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Chasing Frankétienne's Creativity

Jean Jonassaint

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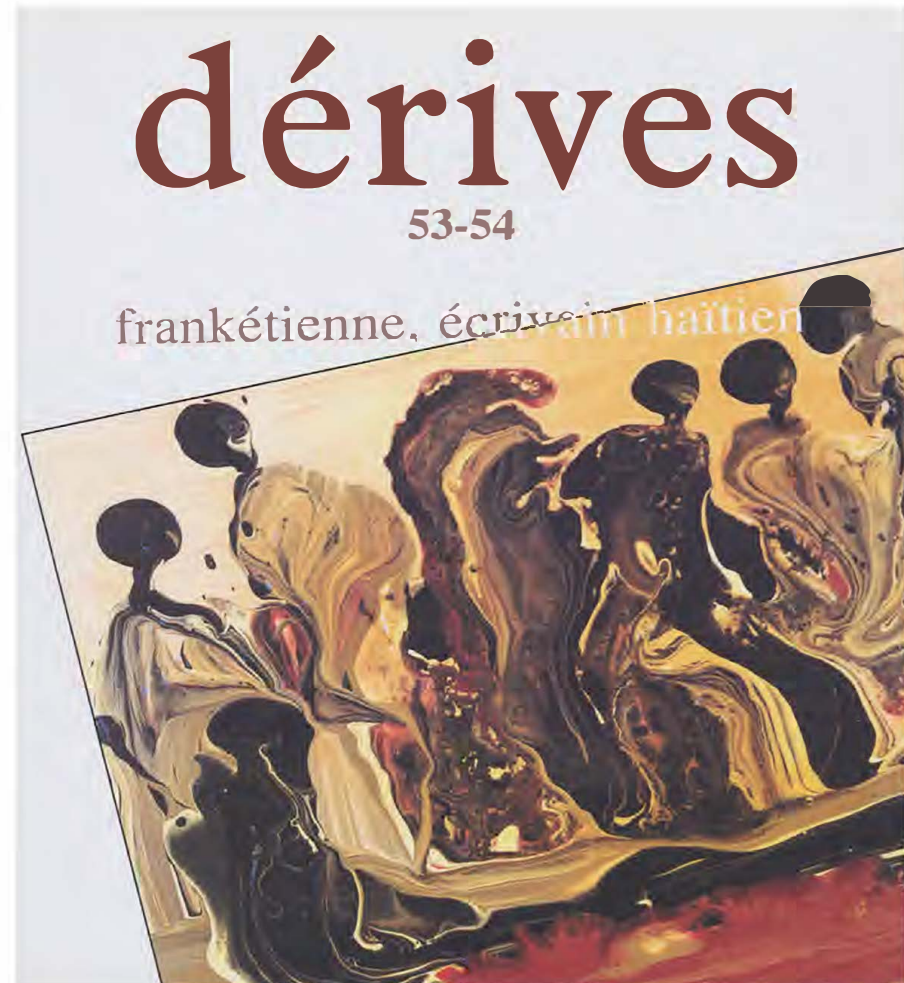
Chasing Frankétienne's Creativity

