical and psychic vitality than whites bring to literature (as well as their interesting caught-between-two cultures situation!). The manifesto treads close to some old racial thinking about the primitive vitality and hyper-embodiedness of black people. (248)

If this criticism is accurate, perhaps the best way to refute it is to look to Senghor and understand that, rather than pejorative notions such as "primitive vitality," there is recognition that different

cultures choose to emphasize and develop different aspects of their collective ontology. It has already been established eloquently by Senghor that rationality has more than one form and that there is nothing primitive about an intuitive way of being and thinking.

> La raison intuitive est donc à la base de l'ontologie, de la vision nègre du monde. Les différentes apparences sensibles, constituées par les règnes animal, végétal et minéral, ne sont que des manifestations matérielles d'une seule réalité fondamentale : l'Univers, réseau de forces diverses, qui sont l'expression des virtualités enfermées en Dieu, seule force réelle. (*Liberté 5* 18)

If literature is capable of transposing the vital expression of whatever it is that continuously generates the Real–God, rhythm, élan vital–both Negritude and the *littérature-monde* monde movement aim at encouraging that potential. Sharing and expressing *esprit* through literature, in this case, can evoke the remembrance of the potential for embodied connection, which is arguably a very useful and engaged way for a human to exist. An intuitive epistemology is already always available; the openness to this way of being takes courage and, more importantly for this thesis, it requires exposure to the potential that there are multiple kinds of reason. The battle-cry of *littérature-monde* is quite simply an attempt to promulgate the vibrant, effervescent, rhythmic and spiritual potential of poetic literature throughout *le monde entier.*

This chapter points to the underlying thread of intuition that runs through French and francophone literature and thought while taking the necessary space to first acknowledge that the postcolonial "lesions" cannot be ignored, lest they fester unrecognised. Ironically, though Senghor is often criticized for being Eurocentric, careful consideration of his works can bring about ideas for interrelation and cultural exchange that maintain postcolonial concerns. Senghor's vision for the future is ripe with the hope for intercultural dialogue; the future of the

littérature-monde movement is most useful if it is nurtured with such hope. As Kesteloot writes, « L'unité du Monde noir est […] à reconstruire dans le cadre plus complexe de la mondialisation. Est-ce possible ? Il faut croire à l'utopie » (11). Utopia is an unachievable state, a benevolent future that will never come to be, and yet it is a worthy goal.

II. *Littérature-monde,* Senghor and the Utopian "Polyphonic Dialogue"

> « La poésie sera donc son arme. La culture, son champ de bataille. »
> (Jean Michel Djian, *Léopold Sédar Senghor : Genèse d'un imaginaire francophone* 15)

As noted, the text that initiated this movement in 2007 was the infamous manifesto: « Pour une littérature-monde en français. » The manifesto calls for an end to Francophonie and the subsequent inequality of centre versus periphery politics: « Fin de la francophonie. Et naissance d'une littérature-monde en français » (manifesto *Le Monde*). The ongoing debates illuminate an understandable focus on politics. In general, the most overarching of all the criticism is summarized in the following: "While ostensibly insisting on a literature open to the world and everything in it, the manifesto simultaneously wants to ban any discussion of power differentials, or of political and economic struggle - things which constitute much of 'le monde' and 'le vécu' for most of us" (Sugnet, 245). Power differentials are ever-present and cannot be left to the wayside. However, this limited focus essentially quashes the intention upon which the movement was birthed. The lacuna remains: researchers have yet to thoroughly explore the underlying thread of the concept of *esprit* in *littérature-monde,* which becomes evident not when analyzing the texts from a political or neo-colonial standpoint but by embracing the works and allowing their rhythm and their aesthetic to shape and transform. *Esprit* will be considered more

explicitly in the final chapter whereas the focus here will be more on issues surrounding Francophonie in its many forms.

The mention of the world in the terminology of *littérature-monde* inevitably evokes the political. In terms of being heard globally, the manifesto and the term *littérature-monde* can be understood as promoting a linguistic union and fraternity of writing in French, so that the offering of French-language literature will be strong and vibrant. The benefits of such a global undertaking are obvious to Robert Viau, who notes: « Il s'agit désormais d'établir de nouveaux rapports qui ne peuvent que profiter à tous en affirmant la possibilité d'instaurer une culture de langue française forte à l'échelle mondiale » (103). It is at the level of culture and aesthetics that French, as a language, can be established and most fruitfully adds to the ongoing complexity that is imagining literature globally. The *littérature-monde* manifesto is concerned with promoting literature written in French that is vivid and alive and that evidences the complexity and vibrancy of the periphery, noting all that it has to offer aesthetically and creatively. Globally, this focus on *esprit* is essential, as is noted in the last paragraph of the manifesto:

> Littérature-monde parce que, à l'évidence multiples, diverses, sont aujourd'hui les littératures de langue françaises par le monde, formant un vaste ensemble dont les ramifications enlacent plusieurs continents. Mais littérature-monde, aussi, parce que partout celles-ci nous disent le monde qui devant nous émerge, et ce faisant retrouvent après des décennies 'd'interdit de la fiction' ce qui depuis toujours a été le fait des artistes, des romanciers, des créateurs : la tâche de donner voix et visage à l'inconnu du monde - et à l'inconnu en nous. Enfin, si nous percevons partout cette effervescence créatrice, c'est que quelque chose en France même s'est remis en mouvement où la jeune génération, débarrassée de l'ère du soupçon, s'empare sans

> complexe des ingrédients de la fiction pour ouvrir de nouvelles voies romanesques. En sorte que le temps nous paraît venu d'une renaissance, d'un dialogue dans un vaste ensemble polyphonique, sans souci d'on ne sait quel combat pour ou contre la prééminence de telle ou telle langue ou d'un quelconque 'impérialisme culturel'. (manifesto *Le Monde)*

In this advancement of *littérature-monde,* the emphasis on the creative elements of writing is paramount; it is a concept that unites the *esprit* of people united by a common language, noting that the variations and diversity of expression throughout the French language are of utmost importance. Thus, much like Senghor's *rendez-vous* of give and take, the manifesto calls for a « dialogue dans un vaste ensemble polyphonique. » Or as Le Bris expressed at the 2007 convention in Saint-Malo, *littérature-monde* is: « littérature de langue française ouverte au monde, débarrassée de l'ère du soupçon, enrichie de toutes ces voies d'Outre-France qui, tout en renouvelant le genre romanesque, nous apportent dans notre langue commune, des nouvelles du village global » (qtd in Viau, 104). The manifesto does take a political stance; it calls for the death of Francophonie. Yet, it is also calling for an aesthetic and creative renovation and is championing a utopian vision for cultural dialogue that is based on equality and on listening to the voices of Others, of recognizing the validity of all global voices. In short, by engaging with the works intuitively and by inviting a framework that moves beyond the generally accepted dichotomy of the wrongdoer and the wounded, a choice that would paradoxically generate fertile dialogue. This dialogue can spawn an opportunity for the harsh reality of the wounded to be witnessed, acknowledged and more ultimately, healed.

Nevertheless, before we jump directly into the waters of humanistic universalism, let us check the bath for unreconciled colonial injustice. We have long ago been forewarned that

dialogue and contact is dangerous when the meeting is not accepted by both parties as a gathering of equals. Aimé Césaire explains in *Discours sur le colonialisme:* « Il faudrait d'abord étudier comment la colonisation travaille à *déciviliser* le colonisateur » (11). Perhaps keeping in mind that colonisation is a detriment to both coloniser and colonised, there can be movement forward rather than stagnation. Indeed, colonisation has not been the site of fecundating contact between multiple "civilisations" at all. As Albert Memmi, with his extraordinary personal insight from growing up in Tunisia and having experienced life amidst three different cultures, reminds that: « si l'aventure coloniale est gravement dommageable pour le colonisé, elle ne peut être que sérieusement déficitaire pour le colonisateur » (158). Noting the necessarily mutually damaging relationship to both colonizer and colonized begins to address and undermine the dichotomy of superior and inferior. Nevertheless, economic legacies have left most former colonies in impoverished conditions, since, as Memmi rightly claims: « La colonisation, c'est d'abord une exploitation économico-politique » (159). The global inequality between nation-states occurring today is a direct result of colonial policies that essentially robbed resource rich colonies and then set up international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, ultimately dooming the supposedly "free" versions of these colonially created states to seeming eternal poverty. In terms of the distinction between French and Francophone writers, the *littérature-monde* manifesto aims to eliminate the racialization whereby in order to be shelved in the "littérature française" section of a French bookstore you need to be white and to write in French (ie. Nancy Huston, Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett would have been found pre-2007 in the French section, though none of them come from France). If you are other than white and writing in French, then your works would be shelved in the "littérature francophone" section (ie.

Dany Laferrière, Alain Mabanckou and Marie N'Diaye).[36] The manifesto intends for all literature written in French, including that of the Hexagon, to be subsumed under one global category called *littérature-monde en français.* Le Bris, in the 2010 collection of essays, *Je est un autre,* does speak to this colonial ill which maintains a racial hierarchy, noting that « la France est malade de son histoire coloniale parce que son universalisme républicain se trouve incapable de l'intégrer, et cela depuis l'origine, en sorte que les blessures anciennes nourrissent et enveniment la crise présente » (22). The manifesto and the subsequent collections may not employ academically rigorous postcolonial theory when tending to these pervasive colonial scars, but does that warrant completely discounting the initial intention of *littérature-monde?*

The manifesto concludes with a disavowal of borders and nationally defined languages, with a deconstruction of the very notion of centre and with an affirmation that poetry and the imaginary have no borders other than those of the spirit: « Le centre relégué au milieu d'autres centres […] libre désormais de tous pouvoirs autres que ceux de la poésie et de l'imaginaire, n'aura pour frontières que celles de l'esprit » (manifesto *Le Monde*). The last word of the manifesto underlies the importance of the intangible creative impulse: *l'esprit.* Ultimately, the potential power of *littérature-monde* is in its poetics, not its politics; else it is but a blithe avowal for lyrical vagabonds and wanderers. As is the case with many movements, this one has an unassuming and often misunderstood precursor: the writings and thought of Senghor and his focus on the genealogy of *esprit* in philosophy and literature.

[36] Marie N'Daye received the *prix Goncourt* in 2009 for her book, *Trois femmes puissantes,* which resulted in an interesting discussion surrounding identity politics (she was born in France of a French mother and a Senegalese father who left France when she was one year old). She moved to Germany because of a discord with Sarkozy's politics at the time. For more on this illuminating case study, see Migraine-George, p. xii-xvi.

III. Senghor's Francophonie as a Precursor to *Littérature-monde*

> « L'idée est la même : au-delà d'un possible métissage biologique – qui était réel à Gorée et Saint-Louis du Sénégal, mais là n'est pas important–il est question, essentiellement, d'un métissage culturel. C'est ce sentiment communautaire qui prévaut dans toutes les rencontres francophones. » (Senghor, *Liberté 3* 547)

Sengor's focus on *esprit* is evident throughout his entire oeuvre, but it is especially apparent when considering his vision for Francophonie, which, as noted in the quotation above, is primarily an encounter occurring through the French language that engenders cultural hybridity. A major issue within the *littérature-monde* movement is the incredible variance regarding the slippery notion of Francophonie. Drawing on an article where Réda Bensmaïa places an X through the term Francophonie to show how it is under erasure and is defined only by what it is not (as Heidegger did with the word Being), Emily Apter explains: "To theorize *Francophonie* is to work through a disciplinary negation that defines what the field is by virtue of what it is *not*: *not* the French canon; *not* the literature of the hexagon; *not* a discrete linguistic territory" (298, her emphasis). Because of the difficulty in defining or even delimiting Francophonie, it is useful to consider what Senghor meant by the term.

There is a fruitful link to be made between *littérature-monde* and Senghor's concept of Francophonie (as presented from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s), his philosophy surrounding the "Civilization of the Universal" and the "Dialogue of Cultures," his work on *métissage* and his belief in the pre-eminence of culture over politics.[37] There is a common

[37] Senghor's collections of essays and speeches are comprised of five volumes. *Liberté 3* is subtitled, « Négritude et Civilisation de l'Universel » and *Liberté 5* is subtitled, « Le Dialogue des Cultures. »

intention behind *littérature-monde* and Senghor's hopes for Francophonie (and humanity). At the core of this similarity is the undoing of duality that comes with the aforementioned recognition of *esprit.* With Senghor, we are given the option of blurring duality by imagining how something can be *both*. He was both French and African, both for and against colonization, and, as Jean Chrysostome Akenda reminds us: « Senghor est chantre de l'Afrique traditionnelle; il est aussi le père de la francophonie » (108-109). Senghor's thoughts surrounding Francophonie are much more complex and insightful than those critics who have seemingly failed to even read his works can surmise.

For Senghor, Francophonie is a Humanism with similar potential to that of Negritude. In a sense, his Francophonie is the complementary aspect that, when combined with Negritude, creates a more integral human. In philosophic tone, Senghor explains the following about Black African thinking: « C'est l'opposition, et en même temps la complémentarité par symbiose, du monde visible et du monde invisible, de l'un et du multiple, de la matière et de l'esprit, de la vie et de la mort, comme du mâle et de femelle. D'un mot, la pensée Négro-africaine est dialectique comme la réalité avec laquelle elle se confronte » (*Liberté 3* 547). Negritude carries a dialectic way of thinking to the forefront, one that validates a dynamic, interrelated, vibrant ontological viewpoint. According to Senghor, there ought to be a Negritude and a *Francité* that both generate a return to what is essential about being human: « Je parle d'une *Négritude,* comme, tout à l'heure, d'une *Francité,* ramenée à ses valeurs essentielles. Bien sûr, je n'ai pas la naïveté de croire que ces deux cultures sont parfaites : l'une et l'autre ont leurs défauts et leurs lacunes » (547). Because of these gaps and defects, it is up to each civilization to "re-humanize" itself as it learns through contact new and useful ways to improve. According to Senghor, all cultures have

the potential for any expression available to humanity, providing ample opportunity for "cultural symbiosis," which Francophonie is already an example of:

> A la réflexion, toute culture contient l'ensemble des valeurs humaines, mais chacune n'a mis l'accent que sur telles valeurs, en négligeant les autres. D'où, à la longue, une distorsion du visage humain sur chaque faciès de la civilisation humaine. D'où encore la nécessité, pour chaque culture, de se *ré-humaniser* en empruntant tel trait, presque effacé chez elle, du visage humain. D'où, enfin, la nécessité d'élaborer, s'étendant sur les cinq continents, une *symbiose culturelle* comme celle de la Francophonie, qui est d'autant plus humaine, parce que d'autant plus riche, qu'elle unit les valeurs les plus opposées. (*Liberté 3* 547)

This choice to emphasize or integrate certain values at the expense of others creates a network of cultures and civilisations with very different strengths and weaknesses. It is through contact that we can, as a global culture, begin to recognize and choose the very best combinations possible. This contact comes together in the somewhat Utopian notion of the "dialogue of cultures" for Senghor, and is echoed in the *littérature-monde* manifesto, whereby they propose « un dialogue dans un vaste ensemble polyphonique sans souci d'on ne sait quel combat pour ou contre la prééminence de telle ou telle langue » (*Le Monde*). A dialogue that is free from the rigidity of power dynamics does not necessarily imply that power dynamics are no longer important; it does incite new ideas and novel combinations of seemingly opposed values. Senghor, through his experience and the example he set throughout his life via his poetry, through his prose and his political works, unites the opposed values loosely subsumed by the principles of positivism and of intuition.

His life story is fascinating and too plentiful to truly encapsulate within the scope of this dissertation. For more detailed biographical information, see Janet Vaillant's *Black, French and African.* What is important here is that Senghor initially fell for the dogma of *la mission civilisatrice,* but upon his arrival in France he came to realize that his double-identity was inescapable, and this began to darken the hopes he had once had for being truly accepted into French society. And yet, he did not choose to react with bitter anger towards his colonizers. In his poem « Prière de paix, » Senghor makes a request: « 'Seigneur Dieu, pardonne à l'Europe blanche!' And then, because France used colonial soldiers as fodder during the Second World War, and because of the hatred and bitter anger that began to arise in Senghor towards France, he asks more specifically: « Tue-le Seigneur, car il me faut poursuivre mon chemin, et je veux prier singulièrement pour la France » (*Poésie Complète* 167). He asks that God kill his hatred so that it will neither limit him nor stop him from fulfilling his destiny. The poem cited above often serves as evidence for critics to note Senghor's affinity for colonial Europe and for France in particular, for within it Senghor himself professes that he has « une grande faiblesse pour la France » (168). But does this necessarily mean that Senghor was not determined to shape the future in such a way that would end the injustice and horror of colonialism? Perhaps Césaire himself, since he is considered more anti-colonizer and thus generally more respected in postcolonial circles, can offer some insight into Senghor's motives and methods.

