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Introduction

- This article explores the interplay between globalization, historical commemoration, and social marginalisation as articulated in Guadeloupean playwright Gerty Dambury's *Confusion d'instant* (2003). French Caribbean theatre has often been the vector for socio-political and historical debates engendered by the complex cultural and political history of the region. Guadeloupe is a former plantation colony, and was one of the loci of the Transatlantic Slave Trade from the sixteenth century until 1848, when slavery was abolished for the second time in the French colonies.¹ After three centuries as a colony, Guadeloupe is one of four former French colonies to have gained, in 1946, the status of *départements*, overseas French administrative regions.² The inhabitants are French citizens, with concomitant rights and status. Despite being an integral part of France politically, administratively, and linguistically, French overseas territories have often had a strained relationship with the French metropole, due to the history of slavery and colonialism and a liminal status that has prolonged the colonial relationship between overseas territories and their metropole. What is more, in the case of the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, cultural, geographical, and historical proximity to other Caribbean autonomous and independent nations, has contributed to their frequently defiant attitude towards the French metropole. The French Caribbean is also renowned for having participated in anticolonial struggles and for the contributions to postcolonial thought by its most prestigious writers and theorists, who constitute what Forsdick and Murphy term postcolonial theory's 'French-language roots'.³

- 2 French Caribbean culture draws from a multiplicity of histories and cultural heritages. The population is made up of descendants of European colonizers, African slaves, indentured labourers from South and East Asia, and immigrants from the Middle-East. Some may also claim antecedents from the first indigenous populations, in large part wiped out when the Europeans started settling on the islands. The study of Caribbean drama is fundamental to the understanding of the region's complex socio-cultural fabric. The genre developed from an imbrication of European, African, and Asian performance styles with local oral traditions. In Martinican and Guadeloupean theatre there is an interweaving and overlapping between the field of metropolitan French drama and more distinctly local Caribbean theatre; plays by Martinican and Guadeloupean authors have marked contemporary French drama, as well as having contributed to the formation of postcolonial theatrical forms.
- 3 The *métissage* of Caribbean society has been the inspiration for many a reflection on cultural identity and social formation. Indeed, the Caribbean case can be used as a template for a global society based on the embracing and celebration of difference and cultural exchange. Martinican Édouard Glissant's critique of Western universalism and globalization merits attention in this context. Glissant describes *mondialisation* or globalization as a form of 'downwards standardization', which enforces a sameness where difference is diluted in a monotonous and unoriginal simulated equality. To this he opposes the term *mondialité*, which calls for an equality that embraces difference. Glissant's works are key to understanding the complexities of French Caribbean culture, history, and identity formations, but the engagement in his later *œuvre* with more 'global' debates has led to certain critics describing the Martinican author as watering down his politics by turning away from his Caribbean-focussed theory and activism, in a move away from the political to a more apolitical poetics.⁴ Yet criticising Glissant, for developing a new poetics based on *mondialité* more so than on *Antillanité* [Caribbeanness] is disingenuous. Why should he not write about other areas via a reflexion on the global drawn on the local? As Charles Forsdick has it, Glissant's works cover 'an important range of other politically urgent issues, including slavery, ecology, and the ideology of departmentalization, via which specific local or regional circumstances of the Caribbean are drawn, powerfully and ineluctably, into wider global debates'.⁵ This articulation of the local and global is found in the works of many late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century French Caribbean writers, including Gerty Dambury. Dambury herself writes, on the subject of being identified as a Caribbean writer:
- ... il est absolument capital que nous soyons, nous Antillais, des êtres humains tout court. [...] on est tellement regardé comme étant particuliers, et on se regarde nous-mêmes comme étant particuliers, qu'on ne se rend pas compte que pas mal de problèmes auxquels on est confronté ici sont les même qu'ailleurs.⁶
[it is capital that we Antilleans should be simply human beings. [...] we are so often regarded as being particular, and we consider ourselves as being particular, that we do not realize that many of the problems we face here are the same as elsewhere.]
- 4 This is representative of an issue many French Caribbean writers face: being confined to restrictive categorisations that in effect exclude them from mainstream literature, arts, and theory. Writers such as Dambury continuously attempt to reject and question restrictive categorisations of their work, lest they fall and remain confined to such fields as 'Francophone', 'black', 'regional', rather than simply 'French' literature, or even 'Literature'. For the global dimension of the works by Dambury and her fellow artists are

apparent in their treatment of subjects that affect societies worldwide such as 'race', colonialism and its legacies, French hegemony, globalization, or gender.

- 5 The status of the French Caribbean artist symbolizes the peripheral status that Martinique and Guadeloupe have often occupied within the French nation, as former colonies remaining in a semi-colonial relationship with France. This has led to socio-political tensions between overseas territories and metropole. One of the main contentions is the issue of recognition and commemoration of French and the French Caribbean slave and colonial pasts. Glissant writes of a 'tormented chronology' of the French Caribbean when describing a history that has not been acknowledged by official state historical narratives.⁷ This 'chronology' refers to the collective memory of the French Caribbean people, shaped by experiences of slavery, deportation, migration, and colonialism. There have been efforts on behalf of the French state to commemorate the slave and colonial pasts of overseas territories. In 2001 the Taubira Law recognised the slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity. In 2006, the tenth of May became the official 'journée des mémoires et de réflexion sur la traite, l'esclavage et leurs abolitions [day of commemoration of and reflection on the slave trade, slavery, and their abolitions]', the only one of its kind in the world. However, these efforts have often emphasized 'abolition [of slavery] as a philanthropic act', with the celebration and foregrounding of the abolition of slavery in the French colonies by the French state serving as an instrument dispensing the state from recognising the full extent of the damage inflicted during the colonial period and historical and current 'narratives of Caribbean resistance' to French rule.⁸ Indeed, in 2003, a law encouraged 'les programmes de recherche universitaires accordant à l'histoire de la présence française outre-mer [...] la place qu'elle mérite [university research programmes should allow the history of the French overseas presence the place it deserves].'⁹ At the time it also stated that school curricula should recognize the benefits of colonialism. This was later amended, yet without dispensing universities from the obligation to teach the 'benefits' of colonialism. What is more, there is a lack of recognition by the French state of local historical events that shaped the fabric of overseas societies. For the most part, these events were overlooked because they took the form of strikes and protests against colonial and subsequent metropolitan governments.¹⁰ In the face of such a dismissive attitude from the French state, French Caribbean artists and theorists have taken on the responsibility of commemorating marginalised histories and local collective memories. One of the motivations of female playwrights in the French Caribbean is 'le désir et le devoir de mémoire au sein d'un conscience collective qui, se reconnaissant, se dépasse et guérit ses maux [the desire for and the duty to memory in the heart of a collective conscience that in recognising itself, transcends itself and heals itself of its ills].'¹¹
- 6 Gerty Dambury belongs to a highly prolific generation of French Caribbean playwrights, many of which are women whose works foreground the socio-political realities of their homelands and have contributed to the development of a truly unique theatrical culture. Born in Pointe-à-Pitre in Guadeloupe in 1957, Dambury is a poet, dramatist, novelist, theatre critic, actress, director, and former teacher of English, who has worked both in Guadeloupe and metropolitan France. Dambury started writing, directing, and acting in her own plays in the 1990s. Her texts have reflected on, and represented socio-political issues affecting her native Guadeloupe as well as the wider former colonized black world.
- 7 Gerty Dambury succinctly explores the aforementioned concepts of globalization and historical commemoration in *Confusion d'instant*. First performed in 2003 in a production