production/reception
of a work

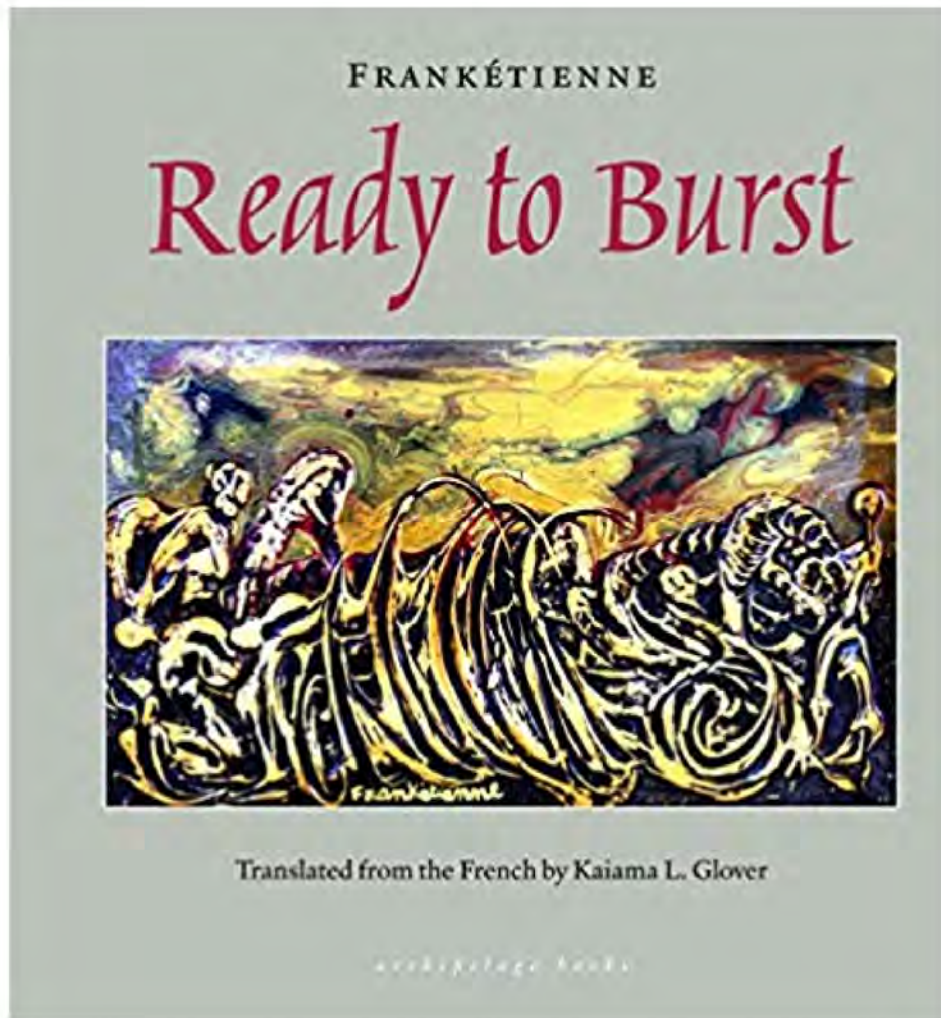
AN EXHIBITION OF MANUSCRIPTS AND TYPESCRIPTS, proofs, first editions, pictures, posters and other artifacts by or about Frankétienne at the Bird Library, March 22-30, 2019. Curated by Jean Jonassaint in collaboration with Stephen Singer and Barbara Opar from the Syracuse University Libraries, the primary goal is to highlight the process of production, dissemination and interpretation of Frankétienne's writings from 1968 to 2018, with a focus mainly on key books for which English translations are partly or entirely available such as *Mûr à crever* (1968), *Dézafi* (1975), *Les Affres d'un défi* (1979), *Pèlin-Tèt* (1978), *H'Éros-Chimères* (2002).

1968, after five collections of poems, Frank-étienne published his first narrative, *Mûr à crever*, subtitled “genre total,” but reedited in 1995 and 2004 as a “roman,” then translated into English by Kaiama L. Glover under the title, *Ready to Burst* (2014). This novel of a novel, which recalled André Gide’s *Paludes* (1895), goes far beyond Gide’s boundaries to explore theatre, essay, poetry, all set with a combination of various types of font and character. It was his very first step toward a more radical genre, he will call “spirale” in 1972 with the publication of *Ultravocal*.

This later book —since reedited in Port-au-Prince, 1995 and in Paris, 2004— not only got nationwide attention, making the front cover of the Haitian weekly, *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, but also had some international echo. Indeed, in 1975, excerpts from *Ultravocal* were published in the opening issue of the Quebec intercultural journal, *Dérives*, the same publication, years later, which would release the very first special issue on his work, **Frankétienne, écrivain haï-tien** (1987).



English translation by Kaima L. Glover of the opening page of *Mûr à crever* (1968)



MORE EFFECTIVE at setting each twig a quiver in the passing of waves than a pebble dropped into a pool of water, Spiralism defines life at the level of relations (colors, odors, sounds, signs, words) and historical connections (positionings in space and time). Not in a closed circuit, but tracing the path of a spiral. So rich that each new curve, wider and higher than the one before, expands the arc of one's vision.

In perfect harmony with the whirlwind of the cosmos, the world of speed in which we evolve, from the greatest of human adventures to struggles for liberation, Spiralism aligns perfectly – in breadth and depth – with an atmosphere of explosive vertigo; it follows the movement that is at the very heart of all living things. It is a shattering of space. An exploding of time.

Re-creating wholes from mere details and secondary materials, the practice of Spiralism reconciles Art and Life through literature, and necessarily breaks with the hypocrisy of the Word. Re-cognition. Totality.