In an interview with Césaire in 2005, Jean-Michel Djian asks: « Senghor était-il aussi violent que vous sur la question coloniale? » Césaire's response offers considerable insight:

> Non, pas du tout. C'est un homme qui était beaucoup plus calme, doux, plus serein que moi. J'avais honte, je me sentais nerveux. Après, j'ai compris pourquoi. On était fort bien ensemble. Mais nous n'avions pas les mêmes réactions ; on n'employait pas le même

> langage. Tout ce que je pensais, il le pensait. Mais différemment : 'Ne t'en fais pas, on y arrivera !', disait-il. Senghor était très bien avec les professeurs, il était très bien avec Pompidou. Il déclamait bel et bien. Mais il n'en pensait pas moins. Quant à moi, j'avais plutôt tendance à me fâcher. […] Il savait très bien qu'un jour les Français partiraient ; seulement il prenait son temps. […] Très tranquillement, il acceptait avec beaucoup de sérénité la 'cohabitation' avec les Européens, tandis que moi je ne voyais pas d'issue à une telle situation. C'est une question de tempérament, une question d'homme. (223-224)

As Césaire explains, Senghor did not react with the same violent affront to colonialism as he did, but it was not because he was too weak or had too much affinity for the French. Senghor was a serene and, more importantly, a strategic and insightful man. In the same interview, Césaire notes that « Senghor était un homme opportuniste » (227). Being opportunistic is certainly more akin to the kind of discursive reason Senghor is often said to neglect.

Senghor's strategic inclusion of Western thought and philosophy to bolster Negritude has left ample opportunity for critics to condemn his use of European sources. However, as Janet Vaillant notes, "When he could find European support for his African point of view, the focus of his double perspective was sharp" (263). He chose carefully and was excited when Europeans would reject the positivistic worldview in favour of the less rational and more intuitive approach, which, as explained in the second and third chapters, is why he named Bergson, Rimbaud and Claudel as the fathers of the "Revolution of 1889." Or with regard to the French paleontologist, Jesuit priest and idealist philosopher, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: « Cher Teilhard, qui m'a toujours ramené à mes sources, en légitimant ma Négritude ! » (*Liberté 5* 12). Vaillant describes the importance of remembering that Senghor was open only to those European thinkers whose ideas most suited his purposes, hence the strategy:

> Whether it was an ethnographer whose work provided information about the uniqueness and achievements of African civilization, a poet or novelist who proclaimed the importance of intuition and an emotional grasp of reality, or a contemporary religious thinker, scientist or social critic who saw in European development distortion that needed correction, all those whose work influenced Senghor did so in large part because their ideas suited his purpose. (263).

Senghor did not blindly borrow or steal ideas from Europe; he found evidence in certain European works to support what he had deemed the Black African approach or Negritude. And yet, though he saw opposing emphasis on values between Europe and Africa, he never doubted that symbiosis or *métissage* could be achieved. In part this is because of his own personal necessity to marry the dualistic aspects of his experience: he was both French and African, both traditional and modern. Thus: "Just as African will benefit from an infusion of the inquisitive spirit and a higher development of analytical reason, so Western Europe, now locked in a dehumanizing worship of machines and material wealth, will benefit from the African contribution of its greater emotional and spiritual development, vitality, and understanding of the interconnectedness of all life in the universe" (Vaillant 266). And it is this interconnectedness that ties in with the kind of Francophonie Senghor promoted as well as with the similarity of the *littérature-monde* vision. It is through the spread of international contacts that the "best each civilization has to offer" will be able to come into contact. And this is crucial for, as Vaillant explains, "the spiritual wisdom and vitality of Negritude will prove of far greater importance to Europe than Africa's raw materials ever were" (267). When considering Senghor's vision for Francophonie one must consider the root of his notion that cultural contact is the very best thing to come of colonisation. Thus, Senghor's Francophonie and his Negritude share a common goal:

that of the "Civilization of the Universal," whereby planetary cultural enhancement is an inherent by-product.

Just as Vaillant defends Senghor's European supports, Aimé Césaire, in the interview with Djian, explains how Negritude and Francophonie were never contradictory for Senghor. Djian begins: « Revenons à Senghor. Dans les années quatre-vingt, Senghor modifie son plan de combat ; il laisse un peu de côté la négritude et se bat pour la francophonie » (231). To which Césaire responds: « Ce n'est pas contradictoire chez Senghor. Déjà au lycée, on n'arrivait pas toujours à savoir ce qu'il pensait. Il respectait tellement les conventions que certains étaient persuadés que Senghor était un lâche. Il n'a jamais été question de cela. Ce n'est pas du tout vrai. C'est un homme posé et réfléchi » (232). For Senghor, Negritude and Francophonie are not at odds. In a similar way, even Césaire presents an uncomfortable marriage of loving the French language while being simultaneously opposed to the detrimental aspects of colonialism. Césaire explains that he has reservations about Francophonie; he states: « C'était un acte de colonialisme, tout simplement. […] Je n'étais pas du tout anti-français. J'étais contre une forme d'expansionnisme linguistique, ce qui signifiait la mort des cultures spécifiques » (232). The threat of Francophonie is the loss of the particulars: of the creole languages, the indigenous ones, the traditions, the foods and of cultural expression in general. And still, both Senghor and Césaire expressed themselves through the medium of the French language. But Senghor proposed that education in Senegal include not only teaching of French, but also that Wolof and Serer be taught in schools as well. Senghor's Francophonie demanded that each culture maintain its strong roots in its own fertile soil; being open to the West by learning a common language is only in addition to maintaining indigenous ones. Could it be that the *kind* or the *type* of Francophonie is of utmost importance? Césaire identifies the need to be clear about what

Francophonie entails: « Je suis très lié à la France. J'ai appris à lire en français, à écrire en français, à penser en français. Mais il faut en finir avec la francophonie du XIXe siècle. 'Le français partout et on est sauvés !' Non ce n'est pas de cela que nous avons besoin. Il y a bien trop de cultures à protéger. Parlons plutôt de francophonies au pluriel » (232). What do we need then? A plurality of *francophonies*? Would this protect culture?

IV. Francophonie/S

> « C'est bien pourquoi la Francophonie renvoie dans l'opinion commune au 'tiers-monde' […] La Francophonie est ainsi couramment assimilée à l'héritage colonial de la France » (Dominique Combe, *Les littératures francophones* 29).

Aimé Césaire is not alone in speaking of Francophonies in the plural. Both Dominique Combe, a prominent scholar of Francophonie, and Jean-Marc Moura, postcolonial scholar and critic of francophone literatures, pluralize the francophone context (Combe, 1995; Moura, 2005; Combe, 2010). Réda Bensmaïa offers the recognition that, in terms of Francophonie, there is still much to be undone:

> Once the dualist conception of the relation of exclusion that links French literature and Francophone literatures was eliminated, once the 'veil' that made the One a paragon of the Universal, and turned the others into substitutes for or avatars of 'en-face' literature-once this veil was raised, then one could begin to read, study, and teach literatures written in French using a framework that no longer confined them to the catch-all category known as 'Francophonie.' (22)

The *littérature-monde* movement is attempting to emphasize the need to undo this dichotomy. But, because of the term Francophonie itself, there has been much misunderstanding. For

example, Senghor, often considered the grandfather of Francophonie, is mentioned in the *Pour une littérature-monde* collection by Nimrod, but no other authors mention him in their essays. That a signatory of a manifesto calling for an end to Francophonie praises the grandfather of Francophonie only points to the lack of consensus regarding this ambiguous term. Migraine-George mentions Senghor, in her exploration of *littérature-monde*, noting his presence and efforts during the time of African independence to extol Francophonie along with French presidents like Charles de Gaulle and Georges Pompidou (for whom he wrote a beautiful elegy)[38] and African leaders like Habib Bourguiba (xxxiii).

There are, inescapably, numerous legitimate concerns surrounding the institutional and political legacies of Francophonie. Dominique Combe concludes his 2010 book, *Les littératures francophones: Questions, débats*, *polémiques,* by claiming that, « le manifeste revient ainsi, bien malgré lui, à la Francophonie honnie » (227). But he was already engaging with the centre/periphery inequalities in his 1995 book, *Poétiques francophones*, wherein he famously stated: « Le problème des littératures francophones, c'est d'être écrites en français » (4). Combe explains that Francophone writers such as Congolese Henri Lopes want to be « jugés à l'aune de la littérature mondiale » (5). According to him, this desire for recognition by Francophone writers is echoed twelve years later in the manifesto, and in the collection. However, the comprehensibility of the collection of essays has also been a subject of criticism. In Combe's article, he notes that Dany Laferrière and Wajdi Mouawad don't even mention *littérature-monde* in their essays and that Nimrod seems to argue for Francophonie: « Nimrod, fidèle à des

[38] Senghor's elegies are collected in a book called *Les Élégies majeures.* Paris: Éditions Regard, 1978. Also included within are elegies for Martin Luther King, for the Queen of Saba and for his son, Philippe Maguilen, from his second wife, who died tragically in a car accident. Senghor knew personal tragedy as one of his sons from his first wife committed suicide. The other son was not widely known about until recently and he remains somewhat of a mystery.

positions exprimées dans un hommage rendu à Senghor, prend même le contre-pied de la thèse du manifeste pour défendre l'idée de Francophonie » (243). And yet, it is the division that is created by differentiating between "French Literature" and "Francophonie" that is being questioned. Emily Apter explains that the very term does imply and maintain a binary of superior/inferior: "Abolishing the divides of inside/outside, guest/host, owner/tenant, Francophonie names a comparatism that neighbors languages, nations, literatures, and communities of speakers" (303). Thus we must consider: when the manifesto calls for an end to Francophonie, what is it exactly that they want to be rid of? And what is being encouraged as a replacement? Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to unpack all the baggage that Francophonie carries, it serves to bring forth some key concerns regarding the convoluted term.

In Jean-Marc Moura's 2005 book *Littératures francophones et théorie postcoloniale,* he admits that « la définition linguistique de la francophonie est un véritable casse-tête » (25). There are various approaches that can be used when understanding what it means to be francophone. Even if linguistics is the sole determining factor, the experience remains varied. Moura notes: « On peut dire qu'un pays, une région francophone sont des territoires où le français a statut de langue officielle » (25). Within that framework, there is much variance in terms of monolingual native francophone (Quebec, France); non-indigenous francophone but officially so (many countries in West Africa); shared official languages with French (Luxembourg, Brussels); non-official francophone but still widely spoken (Tunisia, Morocco); not francophone but officially part of francophone institutions (Laos, Vietnam); and places where Francophonie was historically rooted in the territorial area (Trinidad, Grenada) (25-26). There is no simple definition to denote what it means to be Francophone and Moura professes the importance of approaching this complexity with postcolonial awareness.

The overarching criticism of the *littérature-monde* movement is the failure to consider or take post-colonialism into account. Moura describes why a postcolonial perspective is crucial when considering "francophone literature":

> L'homogénéité et la stabilité des 'aires' francophones extra-européennes ne présentent pas le caractère d'évidence des aires linguistiques européennes. La perspective postcoloniale s'attache à des littératures en contact, donc à des situations ou une littérature écrite en français coexiste avec une (ou plusieurs) littérature(s) écrite(s) en une (ou plusieurs) autre(s) langue(s). Elle considère aussi que cette situation de coexistence provient d'une histoire coloniale qui a consisté dans l'imposition d'une culture (dont participent des normes et des formes littéraires) présentée comme supérieure aux cultures des pays colonisés, et que cet état de fait a été la source de créations spécifiques. (31)

The postcolonial perspective emphasizes not only contact but notes that the colonial power self-presented as more powerful and imposed their culture upon the colonised. Even after decolonisation, in terms of literature, the methods and styles of the colonizer are still at play. Postcolonial awareness keeps this power dynamic at the forefront. Much of what the *littérature-monde* manifesto fails to address can be remedied by Senghor's thought surrounding *métissage* and rooted cosmopolitanism.[39] Senghor continuously fought for the dismantling of the colonizer/colonized dynamic. According to Jean-Michel Djian, for Senghor: « Rien ne semble tant lui importer que de *toucher* l'autre. Peu importe la manière et la forme. Il s'emploie, dans le même temps, à jouer dans cette cour de la raison discursive pour pouvoir ensuite distiller à son

[39] For a detailed discussion surrounding the notions of Senghor presenting a cosmopolitanism that is rooted, see: Chike Jeffers. "Black civilization and the dialogue of cultures: Senghor's combination of cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism." *Negritude*, edited by Isabel Constant and K.C Mabana. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, pp. 54-65.

gré ce que la force de l'intuition peut libérer avec des mots » (Djian, 128). Discursive reason is not to be overlooked. It is a tool that can carry the depth of meaning evoked by certain word combinations. Similarly, the criticism of postmodernism and poststructuralism that is found in *littérature-monde* (example) points to the notion that one can go too far in terms of leaving reason behind: what remains is utter non-sense.

Just as Senghor was criticized for being inauthentic (for being too French) Le Bris and Rouaud are also criticized for being French and too quick to group themselves with the non-hexagonal writers. In short, for being inauthentic or for making assumptions that many deem them incapable of making because precisely because they are French white–and thus privileged–males. But Le Bris does not see himself in such a light. In a round table discussion that took place at Saint-Thomas University in October of 2010, he poses the questions: « Moi critique du centre? Je ne sais pas, je ne suis pas le centre » (« Points saillants » 576). Then he explains what inspired him to build the movement that surrounds the manifesto, the two collections and the festival *Étonnants voyageurs:*

> J'ai créé un endroit, un espace de relation entre écrivains français, francophones, du monde entier et on peut lancer des idées et puis comme on lance des cailloux dans l'eau, il y a des zones concentriques ; mais de voir comment ces choses-là se précisaient d'année en année, évoluaient, s'enrichissaient, ce que je constatais tout simplement et d'une manière très simple en organisant, à Bamako, avec les écrivains, un lieu, un festival. Et tout d'un coup, je découvrais quelque chose dans ces littératures, pareil dans les Caraïbes, et il devenait clair que quelque chose que s'était perdu de l'idée même de littérature – pendant le règne je dirais des anorexiques claustrophobes quelque part en France – se trouvait encore vivant. (578)

The vivacity, the life force, the spiritual component is exactly what Senghor claims the Black African will bring to the *rendez-vous* of give and take. That there is this element of Negritude apparent throughout *littérature-monde,* and the essentialism that goes along with it, brings forth critics who see a reinforcement of the problematic exoticisation of the Other. Nevertheless, Le Bris maintains that the potential of the encounter is fertile and rich, noting: « C'est le phénomène de la rencontre qui m'intéresse parce que nous arrivons de tout à fait autre chose et c'est le dialogue qui s'est créé à ce moment-là, qui se poursuit. Un dialogue formidable avec une nouvelle génération d'écrivains africains, des Caraïbes, des Antilles, aussi d'Haïti…et ces relations sont très, très riches » (579). Le Bris, like Senghor, sees contact between cultures as the best possible outcome of colonisation. He is willing to blithely disregard both post-colonialism and Francophonie if either of those terms implies that there is something to be opposed, to be battled. Both of these ideas need to be reconsidered so that fruitful dialogue can take place, otherwise there is simply a rigid deadlock. Alain Borer agrees, noting: « Il faut d'abord questionner et re-questionner francophonie et postcolonial, parce qu'il est frappant que ses notions soient des métonymies, c'est qu'elles renvoient, par contiguïté, à quelque chose contre quoi elles s'adossent » (« Points saillants » 576). Senghor, long before the creation of "post," had already considered a realistic and optimistic way to view the historical reality of colonization.

If Senghor is often criticized for being too forgiving of France, for being too Eurocentric, it is also because of his realistic optimism. Colonization is a historical fact that cannot be undone and so, Senghor recommends taking the best of what has been offered (to assimilate rather than be assimilated).[40] In *On African Socialism,* he writes: "In our return to our cultural roots, and

[40] The title of Senghor's 1945 essay, « Vues sur l'Afrique Noire ou assimiler, non être assimilés », effectively sums up his method of moving forward after colonisation: choose what to keep from the colonisers and toss out the rest. The essay is found in *Liberté 1* but was first published in *La Communauté impériale française* in 1945.

particularly to the Negro-African method of knowledge and comprehension (*con-naissance* and *ap-préhension*) of the world, we cannot reject European methods" (80). As Alain Borer suggests, Senghor long ago proposed a "re-studying," but of colonialism rather than post-colonialism. Underlying this reconsideration is dialectical reasoning where outcomes need not be fixed into either/or dichotomies. Senghor writes: "Let us stop denouncing colonialism and Europe and attributing all our ills to them. Besides being not entirely fair, this is a negative approach, revealing our inferiority complex, the very complex the colonizer inoculated in us and whose accomplices we thereby are secretly becoming" (80). By this logic and argument, postcolonial theory locks the ex-colonies into states of inferiority. Of the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the colonial practices that coincide with them, Senghor reminds: "It not only destroyed, it built; it not only killed, it cured and educated; it gave birth to a new world, an entire world of our brothers, men of other races and continents!" (81). Postcolonialism might deem Senghor's position to be too forgiving, but, in a more dialectical thought process such as his, he is able to admit to the historical wrongs of colonialism while simultaneously stating that the colonized will hereby take all that serves them in the continued march towards becoming more human.