directed by the author herself, and published by the Éditions du Manguier in 2014, *Confusion d'instant* follows the interactions, or lack thereof, of three characters belonging to different generations and genders.¹² Each character speaks in a single tense that echoes their obsession with a singular object of consumption. Mimilie is an elderly woman who only speaks in the present tense and is addicted to the purchasing and hoarding of household appliances. Cosmonaute, Mimilie's husband, speaks in the past tense and is a former war veteran who has participated in several of France's armed conflicts. Malonga is a young man who lives for the future and speaks in the future tense, and expresses himself using terms relating to cars. The play is set in Mimilie's kitchen which is filled with numerous household goods. Throughout *Confusion d'instant* the characters fight against their own obsessions, and struggle to interact with one another. Towards the end of the play, however, Mimilie manages to unite her companions and they begin to find a semblance of unison when the play closes. While set in Guadeloupe and comprising only Guadeloupean characters, *Confusion d'instant* clearly articulates issues of consumerism, memory, and marginalisation as at once local and global phenomena. Each character appears to embody an allegorical role relating to each of these questions, and each will be analysed in turn below. The final section will assess how Dambury articulates the characters' move from a confused - to borrow a term from the play's title - polyphony to a semblance of harmony orchestrated, for the most part, by the female character Mimilie.

Consumerism

- 8 *Confusion d'instant* can be considered overall as a critique of the deleterious effects of consumerism in a capitalist economy. The crowded set is the most blatant demonstration of the characters' absorption into and dependence on consumer culture. Indeed, in *Confusion d'instant*, the lives of the characters are contained within this cluttered set; the rhythms and sounds of the machines that constitute it are used on several occasions to reflect the characters' moods and interactions. Dambury even includes the space as a character in the *dramatis personae* at the start of the published edition of the play, giving it equal weight with the characters Mimilie, Cosmonaute, and Malonga:

Un espace : celui de Mimilie, dans lequel est accumulé un nombre impressionnant d'appareils électroménagers. La pièce en est saturée, les étagères croulent sous les robots, les fours à micro-ondes, les fers à repasser, les centrifugeuses, les cafetières électriques, les ouvre-boîtes électriques, les balances électroniques, etc. Il y a là des modèles différents, des marques différentes, des objets neufs ou cassés, à moitié réparés, des fils qui pendent de partout. La poussière, la graisse se sont accumulées sur certains de ces objets ; des vieux moteurs récupérés sur des machines en sommeil attendent d'être réutilisés.

Partout des tas de notices, de factures graisseuses ou jaunies, des piles usagées, beaucoup de piles, des Wonder, des Akai, des Sony, de toutes les tailles et de toutes les puissances.

[A space: Mimilie's space, in which are amassed a remarkable number of household appliances. The room is filled with them, the shelves weighed down by robots, microwave ovens, irons, juicers, electric coffee-makers, electric tin openers, electronic scales, etc. There are different models, different brands, new, broken, or half-repaired objects, wires hanging everywhere. The dust, the grease have accumulated on some of these objects; old motors salvaged from machines snoozing and waiting to be reused.

Everywhere there are instruction manuals, greasy or yellowed bills, used batteries, a lot of batteries, Wonder, Akai, Sony batteries, of all sizes and strengths.]¹³

- 9 From the outset, the play offers the spectator a vision of the materiality of conspicuous consumption. The excess portrayed on stage produces an effect of claustrophobia and entrapment. The characters are confined to this space throughout the play, as well as being drawn to the many objects within it. Indeed, Mimilie is obsessed with kitchen appliances, which occupy the greater part of the kitchen space, batteries are important to Cosmonaute who needs them for his pacemaker and radio sets, and the engines and machines on set may be seen as a visual reminder of Malonga's fixation on cars.
- 10 The sensation of imprisonment was exploited in the first performance of the play, which took place in a square on an urban council estate in Pointe-à-Pitre. The actors performed in cages made of wire mesh, which 'faisaient écho à celles des spectateurs juchés aux fenêtres de leurs immeubles, [echoed those of the spectators perched at the windows of their homes]' explained Guadeloupean actor Mylène Wagram, 'comme si l'urgence à dire n'avait pour vecteur que la parole directe, incarnée et frontale [as though the urgency of the message could only be conveyed through direct, embodied, and forward-facing speech].'¹⁴ The set in *Confusion d'instant* serves as a very visual, 'direct' depiction of the excesses of consumer culture. It efficiently questions the value of material goods and the entrapment of the consumer within the accumulation of such goods.
- 11 While the set serves as a powerful reminder of the excesses of consumerism, Dambury's characters are also potently emblematic of the impact of these excesses on the individual consumer. Each character is obsessed with a particular kind of consumer good, but it is Mimilie who appears as the typical example of a shopping addict. In her first monologue at the start of the play, Mimilie is sitting at her kitchen table noting her purchases and savings in a ledger. In her monologue, which takes the form of a stream of consciousness, she reveals her obsession with saving money, with cutting out waste to economize, so as to have more money which she can then spend on a new time-saving machine, which allows her to be more productive. This depicts on an individual scale the cycle within which consumers are trapped under a capitalist economy. Saving money to buy goods, to save time with which to earn more money, to then buy more goods:
- ...compter combien pour le pain, combien pour la farine, la farine, c'est pour faire les gâteaux, les gâteaux, c'est pour vendre, l'argent des gâteaux, c'est l'argent de la nourriture [...] Avec tes économies, tu achètes une balance électronique pour peser la farine. On perd moins quand on pèse au milligramme près [...] et c'est toujours ça de perdu sur le prix du gâteau. Avec ce que tu économises sur le poids de la farine, tu achètes une batteuse. Avec la batteuse tu vas plus vite pour préparer les gâteaux, tu en fais plus donc et comme tu en as plus, tu vends beaucoup, tu vends beaucoup, tu achètes un couteau électrique, avec le couteau électrique, tu coupes mieux le beurre glacé.
- [count how much for the bread, how much for the flour, the flour to bake cakes, the cakes, to sell, the money earned with the cakes is money you can spend on food [...] With your savings, you buy electronic scales to weigh the flour. You waste less when you weigh by the milligram, every milligram counts when you bake a lot of cakes, and that's always money saved on the price of the cake. With what you save on the price of flour, you buy a mixer. With the mixer, you make the cakes more quickly, and so you make more and since you have more, you sell more, you sell more, and then you buy an electric knife, and with the electric knife, you cut the frozen butter.]¹⁵
- 12 And the monologue continues in this vein for another two pages, demonstrating the extent to which Mimilie has herself been consumed by the cycle of consumerism which dictates her lifestyle. Further on in the monologue she describes her use of daytime