≈ 8 ≈

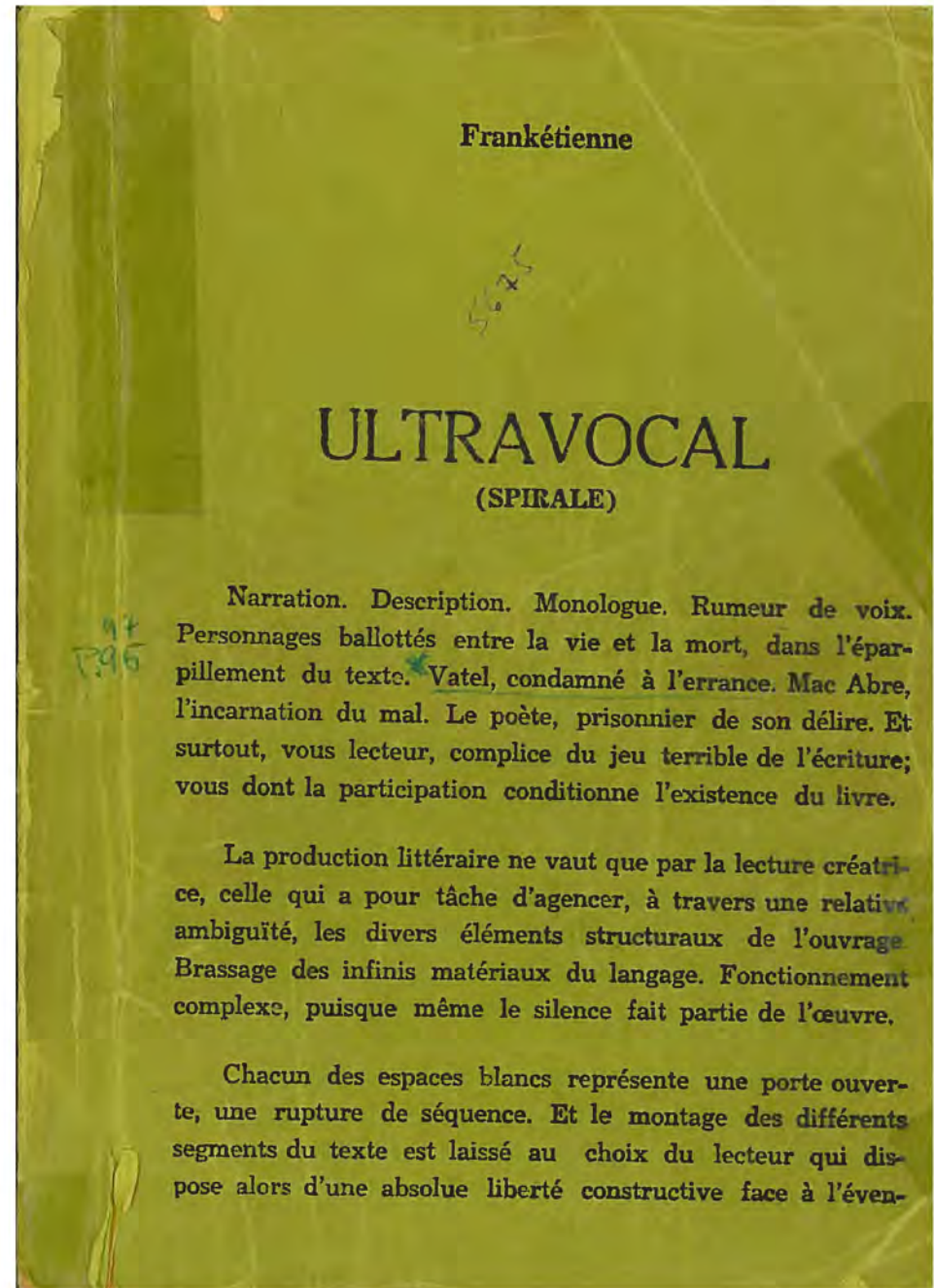
In this sense, as a means of expression – efficient, *par excellence* – Spiralism uses the Complete Genre, in which novelistic description, poetic breath, theatrical effect, narratives, stories, autobiographical sketches, and fiction all coexist harmoniously . . .

Excerpts from *Ultravocal* in *Dérives* 1, 1975
Ultravocal (1972), Front cover

Te he prometido que juntos cantaríamos las flores. O eterna primavera de nuestra isla de luz ardiente. Te he prometido la sangre del sol. Dedos de lluvia entre mis palabras y las piedras.

Chaque nuit, je me souviens de toi, qui, un soir de juillet au Cabaret-Royal, dans la senteur des vétivers, me parlas longtemps de tes enfants. Tu pleuras tristement dans mes bras. Entre deux étreintes rythmées de pluie et de vent. Ce soir-là, tu fus à mes yeux la femme-phénix de la nébuleuse caraïbe. O ma soeur, mon amour, ma carmencita, anacaona des Amériques!

Qu'ai-je bien pu faire de tout l'espoir que tu as mis en moi? Je t'avais promis de partir avec toi. Tu ne m'as point revu. Je ne suis pas l'époux que tu espérais sur l'île navire, veuve de tant d'amours naufragées. Je ne suis pas digne de la couronne fleurie qui ceindra la tête du père qu'attendent encore tes enfants tristes. Je n'ai que des rêves et des mots. Rien de plus. C'est peu. C'est vraiment peu pour chasser les rats de ta pauvre demeure. Tu es partie toute seule. Et j'en souffre. Je reconnais mes limites, racines de ma torture. Ne sachant au juste ce qu'il faudrait faire, j'ai mauvaise conscience de ne pouvoir créer le mot qu'il me suffirait d'écrire, pour t'atteindre où que tu sois de l'autre côté de la frontière. Tu verrais la douleur tapie au fond de mes yeux obscurs. Amor mio, que podremos hacer contra las tinieblas? Sombras alrededor de mis manos que tiemblan.



