

Spacio-temporality in Selected Works by Dany Laferriere: A Crafty Imbrication of Virtual Ecotone and Global Nodal Space

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Abstract

This paper takes a critical look at the novel manner in which Danny Laferriere weaves personal, collective and multifaceted imaginary spaces in which his narrator lives, while highlighting the erasure of such an imaginary world through a return to the physical tangible native country. In *l'Enigme du retour* (2009), the narrator carves for himself a universe in which he resides quasi-comfortably and tumultuously in order to escape the fact that his father just passed on, on the same land where both of them have been living, as Haitians exiled in Canada. In *Pays sans chapeau* (2007), the focus is on the anti-thesis of the imaginary characteristics of life in Quebec, through Laferriere narrator: the realities of life back home and the changes that settled during the several decades of absence. The notion of ecotone is therefore of paramount importance in this work, where it is used to mean 'the virtual space between the universe that the narrator create in those two novels and the physical native land, Haiti'. The thrust of this paper is therefore twofold: firstly, to unveil and dissect the various literary features that the author uses in his construction of the ecotone, which is represented as a complex and impressive dream land where sorrows, fears and sadness are nullified and secondly, to scrutinize the various multiple components of the nodal space which, in this paper is the mutations or changes that the geopolitical order of the world terms as the north and the south, or the east and the west. The north or west (Canada and Quebec here) which was hitherto synonymous with happiness and abundance is surprisingly reduced to need, want, fear, suppression of sad realities and feelings, as the narrator's life in *l'Enigme du retour* shows. The south or east (Haiti in this case) which was associated with all negative traits now has 'sophistication' and opulence, although such good assets lie in the hands of the few agents of imperialism and its local allies as *Pays sans chapeau* reveals. The theoretical framework guiding this work is the Diasporan Cultural Literacy Theory, propounded by Raphael Confiant et al. in *In Praise of Creoleness* (1993) where the physical and virtual distance between the Francophone Black Diaspora in the Caribbean on the one hand and continental Africa on the other hand are explored and analyzed as unifying factors, not as a gap or fissure.

Keywords: Spacio-temporality, Ecotone, Diasporic Nodes, Escape, Homeland