V. Senghor's Francophonie as a Tool for Humanism

> « En un mot, avec la langue française, nous participons à l'évolution et aux révolutions de notre temps. […] C'est la raison pour laquelle, après avoir pris en main les destinées de nos pays respectifs, nous cherchons à sauvegarder la langue française, qui est, pour nous, un moyen précieux de communication avec l'extérieur et de connaissance des *Autres* comme de nous-mêmes. La Francophonie est une volonté humaniste, sans cesse tendue vers une synthèse, et toujours en dépassement d'elle-

> même pour mieux s'adapter à la situation d'un monde en perpétuel devenir. » (Senghor, *Liberté 3* 187)

When Francophonie is considered to be a tool of the colonizer to assimilate, it is no wonder that the manifesto aims to end it. The manifesto contains the following question: « Comment s'en étonner si l'on s'obstine à postuler un lien charnel exclusif entre la nation et la langue qui en exprimerait le génie singulier–puisqu'en toute rigueur l'idée de 'francophonie' se donne alors comme le dernier avatar du colonialisme? » The Francophonie under attack here is one that maintains and upholds the inequality of colonialism and the subordination of the periphery by the centre. The goal is to break the unilateral link between Paris and the Francophone world and to create a literary space for writers expressing themselves in French that is egalitarian and that respects the diversity and richness of cultures. As Le Bris explains, « Il faut que les écrivains français se sentent francophones » (« Points saillants » 583). But this intended goal of freeing Francophone writers from the powers of the Hexagon by levelling the playing field is the same as one presented by Senghor in 1966 at a conference at the Université Laval, where, in his lecture entitled « Francophonie comme culture, » he insisted:

> La Francophonie ne sera plus enfermée dans les limites de l'Hexagone. Nous ne sommes plus des « colonies » : des filles mineures qui réclament une part de l'Héritage. Nous sommes devenues des États indépendants, des personnes majeures, qui exigent leur part de responsabilités : pour fortifier la communauté en l'agrandissant. [...] L'essentiel est que la France accepte de décoloniser culturellement et qu'ensemble, nous travaillions à la *Défense et Expansion de la langue française* comme nous avons travaillé à son illustration. (89)

Though Senghor is often criticized for being essentialist and for being "more French than the French," his discussions surrounding Francophonie very often mirror what is being proposed by the *littérature-monde* concept, though Senghor's vision for rich cultural dialogue came at the very birth of the postcolonial world, long before the proponents of *littérature-monde* came forth. As he stated in 1969, « La Francophonie n'est pas une *idéologie;* c'est un *idéal* qui anime des peuples en marche vers une solidarité de l'esprit » (*Liberté 3* 194). This march towards a solidarity of spirit is directly linked to Senghor's ultimate vision: his "Civilization of the Universal" whereby all voices engage in dialogue, bringing forth the very best each civilisation has to offer. The progress of humanity is everyone's responsibility, according to Senghor, and Francophonie is an aspect of making this peaceful dialogue possible: « En cette année [1969], où l'homme s'inquiète et s'interroge sur le sort du monde futur, la Francophonie affirme la volonté pacifique d'une *communauté de peuples,* qui veulent être présents 'au rendez-vous de donner et du recevoir' pour assumer, avec tous les autres, la responsabilité du progrès humain » (194). A community of people open to the wide world and united by the fact that they write and express their art through some version of the French language is very much akin to what the *littérature-monde* movement promotes and fosters, as is evident in Le Bris' 2009 « Monde en crise, besoin de fiction, » where he states:

> Vingt années animées par une même passion : ouvrir la littérature française à tous les vents du monde, et qu'elle ose enfin s'affirmer aventureuse, voyageuse, tournée vers le monde, soucieuse de le dire. Un monde, sous nos yeux, disparaissait et avec lui ce que nous pensions des repères assurés, un autre naissait, fascinant, inquiétant : n'étaient-ce pas aux artistes, aux écrivains de nous le donner à voir, en inventer la parole vive ?

The living word is to be constantly created and recreated as societies evolve and shift. Both Senghor and the proponents of *littérature-monde* aim to rise up against stagnation and rigidity in favour of the more real, vibrant interchange that is at play both in terms of literature and culture.

Senghor's vision for Francophonie, one which is non-ideological and which removes the dichotomy of coloniser/colonised, illuminates why Nimrod pays him homage in *Pour une littérature-monde*, which in turn incites criticism from Combe. Nimrod does defend Senghor's ideas surrounding *métissage* and mutually enriching relations between France and her former colonies, but the inequalities Francophonie has come to denote is not at all what he identifies with. He quotes Senghor's 1950 essay, « De la liberté de l'âme, ou l'éloge du métissage » wherein Senghor writes: « Notre vocation de colonisés est de surmonter les contradictions de la conjecture, l'antinomie artificiellement dressée entre l'Afrique et l'Europe [...] Supériorité, parce que *liberté,* du Métis, qui choisit, où il veut, ce qu'il veut pour faire, des éléments réconciliés, une œuvre exquise et forte » (*Liberté 1* 103-my emphasis). The emphasis here is on the freedom to choose what to take and what to reject. That stated, this freedom is still limited by unequal access to publishing houses, to exposure and to opportunity in general.

It is the Senghorian vision of being free to choose the best of what can be offered by colonial legacies and of finally being considered valid human beings that is approved of by Nimrod, who writes: « On nous prend pour des assistés, lors même que notre état recouvre une réalité inédite dans l'histoire mondiale: nous écrivons pour des pays qui n'existent pas encore » (*PLM* 228), lamenting the fact that African countries were never allowed the opportunity and freedom to fully form. We can see that Senghor's utopian vision never came to be; but does that make it obsolete? The problem with Francophonie for the writers of the manifesto is more administrative than cultural, more political than creative, and it could arguably be traced back to

the failure for Senghor's Francophonie to come to fruition. By considering Senghor's notion of Francophonie, we are able to gain aesthetic and cultural insight in addition to the already important political debates underway.

For Senghor, Francophonie is an occasion for rich cultural dialogue. At a conference in Kinshasa in 1969 he gave a lecture called, « La francophonie comme contribution à la civilisation de l'universel. » He begins by noting that while there is no use in outlining the entire project of Francophonie, it is crucial to keep in mind is that, « *la francophonie* est une notion essentiellement *culturelle* » (*Liberté 3* 183). For Senghor, culture precedes the political, and cultural colonialism is the worst possible form of assimilation: « le colonialisme culturel, sous la forme de l'assimilation, est le pire de tous » (*Liberté 1* 285). Yet the word "culture" is difficult to define because it is intangible. Nevertheless, Senghor defines culture eloquently, if not idealistically, marking its crucial importance to civilization:

> Mais, *qu'est-ce que la Culture?* La culture est l'esprit de la civilisation, qui est, elle-même, l'expression d'une façon de sentir, de concevoir et d'agir. C'est un langage commun qui rapproche et unit les hommes, une prise de conscience et une expression de la complexité du réel. Elle est un style : une manière d'éclairer les choses et les événements. Il n'y a pas de civilisations sans culture, car l'effort culturel est, lui-même, la principale valeur de civilisation. (183)

Culture is the very spirit of civilization for Senghor and the politics of economic or social development should have culture as their ultimate goal. This would lead to a cultural dialogue that pays heed to all voices.

Senghor's vision of Francophonie, often described in an eloquently lyrical, even spiritual tone, is repeated in *Pour une littérature-monde,* both in terms of style and intention. Both evoke

a vision for utopian dialogue between diverse cultures that communicate through the common medium of French. Robert Viau notes that the ultimate stakes of *littérature-monde* consist in eliciting a new and productive dialogue: « L'enjeu de la littérature-monde consiste à abolir les barrières de la francophonie, d'entamer un nouveau dialogue, une meilleure reconnaissance des écrivains dits encore, mais peut-être pas pour longtemps, 'francophones' » (103). This citation clearly shows that Senghor's vision for a decentred and egalitarian Francophonie has yet to be achieved. The term Francophonie connotes, for most, the dominance of centre over periphery. However, forty years ago Senghor was already claiming the French language as his own: « depuis nos indépendances respective, elle a cessé d'appartenir, exclusivement, à la France » (*Liberté 3* 184). For him, Francophonie forms a community, and not just in terms of the joining of individuals via a common language, but on the level of the spiritual. He asserts: « Dans les faits, la Francophonie se présente comme *la communauté spirituelle des nations qui emploient le français, soit comme langue nationale, soit comme langue officielle, soit comme langue d'usage* » (185). Since the inception of Francophonie, it would seem that the "spiritual community" remained divided between the centre and the periphery, despite Senghor's utopian vision. Does *littérature-monde* have the potential to instigate new movement towards acceptance and celebration of diversity, effectively disentangling the tight chords of forty years of postcolonial division? Perhaps the greatest chance that it has in this regard is precisely cultural, in terms of the spirit of literature, written in French.

The colonial issues tied to Francophonie exist because of its institutionalization and because it became an ideology rather than an ideal, as Senghor had hoped: « La Francophonie n'est pas une *idéologie;* c'est un *idéal* qui anime des peuples en marche vers une solidarité de l'esprit » (194). In this light, *littérature-monde* could be considered an extension or a

continuation of the potential that the project of Francophonie held for Senghor. Le Bris echoes Senghor's hopes for a non-francocentric gathering by specifying which Francophonie must go: « Historique, donc, ce moment : l'acte de décès d'une certaine idée de la francophonie, perçue comme un espace sur lequel la France dispenserait ses lumières au bénéfice, il faut donc le supposer, de masses encore enténébrées. La fin de cette francophonie-là, et l'émergence d'une littérature-monde en français » (*PLM* 24). The vision is for a French world literature, global in scope. Yet, if debates remain focused solely on the level of politics, the potential for cultural dialogue having to do with thought and consciousness, with *esprit* and with the creative gains available via mutual enrichment may be stifled. The "Civilization of the Universal" will be slayed by the critics before it even gets a chance to breathe its first breath.

VI. *Littérature-monde en français*: an-Other Example of the Essentialist Exotic?

> "Such a Senghorian dialogue would have to take place between equal angels who had just floated up to heaven shorn of their bodies (marked by gender, race, and linguistic accent) and of historical experiences. It seems contradictory and disingenuous to build *en français* into the very title of the thing, and then disavow debate about language and power. While the manifesto resolutely insists that colonialism is in the past and *littérature-monde* wants to move into the future." (Charles Sugnet, "*Pour une littérature-monde en français*: manifesto retro" 245)

The unequal power dynamics between former colonies and their colonizers inform much of the criticism pertaining to *littérature-monde*. The opening quotation to this section indicates the overarching qualm of many critics: this utopian ideal entails a complete disregard and failure to reconcile the deep injustices caused by France's colonial past. Dominique Combe accuses Le

Bris and Rouaud, saying that they « sacrifient à l'exotisme européocentrique que la théorie postcoloniale, depuis Edward Saïd, n'en finit plus de déconstruire » (*Les littératures* 221). The claim of exoticism and folklorisation are both valid and important aspects to consider. The various concerns brought forth against *littérature-monde* are important, especially in a global climate where the dangers of a neo-colonial paradigm are frighteningly visible. This is why, at this point, we must consider the manifesto more thoroughly, for it differs considerably in tone from the collections [*Pour une littérature-monde* (2007) and *Je est un autre: Pour une identité-monde* (2010)], as well as the accompanying criticism (Sugnet; Toledo; Forsdick; Jenson; Combe; Migraine-George). At odds throughout the criticism is the blurring of the identity politics inherent to the project with the very real politics of the institution known of academia. Furthermore, the *littérature-monde* discussion was most fervent within the North American departments and faculties of French and Francophone studies: the "death of *francophonie,*" at first glance, seems undeniably threatening to those departments that name themselves under this controversial and misunderstood term. As Migraine-George points out, *"*Unsurprisingly scholars who have specialized in Francophone studies in Anglo-American academia – where Francophone studies have been very successful in establishing themselves – overwhelmingly come to the rescue of Francophonie while largely discrediting the manifesto" (xxiii). She then explains that an entire collection of the most prominent voices in Francophone studies is excruciatingly virulent in its utter rejection of *littérature–monde.* The collection in question is entitled: *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-monde* (Hargreaves, Forsdick, and Murphy 2010). The over-arching grievance illustrated throughout the book is that the manifesto lacks any kind of serious political consideration. In depth and careful consideration

of the dominant criticisms is imperative. A description of the manifesto, of its language, tone and message, will provide the foundation for understanding what is being condemned.

As mentioned, at the most basic level, the manifesto calls for an end to Francophonie. However, as previously discussed, there is no unequivocal definition of Francophonie. The *littérature-monde* manifesto ultimately envisions an end to the hegemony of the publishing empire that is Paris. This is far from a new concern; Jacques Derrida for instance, in *Monolingualism of the Other*, noted that "Paris is also the capital of Literature" (42). No longer should there be a power discrepancy between French hegemonic voices and the variety that makes up everyone else who writes in some version of the French language. The goal of the manifesto was to demand an end to the political injustice of Francophonie to be replaced by a transnational literature that is open to the world: « Soyons clairs: l'émergence d'une littérature-monde en langue française consciemment affirmée, ouverte sur le monde, transnationale, signe l'acte de décès de la francophonie » (Le Bris, et al. *Le Monde*). Why does Francophonie have to die? Because, France is no longer the navel of the Francophone world: « le centre, ce point depuis lequel était supposée rayonner une littérature franco-française, n'est plus le centre » (Le Bris et al. *Le Monde*). Arguably, the politically charged demands for the death of Francophonie and for an end to the colonial residue of centre versus periphery are central; however, underlying and informing this political agenda is a discourse that is coloured by sentiment and less tangible aesthetics.

The manifesto is composed in colourful language that provokes an intangible, even "affective" response. The document, beyond its political aims, calls for an aesthetic renewal of literature. This reinvigoration of literature will occur by being open to the richness that the diversity of the world can offer. In his thorough synopsis of *littérature-monde*, Robert Viau notes

the overlooked aesthetic goal of the manifesto, remarking that the overall purpose is twofold (87). First, the emergence of *littérature-monde* aims to valorise the works of those writers who were wrongly assimilated to productions of the periphery. The second aspect of the overall goal is: « de revitaliser la littérature française de l'Hexagone rendue, d'après les signataires du manifeste, aseptisée, exsangue, car dominée par un certain nombre de pré-conditions esthétiques » (87). These stagnant hexagonal aesthetic trends are attributed by Le Bris and Rouaud to formalism, structuralism and to the removal of the subject and of subjectivity; trends that are accused of ushering in the destruction of imagination and of style (88). The answer is to return to literature that has been transformed by the authors' openness to alterity, by "dancing the Other," as Senghor would say, and by creating a space for literary techniques to be gained: « la créolisation, la diglossie, l'intertextualité et la transgénéricité » (88).[41] Jacques Derrida, in his text *Monolingualism of the Other Or The Prosthesis of Origin,* discusses the ludicrous notion of claiming such a tangible and singular idea as "*the* French language" (my emphasis-1998).[42] Moreover, he proposes that the worn-out colonial cry of "openness to the other" has been misinterpreted and misrepresented (40). His claim is that this very intention to be open to alterity means something else:

> [T]he monolingualism of the other means another thing, which will be revealed little by little: that in any case we speak only one language – and that we do not *own* it. We only ever speak one language – and, since it returns to the other, it exists asymmetrically,

[41] I remind that, in *On African Socialism,* Senghor contests Descartes' *cogito* by presenting the Black Africans superior way of knowing: "Subject and object are dialectically face to face in the very act of knowledge. It is a long caress in the night, an embrace of joined bodies, the act of love. "I want you to feel me," says a voter who wants you to know him well. "I think, therefore I am," Descartes writes. [...] The Negro African could say, "I feel, I dance the Other; I am." To dance is to discover and to re-create, especially when it is a dance of love. In any event *it is the best way to know*." (73)

[42] The oral version of this text was presented at a conference in Baton Rouge at Louisiana State University. The conference was entitled: "Echoes from Elsewhere" / "Renvois d'ailleurs," and speakers were asked to address issues of Francophonie outside of France, ranging from linguistics, literature, culture and politics.