4ème année
N 114
20-26 sept. 1975

Le petit Samedi Soir

LA REVUE DE LA SUPPLÉMENT CULTURELLE HAITIENNE

DÉZAFI

LE PREMIER
ROMAN
EN LANGUE
CREOLE
DE LA
LITTÉRATURE
HAITIENNE

FOOT-BALL

UN EVENEMENT
SANS PRECEDENT
DANS L'HISTOIRE
DES LETTRES
HAITIENNES

Frankétienne
l'auteur de
DÉZAFI

PEPSI

1975 is Frankétienne's year: the release of the first published novel in Haitian Creole *Dézafi*, put him not only in the forefront of the Haitian literary world, but of the Caribbean. The book was praised by writers and critics such as the Martinicans Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant and Édouard Glissant. It was received with great pride and admiration by the Haitian intelligentsia, and also drew the attention of European scholars such as the German Ulrich Fleishmann, who published the first interview with Frankétienne outside of Haiti in *Dérives* (1977), "Entrevue avec Frankétienne sur son roman *Dézafi*."

Years later, in 2010, a revised and augmented version with the new Haitian Creole spelling was published in France by Éditions Vent d'ailleurs. The French version of this incredible story of oppression and revolt, *Les Affres d'un défi* (1979), is his very first book translated and published abroad by the Italian Annamaria Coppola, *Galli da combattimento* (Napoli: S. Pironti, 1996), and two excerpts in English translation respectively by Michael Dash and Carrol Coates appeared in the American journal *Callaloo* (1992 and 1996).

intervention(s)

Entrevue avec Frankétienne sur son roman “Dézafi”

Frankétienne, écrivain haïtien, dont nous avons publié (*dérives*, No 1, 1975) un extrait de son *Ultravocal* (Imprimerie Serge Gaston, Port-au-Prince, 1972), dans cet entretien avec Ulrich Fleischmann exhibe tous les pièges qui, dans le débat (ouvert) CREOLE VS FRANCAIS, sont tendus à l'écrivain haïtien dans sa pratique littéraire.

Qui plus est, autour de cette réflexion sur *Dézafi*, toute la dualité (linguistique) de l'intellectualité haïtienne s'étale. C'est un document de première main sur la production littéraire (scripturale) actuelle en Haïti – Frankétienne étant, sans doute, l'écrivain haïtien le plus important de sa génération.

Ulrich Fleischmann: M. Franck Etienne, la parution de votre roman DEZAFI a suscité un vif intérêt dans le public haïtien. J'ai l'impression que cet intérêt porte surtout du fait que pour la première fois, dans l'histoire de la littérature haïtienne, un roman a été écrit en créole. Est-ce que cela est juste?

Frank Etienne: Je crois que c'est partiellement juste, parce que les débats autour du créole remontent à plusieurs années. Il est vrai, durant ces dix dernières années, le “mouvement créole” a connu une certaine vogue et un bon nombre de discussions théoriques ont été engagées autour de la question du créole versus le français, langue officielle. Depuis quelques années, certaines recherches ont été faites dans le domaine du créole. Mais la majeure partie des publications créoles ont été des contes, des historiettes ou des poèmes, d'ailleurs très courts. Ces dernières années, on s'attendait à une oeuvre de plus grande capacité, une oeuvre qui tant du point de vue qualitatif que du point de vue quantitatif ferait le poids à côté de la littérature francophone d'Haïti. Donc, je crois, au départ qu'il y a eu une certaine attente – on s'attendait à l'élaboration, à la publication d'une oeuvre en créole de plus grande envergure que des poèmes, des fables, des historiettes ou des contes. Et cet intérêt soulevé par *Dézafi* est dû réellement, en

It is also the first one to be fully analyzed in a M. A. thesis by Marie Michèle Amédée, *Les Proverbes en créole et dans le roman « Dézafi », étude linguistique, sociologique et stylistique* (Université de Montréal, 1982). Since, there were many studies on this Haitian novel and/ or its French version, one of the most relevant by a Brazilian scholar, Celina Scheinowitz, *Les Affres de l'inhumanité: défi romanesque de Frankétienne* (2012). Lastly, in 2018, an English translation was published by the University of Virginia Press.