shopping channels, and three scenes later she reveals she owns several kinds and brands of the same object:

Les couleurs ça change avec les années. Les batteurs, avant, c'est marron. J'en ai des marrons et des jaunes, des oranges, des crème et orange. [...] Je manque de place. Sans ça, toutes les couleurs de cuisinière, j'achète. Des blanches, des marrons, des bordeaux, des bleu-profond, des noires. Je manque de place, bien sûr...

[The colours have changed over the years. The mixers were brown before. I have brown and yellow ones, orange ones, cream and orange ones. I'm running out of space. Otherwise, I buy cookers of all shades. White ones, brown ones, burgundy ones, deep blue ones, black ones. I'm running out of space, of course...]¹⁶

- 13 Despite admitting to not having sufficient space, Mimilie sees the lack of space rather than the number of appliances she wishes to store within it as the problem. This demonstrates further her entrapment within a cyclical consumption of new household goods. The older ones remain, for, as she points out 'je n'achète pas le ménage pour faire une seule chose avec, comme ils disent, moi, les choses ça peut toujours évoluer, c'est ce que je dis [I don't buy household appliances to do only one thing with them, as they say, and as I say, things can always evolve, that's what I say.]'¹⁷.

- 14 Cosmonaute and Malonga are also affected by the cycle of conspicuous consumption. Indeed, in each character's case Dambury explores levels of alienation and reification that result from the contemporary capitalist economy. The reification of the characters is apparent in the direct symbiosis established between Mimilie, Cosmonaute, and Malonga with the machines in the play. The same scene where Mimilie describes the many types of appliances she owns starts with her switching all of these appliances on, whereupon she falls into rapture as she witnesses the 'bruit des machines, de toute cette électricité accumulée. [the sounds of the machines, of all this accumulated electricity]'. She describes the appliances as though they were living creatures, the sensation they bring echoing her own feeling of ecstasy. In another scene, Cosmonaute turns on several radios at the same time. This paralyzes him, and he behaves like a tripped-out machine:

On entend d'un seul coup toute une série de radios qui se mettent en marche en même temps [...] Cosmonaute ne bouge pas. Il est comme paralysé. Il répète un mot que l'on ne comprend pas. [...] Mimilie sort en maugréant, elle passe derrière le rideau, et tout se tait, sauf les Ave Maria et Cosmonaute qui répète :

Cosmonaute : Alerte n°1...Alerte n°1...Alerte n°1...

[...]

Mimilie : Chaque fois, c'est la même chose, il reste bloqué.'

[All of a sudden, the sound of a series of radios all starting at the same time is heard [...] Cosmonaute does not move. He is paralysed. He repeats an unintelligible word.

[...] Mimilie exits mumbling, goes behind the curtain, and everything is silent, save the Ave Marias and Cosmonaute who repeats:

Cosmonaute: Red Alert... Red Alert... Red Alert

[...]

Mimilie: It's the same every time, he gets stuck.]¹⁸

- 15 This symbiosis symbolically reflects the characters' experiences on a broader socio-political level. The characters in *Confusion d'instant* have all been exploited by colonial or capitalist institutions. Mimilie is a slave to the market and consumer economy, as is Malonga who yearns to possess a fortune and commodities of his own. And when Cosmonaute was a soldier he was exploited to build up and fortify the French state as one of the world's largest and most powerful economies. Each character, like the machines on set, has a singular purpose that they have served (Cosmonaute), do serve (Mimilie), or will at some point serve (Malonga), to keep the cogs of various exploitative systems running.

Thus, they resemble the machines that encumber Mimilie's kitchen. And this in turn may explain why they cannot work together or communicate with each other, for they must each serve their single purpose, and take the other's place in the cycle, much like the future tense succeeds the present tense which follows the past tense.