> always for *the other,* from the other, kept by the other. Coming from the other, remaining with the other, and returning to the other. (40)

Derrida's differentiation from the usual understanding of openness to alterity echoes Senghor's description of the dance of being, whereby the Black African engages in a dance of love and moves towards the other, ultimately becoming the Other, with which or with whom they are in relationship. Again, the importance and fecundity of contact, whereby we might "dance the Other."[43] Both Senghor and Derrida, in their understanding of Otherness, present us with a non-dualistic way of relating; thus, the hierarchical victim/perpetrator or deprived/privileged dichotomy, though it is important and describes historical truths, can be surpassed and a more fruitful dialogue can take place, offering forward momentum rather than dead-lock scholarship. In many instances, postcolonial studies engender guilt and leave little room for creative solutions and affirmative potential. The manifesto does neglect to maintain postcolonial considerations at its forefront; however, its underlying intention is to create a globally encompassing and multidimensional interaction of literature written in French and to celebrate the creative potential that a diversity of cultural poeticism can offer, not to diminish or invalidate postcolonial realities. It may be blithe or even utopian to envision such a dialogue, but does the alternative offer more potential for working towards equality and global justice? Senghor believes that the so-called "Third World" has much to offer the rest of the planet: « La *Francophonie* s'incarne donc dans l'ensemble des pays qui ont la langue française comme instrument de communication et d'échanges, non seulement économiques, mais surtout socio-culturels. Et c'est un fait que, dans ces échanges, les cultures du Tiers Monde ne viennent pas les mains vides » (*Liberté 3* 547).

[43] The entire citation is on page 73 of Senghor's *On African Socialism.*

Having the French language as the *lingua franca* potentiates global dialogue whereby a diversity of socio-cultural understanding and knowledge can surface and be shared.

Nevertheless, the debates, occurring mainly in North American universities, continue to focus on politics and are informed by a defensive stance rather than by any genuine desire to understand the intention or foundation of *littérature-monde.* That said, even Charles Forsdick, arguably the most scathing critic of *littérature-monde*, admits that the text "has served as a new focus for a range of debates situated loosely in the overlapping fields of modern languages, comparatism, postcolonialism and 'world literature'" (128). What remains to be included in the debates, however, is the advancement of aesthetic creativity and the potential of the admittedly uncomfortable non-dualistic or hermeneutic reasoning that is, instead, criticized as anti-academic, as utopian or as failing to take postcolonial realities into account. The creativity of the essays in both *Pour une littérature-monde* and *Je est un autre*, composed in such a multiplicity of voices, speaks to the desire for a kind of universal that is inclusive of all possible particulars.[44] Migraine-George sees this comfort with alterity and diversity as a main strength of *littérature-monde*: "Instead of striving to contain this untenable tension between sameness and otherness, unity and diversity, within a seemingly coherent literary and scholarly field, the proponents of littérature-monde celebrate the explosion of unity into unbridled multiplicity, the "creative effervescence" of many voices" (xxxvii). The vision is for literary works written in French, for Francophone works, to include writers from France, from the "core," so as not to diminish the importance of those writing from the "periphery." All voices are to be considered equally valid

[44] Aimé Césaire, in his letter to Maurice Thoroz, states "There are two ways to lose oneself: walled segregation in the particular or dilution in the 'universal'. My conception of the universal is that of a universal enriched by all that is particular, a universal enriched by every particular: the deepening and coexistence of all particulars" (Césaire, 136).

and the very lyricism and non-academic writing that is being criticized is, in effect, an example of the kind of writing that the manifesto hopes to promote. As Le Bris affirms in his section of *Pour une littérature-monde*: « l'épreuve de l'autre, de l'ailleurs, du monde, qui, seule, peut empêcher la littérature de se scléroser en 'littérature' –entendez: en ronds de jambe, emphase, mauvaise littérature » (29). He explains that literature is always in peril of being codified and conventionalized and that the world, along with the lived experience of existing in the constant movement and vivid creative mélange that makes up the world, can save literature from such stagnation, but only on one condition: « À la condition que dans le même mouvement on comprenne que c'est seulement cette parole vive, portée à incandescence par les artistes, les poètes, les écrivains, qui, par nommant le monde, nous le donne à voir, l'invente, le revivifie, l'empêche de se refermer sur nous en prison » (29). Much like Senghor in his utopian vision of the "Dialogue of Cultures," the proponents of *littérature-monde* see the fecundity of having cultural dialogue whereby all offerings are brought forth and received under the supposition of egalitarianism. All have something valid to offer at the *rendez-vous*. Writers have only to "rub up against the vital energies and capture the breath of the world"[45] (Le Bris, et al. *Le Monde*). This openness to the living speech and to the vibrational movement of the world around also informs the intention behind the Saint-Malo gathering of travel writers called "Étonnants Voyageurs," a festival that was the birth place of *littérature-monde.*

The term *littérature-monde* was first coined in Michel Le Bris' 1992 collection based on the travel writers' festival: *Pour une littérature voyageuse.* Deborah Jenson criticizes the manifesto for simply being an affirmation of this decadent cosmopolitan gathering. Her article, "Francophone World Literature (*Littérature-monde*), Cosmopolitanism and Decadence: 'Citizen

[45] « se frotter au monde pour en capter le souffle, les énergies vitales » (*Le Monde*)

of the World' without the citizen," relates the "suppressed fault-lines of migrant rather than citizen cosmopolitanism, as they are revalorized in the post-colonization framework of *littérature-monde,* to the troubled and troubling forms of cosmopolitanism whose polycultural dissonance inspired the nineteenth century literary and artistic movement of decadence" (16-17). There is a real danger that the movement become a justification for cultural elite to exoticize and blithely, or even decadently, play at being Other.

However, Le Bris explains his intention behind forming the gathering of « Étonnants Voyageurs, » and, in his description, it is evident that he is aware of the problematic nature of universalism. What he is promoting via the « festival Étonnants Voyageurs » is an alternative to such assumed universality as that of French universalism. He explains the birth of the festival in his section of *Pour une littérature-monde*:

> Il était né, ce festival, d'un gigantesque ras-le-bol devant l'état de la littérature française, devenue sourde et aveugle, me semblait-il, à la course du monde, à force de se croire la seule, l'unique, l'ultime référence, à jamais admirable, modèle livré à l'humanité–né d'un coup de col colère, pour tout dire, devant l'invraisemblable morgue des pions qui tenaient alors le haut du pavé, imposaient leurs normes, dictaient les goûts et les rejets, fonctionnaires autoproclamés de l'universel, si imbus d'eux-mêmes qu'ils ne se rendaient même pas compte que depuis longtemps ils parlaient dans le vide. (25)

The criticism against Le Bris and Rouaud, and against the manifesto, for presenting a kind of decadent cosmopolitanism fails to take into account the ultimate project of *littérature-monde*, which is not simply to put an end to the condescending voice of the all-powerful Hexagon, but to initiate a space that is inherently fluid and evolving because it is created and upheld in the spirit

of being open to the world, a world that is itself « ouvert, foisonnant, bigarré, en mouvement » (*PLM* 21). In this vein, as already mentioned in the opening paragraph to this chapter, when asked to define the term, Le Bris explains: « C'est pourtant simple: deux mots, 'littérature' et 'monde', avec, entre les deux, un trait d'union. À inventer par chaque écrivain, puisque ce trait est l'espace même de l'œuvre » (« Le monde en crise »). This space of creative potential between "literature" and "world" provides infinite possibility for the expression of Francophone literature, or is it better to say, of literature written in some version of French? Nevertheless, though I argue that the creative potential of *littérature-monde* exists despite the disregard for the postcolonial, the very real matter of colonial legacies should be given due diligence. We still exist in a global climate where nations and states have real geopolitical power and that power varies tremendously. As Charles Sugnet notes, "The state is, of course, not quite the same thing as the nation, but there is a relation, and it's doubtful that the French language can be suddenly freed from its historical burdens, while the French state and official Francophonie continue to use it as an instrument of geopolitics" (249). What are some of the potential pathways towards integrating and remedying historical burdens and injustice?

Having described the tone, intention and language of the manifesto, it is no surprise that *littérature-monde* gets labeled many things: from naïve to idealistic and even absurd. Charles Sugnet writes that *littérature-monde* establishes a "retreat from the urgent intellectual and artistic work of confronting the aftermath of colonialism in France" ignoring the legacies of postcolonialism (250). Charles Forsdick and Dominique Combe also consider the lack of congruence and of theoretical or political positioning to be a major downfall. In an article that he wrote for *PARAGRAPH,* Forsdick scathingly explains: "The elaboration of *littérature-monde* took place in the anti-theoretical and purportedly anti-academic context in which Michel Le Bris

has located much of his previous work" (128). And Dominique Combe, in his 2010 book, *Les littératures francophones: Questions, débats, polémiques,* attacks the very language in which Rouaud expresses himself, claiming that he, « dans son enthousiasme lyrique, fait fi de l'histoire coloniale et postcoloniale en postulant une langue 'devenue autonome, choisie', comme si le problème des relations avec l'empire ne se posait plus » (220). Colonial and postcolonial histories are not to be treated in such a casual manner.

The main argument Combe puts forth is that the *littérature-monde* movement fails to consider historical legacies, and because of this blithe neglect, the result is the same condescension of the Francophonie under attack. He writes that, in proposing a language that is "autonomous, chosen," the manifesto writers act as though « le problème des relations avec l'empire ne se posait plus. Mais une telle vision de la langue dans la 'littérature-monde' n'est pas seulement irénique. Oublieuse de la politique, elle n'est pas moins 'condescendante' que celle de l'ancienne Francophonie stigmatisée par le manifeste » (220). To turn a blind eye to the injustice of colonialism and then to deny that the ongoing issues have yet to be resolved would be detrimental; I have yet to discover evidence within the three texts (the manifesto and the two collections) that points to such a conclusion. The most common criticism involves the "non-academic" language used: « La forme (ou le genre) du manifeste révèle le caractère passionnel que peuvent prendre à Paris des questions littéraires (on n'imagine guère cela aux États-Unis), dans un discours dramatisé, solennisé jusqu'à la grandiloquence » (215). This argument is akin to the discussion surrounding "(post)structuralism" and, one might ask, what is wrong with promoting writing that is moving, passionate and exciting to read? One might consider the conundrum: as a French writer who is passionate about diversity and culture, how might you communicate without being criticised for inauthenticity and/or colonial pejorative assumptions?

Combe attacks the style and notes the irony by saying that Le Bris and Rouaud are too Parisian, though they denounce the centre: « Jean Rouaud et Michel Le Bris, qui dénoncent le parisianisme, ont paradoxalement recours au genre et au style polémiques qui sont, par excellence, ceux des intellectuels de Saint-Germain-des-Prés » (215). Are they inherently incapable of self-identifying with the works of those they praise? Is connection and identification with Other so that one can better know their self not, at least in part, the goal of the movement? The assumption is that, through literature, one might learn and incorporate the experience of the Other so that one might begin to recognize the essential sameness of human beings. This erasure of experiential dichotomy ultimately undoes the inferiority/superiority complex that remains so firmly plastered to the colonial mindset. Senghor was already pushing the boundaries of the dichotomous thinking that strengthened positivistic doctrines since the late 1700s when he wrote:

> On peut, dès maintenant, en tracer les valeurs, qui se résument dans l'*unité des contraires.* C'est l'opposition, et en même temps la complémentarité par symbiose, du monde visible et du monde invisible, de l'un et du multiple, de la matière et de l'esprit, de la vie et de la mort, comme du mâle et de la femelle. D'un mot, la pensée négro-africaine est dialectique comme la réalité avec laquelle elle se confronte. (*Liberté 3* 546-547).

Could it be that, like Senghor's characterization of Black-African thought as dialectic, which simultaneously reflects reality more accurately while also collapsing the dichotomy of reason/emotion, white/black, male/female, superior/inferior, coloniser/colonized, the *littérature-monde* movement aims to dismantle colonial inequality?

If this is potentially true, could the *littérature-monde* movement nevertheless have paid more careful attention to colonial legacies and thus had greater potential to achieve the stated goal of literary equality and also contributed more efficaciously towards the promulgation of

new and vibrant ideas and written works? This lack of sensitivity towards colonial legacies is undeniably problematic, and is, as mentioned, at the forefront of: *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-monde.* The introduction notes that, "most of the scholars who have thus far entered the debate have been critical of the manifesto's blind spots and what has generally been perceived as its excessive utopianism" (3). The most debated of these blind spots has been the failure to carefully consider the blithe disavowal of the French/Francophone dichotomy. The question underlying this annual publication of the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies is this: "does *littérature-monde* offer an all-embracing transnational vista leading beyond the confines of post-colonialism even while proclaiming the end of the centre/periphery divide?" (3). The only real value generated by *littérature-monde,* as they claim, is that the manifesto is a useful catalyst for debate "about the appropriate ways to study the cultural production of France and the French-speaking world" (8). Their conclusion is that further debates will center around two issues: "the importance of politics" and "wider philosophical issues of translatability, untranslatability and the politics of cultural relationality" (9). These topics are clearly forged in the ivory tower of correct and proper tedium. Nevertheless, proper respect and consideration of their arguments is warranted. The following will look more closely at two of the articles, beginning with Deborah Jenson's discussion surrounding the cosmopolitanism inherent in *littérature-monde.*

I already briefly mentioned Jenson's article in the previous section. Fundamentally, Jenson is critical of *littérature-monde* because of its universalizing tendency and its move away from identity politics. Arguably, the manifesto and subsequent book collection champion cultural hybridity and present a utopian vision of the benefits of doing away with centre versus periphery politics; Jenson notes, "this blurring of cosmopolitanism with diasporan or migrant agency

creates a new decadence to be valorized as a critical opportunity to crack open the hard nuts of universalist pieties" (31). The point she makes is that *littérature-monde* has been presented carelessly and without due consideration to the postcolonial context in which it necessarily exists.

Jenson begins her article by noting the amount of times Barack Obama used terms that evoke a cosmopolitan sentiment during his 2008 election campaign; there is more concern regarding notions of cosmopolitanism and diaspora than careful analysis of the manifesto or the concurrent book of essays. Discussion pertaining to *littérature-monde* is periphery to her main corpus, which often becomes muddled. It is often unclear whether her criticism is of international movements in general. At times, she seemingly commends *littérature-monde* for presenting an international World Literature that extends beyond the Anglophone world. The following comment is puzzling, and we should take note here, for it is the word "intuitive" that baffles: "Even against that dominant Anglophone/World Literature alignment, the non-alignment of *francophonie* with cosmopolitanism is not intuitive, and it arguably took *littérature-monde* to make their disjuncture more salient" (19). This, Jenson explains, is because the French colonial project-imposed Francophonie in order to achieve the goals of the *mission civilisatrice*; thus, she concludes, colonialism and cosmopolitanism are incompatible. The assumption is that *littérature-monde* is essentially a cosmopolitan project that carelessly celebrates diversity while paying no heed to colonial legacies of inequality.

Moving beyond the notion of cosmopolitanism, Jane Hiddleston considers the problematic potential for the presentation of a reductive type of universal humanism. In, "*Littérature-monde* and Old/New Humanism," Hiddleston notes that: "The humanism of the *littérature-monde* movement is conceived to celebrate human diversity, and yet it is intriguing that some of its

supporters uphold a notion of universality that echoes the very humanism that fueled the colonial mission" (180). The terms "universality," "humanism" and "colonial mission" have diverse and varied formulations; can it be accurate to make the claim the "universality" upheld by the supporters is essentially in alignment with the colonial mission? If so, on what grounds? According to Hiddleston, it is the implied "human condition" of *littérature-monde* that is problematic and reductive. The grounds she offers for criticizing the humanism evoked are as follows: "One of the first difficulties of the humanism of the *littérature-monde* movement is, perhaps, this notion of the universal 'human condition' and its potential complicity with the assimilatory forms of Eurocentric humanism that the writers of the *littérature-monde* movement set out to reject" (181). She claims that Le Bris and Rouaud undermine specific cultural differences and that their over-eagerness to be rid of the colonial legacy effectively denies that there are still very real tensions existing. She explains that, ultimately, "Le Bris and Rouaud may set out to insist on human diversity as well as sameness, but their refusal to explore the ongoing effects of colonialism, together with their retention of a notion of a shared 'condition', means that their humanism, like that of the past, again risks obscuring certain kinds of difference" (182). She even implies that they "perceive a clear and perceptible relation between their own experiences and those of the indigenous peoples in France's colonies and ex-colonies" (181). She cites no examples of exactly how they accomplish this self-identified indigeneity.

Hiddleston's argument brings to mind an interview that circulated around social media a few years ago with American actor Morgan Freeman. In the interview, Freeman is asked his opinion of Black History Month. He explains that he is against it, saying "You're going to relegate my history to a month?" After Freeman has Mike Wallace, media personality and American journalist, admit that he would not want a Jewish History Month, he states: "I don't

either. I don't want a Black History Month." He then claims that "Black History is American History." Mike Wallace asks him: "How are we going to get rid of racism until…" Freeman cuts him off by saying, "Stop talking about it! I'm going to stop calling you a White man. I'm going to ask you to stop calling me a Black man." He then suggests they call each other by name. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HVWtlOaMuc, April 2018)

When this video first circulated, I noticed that it was shared on social media platforms mainly by white people. I wondered what my Philosophy of Race professor would think about Morgan Freeman's comments surrounding Black History Month. I have outlined one person's opinion regarding whether or not the institutionalized memorialization of a particular race is useful, necessary or even good. Morgan Freeman seems to think racism would best be dealt with if people "stopped talking about it." This argument is also espoused by Paul Gilroy, who published *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Colour Line* in 2000. I don't entirely agree, and there is value in opening to a notion of absolute particularity (« J'aime répéter que je n'écris ni en français, ni en créole. Mais en Maryse Condé » [*PLM* 203] or Dany Laferrière's similar stance in *Je suis un écrivain japonais : roman,* 2008) while simultaneously allowing for a unifying idea such as the universal human condition to be a fuller, broader picture of all the individual particulars.