1978-1998 Exploring the Haitian language, Frankétienne's journey into theatre and performance to reach out to a broader audience is quite exceptional. Not only did he write his texts, both in Haitian and French, but more and more he became involved in their production and dissemination as producer, director, costume designer and performer.

THREE CRUCIAL STEPS MARKED THIS JOURNEY:

The first one, probably the most important, is his debut with the Théâtre National d'Haïti (1977-1978), more specially the production of *Pèlin-tèt*, an adaptation of the French translation by Gabriel Meretik of Slawomir Mrozek's *Emigranci, Les Émigrés* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1975). Created in 1978 by François Latour and Roland Dorfeuille of the National Theatre of Haiti, published the same year, it was a huge success both in and outside of Haiti. Bearing significant political meanings for several Haitians, it is viewed as a starting point in the ending of the Duvalier's regime in February 1986.

Two commercial recordings of the play were released: a double LP with the couple Latour/Dorfeuille (1979); a video featuring Frankétienne as the intellectual, Polidò, and Ricardo Lefèvre as the worker, Piram (2000). More recently, excerpts of an English trans-

lation by Asselin Charles appeared in the journal *Metamorphose* of Smith College (2003), and a revised edition of the text published by the Institute of Haitian Studies, University of Kansas, and Edisyon Espiral, Port-au-Prince (2002).

The two other steps overlap: the second one, like an intermission between the opening and the ending of the third. Indeed, just after his split with Latour, who directed his two first plays, *Troufoban* (1977) and *Pèlin-Tèt* (1978), looking for a way to stay in touch with the majority of the Haitian people, Frankétienne recorded in 1983 a long poem or spiral in Haitian, *Zago Loray*. The LP of this solo performance by the writer made in collaboration with a group of Haitian celebrities —the sculptor, Patrick Vilaire, the guitarist, Gérald Merceron, the painter Philippe Dodard, the radio producer and anchor, Bob Lemoine— quite successful, released a second time in CD (with no date), could be seen as his first attempt to his famous circle of one man show, *Totolo-mannwèl/ Foukifoura* (1996-2000).

Frankétienne in *Foukifoura*, Paris (2004)
Photo © Eric Legrand



FRANKÉTIENNE

THE NOOSE (Excerpts)

(PÈLEN-TÈT)

*Presented and translated from the Haitian Creole
by Asselin Charles*

Frankétienne's *Pèlentèt* is a two-character play that seamlessly blends elements of the traditional odd-couple comedy and the social-realist *théâtre engagé*. Polydor, a middle-class intellectual and revolutionary, and Pyram, a semi-literate factory worker of peasant origin, have been rooming together for the last three years in a Brooklyn basement apartment. The dramatic thrust of the play surges from the apparently irreconcilable ideological and social differences between the two men, this odd couple made up of an educated exile and an unlettered immigrant worker. Equally alienated, they live and express their common experience of migration, political oppression, economic exploitation, and social exclusion each in a way consistent with his social background. Polydor seeks refuge in intellectual detachment, self-righteous asceticism, and revolutionary hubris, while Pyram, who occasionally harbors thoughts of suicide, seeks salvation in sexual fantasy, Vodou, and the immigrant's dream of riches through hard work and thrift. The two countrymen conduct a circular dialogue that is occasionally absurd, often humorous, at times poignant, and for the most part pregnant with mistrust, misunderstanding, and a measure of despair. Ultimately, Polydor and Pyram emerge from their confrontation and from their painful examination of their lives with a *prise de conscience* of their common fate and a recognition of the ties of active solidarity

The second step even shorter was the most productive and the most instructive. Thanks to an intensive collaboration with the French director Jean-Pierre Bernay and his partner, the comedian, Jenny Leignel of the Centre dramatique Franco-haïtien (1984-1986), and with the support of the Institut français d'Haïti, Frankétienne wrote, both in Haitian and in French three major dramas, which, decisively, put him on the international stage: *Bobomasouri* (1984), *Kaselezo* (1985), *Totolomannwèl* (1986).

This later play transformed into a long monologue about the "quest of an actor", in its revised French version under a new title, *Foukifoura* (2000), became the core of his last performance's venture, a one man show again and again reinvented through several representations in Avignon, Boston, Brussels, Paris, Port-au-Prince, Montréal, Tokyo, Yaoundé...

Excerpts from a note of the French Institute's Director, Henri MICCIOLLO

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS D'HAÏTI

Le Directeur

PORT-AU-PRINCE LE 29 MAI 1984
B. P. 131 TEL 2-2051
No 543 / 18.4

Note à l'intention de M. GOELDNER

Dans le cadre de la politique de promotion de la culture haïtienne que mène sans désespérer l'Institut Français d'Haïti, le Centre dramatique Franco-haïtien a récemment présenté un spectacle sur lequel il convient d'attirer l'attention du Département dans la mesure où, d'ores et déjà, cette réalisation fait figure d'événement dans l'histoire du théâtre haïtien.