Remembering the Past

- 16 The enslavement of the characters to the consumer economy and global technico-capitalist system can be deemed a veiled reference to slavery and the dependency of overseas departments on the French metropole. Slavery and colonialism remain contentious subjects in the relation between France and its overseas territories. Yet in *Confusion d'instant* Dambury broaches another key issue in the debate on national memory and commemoration: the history of colonial troupes who participated in several conflicts in which France was engaged over the twentieth century, exemplified here by Cosmonaute's character. The history of colonial troupes is imbricated with the histories of slavery and colonialism for without France's colonies -- former slave colonies in many cases, there would have been no colonial troupes to fight in France's conflicts. Several recent studies and artistic initiatives have contributed to shedding light on this often-ignored chapter of French colonial history.¹⁹ Within French Caribbean women's theatre in particular, the figure of the veteran colonial soldier features as a memento of a forgotten past. Two notable examples are Ina Césaire's Lafrik in *Man Filibo: Pièce en neuf tableaux (pour un théâtre de rue)* (2007) and Michèle Césaire's character Cassino in *La Nef* (1991), named after the Mount Cassino campaign in which he took part during the Second World War.²⁰ The character of Lafrik in Ina Césaire's *Man Filibo* is a traditional French Caribbean *conteur* [storyteller] figure who relates the life story of a deceased character in the play, and is also the carrier of memories of both the distant and more recent pasts. He is the living memory of his community, and his pivotal role in the play reflects Césaire's desire to honour such members of Martinican society. One interpretation of Michèle Césaire's *La Nef* is that the characters are on board a replica of the ship of fools, a mythical ship manned by the mentally ill.²¹ The characters in *La Nef* are modern Caribbean manifestations of these 'fools', and the mental ailment afflicting Cassino the war veteran can be seen as a form of post-traumatic stress. Cosmonaute in Dambury's *Confusion d'instant* shares both of these characters' characteristics, in his embodiment of post-traumatic stress and in his role as living reminder of the colonial past.
- 17 Cosmonaute is a character whose past is at odds with the present he inhabits in *Confusion d'instant*. As Mimilie claims, 'Cosmonaute utilise donc un temps passé pour parler d'un événement qui continue dans le présent et dont on ne connaît pas l'avenir [Cosmonaute thus uses a past tense to talk about an event that continues in the present and of which we do not know the future]'.²² Malonga speculates that the moment Cosmonaute will stop speaking in the past tense will be the moment he has recovered from his post-traumatic stress: 'Cosmonaute, le jour où il parlera au présent, eh bien on pourra dire qu'il aura quitté ses obsessions. [The day Cosmonaute speaks in the present tense, we'll be able to say he has abandoned his obsessions.]'.²³ Various elements of Cosmonaute's personality and behaviour denote this incapacity to let go of the past, and can be interpreted as symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Haunted by memories of the many conflicts in which he has taken part, Cosmonaute often conflates his present reality with a past experience.

He is obsessed with radio sets, which he uses to receive radio transmissions reminiscent of those he depended on during the war:

Cosmonaute : Vous n'aviez pas à blâmer les radios, vous autres, hein ! Si on avait eu des radios comme il faut, est-ce qu'on serait tombé dans leurs pièges ? Est-ce que j'aurais passé presque un an enfermé dans les ratières de Japs ? Est-ce qu'ils nous auraient encerclés dans les marécages ? Est-ce qu'ils nous auraient torturés ?

[Cosmonaute: No need to blame the radios, you lot, eh! If we had had proper radios, would we have survived their traps? Would we have spent almost a year trapped in Jap traps? Would they have surrounded us in the swamp? Would they have tortured us?]²⁴

- 18 His persistent distrust of former enemies is articulated in this rejection of all things Japanese, in reminiscence of the Second World War. This aversion is reiterated at other moments in the play, for instance when Mimilie insists on Malonga buying batteries that are not Japanese for Cosmonaute's pacemaker:

Malonga : Des piles pour son cœur ?

Mimilie : Oui. [...] Prenez plusieurs sortes mais pas des Japonaises. [...] Les Japonaises, ça fait pas battre son cœur. La vieille histoire, 39-45, d'Indochine, Cacochine et le reste, vous vous rappelez ?

[Malonga: Batteries for his heart?

Mimilie: Yes. [...] Buy different kinds, but not Japanese ones. [...] The Japanese ones do not make his heart beat. The same old story, WWII, Indochina, Cacochina and all the rest, remember?]²⁵

- 19 In addition to the Japanese, Cosmonaute is also suspicious of other former enemies of France. When Malonga announces he is to start a new job in Italy, Cosmonaute is dismayed: 'Un emploi [...] En Italie. Chez l'ennemi...Mussolini passe en revue les troupes [A job [...] In Italy. At the enemy's place. Mussolini reviews the troupes.]'²⁶ This distrust is emblematic of his difficulty relinquishing past trauma, with memories of old conflicts haunting his present.

- 20 The extent of Cosmonaute's trauma is depicted in a dialogue between himself and Mimilie halfway through the play. In this scene, Mimilie tries to ask Cosmonaute for help reading an instruction manual for a new microwave, which sends Cosmonaute into a rant about his experience as a prisoner of the Japanese during the Second World War:

Cosmonaute : [...] vous n'étiez pas contente de savoir que j'étais bien enfermé dans ma pièce avec mes radios, vous êtes venue me chercher, me tisonner pour lire des notices écrites en japonais. Du japonais, ça. Quelle marque ? Répondez ? Sansui. Sansui. Senseï... Comme ça qu'ils nous appelaient. [...] Et pendant ce temps là, pendant qu'ils faisaient semblant de capituler, pendant qu'ils endormaient ta confiance, voilà, tu étais entouré, encerclé et en moins de temps qu'il fallait pour battre un œil tu te retrouvais sous la terre. Il faisait nuit bordel du bon Dieu il faisait nuit et tu ne savais même pas à quoi tu ressemblais après la raclée qu'ils t'avaient passée [...]

Mimilie : [...] Ah mais Seigneur dieu de miséricorde, c'est pas possible d'avoir une conversation normale avec vous. Sansui, c'est coréen il me dit le vendeur. Coréen. C'est des ennemis aux Japonais. Voilà. C'est des ennemis des Japonais donc c'est des amis à nous. C'est bien pour ça qu'on vend leurs trucs !

[Cosmonaute: [...] you weren't satisfied knowing I was locked away in my room listening to my radios, you had to come and find me, harass me into reading manuals written in Japanese. This is Japanese. What brand is it? Answer? Sansui. Sansui. Senseï... That's what they called us. [...] And meanwhile, while they pretended to surrender, while they lulled you into a false sense of security, there, you were surrounded and in the blink of an eye you found yourself underground. It

was dark good God it was dark and you did not know what you looked like after the beating they had just given you [...]