Another of Hiddleston's criticisms is that Le Bris and Rouaud argue for liberating literature from its pact with the nation-state. For Hiddleston this is premature, and she argues that there is still an undeniable connection to the nation. Because she is not in agreement with bypassing the nation in favour of a global humanism, she champions Césaire and Fanon as alternative versions of humanism, noting that "Fanon's humanism seems closely related to his celebration of national culture" (184). In this light, Senghor also has much to offer because of his cosmopolitan vision is

one that is firmly rooted in the original culture. In fact, the quotation Hiddleston chooses from Fanon echoes Senghor's views almost exactly. Fanon stated: "let us decide not to imitate Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction" (185). Senghor explains: « La véritable culture est enracinement et déracinement. Enracinement au plus profond de la terre natale : dans son héritage spirituel. Mais déracinement : ouverture à la pluie et au soleil, aux apports fécondants des civilisations étrangères » (*Liberté 5* 25). Senghor, once again, engages in the fecundity of dialectic reasoning. Hiddleston concludes:

> [W]hile vilifying abstraction, Rouaud and Le Bris's vision remains a relatively abstract and superficial reworking or previous forms of postcolonial humanism, and fails, moreover, to elucidate the vital ethics at that humanism's core. It champions human diversity but lacks a notion of the work of reading and attending to that diversity, which in turn would serve to give humanism both rigour and substance. (190)

As the fifth conclusory chapter will demonstrate through textual analysis, if the manifesto, due to its polemical tone and abrupt nature, fails to give humanism "rigour and substance," the collections of essays are rampant with the vitality and substance that can flesh out the driest, most rigid humanism.

Ten years after the manifesto was published, two of the signatories, Alain Mabanckou and Abdourahman Waberi, participated in an interview with one of the most outspoken critics of *littérature-monde*, Charles Forsdick. The interview is called "'Littérature-monde en français': Ten Years On" and the comments and statements made by Mabanckou and Waberi affirm and validate this thesis. When Forsdick asks Mabanckou about impact the manifesto has had on francophone literary production, Mabanckou replies: « Je crois que c'est un manifeste qui ne faisait que confirmer le mouvement actuel de la littérature: s'ouvrir au monde et ne pas se laisser

emprisonner par les discours nationaux » (Web). As has been described throughout, this theme of being open to the world is at the heart of Senghor's discourse as well. The space being imagined is a space that moves beyond the rigid boundaries of nation. *Littérature-monde* is a continuation of a movement that embraced the whole world while celebrating the diversity and potential of each individual writer.

The Negritude movement already started this decentralization of literature and art away from France and from Paris. Hence, Forsdick asks why not draw upon a genealogy of literature that had been brewing since the 1930s at least? He asks: « le manifeste aurait-il pu reconnaître une généalogie beaucoup plus complexe de la littérature-monde¸ avec des apports des auteurs importants tels que Césaire, Senghor, Damas et d'autres? » (Web). Mabanckou's response is that the works and theories of Césaire and Glissant are already fundamental to *littérature-monde* :

> Je crois que dans le Manifeste on peut ressentir en filigrane la présence de Césaire, de Glissant. De Césaire nous empruntons le refus de la soumission : les auteurs francophones ne sont pas les esclaves de la langue française, mais cette langue ne vaudrait rien si elle n'était pas revivifiée par les écrivains venus d'ailleurs. De Glissant, on peut constater que même dans l'expression 'littérature-monde' son esprit est là, avec ses thèses de 'l'identité rhizome' ou sa 'poétique de la relation'. Césaire et Glissant sont parmi ceux qui ont placé notre imaginaire dans le concert du monde. (Web)

The French language owes much to those who express themselves through it but who evoke a plethora of cultural and even spiritual meaning. And when Forsdick asks about the meaning behind identifying writers as: *postcoloniaux, exophones* or simply *écrivains d'outre France,* Mabanckou notes an important distinction: « Je ne me sens pas 'exophone' ou même 'd'outre-France': je suis un écrivain africain qui dit le monde en français, parce que le français est ma

seule langue d'écriture » (Web). This statement echoes the thesis of Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other* and reminds that writing reveals the unique expression of each individual writer.

Forsdick is also concerned about ignoring postcolonial studies and why *littérature-monde* did not mention the anglophone or even the much earlier theoretical studies surrounding world literature and *Weltliteratur*. Waberi explains that the focus on long-term academic postcolonial theoretical studies goes well beyond the original intention of the manifesto, which was quite simple: « Il s'agissait de s'adresser d'abord aux journalistes, aux éditeurs, aux libraires français pour leur dire d'arrêter de minorer les productions des artistes que l'on appelle Francophones » (Web). The intention was to promote those individual artists who were being overlooked and to make the wings of literature written in French spread far and wide so that the world could benefit from what was being produced. Ultimately, as Mabanckou affirms: « Nous avons prôné une littérature-monde, maintenant il s'agit de vivre le monde en littérature et de se rappeler que la création littéraire est avant tout une aventure personnelle » (Web). Literary creation is birthed from the individual experiences of each writer; it offers a gateway for seeing the world anew, through the expression of an-Other. In so doing, there is potential for learning true reciprocity and finding ways to dance together in unison and to be imprinted by the experience of another person, such that some aspects of the Other become a part of the Self.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, *littérature-monde* attempts to surpass the lingering colonial victim-perpetrator dichotomy by focusing on *esprit*, which will be further demonstrated in the next chapter. A focus on *esprit*–call it rhythm, call it poetics, call it vital force–is precisely how Senghor, though the theory of Negritude, approached the dichotomous vestiges of racial

inequality. That said, there is a precarious balance to maintain if our aim is to avoid fomenting colonialist values and mindsets. Creation and vibrant dialogue are undeniably positive, but not if their elevation means disregarding and even potentially replicating the injustices of the past. Such lofty ideals as humanism and universalism have their roots in Empire; the argument that *littérature-monde* pays little heed to this historical accuracy is valid. I argue, however, that there is still great potential in the vision for an egalitarian literary production that considers and accepts all writers producing in French as having much to offer. *Littérature-monde* goes so far as to champion the former colonies, thus warranting criticism of exoticizing or essentializing writers hailing from former colonies. This criticism parallels that of deeming Negritude essentialist. Because Senghor eloquently, extensively and thoroughly unpacked the reasons for promoting an "African way of being in the world," while also producing insightful documents regarding effective ways to move forward after Colonialism, we can look to his works to try to gather and keep the momentum of the useful aspects of *littérature-monde.*

Senghor, in his valorization of aesthetics, rhythm and utopianism was, and still is, often viewed under the same Eurocentric, essentialist lens as *littérature-monde.* But there is a misunderstanding in both regards. This misunderstanding can be summarized as the failure to recognize that reality is not an either/or kind of thing. Dialectical thinking and intertwined ideas are at the forefront of Senghor's oeuvre and dialectics inform the *littérature-monde* movement as well. In the "Table Ronde" discussion, Le Bris explains that « Il ne faut pas avoir peur du chaos. Il faut se garder de trop figer les choses dans les catégories. Créer du mouvement » (« Points saillants » 584). The theme of finding comfort in the discomfort of the intangible, in embracing the chaos, is akin to the theories of Édouard Glissant. Though Glissant is often championed and simultaneously presented in contrast to Senghor, their thought has much commonality, especially

with regard to the "post-postcolonial," as will be discussed in the next and final chapter. To recognize oneself as Other, to seek a deep understanding of what Arthur Rimbaud meant by "*Je est un autre,"* and to ultimately open to the intangible rhythm of the world is the goal of *littérature-monde,* Négritude and Senghor's vision of Francophonie. As Senghor notes, « Vouloir la justice pour les *Autres,* c'est, auparavant, penser dans les pensées des Autres pour s'identifier aux Autres » (*Liberté 3* 552). By reading the literature of one another, of *Others,* with open-minds and open-hearts, we will be better able to relate, to identify with people from all over the world. Senghor's definition of Francophonie is not the one that the manifesto aims to kill; rather, the Senghorian Francophonie is synonymous with *littérature-monde*, and, moreover, as a project, they are both worth promoting, especially at the level of *l'esprit*. Ultimately, there is a way to respectfully acknowledge colonial legacies through the lens of humanist universalism, and that way is poetic.[46]

[46] « La poésie est l'art majeur. Plus que tout autre art, elle est *poïesis* : acte de faire, c'est à dire création à l'exemple de Dieu » (Senghor, *Liberté 3* 24). *Poïesis* from the Greek word meaning simply : to make, to create.

Chapter 5: An Homage to Those Who "See" an Interconnected Humanity

> LE CORYPHÉE :
> L'amant de la nuit aux cheveux d'étoiles filantes, le créateur des paroles de vie
> Le poète du Royaume d'enfance.
>
> LE CHŒUR : Bien mort la politique, et vive le Poète !
> (Senghor, « Chaka, » 251)
>
> La poésie ne doit pas périr. Car alors, où serait l'espoir du Monde ? (Senghor, « Lamantins », 276)

Long live the poet! This is the cry of the choir in Senghor's « Chaka, » from *Éthiopiques.* It is also, in the most basic sense, the call of Senghor, Bergson, Rimbaud, Claudel, Meschonnic, and the *littérature-monde* movement in general. Tied to the crucial importance of the poem[47] is the journey towards self-reflection, which in turn readies the space for creation to burst forth. There is a requirement that the "poet" return to a certain state of being sensitive and open to intuition; this state is found by diving to the depths of self-realization. And, paradoxically, knowing the self requires intimate connection to the other. Henri Bergson, though he is known most commonly as a philosopher but who vibrates poetically amidst these literary fathers of Senghor's revolution, also sees the creative impulse as the purpose of life. In the third chapter of *L'évolution créatrice* he explains:

> Essentielle aussi est la marche à la réflexion. Si nos analyses sont exactes, c'est la conscience, ou mieux la supraconscience, qui est à l'origine de la vie. […] Mais cette conscience, qui est une *exigence de création,* ne se manifeste à elle-même que là où la

[47] Keeping in mind Senghor's illumination of the Greek phonetic meaning as *poesis*: to make.

création est possible. Elle s'endort quand la vie est condamnée à l'automatisme ; elle se réveille dès que renaît la possibilité d'un choix. (261-262)

The pursuit of self-understanding is vital to the origination of bringing forth new and true examples of being (such as: poetry, art, dance, medicine and even science). Hybridity, *métissage*, and exposure to cultures other than one's own generate choice and possibility. Juan Goytisolo, in his contribution to *Je est un autre,* explains that monoculture is incapable of inspiring the creative impulse. He writes: « l'espace urbain [après Franco] manquait pour moi de l'excitation et de la force créatrice qui sont le produit de l'hybridité et du contact stimulant avec la variété humaine de la planète » (209-210). Creative force is a product of cross-cultural fertilization, of hybridity. In order to initiate creation, there is a need to move away from narrow cultural conditioning and to open to possibility and to the freedom that new information and choice provide. This is why the seeming paradox of self and other must make contact, so that there can be a return to unity, to supra-consciousness or, to the "kingdom of childhood" as Senghor sometimes called it.

This brings us back to « Chaka, » one of Senghor's poems. It is a retelling of Thomas Mofolo's novel. The novel was first translated from Soutu by an elderly missionary named V. Ellenberger and published in 1940 by Gallimard. Senghor's version is a « poème dramatique à plusieurs voix » (241). « Chaka » first appeared in *Présence Africaine* in 1951 and is dedicated to the « Martyrs Bantous de l'Afrique du Sud » (241). At this time, apartheid had been systematically in place for three years; thus, while the poem is dramatic and rhythmic, it also takes a daring political stance. Pierre Brunel, in the critical edition of Senghor's complete poetry, notes: « Il n'est pas interdit de penser que la poésie de Senghor, dans 'Chaka', est une poésie risquée, comme était risquée celle du jeune Claudel en 1890 » (299). But, as repeatedly

mentioned, culture is prior to politics for Senghor and it is thus no surprise that the chorus also chants for the death of politics concurrently with the hope that the Poet will rise: « Bien mort la politique, et vive le Poète ! » (251). But the rise is only metaphorical, or perhaps spiritual, for Chaka dies after uttering these final words: « Que du tam-tam surgisse le soleil du monde nouveau » (253). A new world, specifically the « Civilisation de l'Universel, » is being called forth. Poetry and the promise of the "Civilisation of the Universal" are intrinsically linked, according to Senghor. In his speech presented in 1984 at the World Congress of Poets he explained: « Il s'agit pour nous, et ce sera ma conclusion, que, dans cette Civilisation de l'Universel qui sera celle de l'an 2000, la poésie reprenne sa place majeure, en redevenant intégrale comme elle l'a déjà fait en Afrique » (*Liberté 5* 260). Poetry, rhythm, dance and the poetic in general must reclaim their rightful role in society so that the realms of the visible and the invisible can be understood as unified.[48] Unifying this paradox is directly linked to developing a core sense of self and thus being open to connection with the Other.

The following excerpt from the last lines of « Chaka » is a powerful incantation that melds the Negritude vision of having roots firmly planted in one's own culture while simultaneously opening to the potential for global freedom:

LE CORYPHÉE: Aube blanche aurore nouvelle qui ouvres les yeux de mon people.

LE CHŒUR : *Bayété Bâba ! Bayété ô Bayété !*

LE CORYPHÉE: Rosée ô rosée qui réveilles les racines soudaines de mon peuple.

LE CHŒUR : *Bayété Bâba ! Bayété ô Bayété !*

[48] The symbolic image, which is characteristic of African poetry according to Senghor, is that which « unit le visible et l'invisible, le matériel et le spirituel » (*Liberté 5* 255). Though it goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theories surrounding "the flesh" offer much to the underlying theme of the inter-being of seeming duality. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *The Visible and the Invisible,* edited by Claude Lefort, translated by Alphonso Lingis. Northwestern University Press, 1968.

LE CORYPHÉE: Là-bas le soleil au zénith sur tous les peuples de la terre.

LE CHŒUR : *Bayété Bâba ! Bayété ô Bayété !* (253)

There is a call for the white dawn to shed light and thus open the eyes of "my people." It reaffirms that Senghor embraces both aspects of reason: the emotional and the rational, which he sees as being expressed in varying degrees amongst different cultures. The *white* dawn (of progress?) brings new ways of being that can be useful. The moisture of the dew can seep into the roots, awakening latent potential. And finally, the distant sun is called to shine upon all the peoples of the earth, leaving no peoples in darkness. There is no dichotomy left: the sun and all that it illuminates is part of the everything. This everything manifests through the ever-beating rhythm of life force, as made manifest by drums like the tam-tam.

The tam-tam, a traditional African drum, beats rhythmically throughout the poem, changing after the first « Chant » (rather than Act) from a funeral drum to a lively « tam-tam d'amour » throughout the second « Chant » (248). As Chaka dies, he asks that the rhythm of the « tam-tam » will cause the sun to rise upon the new world. The poem ends with the repeated Sotou refrain of *Bayété Bâba! Bayété ô Bayété!* which is translated as "Glory to the heroes! Oh Lord of Lords" in the footnotes (302). But according to Jean-Louis Joubert, in the original text by Thomas Mofolo, « il glose le mot 'bayété' en indiquant qu'il désigne 'celui qui se tient entre les dieux et les hommes', autrement dit une sorte de dieu inférieur ou intermédiaire, un demi-dieu » (215). The Poet is that intermediary, and, since the « poème est mûr au jardin d'enfance », it is the work of the Poet to be sensitive and open to becoming the vessel that will reveal the essence of the real (« Chaka » 248). And the very essence of what is real involves experiencing the unity beneath the seeming duality; artists are those who can see through the façade to the depths of vibration, which, as Claudel says: « est le mouvement prisonnier de la forme » (*Art*

poétique 73). The artist frees the vibration from its prison, thus re-creating the experience of spiritual unity through their art form.

This concluding chapter considers how and why the archetype of the "poet," of the seer, is crucial to imagining and manifesting a new world. Poetry is capable of bringing the underlying invisible and unseen realms to the surface. Because of this, poetry can bring forth deeper realities and provoke the beginning of individual journeys towards self-realization. The paradox, as is described in the third section, is that self-understanding requires being open to and experiencing the Other. The underlying *esprit* is accessed by intuition. Therefore, the continuation of the intuition revolution is two-fold: self-realization *and* global identity. In order to intuitively embrace a productive, dialogue-friendly « identité-monde » one must recognize the existence of spiritual or esoteric forces. A new world is always on the rise. In 1976, Senghor concluded his speech « La Négritude, comme culture des peuples noirs, ne saurait être dépassée, » with a call to hear the voices both of Francophonie and Negritude in order to listen to the potential *métissage* has to offer:

> Les vertus de la Négritude ne sont ni épuisées ni dépassées. Elles sont plus que jamais nécessaires au monde nouveau qui se lève à l'horizon de l'an 2000. Et, d'abord, à la Francophonie, dont vous êtes partie intégrante. Je dis : partie essentielle, parce que vous êtes situés au carrefour des métissages encore une fois, pour reparler comme Césaire, 'au rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir'. (*Liberté 5* 109)

The year 2000 has come and gone. Everyday there are messages of hope and of intense despair. Now more than ever we need to bring forth and honour the "poets", the ones who are brave and strong enough to unite duality, to translate the unknowable into the known and to make the unseen seen.