Il s'agit en effet de la création de la dernière pièce, en créole, de Frankétienne, BOBOMASOURI. Roman-cier, poète, dramaturge et peintre de tout premier plan, Frankétienne jouit en Haïti d'une réputation prestigieuse que ne contribue pas peu à auréoler son statut reconnu d'opposant plus ou moins toléré par le régime duvaliériste.

Ses œuvres, les unes en créole, les autres en français (notamment ULTRAVOCAL et LES AFFRES D'UN DEFI), témoignent à la fois d'une influence intelligemment assimilée des recher-

ches les plus significatives de la littérature occidentale contemporaine (celles, notamment, du nouveau roman) et d'une volonté de décrire sans complaisance la condition humaine haïtienne, tout particulièrement à travers la métaphore aussi récurrente qu'accusative de la zombification.

(...)

Progressivement convaincu par le travail accompli au sein de l'Institut Français par le Centre Dramatique Franco-haïtien, dirigé par Jean-Pierre BERNAY, animateur culturel qui imprime à ses réalisations la qualité et l'exigence d'un professionnalisme de haute tenue, Frankétienne décidait enfin de revenir à la scène et d'écrire une pièce qui serait montée et jouée à l'Institut Français.

Le fait que BOBOMASOURI soit en créole ne posait évidemment aucun problème théorique, eu égard aux options culturelles définies et suivies par l'Institut, mais soulevait en revanche d'innombrables difficultés techniques à être résolues, au cours des répétitions et de la mise en place du spectacle, que par la collaboration étroite qui s'est instaurée entre Frankétienne et Jean-Pierre BERNAY, et qui rapidement devait se transformer en complicité véritable.



FESTIVAL DU THÉÂTRE DES AMÉRIQUES



012 mwen KASELEZO
benin crise Franke'fiere

- 9 -

Bénita. - Apa ou reveye, Mansya. Gen lè ou panko janm dòmi?

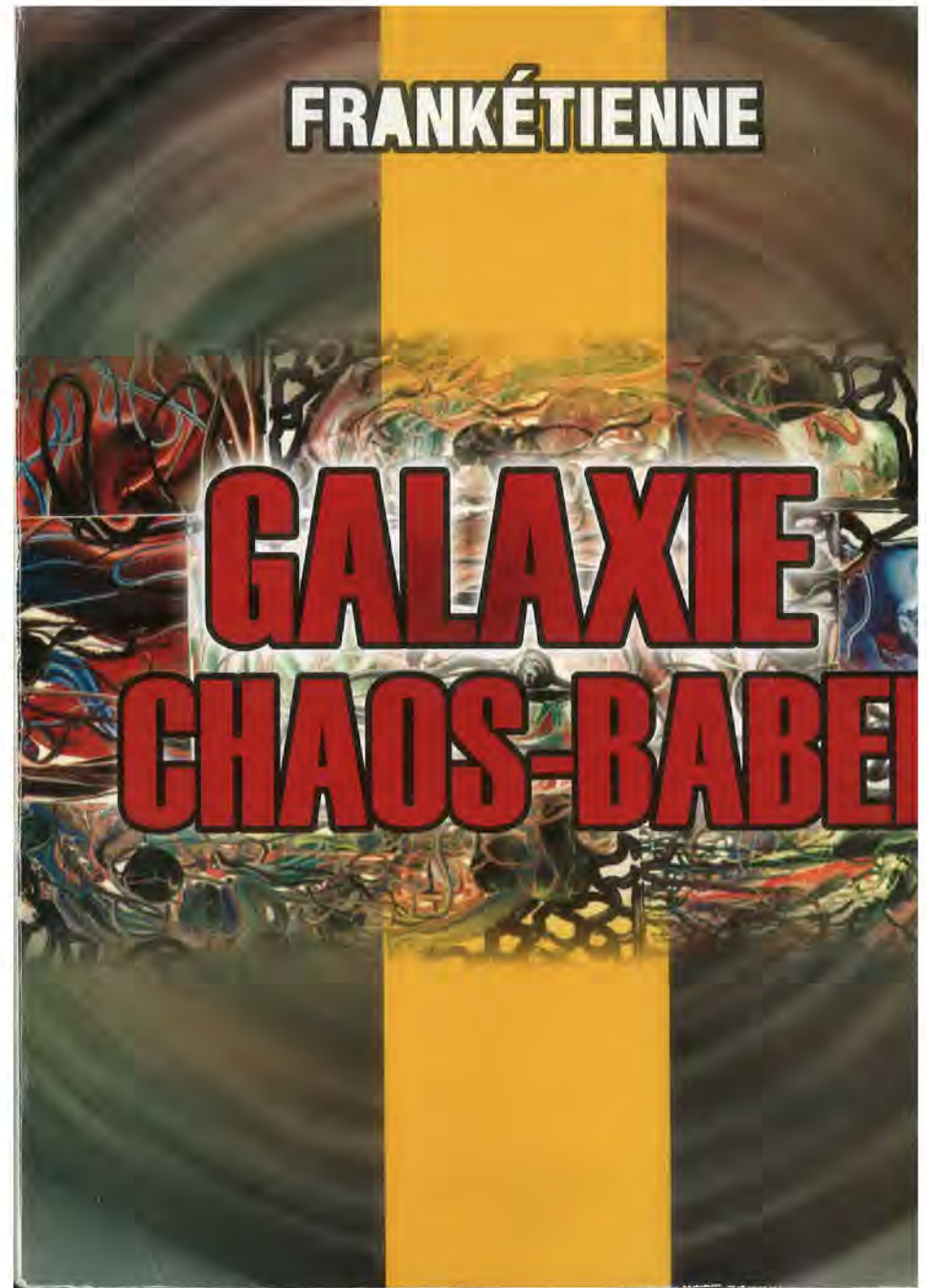
Mansya. - Nywit saa, dòmi pa lan je mwen ditou, Bénita. Poutan, mwen kouche lontan. Labrindiswa te fèk tabli. Mizik zandolit ak serenad krikèt te fèk koumanse.