Mimilie: [...] Oh Merciful God, it's impossible to have a normal conversation with you. Sansui's Korean, the sales assistant tells me. Korean. They are the enemies of the Japanese. There. If they're enemies of the Japanese they are our friends. That's why we sell their stuff!²⁷

21 This conversation reveals multiple aspects of Cosmonaute's trauma. He is often seen lurking in the kitchen at night, and this corresponds to the darkness he was plunged in while imprisoned and left to starve by the Japanese. The physical impact of post-traumatic stress is depicted in Cosmonaute's obesity and incessant hunger. He is in constant need of nourishment, sneaking into Mimilie's kitchen to look for food on several occasions in the play. This hunger is never satisfied, and is a result of his lacking food during the many campaigns he participated in as a soldier: 'les Japs ils avaient réussi à percer mes boyaux, c'était comme si rien ne restait, j'avais toujours faim... [the Japs managed to pierce my guts, it was as though there was nothing left, I was always hungry...]'.²⁸

22 Cosmonaute's fate is also relatable to that of other veterans from other countries. Indeed, references to the Vietnamese jungle and to soldiers speaking English, his distrust of Japanese brands, could also reflect sentiments of American war veterans. This analogy is articulated in the play's final scene, which portrays Cosmonaute dreaming to a soundscape drawn from popular American war films:

Des bruits de mitraille nous parviennent de loin, ainsi que le ronflement d'un moteur d'hélicoptère. On est dans une scène d'Apocalypse Now. [...] Tout d'un coup il se trouve en plein centre d'un extrait de Kagemusha de Kurosawa, [...] On entend des voix en japonais, donnant des ordres bref.

Toute une série d'extraits de films défilent de cette manière, qui ont trait à la guerre.

Le Pont de la Rivière Kwai (peut-être ce pourrait être juste la musique, que chacun reconnaît), et autres films majeurs de l'histoire du cinéma.

[Sounds of gunshots are heard from afar, as well as the sound of a helicopter. It's a scene from *Apocalypse Now*. [...] Suddenly he is in the middle of an excerpt from *Kagemusha* by Kurosawa [...] Japanese voices are heard, giving brief orders.

A series of war films excerpts flashes past in this way.

The Bridge on the River Kwai (perhaps just the music, that everyone will recognise), and other major films from cinema history]

23 At the end of *Confusion d'instant*, Cosmonaute's story and experience are thus portrayed as being of global significance. Interestingly, as part of a series of exhibitions run between 2014 and 2018 organised by the French research group Achac outlining the history of French colonial troupes involved in major world conflicts of the twentieth century, one exhibition draws parallels between soldiers from French colonies and protectorates and African American soldiers. The exhibition programme reads: 'Il est désormais temps de bâtir une histoire partagée, avec distance et critique, et de croiser les mémoires pour inscrire désormais ces récits dans nos histoires nationales et dans une histoire postcoloniale. [It is now time to build a shared history, critically and with distance, and to share memories so as to now inscribe these narratives in our national histories and in a postcolonial history.]'²⁹ Similarly, in *Confusion d'instant*, Dambury not only explores the fate of soldiers belonging the colonial troops, but also proceeds to turn this exploration into a critique of the impact of war on soldiers in general, and to reclaim the forgotten history of marginalised communities who participated in major world conflicts.

- 24 Cosmonaute is the main flagbearer of this reflection on historical commemoration and memory. Yet all three characters ultimately benefit from recognizing this forgotten or dismissed history. For in remembering one's own local history, one has a better grasp of the past and its influence on contemporary social structures. As Mimilie realizes at the end of the play after she swaps tenses with him, 'son passé était plus fort que mon présent'.³⁰ A loaded sentence referring to the weight of the past on contemporary society.

The Disenfranchised

- 25 The characters' psychoses in *Confusion d'instant*s hint at issues of marginalization within Guadeloupean society. With *Malonga*, Dambury explores a theme found in several of her other plays: the social and financial precarity of Guadeloupean youth. Her plays *Trames* (2008) and *Des doutes et des errances* (2014) also feature young men at odds with their elders, their communities, and their own sense of self.³¹ The characters are often unemployed or disillusioned and have difficulties interacting with their elders out of mutual misunderstanding and resentment. Malonga in *Confusion d'instant*s is in particular reminiscent of the character of Christian in Dambury's *Trames* in which Christian and his mother Gilette are portrayed as sharing a series of meals together. At first it seems Christian visits his mother only to be fed and to borrow money. However, he also wishes to establish a connection with his mother, asking her about his past and his father, in an attempt to develop a sense of identity he lacks due to a fatherless childhood and his mother's aloofness. But there appear to be irreconcilable differences between the two, and the play ends in tragedy with Christian accidentally killing Gilette. In *Confusion d'instant*s, Malonga visits Mimilie's kitchen for food, as well as the possibility of being conferred a paid errand. A monologue half-way through the play has him plot against the two other characters, in order to steal their money and belongings. However, the scenes that follow show that Mimilie and Cosmonaute consider him a son. He is an integral part of their family unit, and has as important a part to play in their dysfunctional search for harmony.
- 26 Malonga is obsessed with cars and speed, a symptom of his attachment to the future, which is also apparent in his constant use of the future tense. He speaks in mechanical terms relating to cars. In moments of elation and distress he uses a plethora of expressions, verbs, and nouns drawn from the lexical field of cars and machinery, when he plots against Mimilie and Cosmonaute for instance:
- Ah ! Chassieux ils seront leurs yeux quand ils comprendront mon échappement de leur prison. Ah, mais ils verront que je frein à disques à toute sur mes roues motrices. En plus je transmissionnerai en manuel tout ça, et projets, et rêves, et tout l'ensemble.
- [Ah! Their eyes will be rheumy when they realize I've filtered myself out of this prison. Ah, they'll see me disk brake hard on my wheels. And I'll switch the lot to manual, projects, and dreams, the whole lot of it]
- 27 Malonga lives in the future, anticipating his needs before they take shape: 'Je penserai toujours à la faim avant son arrivée. Je mangerai avant d'avoir faim. [I'll always be hungry before I get hungry. I'll always eat before I'm hungry.]'³² He knows he will need money, he knows he will go hungry, he knows he will get a sports car. His actions are therefore motivated by these objectives. He lurks in Mimilie's kitchen hoping to find her money, he eats before he gets hungry, and he plans to work in a car factory. In a dialogue with Mimilie she asks whether he can speak using 'normal language', such as the present

tense, to which he replies: 'Le présent ne me comblera pas, je serai perdu dans ce temps. [the present won't fulfil me, I'd be lost in that tense/time.]'³³ The present does not fulfil him, perhaps because its 'immediacy' might draw attention to his present insecure state of destitution. It is possible to deduce that Malonga is unemployed, and therefore that there is nothing in the present worth his while, save the achievement of a future that has yet to materialize.