I. Poetry as Defiance of Duality: Multiplicity Unified, Uniquely Multiplied

> « Le monde du signe est la raison dans ses catégories traditionnelles, le paradigme dualiste : au signifiant et au signifié correspondent les couples que font le chaos et l'ordre, l'émotion-déraison et la raison, la poésie et la prose, le prélogique (qui dans l'anthropologie duelle du XIXième siècle et jusqu'à Husserl et Lévy-Bruhl inclut le sauvage, le fou, la femme, l'enfant et le poète) et le logique (le civilisé normal blanc masculin). Dans ce schéma, est facile l'identité. Difficile, l'altérité. » (Henri Meschonnic, *La rime et la vie* 86)

The dichotomy of reason and emotion, of logic and pre-logic, has been tied to gender, to race and to age throughout time. It is of note that Henri Meschonnic includes the poet, in the above quotation, on the side of the pre-logical, along with woman, the savage, the insane and the child. The only kind of person that he places on the side of logic is the civilized, normal, white masculine. In this kind of simplified schema, he notes that identity is easily identifiable, but the recognition and openness to alterity, to the Other, is very difficult. Such a rigid line between the generally assumed holder of power – that white masculine way of being – and, on the polar opposite side, the silly, imbecilic, childish crazy savage, engenders undeniable power imbalance. Senghor's Negritude thoroughly describes why this power imbalance is false and his essays and poems work diligently to valorize the "pre-logical," the intuitive, the emotional. All the founders of Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" take part in a similar attack on the dominance of the logical by exhibiting the undeniable worth of intuition. Senghor's trope of the emotional, sensitive "black man" would fit, in the above quotation, on the side of the pre-logical. The dichotomy can begin to unravel once there is a revalidation of the often-deemed inferior intuitive way of being. Only then can there exist the potential for uniting the seeming polarities and becoming more fully self-aware and thus able to connect with the wide (and deep) array of potential Others, with

life and all that may be experienced therein. Poetry, fiction, literature and art in general offer something more than the rational interpretations. I remind that this opening to another way of thinking and being is part of the *littérature-monde* movement; Michel Le Bris notes in *Je est un autre*: « Le fictif, donc, échappant à l'opposition du vrai et du faux, oblige à penser une autre forme de connaissance que la connaissance rationnelle, qui serait le propre de l'imaginaire » (17). Once the potential for another way of thinking is revealed, it can be incorporated for the individual who is willing to take it on. Thus, the unraveling of duality, and the disintegration of fixed or nationalistic identities, begins.

Expressing the unity of existence via objective multiplicity is the task of the artist, and of the visionary. When Souleymane Bachir Diagne labels Senghor a "poet of hybridity,"[49] it is not solely, as many might initially assume, because Senghor was so doubly conscious in the way Du Bois[50] wrote about; what is also being referred to is Senghor's melding of seeming duality. He is a poet of hybridity because he gracefully and eloquently expresses the truth of multiplicity and unity. As we saw in the second chapter of this dissertation, Bergson extrapolates with regard to "the Multiple and the One" throughout his *Essai,* where he explains that all number is a collection of units (59-60). Gilles Deleuze, many of whose lectures are available online, delivered a lecture regarding the notion of *multiplicity* in Bergson's *Essai*, wherein he noted the importance of understanding Bergson's "true substantive" (rather than descriptive) *multiplicity.*

[49] Senghor as a poet of hybridity is discussed in Chapter 1, section III.

[50] DuBois first wrote about "double consciousness" in *The Souls of Black Folk,* published in 1903. It includes the drive to find a "truer self" and is described as follows: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife- this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self." (2-3)

Deleuze explains: "When we employ the substantive multiplicity, we already indicate thereby that we have surpassed [dépassé] the opposition of predicates one/multiple, that we are already set up on a completely different terrain" ("Theory of Multiplicity in Bergson" deleuzelectures.blogspot.com). May I remind that this "completely different terrain," according to Bergson, necessitates understanding that there are two types of multiplicity: « celle des objets matériels, qui forme un nombre immédiatement, et celle des faits de conscience, qui ne saurait prendre l'aspect d'un nombre sans l'intermédiaire de quelque représentation symbolique » (*Essai* 65). In order for symbolic representation to be possible, Bergson explains that space must first intervene (65). This is one example whereby the concept of *esprit* is illuminated, especially with regard to the need for *esprit* to be present when disentitling the dominance of duality. In summary, without space, the *mind/spirit* would not be capable of constructing number:

> Ce qui appartient en propre à l'esprit, c'est le processus indivisible par lequel il fixe son attention successivement sur les diverses parties d'un espace donné ; mais les parties ainsi isolées se conservent pour s'ajouter à d'autres, et une fois additionnées entre elles se prêtent à une décomposition quelconque : ce sont donc bien des parties d'espace, et l'espace est la matière avec laquelle l'esprit construit le nombre, le milieu où l'esprit le place. (63)

There is an indivisible process which is accomplished by the *esprit.* Bergson may simply mean "mind," in the sense most Anglophones might understand it. Yet I propose that he means the instrument with which we perceive indivisibly, though the indivisible perception may go unnoticed by the thought and language making layers of mind. In Sanskrit the word for "mind" (*citta*) lumps the energetic heart and the mind together, identifying a perceiving lens through which one interprets their experience that includes *both* of these neuron-dense organs as well as

the channel between them.[51] For our purposes, yes *esprit* is that which inserts space in order to construct number, but moreover, it is that which imposes meaning upon the component parts of language. There is a common understanding that language is more than, is beyond or is beneath the duality of sign/signifier running throughout the writings discussed in this dissertation. Bergson's philosophical view regarding multiplicity and unity is one part of a non-dualist tradition, whereby duality becomes only the surface aspect of reality.

Of crucial importance for fusing this dissertation together is when Bergson, in chapter three of l'*Évolution créatrice,* considers if the *élan vital* is one or multiple? As has been noted throughout, though there are differences in the specific definition, there is an underlying cohesion between the terms *élan vital, rythme, vibration*, and *esprit.* Thus, in understanding how the underlying essence of creation is neither *one* nor *multiple,* and not even both at the same time, we can begin to return to a more complete or even "truer" way of being in this world. How then does Bergson describe unity and multiplicity? Defining these terms is anything but simple because defining at all is not entirely possible: « La vie est en réalité de l'ordre psychologique, et il est de l'essence du psychique d'envelopper une pluralité confuse de termes qui s'entrepénètrent » (*EC* 258). Furthermore, it is only within the realm of space that terms like unity and multiplicity can hold still long enough for us to even pretend to grasp and define them:

> Dans l'espace, et dans l'espace seul, sans aucun doute, est possible la multiplicité distincte : un point est absolument extérieur à un autre point. Mais l'unité pure et vide ne se rencontre, elle aussi, que dans l'espace : c'est celle d'un point mathématique. Unité et multiplicité abstraites sont, comme on voudra, des déterminations de l'espace ou des

[51] It is now known that the heart communicates to the brain in four ways: neurological, biochemical, biophysical and energetic. For more information on this subject, see: *Science of the Heart* by Rollin McCraty Ph.D.(Heartmath.org)

> catégories de l'entendement, spatialité et intellectualité étant calquées l'une sur l'autre. (258)

In order to help the reader understand such abstractedness, Henri Bergson offers one of his ubiquitous "consider XYZ, for example" scenarios. In this case he uses the example of his person: « Ma personne, à un moment donné, est-elle une ou multiple? » (258). If he considers himself to be one, then there is a plethora of internal voices, sensations, feelings, representations that protest; if he considers himself multiple then his conscience insists that all those are abstractions operated by himself and that each individual state implies all of the others (258). His conclusion to the question is as follows:

> Je suis donc – il faut bien adopter le langage de l'entendement, puisque l'entendement seul a un langage – unité multiple et multiplicité une ; mais unité et multiplicité ne sont que des vues prises sur ma personnalité par un entendement qui braque sur moi ses catégories : je n'entre ni dans l'une ni dans l'autre ni dans les deux à la fois, quoique les deux, réunies, puissent donner une imitation approximative de cette interpénétration réciproque et de cette continuité que je trouve au fond de moi-même. (258-259)

Senghor's desire to unite reason and intuition in order to "more-be,"[52] then, is still merely an approximate imitation of the continuity of the self. Furthermore, the above citation is almost an expanded more detailed extrapolation on Rimbaud's « Je est un Autre, » including what is discovered through contact with the Other: there is a deep continuous fundamental self. The self that is contingent to and that co-creates with the vital force, with the *élan vital* is not only non-dual…it is essentially undefinable.

[52] I remind at this point that, in *Liberté 5* « Hommage à Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, » Senghor explains that the ultimate goal of humankind is to develop a spiritual "more-being" : Donc, au-delà du bien-être matériel, le 'plus-être' spirituel, épanouissement de l'intelligence et du cœur, est confirmé comme but ultime de l'activité générique' de l'Homme, pour employer l'expression de Marx » (11).

The principle whereby navigating the deconstruction of duality requires a recognition of some kind of informing or generative, often considered vibrational, force is fundamental to the "Revolution of 1889" and to its connection with *littérature-monde*. If the critical focus on *littérature-monde* remains to be the failure to consider politics, then the potential that an emphasis on the freedom of expression which implies the recognition of an underlying force, a spirit or a vibration, which in turn comprises the infinite variety of language, will be lost. As already discussed, Henri Meschonnic provides a theory of language where he concludes that « le rythme est irréductible au signe. Mais il est dans le langage » (*Critique* 705). And Meschonnic also explains that the work of the poet is to bring forth the unknown: « La poétique est toujours une poétique de l'inconnu. C'est l'effet de parabole du mot d'Alexandre Blok, qu'un poète passe sa vie à reconnaître, inventer son rythme » (*Le rythme et la lumière* 114). *Rythme* and *poétique* are directly linked to self-understanding and the intuition that opens towards and can express the unknown being. The linking factor for the fathers of the "Revolution of 1889" is intuition, and as we consider more deeply what intuition consists of, it becomes increasingly clear that, though language itself fails to adequately describe the deepest real, intuition involves gaining access to unity consciousness. One gains access to this by reorienting towards the, dare I say, spiritual component of life.

II. *Esprit* and the Two Kinds of Intelligence: Flowing with Life

> « L'esprit communal, qui perçoit les rapports secrets, parce que pas d'abord manifestes, qui unissent les mondes visible et invisible, la matière et l'esprit, la nature et l'homme. » (Senghor, *Liberté 5* 99)

There is an underlying "spirit" that can perceive the vibrational, less tangible, aspects of being. In the briefest sense, *esprit* is that which can unite the paradox of reason and intuition, of the "visible and the invisible." As Mark Cohen exclaims in the film version of Jonathon Larson's rock musical *RENT,* "the opposite of war isn't peace…its CREATION!" Bringing forth the unseen in order to make the interconnection of life manifest describes the act of poetry and art; making manifest is creation and such poetic creation demands a willingness to acknowledge something at work that cannot be contained or defined: *esprit* will be what we deem it for the moment. In his discussion surrounding what African poetry can offer world poetry, Senghor goes so far as to call *les esprits* « les Lettres et les Arts » (*Liberté 5* 259). Consider the following quotation, as it combines much of what has been offered throughout this entire dissertation:

> Je voudrais m'acheminer, doucement, vers ma conclusion en vous disant ce que les poésies africaines, la traditionnelle et le moderne, pourraient apporter, aujourd'hui, à la poésie mondiale.
>
> Or donc, depuis l'Asie, avec Sumer, puis l'Europe, avec la Grèce, ont pris, des mains de l'Afrique, le flambeau de la civilisation humaine, notre continent s'est mis à l'école de ses deux voisins. Cependant, depuis ce que j'appelle la Révolution de 1889, marquée par Henri Bergson et sone *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience,* les esprits, je veux dire les Lettres et les Arts, ont beaucoup changé. De nouveau, on a donné la primauté à la raison intuitive sur la raison discursive. De nouveau, car les Grecs, y compris Platon, voire Aristote, le faisaient déjà. (259)

The primacy of intuition is returning, and, on the global scale, it must be taken into consideration or else humanity will perish. There is a parallel in that the *littérature-monde* is also championing the spiritual, poetic offerings of the vibrant literature coming from the "periphery," whereas

Senghor is validating Black African poetry specifically, but Negritude in general because of the primacy of intuitive reasoning. Thus, as already noted, *esprit* in literature and in life, is directly linked to the intuitive approach. Intuitive reasoning is sensitive to vital force, to that underlying spirit that, in language, has been theorized as *rythme* by Meschonnic and Senghor.

Senghor's politics were also always informed by the spiritual, and though he read Marx and Engels, searching for liberation therein, he concluded that there was something missing in Marxism: « Pendant des années, j'ai cherché Dieu dans l'œuvre immense des deux penseurs. En vain » (*Liberté 5* 10). He did not give up his search easily, but, eventually, Senghor returned to Negritude:

> Et je revenais sur mes pas, vers ma Négritude, qui était, sans contredit, le fondement même de mon être : la base permanente où trouver de nouveaux viatiques pour de nouveaux départs. J'en avais, en effet, une conscience aiguë, la Négritude était un refuge, une forteresse : encore une fois, un départ, une cause, non un but. Pour être plus nègre, il me fallait sortir de moi pour aller aux autres : à l'Autre. Il me fallait aussi, non précisément dépasser le marxisme, peut-être même pas le *re-penser,* mais, dans ma situation de Négro-Africain et d'homme du XXième siècle, le pousser jusqu'au bout. (10-11)

Again, there is the theme of having realized one's own being as the precursor to opening to the other, or, more effectively, the capitalized Other which hints at the divinity present in each one of us. To push Marxism to the very limits, Senghor returns to what he knows and then he discovers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, which, for Senghor, provides transcendence of the false spirit-matter dichotomy: « il [Teilhard de Chardin] pousse la méthode dialectique à ses conséquences ultimes » (11). Delving into the detailed philosophical, anthropological and

teleological theories provided by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's work is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but there will be some brief insights coming from his writing in the conclusion of this chapter. Of note is that his works, for Senghor, legitimized Négritude because they confirm non-dualism as well as explain the underlying force of being: « Teilhard de Chardin nous apprend qu'en définitive, des deux faces de la même réalité, des deux énergies, c'est la psychique qui est primitive et consistante, l'autre, la physico-chimique, n'en étant qu'un sous-produit » (11). Most importantly, these two energies coincide with the intuitive and the discursive types of reason. More importantly, the primitive, consistent psychic force affirms the importance of *esprit,* of an animating force for Senghor. With regard to Teilhard de Chardin's God, he explains:

> Son Dieu, on le sait, ne descend pas du ciel, *ex machina.* Il émerge d'une nécessité interne. Plus justement, il apparaît, à l'ultime étape de la logique dialectique que, non plus cause, mais effet, non plus extériorité, mais intériorité, non plus motif, mais fin, Dieu est la solution cohérente et efficace que propose Teilhard au problème de l'aliénation, du non-être, posé par Marx et Engels. (11-12)

This God is no longer the mechanistic, Bourgeois God of the past. This God lives within all of humanity and is there to discover if dialectical thought is pushed to its limits. Senghor reminds the reader that Negro-African Ontology has long presented an innate God-force: « Je n'ai pas besoin de rappeler que, de tout temps, Dieu a été, dans l'ontologie négro-africaine, l'Existant en soi, la force de qui procèdent et en qui se renforcent tous les existants » (12). By establishing an inherent vital force to all of humanity, there is a return to the often-criticized universalistic tendencies of both Senghor and *littérature-monde*. These utopias, however, do seem a better alternative than increasing divisions and fractionalization. The text currently being discussed was

written at the end of 1963 during the Cold War. Nationalistic divisions and the sorting of humans into groups have both increased and decreased since that time, though the following words are as imperative now as they were when first written:

> Qu'au demeurant, avec les nationalismes et les racismes, plus aigus que les conflits de classe, nous sommes à une époque de divergences extrêmes. Que s'annonce, cependant, nécessité par l'extrême des tensions et par la puissance de nos moyens de combat comme de compréhension, un mouvement de convergence panhumaine. De ce mouvement doit naître la 'Civilisation de l'Universel', symbiose de toutes les civilisations différentes. (12)

If *esprit* is innate to all of life, if all are capable of developing a deep relationship with their inner self and thus honing their intuitive reasoning faculties, then the defensive and protective realm of duality will begin to unravel. Validating intuition implies recognition of *esprit.* Increasing the importance of intuitive understanding has great potential for recognition of a shared humanity: a shared humanity that welcomes and engenders diversity.