Bénita. - Ou parèt kontrarye, Mansya. Kisa ou genyen?

Mansya. - Mwen pwonmennen sou tout kabann lan. Mwen bat kò mwen lan tout pozisyon. Mwen pa janm ka jwenn filyè somèy. Moman youn kabicha soulèzèl tanmen filonnen pòpyè mwen, ou ta di gen youn vwa ki sòti byen lwen, ki plede rele mwen, ki di mwen: "Tanpri Mansya, pa dòmi pou nywit saa. Pitit ou lan pasay, manman. Pa lage mwen pou kont mwen lan antonwa manwèl. Si dòmi bwote ou ale, fwa saa m'ap anfouraye nèt lan toubiyon melovivi. Pa kite pitit ou neye lan tchouboum pèdisyon. Pa kite mwen anfale lan fènwa malouk". Se sa vwa a di mwen, Benita. Men vwa a te sòti lwen lwen... Se te youn bèl vwa fanm ki t'ap kriye san.

Benita. - Mwenmenm, mwen t'ap dòmi. Lan mitan youn vye rèv makawon, mwen wè yo anchennen mwen delatètopye sou youn batan pòt. Lèfini,

1998 in Paris, Jean-Michel Place, with a different cover, released a reprint of the 1993 edition of *L'Oiseau schizophone*. The book drew the attention of the critic Bernard Loupias of the influential French magazine, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, which published a double page on Frankétienne and this monumental book-album of 812 pages, partly inspired by the *Absolument nécessaire* de Joëlle de la Casinière (Paris: Mimuit, 1973) and the work of the Montfaucon Research Center as it appeared in publications such as their collective book, *Manu Script* (Montréal: Dérives, 1981). It is a beginning of a new venture for the Haitian writer and artist. Indeed, since then, mastering more and more this “assembling,” to recall the title of a series directed by Richard Kostelanetz and Al. (New York: Assembling Press, 1970’s-1980’s), of collage, drawings, copyart, hand written texts, typescripts, and other typographic materials, Frankétienne published some incredible book-albums, among them: *H’Éros-Chimères* (2002), *Miraculeuse* (2003), *Galaxie Chaos-Babel* (2006).



TRANSLATING FRANKÉTIENNE BOOKS implies a series of challenges: linguistic and typographic, but also on the graphic design front. It is more a process of producing a version of the printed texts into a foreign language than a mere translation of a text, as shown in a couple of stages in the production of the English versions of *Dézafi* by Asselin Charles, and more obviously the collaborative work of Rachel Douglas, Jean Jonassaint, a graphic designer of the *Journal of Haitian Studies*, and the writer/artist on one page of *H'Éros-Chimères*.

FRANKÉTIENNE, *H'Éros-Chimères*, manuscript of p. 245.

FRANKÉTIENNE, *H'Éros-Chimères*, p. 245 annotated by Jonassaint for revision of Douglas first draft English translation.

FRANKÉTIENNE, *H'Éros-Chimères*, Douglas first draft English translation of p. 245 highlighted by Jonassaint for revision.

FRANKÉTIENNE, *H'Éros-Chimères*, primary layout of English translation of p. 245 for insertion of illustration and Frankétienne handwritten phrases.

Frankétienne, *H'Éros-Chimères*, English translation of p. 245 as published in the *Journal of Haitian Studies*.