- 28 The violence of some of Malonga's words in his plotting against Mimilie and Cosmonaute echoes that of other characters found in plays by Dambury and by another Guadeloupean writer, Maryse Condé. In Condé's *Comme deux frères* (2007), two delinquents are imprisoned after having tried to change society using violent means.³⁴ In Dambury's *Les Atlantiques amers* (2009) and *Des doutes et des errances* (2014), the setting of a popular strike in Guadeloupe leads to violence breaking out in the streets of the capital Pointe-à-Pitre, and to some of the characters wishing to take a stand to dissuade Guadeloupean youth from employing violence as a means of political protest. In *Confusion d'instant* Dambury pursues her examination and portrayal of the struggles of Guadeloupean youth, and the intergenerational conflicts within Guadeloupean society that could be resolved if individuals within the same community or family unit were made aware of the other's problems, needs, and experiences.

From Polyphony to Harmony

- 29 There is a sense of a harmony that is sought yet not fully achieved in *Confusion d'instant*. Dambury confines each character to a single grammatical tense and material obsession to draw attention to discrete ailments within Guadeloupean society. However, it is made apparent that these characters cannot function independently of one another. The deleterious effects of consumption, the forgotten chapters of French history, and the precarious living conditions of the youth, are all of equal importance to contemporary Guadeloupean society. Hence each character, and the issue they represent, is vital to achieving harmony between the characters, and within society as a whole. They form a polyphony of voices and concerns that desperately need to become aware of one another. A sense of unity that fails to fully establish itself is conveyed throughout the play, but more emphatically so in the scenes where all three characters are present. The trio's polyphony is introduced in an opening scene. It is a dream sequence with each character is trapped in a different dream. However, all repeat the same line, albeit in a different tense and with the occasional reference to their individual fixations:

J'avance à tâtons, les mains tendues devant moi
 J'avançais à tâtons, les mains tendues devant moi
 J'avancerai à tâtons, les mains tendues devant moi
 [...]
 Et puis tout doux
 Et puis tout doux
 Et puis tout doux
 C'est du plastique sous mes mains
 C'était de la terre sous mes mains
 Ce sera du cuir sous mes doigts
 [I feel my way along, hands stretched before me
 I felt my way along, hands stretched before me
 I shall feel my way along, hands stretched out before me
 And softly

And softly
 And softly
 There's plastic in my hands
 There was earth in my hands
 There will be leather in my hands]³⁵

30 Throughout this sequence the characters make up a polyphony that hesitantly reaches for harmony. However, a turning point in the scene has them lose this harmony to fall into the confusion and misunderstanding that permeate the rest of *Confusion d'instants*. The rest of the play is dedicated to retrieving the sense of unity and harmony experienced in their subconscious state during the opening scene.

31 Mimilie, Cosmonaute, and Malonga have difficulty coming together, so focussed are they on themselves and their own obsessions. Interactions between characters typically show them at odds or failing to comprehend the other. Because they speak in different tenses and have different interests, communication fails. This lack of communication draws attention to contemporary social issues, such as the isolation of marginal and fragile individuals in society, intergenerational conflicts, as well as how overarching historical, cultural, and political problems feed into the social fabric and societal relations. It is however made apparent on several instances that each character has a memory and life experience from which the others, and society at large, may benefit. Malonga is the son Cosmonaute and Mimilie never had, Cosmonaute carries a history that needs to be recognised by society at large. In a touching scene, tellingly entitled 'Dialogues Muets [Mute Dialogues]', Cosmonaute and Mimilie describe their affection for each other, but rather than addressing themselves to the other they speak in parallel monologues:

Mimilie : La première fois que je le vois je me dis « *je le remplume celui-là, c'est moi qui m'en occupe.* »

Cosmonaute : Je marchais à peine, traînais les pieds.

Mimilie : Pourquoi il marche comme ça, je me dis [...]

Cosmonaute : Je me suis évanoui. Un mètre quatre-vingt-sept de vaillant nègre à ses pieds. Sauf que j'étais pas bien vaillant.

Ils sourient tous les deux.

Mimilie : ... il tombe comme un i. « *Mais il meurt de faim, ce nègre-là* », je crie.

Cosmonaute : Elle s'est penchée, et elle m'a ramassé [...] Ma Mimilie et sa mère m'ont sauvé.

Mimilie : Je te le mets debout et je l'emmène chez ma mère.

[Mimilie: The first time I see him I say to myself "This one needs fattening up, I'm taking care of him".

Cosmonaute: I could barely walk, I dragged my feet.

Mimilie: Why is he walking like that, I ask myself [...]

Cosmonaute: I fainted. One metre eighty-seven of sturdy black man at her feet. Except I wasn't so sturdy.

They both smile

Mimilie: ... he falls flat on his face. '*But this man is dying of hunger*', I cry.

Cosmonaute: She bent over me, and she picked me up [...] My Mimilie and her mother saved me.

Mimilie: I pick him up and take him to my mother's.]]³⁶

32 This parallel narrative creates a rift between them, that is widened in the next scene, which despite starting off on a tender note, ends with the Cosmonaute returning to his war memories, and Mimilie to her household appliances. The breakdown in communication between them prevents them from acknowledging that they both need and benefit from their relationship.