The "Revolution of 1889" is a precursor to the *littérature-monde* movement because it, as a decentralizing movement, continues to claim the validity of *esprit.* Furthermore, the very same utopian vision for the symbiosis of cultures is at the core of *littérature-monde.* Michel Le Bris, in *Je est un autre,* notes the migratory impact of more than a century of French colonialism, then writes out his dream for the best possible outcome:

> Une histoire douloureuse, chaotique, procédant pas convulsions et crises multiples, certes – mais en même temps en se prend à rêver : si, plutôt que de se replier sur soi dans la crainte panique de l'extérieur, on avait mené (si l'on menait) une politique hardie, résolue, d'ouverture, d'accueil de l'Autre, quelle chance de développement nous aurions

d'un 'pays-monde' ! Quelles possibilités, en retour d'une pleine intégration, d'une ouverture sur le monde ! » (24).

The sentiment of blithe universalism that disregards postcolonial history is evident in the above quotation, admittedly. Nevertheless, as we envision the world of the future, we can hardly imagine that anyone believes increasing divisiveness is fruitful. If there is one thing that is common to all of humanity, it would have to be the animating force that is described by Senghor, Bergson, Rimbaud, Claudel and many of the proponents of *littérature-monde.*

There is a universalism that is inherent to claiming that any kind of vital force informs all of known existence. This spiritual component is expressed only when poetry touches the eternal (sometimes referred to as the "inconnu") as Senghor explains in the postface for *Éthiopiques,* « Comme les Lamantins vont boire à la source »:

> Je persiste à penser que le poème n'est accompli que s'il se fait chant, parole et musique en même temps. La diction dite expressive à la mode, à la manière du théâtre ou de la rue, est l'anti-poème. Comme si le rythme n'était pas, sous sa variété, monotonie, qui traduit le mouvement *substantiel* des Forces cosmiques, de l'Éternel ! ...Il est temps d'arrêter le processus de désagrégation du monde moderne, et d'abord de la poésie. (*Poésie complète* 276)

Rhythm translates the movement of the cosmic forces of the universe. In the preface to Claudel's *Art poétique,* Gilbert Gaddofre similarly states that the poet is also actor and, in part, magician, whereby: « Accordé à l'harmonie universelle, le poète serai ainsi capable de redonner aux êtres et aux choses leur bonheur d'être ensemble, à la Création son arôme » (25). If there is a universal harmony, it is the task of the poet to reveal it. Bergson also notes the reconnection that exists at the deepest levels of life, using the poem as analogy: « Mais à travers les mots, les vers et les

strophes, court l'inspiration simple qui est le tout du poème » (*EC* 259). This simple inspiration is infinitely at work and it is revealed and potentially expressed by moving beyond time and resting in the eternal present. As noted in the third chapter, Rimbaud too explains that the poet is capable of arriving at the *inconnu,* if they are wild/brave/foolish enough to become the *voyant:*

> Le Poète se fait *voyant* par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement* de *tous les sens*. Toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie ; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences. Ineffable torture où il a besoin de toute la foi, de toute la force surhumaine, où il devient entre tout le grand malade, le grand criminel, le grand maudit, – et le suprême Savant ! – Car il arrive à l'inconnu ! Puisqu'il a cultivé son âme, déjà riche, plus qu'aucun ! Il arrive à l'*inconnu,* et quand, affolé, il finirait par perdre l'intelligence de ses visions, il les a vues ! (*Rimbaud: Complete Works* 376)

Once intelligence is overcome, the unknown can rest safe, free from the compartmentalization of analysis, which will destroy the interconnected vision of the unknowable.

The indefinable *esprit* is that which is felt and intuited, as in this epistemology of literary intuition. As noted in chapter two, Bergson explains how both intelligence and intuition make up human awareness: « Intuition et intelligence représentent deux directions opposées du travail conscient: l'intuition marche dans le sens même de la vie, l'intelligence va en sens inverse, et se trouve ainsi tout naturellement réglée sur le mouvement de la matière » (*EC* 267). Intuition flows along with life itself. Intelligence considers the objective, visible aspects of matter and its movement. There needs to be recognition that both opposing directions make up the whole we

might call consciousness.[53] Though the ideal world would honour both directions, intuition is nearly sacrificed to intelligence: « En fait, dans l'humanité dont nous faisons partie, l'intuition est à peu près complètement sacrifiée à l'intelligence » (268). Bergson uses a metaphor to describe intuition as having become « une lampe presque éteinte, qui ne se ranime que de loin en loin, pour quelques instants à peine » (268). But intuition *does* revive. It is ever alive, and will shine quietly upon those aspects of life that are vital: « Sur notre personnalité, sur notre liberté, sur la place que nous occupons dans l'ensemble de la nature, sur notre origine et peut-être sur

[53] There is much thematic non-dual commonality between the focus of this dissertation and the Sufi poet and mystic, Jalal ad-Din Rumi, who lived in 13th century Persia. Consider the following poem's similarity to Bergson's intuition and intelligence:

"Two Kinds of Intelligence"

There are two kinds of intelligence: One acquired,
as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts
from books and from what the teacher says,
collecting information from the traditional sciences
as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world.
You get ranked ahead or behind others
in regard to your competence in retaining
information. You stroll with this intelligence
in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more
marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one
already completed and preserved inside you.
A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness
in the center of the chest. This other intelligence
does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid,
and it doesn't move from outside to inside
through the conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead
from within you, moving out.

notre destinée, elle projette une lumière vacillante et faible, mais qui n'en perce pas moins l'obscurité de la nuit où nous laisse l'intelligence » (268). Bergson explains that, because these illuminated moments are so fragile and so fleeting, philosophy needs to take over and first support their existence so as to help them to expand and reconnect to one another. Ultimately, « plus [la philosophie] avance dans ce travail, plus elle s'aperçoit que *l'intuition est l'esprit* même et, en un certain sens, la vie même : l'intelligence s'y découpe par un processus imitateur de celui qui a engendré la matière » (*EC* 268, my emphasis). Intuition *is* spirit, it is even life itself, or at least it is that which can hold, albeit fleetingly, the unfolding of energy, the processes of life and nature in action. The poets have revealed themselves, has realized themselves, in such a way that they are capable of bringing the ineffable to the surface; in this way readers are reminded that spirit and intuition are inherent to life.

III. The Gift of the Language Behind Language

> « J'ai perdu trop de temps à commenter le fait que j'écris en français. Et à débattre du fait que ce ne soit pas ma langue maternelle. Finalement, tout cela me paraît aujourd'hui assez théorique, et même un brin ridicule. Cette langue française s'est infiltrée dans mes neurones, et son chant rythme mon sang. » (Dany Lafferière, « Je voyage en français » 87)

Theories of language and how language shapes identity are at the underlying core of this dissertation. In the above quotation Dany Laferrière throws caution to the wind and simply states that, no matter what theory or defense he could offer for writing in French, it would not change the fact that the French language vibrates through his very being. Édouard Glissant has published a wealth of illuminating, thoughtful and ground-breaking works surrounding language, identity

and directives for understanding how to navigate the post-colonial. As mentioned in chapter four, his theories are viewed as "post-postcolonial" by Eric Prieto because of the depth of subtlety and nuance exhibited and because Glissant's works defy simplicity and duality. He is also a signatory of the *littérature-monde* manifesto and has an interview in the first collection of essays entitled: « Solitaire et solidaire » (77-86). This title continues to reveal the paradox of the Multiple and the One, of Self and Other and even of reason and intuition. The paradox whereby in order to gain understanding of the self, one must first be open to contact with the other. This is why community and dialogue are crucial for self-realization. Malidoma Patrice Somé, a Dagara medicine man, explains that community is necessary for self-knowledge: "Without a community you cannot be yourself. The community is where we draw the strength needed to effect changes inside of us" (49). And the paradox: "The individual can finally discover within the community something to relate to, because deep down inside each of us is a craving for an honouring of our individualism" (49). Without someone or something to relate to, it is not possible to know the self. And, if the *esprit,* or life force, of interrelating is ignored, then only the surface is contacted, rendering the roots inadequate. This notion is aptly represented once again by the metaphor of the baobab tree, with roots spread wide and deep so that the branches can reach farther and higher outwards to the fecundating aspects of other ways of knowing and being. Poetic expression carries the potential of contact with that deeper, resonant reality known throughout this dissertation as *intuition*, *esprit*, *rythm*e, *vital force* and *élan vital*.

As noted, this subtle vibrating pulsing life force can be expressed through art, particularly poetry. This poetic expression is carried out through, under, via *and* amidst language. The poet has a specific role, according to Glissant: « Le rôle du poète est précisément de préserver les frémissements et l'ardeur des langues, et cela nous empêche de dire que ma langue est celle de

mon peuple car mon peuple peut très bien utiliser demain le langage de plusieurs langages sans pour autant être moins authentique » (82). There is no loss of authenticity no matter if one is expressing through the language of the coloniser, through créole, through indigenous languages. Language is a tool to be reformulated and tied together in infinite variety, leading one, if they so desire, back to the essence of who they are. For Glissant, there is space for the political within this framework because the poet, who can understand what is occurring beneath the superficial levels, links the poetic and the political:

> Oui, le poète possède une clairvoyance car il est le seul à relier en profondeur poésie et politique. Il existe, bien sûr, des poètes militants qui écrivent des poèmes comme on écrit des tracts mais c'est ce que j'appelle la littéralité, des gens qui, littéralement, copient le monde. Or ce qu'il y a fondamental dans l'art, c'est le moment où on abandonne le littéral, la thèse, etc., et où on essaie de voir ce qui se passe au fond, ce que le poète est le seul à voir. Quand je dis le poète, je ne veux pas parler de celui qui écrit des poèmes mais de celui qui a une conception du vrai rapport entre poétique et politique… (84)

To abandon the literal and to then gain a conception of the real interaction between poetics and politics is the work of the poet. Glissant too does not simply mean "one who writes poems" when he uses the label of poet. The poet can see and understand more than the ordinary person; the poet becoming *voyant* is key. And the writer who can bring forth this conception of the real is of utmost importance because cultural relations still have much to offer. Glissant writes: « Car, si les explorations terrestres et marines sont terminées, celles des relations des cultures dans le monde ne le sont pas » (83-84). There is unbounded potential to what intercultural understanding and sharing can bring. Following this, language limits neither identity nor expression.

Harking back to the opening of the last chapter, whereby Derrida's statement surrounding having a language that is not one's own was presented, let us keep this notion in mind while considering one of the essays from the second *littérature-monde* collection, *Je est un autre.* There is an underlying informing principle that vibrates beneath and via the words one uses, and each writer makes the tool that is language express differently. Remember that Derrida stated: "I have only one language; it is not mine" (1). Kebir Ammi has an essay included in *Je est un autre: Pour une identité-monde*. It is called: « Mon identité, celle de l'autre. » In his essay, there is a correlation between the way in which one utilizes, in the mechanical sense, language and the idea that one can come to know the self through the encounter with the Other. Furthermore, he is a fascinating example of cultural hybridity for two reasons: he was born of a Moroccan mother and an Algerian father, and he has been writing in French for over 30 years, but he teaches English literature.

Ammi explains why he makes the claim that his « identité n'est rien que celle de l'autre »: it is because the language he makes use of is a « une langue au-delà de la langue » which does not operate against or counter to any other language (188). Rather, for him « c'est une langue comme un centre, non-pas de rétention, mais d'accueil, soucieux de faire la meilleure place à l'autre d'où qu'il vienne » (188). Like Derrida, Ammi questions if this language used to welcome and make space for the Other really does belong to him. He considers the French language to be a life buoy, yet he questions whether or not they were born on the same river bank: « Cette langue, dont j'use et abuse des syllabes, n'est-elle vraiment pas ma langue, au seul motif que nous ne soyons pas nés, elle et moi, sur la même rive ? » (188-189). Rather than seeing French as his language or even as him being used by the French language, there is a relationship between the writer and the language they employ. Yet it is not accurate to say that French

becomes his language; perhaps it is more accurate to say that French offers a means for the writer to write themselves free. For Ammi, language and writing are the method for creating and expressing identity, but more importantly, for realizing the self. This is evident in the following quotations, the first of which comes from the essay being discussed, and the second from an online newspaper, *L'Orient littéraire*:

> Mon identité est la somme de ce que–fatras ou chaos–je m'emploie à faire passer à travers des mots. Ceux-là disent ce que je ne peux m'empêcher d'être. L'écriture est donc mon identité, puisqu'elle s'emploie à dire–et fidèlement–l'homme que tout en moi s'efforce d'être. […] L'écriture me permet–au travers d'une langue que je revendique, puisqu'elle me prête ses lettres sans restriction–de dire le visage intérieur de cet homme qu'aucun miroir ne possède le pouvoir de designer. (189)

> Je travaille le français de l'intérieur, poursuit-il, je lui imprime des émotions insoupçonnées qui viennent de ma culture marocaine. Quand je voyage, je fais voyager ma langue avec moi. Mon père était berbérophone et il y a sous ma langue explicite, une langue implicite, souterraine, clandestine, qui porte ces accents-là. Je n'écris donc pas vraiment en français mais avec une langue du corps qui charrie mes blessures, mes émotions, mes espoirs. (« Kebir Ammi, arpenteur sans frontières » Web)

All individual human-beings combined with all of their lived experience along with the potential variety of linguistic expression leads to infinite diversity. As Ammi notes, there is an implicit language, like implicit memory, that exists beneath the explicit language. The vibrations of sound, of the component parts of language, meld and mix with each being; with their wounds

and with their victories, with their pain and with their glory. One writes and expresses in language that reveals the self.

Derrida claims that this revelation is always for the other: “My language, the only one I hear myself speak and agree to speak, is the language of the other” (*Monolingualism* 25). All speech, all writing, comprises aspects of the potential that is latent in all language, in all that was ever said or written and in all that will ever be said or written. Derrida calls out for the invention of language– “invent in *your* language if you can or want to hear mine; invent if you can or want or want to give my language to be understood, as well as yours”–as he beckons for writers to “rebel against patriotism!” (57). This request for rebellion, along with the emphasis on invention, foreshadows the *littérature-monde* movement’s desire to encourage writing that brims with the « effervescence créatrice » of a borderless world (manifesto). Derrida explains how the borderless song awakens in him: “Each time I write a word, a word that I love and love to write; in the time of this word, at the instant of a single syllable, the song of this new International awakens in me. I never resist it, I am in the street at its call, even if, apparently, I have been working silently since dawn at my table” (57). The song that awakens is one of invention and creation. All that is now new already once was. And language is constantly being created, again and again. Whether the *littérature-monde* movement calls for this to happen or not, it will continue to happen as it has been with infinite variety and texture throughout the French speaking world (as well as in all areas of the world in all the languages currently at play). Derrida evidently falls under the guise of the French language (which is, as he repeatedly states, not his). Perhaps this is because of the within or the beneath language that is informing each individual utterance or written word? Where did language come from? Derrida says:

> Since the prior-to-the-first time of pre-originary language does not exist, it must be invented. Injunctions, the summons [*mise en demeure*] of another writing. But, above all, it must be *written* within languages, so to speak. One must summon up writing inside the given language. From the cradle to the grave, that language, for me, will have been French. (64)

Like Ammi and Laferrière, it is via the French language that Derrida summons up writing. For both, this work is for the other, but in writing for the other, it is the self that is revealed.

In a recollection similar to the one Claudel reveals regarding his conversion and the influence Rimbaud had on his spirit,[54] Ammi describes his encounter with *Treasure Island,* which instigated profound realization for him and offered him the idea of travel. The following describes his fated encounter: « Un jour, j'ai quinze ans, un livre se trouve sur ma route. Je ne saurai jamais qui l'a posé là, devant moi. C'est *L'Île de trésor.* Cette découverte est un moment fondamental. Je renoue avec la lecture » (192). Ammi's description clearly implies a kind of divine intervention taking place through the pages of a book. He does travel, to England and to America, which, in his words « [se] permet de quitter la rive où des blessures ont du mal à se refermer » (192). He releases the banks of the river, not to escape, but to bravely seek the space where his wounds can finally heal. Where he can reveal, remember and then return to his fundamental self.[55]

Ammi discovers this fundamental self by being exposed to, by learning to write in, the « langue de l'autre » (192). As Meschonnic describes that underlying meaning is revealed through the words but not by them via *rythme,* Ammi explains the effect of surrendering to the

[54] Claudel's "Ma conversion" is discussed in chapter 3, section II.