- 33 After spending most of the play failing to enter into a dialogue with each other, the three characters reach a state of momentary unison following a singular event nearing the end of the play. Mimilie, wishing to cure Cosmonaute of his focus on the past, draws three circles on the ground, one for the past, one for the present, and one for the future. She makes Cosmonaute jump into the circle of the present with her, which paralyzes and renders him speechless. Mimilie, overwhelmed by the clash of tenses in the circle, starts speaking in the past tense. She realizes how insignificant her present was in comparison to the past Cosmonaute held within him, and this speaks to the need of contemporary society to acknowledge the colonial past. Indeed, Cosmonaute's silence in the circle of the present is symbolic of the silencing of this history in which he took part. Malonga then arrives and pulls Mimilie and Cosmonaute out of the circle of the present, but ends up in the circle of past. Malonga panics, and utters a series of terms from the lexical field of cars and mechanics, such as 'disque de freins [disk brakes]', 'freiner par temps de pluie [braking in rainy weather]', and 'freiner sec [come to a halt]'. The young man who has spent all his life speeding towards the future is forced to brake, to slow down and consider the past. Mimilie then pushes both Cosmonaute and Malonga out of the circles, after which both men discover that they now speak in different tenses. Mimilie tries the circle of the future tense, followed by Cosmonaute, for whom it is too much: his pacemaker, which has been in need of a battery change throughout the play, breaks down. Malonga once more goes to save him, but by the end of the scene both men are completely disorientated. Cosmonaute is mute and Malonga has lost the use of verbs and only speaks in monosyllables. Mimilie, however, has acquired all three tenses after this episode, which she uses for the rest of the play to cure her companions.
- 34 With her newly-acquired lucidity, Mimilie sets about healing Cosmonaute and Malonga. At the end of the circle episodes, Mimilie trips out all her machines. This is itself symbolic of the 'tripping out' of the characters themselves, who have broken down but are now ready to start anew. And by the end of the play, all the characters have spoken in a different tense to their own, and have achieved a heightened awareness of each other. Cosmonaute and Malonga are still obsessed with war and cars, but cautiously so, and Mimilie has relinquished her yearning for new household appliances. They are all objects, machines, that have broken down and been repaired, but repaired in a manner that allows them to work together more efficiently. The final scene replicates the opening scene of *Confusion d'instant*, with Mimilie, Malonga and Cosmonaute repeating the same phrase in a different tense. But this is done more harmoniously and jubilantly, for the mood is lighter than in the opening scene, with the characters singing in unison, and dancing while rotating hula-hoops around their waists:
- Mimilie, Cosmonaute, Malonga:
 Woollahop, Woollahop, Woollahop
 Mimilie : C'est un beau rêve
 Cosmonaute : C'était un beau rêve
 Malonga : Ce s'ra un beau rêve
 Woollahop Woollahop Woollahop.
 [Hula-hoop, hula-hoop, hula-hoop
 Mimilie: It's a good dream
 Cosmonaute: It was a good dream
 Malonga: It'll be a good dream
 Hula-hoop, hula-hoop, hula-hoop]³⁷
- 35 The rest of their song refers to the 'dream' from which they have awoken, the 'fixing' of their faulty machinery, the feeling of togetherness they have achieved, and the qualities

each member of the trio brings to the collective. The problems evoked in the play may not have been fully solved, as Mimilie's final line suggests: 'Ça y'est! On est encore dans les emmerdations ! [That's it! We're in trouble again!]'³⁸ Nevertheless, the work towards recognizing and finding solutions to these issues has started.

36 The polyphony in the play, although giving voice to all three characters, is predominantly led and dominated by Mimilie. Her kitchen is the set of the play, and she is the catalyst for unity between the three characters. This points to the importance of the figure of the elderly woman within Guadeloupean society and culture: The motherly, homely figure who is responsible for the survival of society is often termed *potomitan*, the central pillar of the family.³⁹ Mimilie's self-centred and consumerist personality does not deflect her from helping and nurturing Cosmonaute and Malonga. She has taken both men under her wing, feeding them and providing them with a place to call home. The importance of her role is particularly apparent in the final scenes of *Confusion d'instant*. The circles episode sees Mimilie emerge from the experience unscathed, and having gained the capacity to speak in the future and past tenses in addition to her favoured present tense. This is key to her subsequent endeavours to help her companions out of their reveries and trauma; the acquisition of these additional tenses granting her a heightened awareness of the problems at hand.

37 In Cosmonaute's dream sequence, which depicts him in multiple scenes from war films, Mimilie appears as a voodoo priestess.⁴⁰ Therefore, Mimilie as embodiment of this aspect of Caribbean culture anchors Cosmonaute, who is lost in battles set in other countries in this scene, to his homeland. Many rituals in voodoo are used for healing purposes, and Mimilie as a voodoo priestess is also endowed with the status of a healer. Indeed, in the dream sequence she is depicted as drawing circles, as she has done in the previous scene, perhaps in an attempt to mend what was previously damaged in the circles of the past, present and future tenses episode. This healer-status is extended to her relationship with Malonga. At the end of the dreamscape, it is discovered that while Cosmonaute was sleeping, Mimilie saved Malonga from being run over by a speeding car. The threat of losing his life to the object of his desire, a sports car, rouses Malonga from his monosyllabic state and he regains full speech capacity. Mimilie instigated the outing, having offered to accompany Malonga home, and she is responsible for the young man's near-death experience. In both cases, Mimilie amends for making Malonga and Cosmonaute ill with the circles. She provides a mooring for them while they both confront their obsessions and traumas as part of the healing process.

38 Homages to elderly women are found throughout Caribbean literature, Ina Césaire's play *Mémoires d'île* (1983) for instance is one of the most renowned plays that focusses exclusively on the lives of Antillean grandmothers and their role within their community.

⁴¹ Although this image of the elderly woman as pillar of a matrifocal society may be problematic since it may be, and has indeed been, deemed too reductive and deterministic an image of Caribbean femininity, the importance of reclaiming the role of such figures in the shaping of contemporary French Caribbean society, history, and identity is a laudable undertaking.

Conclusion

39 In *Confusion d'instant*, Gerty Dambury tackles issues relating to consumerism, forgotten histories, and youth disenfranchisement. Through the characters of Mimilie,

Cosmonaute, and Malonga, the play explores the effects of the consumer economy and the marginalized status of the French Caribbean on Guadeloupean society's most vulnerable members. Dambury unites the three voices in a polyphony that portrays the imbrication of all issues, generations, and concerns broached in the play. Each character is awoken from their self-centred and obsessive personality to a greater awareness of the other two, and this may be understood as a call for a greater awareness within Guadeloupean, and indeed French society as a whole, of the different qualities and experiences its individual members can offer. In the first production of the play, the creative team sought alternative locations to theatres or auditoriums for its theatrical representations, and *Confusion d'instant* was performed on a housing estate with locals watching the performance from their windows. The play inserted itself into public space thus demonstrating how theatrical production can reach a broader audience and thus initiate a debate about pressing contemporary problems. Dambury's works appeal to local audiences in depicting Guadeloupean characters faced with issues shared by their contemporaries. However, the works also have a global remit, as the many references within *Confusion d'instant* itself to other cultures attest. The issues broached in the play are relatable to audiences worldwide: the negative aspects of globalization, the articulation and acknowledgement of forgotten histories, and the recognition of society's responsibility towards its disenfranchised. French Caribbean theatre may be seeped in the local, but its meaning is global.

NOTES

1. Slavery was first abolished in the French slave colonies in 1794 following the French and Haitian Revolutions, but was reinstated by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.
2. The other three regions are Martinique in the Caribbean, French Guyana on the South American continent, and La Réunion in the Indian Ocean.
3. Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2009, p. 5.
4. See Chris Bongie, *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2008.
5. Charles Forsdick, "Local, National, Regional, Global: Glissant and the Postcolonial Manifesto", in Eva Sansavior and Richard Scholar (eds.), *Caribbean Globalizations, 1492 to the Present Day*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2015, p. 229.
6. Stéphanie Bérard, "Mon cheval de bataille est l'intime" : Entretien avec Gerty Dambury réalisé par Stéphanie Bérard', *Île en île* (July 2004), url : http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ile.en.ile/paroles/dambury_entretien.html [accessed 13th January 2015].
7. Édouard Glissant, *Le Discours antillais*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1981, p. 133.
8. Charles Forsdick, "Local, National, Regional, Global", p. 239-240.
9. Article 4, Loi n° 2005-158 du 23 février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés, Légifrance, url : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/>

affichTexteArticle.dojsessionid=A1EB6E3B53350348DAD29B3872E9EA78.tplgfr34s_3?
idArticle=LEGIARTI000006238939&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006051312&dateTexte=20060216
[accessed 28th December 2017].

10. See my article on the subject: Vanessa Lee, "Art and politics in contemporary French Caribbean theatre: The (re)presentation of Guadeloupe's 2009 general strike in Gerty Dambury's *Les Atlantiques amers* and *Des doutes et des errances*", *Journal of Romance Studies* 17.2, June 2017, p. 211-231.

See also: Yarimar Bonilla, *Non-Sovereign Futures: Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Louise Hardwick, "Depicting social dispossession in Guadeloupe: Nèg Maron, Lettre ouverte à la jeunesse and the general strike of 2009", *Forum of Modern Language Studies* 48, 2012, p. 288-305.

11. Carole Edwards, "Théâtralisation et quête de liberté par procuration chez trois dramaturges antillaises", *Women in French Studies*, Special Issue 5, 2014, p. 183.

12. Gerty Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, Paris, Éditions du Manguier, 2009. First performance directed by Gerty Dambury at Festival des Abyemes, Guadeloupe, 13th May 2003.

13. Gerty Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, Paris, Éditions du Manguier, 2014, p. 7-8.

14. Mylène Wagram, 'Mylène Wagram : "Gerty nourrit mon imaginaire de comédienne"', *Gens de la Caraïbe* (10th March 2013), url: http://www.gensdelacaraibe.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4944:mylene-wagram-gerty-nourrit-mon-imaginaire-de-comedienne [Accessed 27th December 2017]

15. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 19-20.

16. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 29-30.

17. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 22.

18. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 43.

19. The French-based research group Achac's works on seven research strands relating to colonial and postcolonial issues, one of which is "Mémoires combattantes [Memories of conflict/Conflict memories]". Their website holds a wealth of interdisciplinary and multimodal resources relating to the history of colonial troupes, see: <https://achac.com/memoires-combattantes/>

20. Ina Césaire, *Man Filibo : Pièce en neuf tableaux (pour un théâtre de rue)*, in Christiane P. Makward (ed.), *Rosanie Soleil et autres textes dramatiques*, Paris, Éditions Karthala, 2011, p. 243-272. Michèle Césaire, *La Nef*, Paris, Éditions théâtrales, 1992. The Battles of Mount Cassino took place during the Italian campaign of World War One in 1944.

21. The ship of fools was a legendary ship evoked by Plato in Book VI of *The Republic*. It has no pilot, and is crewed by helpless, mad, incompetent individuals. The allegory became popular again in medieval times and inspired Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* (1494) and Hieronymus Bosch's eponymous painting (1490-1500). Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilisation* suggests the mythical ship is also linked to an actual societal practice in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, whereby the mentally ill were put on ships and left to drift down waterways.

22. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 49.

23. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 48.

24. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 40.

25. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 50.

'Cacochine' could be a mis-spelling of 'Cochinchine' or Cochinchina, a region of southern Vietnam that was a French colony between 1862 and 1949.

26. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 53.

27. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 40-41.

28. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 25.

29. Groupe de recherche Achac, *Soldats noirs : troupes françaises et américaines dans les deux guerres mondiales*, Paris, 2017.

30. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 56.

31. Gerty Dambury, *Trames*, Paris, Éditions du Manguier, 2008 ;
Gerty Dambury, *Des doutes et des errances*, in *Des doutes et des errances*, suivi de *Les Atlantiques amers*, Paris, Éditions du Manguier, 2014.
32. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 48.
33. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 47.
34. Maryse Condé, *Comme deux frères*, Carnières-Morlanwelz, Lansman, 2007.
35. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 12-13.
36. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 23-24.
37. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 72.
38. Dambury, *Confusion d'instant*, p. 73.
39. The term used to designate a strong woman in French Caribbean culture, *potomitan*, is also borrowed from a term that describes the central pillar of the Haitian voodoo ritual.
40. Voodoo is a religion that developed in the Caribbean from African and European rites, specifically in Haiti and is a properly Caribbean phenomenon, although not practiced in Guadeloupe specifically.
41. Ina Césaire, *Mémoires d'île (Maman N. et Maman F.)*, in Christiane P. Makward (ed.), *Rosanie Soleil et autres textes dramatiques*, Paris, Éditions Karthala, 2011, p. 199-228.
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ABSTRACTS

Guadeloupean author Gerty Dambury's play *Confusion d'instant* (2003) is a treatment of the impact of globalization on the French and French Caribbean societies' most disenfranchised members. It also explores the interaction of personal and collective memory with local, national, and global histories. *Confusion d'instant* depicts the lives of three characters belonging to different generations and genders, who each speak in a single tense (past, present, or future). Each character also has a personal fixation with specific objects of consumption, such as radios, cars, or household appliances. Through the experiences of these socially and culturally marginalized characters Dambury articulates a searing critique of contemporary Guadeloupean society and of global capitalist consumerism in general. Through a close reading of the play, the article will analyse Dambury's dramatic reflection on globalization, forgotten histories, and social marginalization.

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