[55] Henri Bergson differentiates between the "superficial self" and the "fundamental self" as discussed in chapter 2, section IV.

rhythm, to the sounds of this other language and consequently coming to know that there is a language behind language:

> Je me laisserai porter par une langue. Je ne me soucierai même pas toujours du sens, c'est d'abord le sens qui prévaudra souvent. Puis, je réaliserai que derrière la langue, il y a une autre langue ! Une façon – et cela vous dépasse – de se tenir. Votre manière d'être. D'être au monde. Une vision de soi parmi les autres. L'expression de ce que vous êtes, de vos souffrances, de vos joies, de votre projection dans l'avenir… La meilleure part que vous recelez en vous. L'être réfugié au fond de vous-même et que nul, pas même vous, ne soupçonne. L'écrivain forge, sans le savoir, sa propre langue. *La langue derrière la langue*. Tout en lui concourt à trouver l'autre langue, la langue souterraine qui travaille clandestinement son souffle et qui lui permet de parler à tous les hommes sans distinction. (my emphasis –192)

This subterranean language beneath language allows communication to occur between all peoples. Each individual expression using whichever language-tool is being employed will be entirely unique; but it can only be unique because all expression is evaded by the vibration and energy of that primordial subterranean rhythm: the language beneath language that permeates all that is, and that is especially present throughout the natural world. It is the poet who can bring the rhythm of nature and of the deeper meaning of reality closest to the surface.

IV. The Poetry of Planetarity

> « Un pays d'outre-monde ou 'd'outre-ciel' viendra mythifier la réalité. Les poètes de la négritude, on l'a peu souligné, sont des hérauts messianiques. Ils ne chantent jamais que la terre perdue, ils ne saluent jamais que l'Origine. Le royaume d'ici-bas est un leurre qu'ils tendent au lecteur, un leurre dont il n'a pas cure. Ils recherchent un

pays qui n'existe qu'au plus profond d'eux-mêmes. C'est pourquoi leur voix est si grave, et leur chant, si étrange. »
(Nimrod, « Une terre, un poète » 1283)

The spiritual search for the country that exists only at the depths of the self and that can be discovered by embracing intuition is the task of the "poet." This country exists beyond the realms of nations and borders; it is a kingdom that exists only at the innermost reaches of one's soul. In the above citation, Nimrod notes that the Negritude poets produced powerful and strange incantations, luring their readers back into themselves, evoking a lost land and returning to the origins of being. The poet is the one who can access the spiritual aspects of being and then transmute these realities into words on a page, helping the reader remember and maybe even return to the "Kingdom of Childhood." By "poet" I adopt the meaning of Rimbaud's *voyant* along with the ideas presented by Senghor, Bergson, Claudel and *littérature-monde.* In essence, the poet, the *voyant,* is the one who has journeyed bravely into unknown territories, to the edge of the *inconnu* and, in so doing, was able to discover a fundamental self that flows along with life and the universe and that is capable of moving beyond duality. The poet unites the visible and the invisible by having cleared their fractioned self of debris, making manifest the lost world of *esprit.* As Rimbaud writes: « je retournais à l'Orient et à la sagesse première et éternelle » (*Rimbaud : Complete Works* 236). Eternal and original wisdom is pulsing at the wellspring of non-dual traditions. The poet is, in a sense, one who can gift communication from between the realms of seen and unseen, like a shaman or a visionary. As Joseph Campbell explains to Bill Moyers in *The Power of Myth*, when you write a creative work:

> You yield yourself, and the book talks to you and builds itself. To a certain extent, you become the carrier of something that is given to you from what have been called the Muses–or, in biblical language, 'God.' This is no fancy, it is a fact. Since the inspiration

> comes from the unconscious, and since the unconscious minds of the people of any single small society have much in common, what the shaman or seer [*voyant*] brings forth is something that is waiting to be brought forth in everyone. (71)

When Senghor calls forth the poet to help bring about the "Civilisation of the Universal" it is because the poet can write such that the reader recognizes the impetus to seek the depths of their own inner realms so that they can ultimately become free to be unique among the multitudes, to be open to Other because there is no longer any fear of becoming that which is not in alignment with, in rhythm with, this underlying invisible realm of *esprit.*

Nevertheless, it would seem that in order to return to this inner creative realm, one must first venture forth into the diverse world. The theme of return runs throughout: a return to the kingdom of childhood, a return to intuition, a return to being savage…paradoxically the heroes of this thesis arrived at this "return" by leaving their place of origin, by becoming culturally hybrid. Senghor was forced from his animist roots at the age of seven, so that he could be educated at the missionary school and then, later, he pursued studies in Paris. Henri Bergson, whose father was of Polish Jewish background and whose mother was English and Irish Jewish was born and lived in London until he and his family settled in France when he was nine years old. The influence of Taoist philosophy on Paul Claudel has been noted, for he spent 18 years in Japan and China (1895-1927) (Houriez; 2016). Arthur Rimbaud, though he stopped writing at the age of 21, traveled widely from 1875 until the time of his death in 1891. Nevertheless, Rimbaud metaphorically went to the very depths of his poetic soul throughout *Une saison en enfer,* where I remind that he wrote: « Le plus malin est de quitter ce continent, où la folie rôde pour pourvoir d'otages ces misérables. J'entre au vrai royaume des enfants de Cham » (270). Senghor may have been inspired by this line in Rimbaud. To enter the kingdom of children, to

leave the continent of progress and return to an intuitive way of being that allows one to move with life force energy, rather than against it, and this is paramount if the "Revolution of 1889" is ever to reach fruition.

The next paragraph of Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer* begins with the subject asking: « Connais-je encore la nature ? / me connais-je ? » (270). Self-understanding and the return to intuition is linked to the natural world. Because language is mostly expressed through duality, man has often created societies that mimic division. Nature becomes increasingly important because, in nature, the freedom of life force rules supreme. In a state of untouched nature, a human can begin to remember that underlying sub-real force that is described in a variety of ways by all the writers discussed. Because our understanding of self, our deep spiritual work comes from an inter-being and existence in the natural world. Thus, what we risk losing as we become increasingly alienated from nature is the potential for self-realization and the intuitive epistemological approach. Furthermore, as we stand on the precipice of mass extinction, a return to intuition can help us protect and save the earth. Bergson explains how:

> Ainsi, aux yeux d'une philosophie qui fait effort pour réabsorber l'intelligence dans l'intuition, bien des difficultés s'évanouissent ou s'atténuent. Mais une telle doctrine ne facilite pas seulement la spéculation. Elle nous donne aussi plus de force pour agir et pour vivre. Car, avec elle, nous ne nous sentons plus isolés dans l'humanité, l'humanité ne nous semble pas non plus isolée dans la nature qu'elle domine. (*EC* 271)

With increased strength to create, to act and to live in alignment and flowing with life and nature, we will no longer feel such isolation, nor will we feel lacking, once we come to realize that all we are seeking by layering discursive intelligence on top of primordial understanding is a way to feel safe and whole. The way to self-realization, wholeness and freedom from fear *is* by

recognizing that one can connect with the life force that animates and intelligently orchestrates everything.

Again, I repeat that the paradox of knowing one's self is that, in order to do so, one must open to the Other. This has positive implications for global relations and intercultural understanding as well as for the environment. Arne Naess, the founder of deep ecology, without, I presume, having studied Senghor or African philosophy or Bergson generated the following from, I can only assume, his own intuition:

> Because of an inescapable process of identification with others, with increasing maturity, the self is widened and deepened. We 'see ourselves in others.' Our self-realization is hindered if the self-realization of others, with whom we identify, is hindered. Our self-love will fight this hindrance by assisting in the self-realization of others according to the formula 'Live and let live!' (82)

The *littérature-monde* movement along with its precursor in *littérature-voyageuse* champions and creates spaces where the self is widened and deepened through exposure to the vibrant literature of Others. The goal is not to denigrate postcolonial injustice; it is to look to the future and to envision a world where ideas and discussions occur openly, generating new ways of living together. Juan Goytisolo explains: « Discuter, apprendre, expérimenter des idées nouvelles, telle devrait être la boussole qui guide nos pas » (217). Goytisolo's travels and studies abroad granted him opportunities to learn and adopt new identities; this did not mean his underlying identity was ever under threat (such is the beauty of the dialectic, of holding paradox in one's heart and soul). Consider the following: « J'ai accumulé des identités, sans renoncer à aucune d'entre elles. Je ne suis pas nationaliste, je ne le serais jamais, et en réponse aux voix ronflantes qui prêchent une histoire exclusive et patriotique, je revendique ma condition

privilégiée de citoyen traîne-savates de la planète Terre » (217). I remind that the second collection from the *littérature-monde* collection has « Pour une identité-monde » as a subheading.

There is an increasing need to imagine ourselves as planetary citizens and to move beyond the fear that is felt by what Bergson would call our "superficial self." There is a dire need for humans to develop and return to intuition so that the "fundamental self," the self that is open to alterity, can take the lead as we journey forwards into the 21st century. There is a special role for the "poet" and for literature, as Le Bris writes in *Je est un autre:* « La littérature, donc, plus que jamais au cœur des enjeux du monde qui vient. Le roman, le poème, plus que jamais nécessaires » (26). The world that is to come need be one where thinkers, knowledge-producers and poets plant roots firmly and deeply enough into the soil, thus becoming able to access intuition and grapple with the difficulty of imagining "planetarity," as Gayatri Chakravorty Sivak discussed in *Death of a Discipline.* She concludes as follows:

> The planetarity of which I have been speaking in these pages is perhaps best imagined from the precapitalist cultures of planet. […] The "planet" is, here, as perhaps always, a catachresis for inscribing collective responsibility as right. Its alterity, determining experience, is mysterious and discontinuous–an experience of the impossible. It is such collectivities that must be opened up with the question "How many are we?" when cultural origin is detranscendentalized into fiction–the toughest task in the diaspora. (101-102)

Spivak mentions the precapitalist cultures as offering insight into the kind of planetarity we are to imagine. The precapitalist cultures have some version of spirituality, some means for connecting with the unseen realms as well as the knowledge that they are indivisibly a part of

said realms. Humans have a collective and shared responsibility to this planet because we alone (ok, potentially dolphins and elephants too) are capable of self-reflection. And I conclude with the words of Henri Bergson, who offers even to remove the seeming obstacle of death itself:

> Comme le plus petit grain de poussière est solidaire de notre système solaire tout entier, entraîné avec lui dans ce mouvement indivisé de descente qui est la matérialité même, ainsi tous les êtres organisés, du plus humble au plus élevé, depuis les premières origines de la vie jusqu'au temps où nous sommes, et dans tous les lieux comme dans tous les temps, ne font que rendre sensible aux yeux une impulsion unique, inverse du mouvement de la matière et, en elle-même, indivisible. Tous les vivants se tiennent, et tous cèdent à la même formidable poussée. L'animal prend son point d'appui sur la plante, l'homme chevauche sur l'animalité, et l'humanité entière, dans l'espace et dans le temps, est une immense armée qui galope à côté de chacun de nous, en avant et en arrière de nous, dans une charge entraînante capable de culbuter toutes les résistances et de franchir bien des obstacles, même peut-être la mort. (*EC* 271)

The "Revolution of 1889" is an awakening of intuition, yes. But moreover, it is a return. May we return to a way of being in this world that engenders connection to all of life, such as Bergson described in the above quotation. So that we can flow along with life and the underlying vibrational force, whether we name it rhythm, élan vital, *esprit* or even God. And may there always be poets to remind us what it is we must return to, so that we might recognize that force within our own deeper selves and in so doing, may we even overcome death itself.

V. Conclusion

> « Devant nous, le Monde est comme un labyrinthe. Beaucoup d'entrées. Mais un seul chemin qui mène au centre. La Nature résiste à nos efforts pour le

> pénétrer parce que nous la prenons de travers ou à rebours. Choisissons mieux le Connu et l'Inconnu. Mettons l'x où il doit être, c'est-à-dire dans le matériel et le plural ; et reconnaissons que le conscient, le libre, sont des *évidences primitives, inanalysables.* Alors nous tombons dans l'ordre. » (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *L'Énergie humaine* 30)

"The Revolution of 1889" will be achieved by returning to that which is essential, eternal and un-analysable. It is possible to "fall into the order," as in the above citation, by flowing along with life; an intuitive understanding can enable this. Senghor lived amidst nature, not trying to penetrate it but as a part of the vibrant flow of life, for the first seven years of his life. When asked what he carries with him from his early childhood, he replies:

> J'ai quitté ma mère en disant adieu au 'Royaume d'Enfance'. Pendant ces sept ans, j'avais vécu en me développant harmonieusement. J'avais vécu heureux dans un monde de bonté et de beauté, de dignité et de liberté. Je ne place pas ce Royaume seulement au début de ma vie. Je le place aussi à la fin. En généralisant, je dirai que c'est le but ultime des activités de l'homme que de recréer le Royaume d'Enfance. (*La poésie de l'action* 45)

The ultimate aim of being human is, according to Senghor, to recreate the Kingdom of Childhood.

This Kingdom is a country without borders and it is a place where contact, con-naissance and the dance of reciprocity takes place. Thus, as Teilhard de Chardin expresses: « L'âge des nations est passé. Il s'agit maintenant pour nous, si nous ne voulons pas périr, de secouer les anciens préjugés, et de construire la Terre » (46). Those words were first published in 1931; the concern over whether or not we will perish is entirely more imminent today. He says that the world is « en voie de ramasser en soi les éléments d'un corps supérieur et nouveau » (45). If this

is the case, if the world had already begun gathering new and better elements almost a century ago, then the time for revealing the fruition of this is looming.

As Spivak noted in the quotation regarding Planetarity, it is the precapitalist cultures who have retained a connection to the spiritual, that understand intuitively that nature best not be penetrated as it has been for too long already. And there is still hope. Arundhati Roy writes: "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing" (112). The way to achieve this world is not through political power but through art, poetry and storytelling: "Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe" (112). We have been brainwashed to believe that the Scientific Method reveals the truth and that we should only believe that which we can see and analyze. We have been told that we are separate from each other. But the writers featured in this dissertation tell different stories. They write of connection, of deep vibrational and unseen forces. They write of intuition. They write of returning to the source of what it means to be human and to love. Teilhard de Chardin reminds that: « L'amour est la plus universelle, la plus formidable, et la plus mystérieuse des énergies cosmiques » (40). These mysterious cosmic energies have been called rhythm, vibration, élan vital and *esprit.*

The poet can alchemize the intuitive knowing that is birthed from the generative forces at work into words on pages. These words, be they poetry or stories, an all art in general, reveals something that was once unseen, making the invisible visible. In this way, a return to the Kingdom of Childhood becomes possible, if one is willing to let go of the seeming safety of

remaining within the land of the known, the rigid country defined and demarcated by borders and dogma. Senghor, upon reading their works, recognized that Bergson, Claudel and Rimbaud had access to the Kingdom of Childhood. By returning to this realm that is undeniably imbued with *esprit*, they were then able to transmute what they understood and share their insights through their works. The proponents of *littérature-monde* are very simply calling for an openness to the vibrancy of life in all its chaotic potential. They too are hoping to transmit and reveal *esprit* globally.

The discussions in this dissertation surrounding the meaning of *esprit* have inevitably been, in some ways, unsatisfactory for the rational mind. This is because knowing *esprit* is almost beyond the scope of language to express. Teilhard de Chardin describes the phenomenon of *Esprit* as follows:

> Le Phénomène-Esprit a comme de juste attiré plus qu'aucun autre, l'attention humaine. Nous coïncidons avec lui. Nous l'expérimentons par le dedans. Il est le fil même dont sont tissés pour nous les autres phénomènes. Et cependant sur la nature de cet élément fondamental (qui est ce que nous connaissons le mieux au monde, parce que nous le sommes lui-même, et qu'il est tout pour nous) nous n'arrivons pas à nous entendre.
>
> Pour les uns, héritiers de la presque unanimité des spiritualismes anciens, l'Esprit est chose si spéciale et si haute qu'il ne saurait être confondu avec les énergies terrestres et matérielles qu'il anime. Incompréhensiblement associé à ces dernières, il les imprègne sans s'y mêler. Il y a un monde des âmes et un monde des corps, L'Esprit est un « méta-phénomène ». (117)

The rational mind does not know how to dance with the meta-phenomenon of *esprit.* And yet, *esprit* is real, it is deeply real, and it animates each and every bit of existence. Through intuition, one is able to feel what it is to flow with the vibrations that are, in a way, breathing and animating all of life.

Artists, poets, mystics and storytellers are the sensitive lovers and feelers who will lead Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" steadily onwards. May we remember that which we never entirely forgot: The Kingdom of Childhood is accessible to all precisely because it is how we all began and how we will all end. We started this journey through life entranced by our surroundings, knowing the magic of seeing all things and by also being imbued by *esprit.* As we come to deeply know ourselves and then access a more complete way of knowing, as we adopt a left and right brain working together in balance kind of approach, then we create hope for the environmental world as well as the cultural world. As within, also without: or, our social and physical environments can achieve a similar peaceful balance. Senghor's "Revolution of 1889" asks us to see the wisdom in the embrace of intuition, to validate the Black African ontology that honours emotion and to find it within ourselves as well. May we all remember the sacred gift of intuition.

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