CHARLES Summary of email exchanges with Frankétienne on difficult phrases or words in *Dézafi* (1975), p. 1.

CHARLES email to his publisher, Ellen Satrom, on some corrections, typography and layout of the book.



53
MONOLOGUE INTÉRIEUR
EN CHAMBRE IMAGINAIRE
(Spirale dramatique en un acte)

OB-SCÈNE I

Ni oui, ni non. Mais un si d'exception que j'imagine en flux d'ondulations sous un drap de velours. Un lit à moustiquaire. Un lit à baldaquin. La chambre exceptionnelle avec des rideaux roses. Un abat-jour doré en tronc pyramidal sur une table circulaire en acajou poli. Un miroir elliptique. Encadrement de bronze. Deux tableaux exotiques. Peintures impressionnistes. La mémoire imbibée d'inquiétude et d'angoisse. Tout un apprentissage. ~~Une~~ Une longue initiation dans l'alternance des labeurs exaltants et des tâches fastidieuses. Pour elle, dans sa petite cervelle de rurale analphabète, elle vivait dans un espace magique. Un autre territoire. Un autre espace. Un univers étrange. Un pays étranger. Sans être montée dans un avion, ni dans un bateau, elle évoluait soudain dans le pays des blancs. Un autre monde avec ses normes et ses convenances. Une autre réalité avec ses perceptions propres, ses goûts, ses parfums, sa musique, ses bruits sourds et le silence. Une enclave paradisiaque sur la terre haïtienne. Les effusions de tendresse et de joie de sa mère adoptive France-Mary. Paroles et gestes pleins de douceur. Le savoir-faire et la présence avisée de la gouvernante Emma, maîtrisant parfaitement l'anglais, le français, le créole. Tu rapproches les genoux et tu fermes les jambes, quand tu es assise même s'il n'y a personne autour de toi. Tu fais de même, lorsque

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Les pièges
de la fiction



ce que le cœur
ne peut dire

Par où commencer

**INTERIOR MONOLOGUE
IN AN IMAGINARY BEDROOM
(Dramatic Spiral in one act)**

OB-SCENE I

Neither yes, nor no. But rather an exceptional yes which I imagine in a stream of undulations under a velvet sheet. A bed with a mosquito net. A four-poster bed. The exceptional bedroom with pink curtains. A golden lampshade with a pyramid-shaped base on a polished circular mahogany table. An elliptic mirror. Bronze framing. Two exotic pictures. Impressionist paintings. The memory steeped in anxiety and anguish. Quite an apprenticeship. A long initiation into the alternation of exalting labors and fastidious chores. For her, in her rural illiterate mind, she was living in a magical space. Another realm. Another space. An uncanny universe. A foreign land. Without setting foot [getting] in a plane, or a boat, she was suddenly in the country of the whites. Another world with its own standards and etiquette. Another reality with its own views, tastes, odors, music, muffled sounds and silence. A heavenly enclave on the Haitian soil.

The traps of fiction

Where to start

what the heart cannot say

Rachel Douglas original English translation highlighted and annotated for revision by Jean Jonassaint

**INTERIOR MONOLOGUE
IN IMAGINARY BEDROOM
(Dramatic Spiral in one act)**

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Where to start

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE IN IMAGINARY BEDROOM (Dramatic Spiral in one act)

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**The traps
of fiction**



**what the heart
cannot say**

Where to start



Photo: Max Nucci © 2003

FE & M-AE

TRADUCTION ANGLAISE DE DEZAFI

Mots, expressions et phrases à expliquer ou à traduire

Mot - Expression - Phrase	Pages Fardin	Pages Texte anglais	Traduction (français ou anglais) - Synonyme créole - Explication
1. lasigouav	12	3 ✓	Animal mythologique avec un corps métallique circulant la nuit. Animal entre le chien et le loup.
2. pozision koukouman	19	8 ✓	Comme un crapaud. Accroupi.
3. lan krémòl nou trinnin zèl	24	10 ✓	Par fantaisie et irresponsabilité nous perdons du temps.
4. bròstè	24	10 ✓	Quand les ailes du coq traînent sur le sol.
5. bòt-saliè	24	10 ✓	Coup à la clavicule.
6. bègouè pèdi / tchoul frité	25	11 ✓	Les imbéciles ont échoué/les valets sont à la dérive.
7. bèkèkè pèdi fil / azizouèl toutouni	25	11 ✓	Les idiots s'égarer hors du chemin/la nudité des courtisanes
8. pèdi fèy égal toké	25	11 ✓	Au seuil de la déraison s'effeuille la mémoire
9. yo bay kòk nou grinn sou prémié boulva	26	11 ✓	On a empoisonné notre coq à l'ouverture du tournoi.
10. kòk zinga	26	11 ✓	Coq au plumage bigarré
11. maléré mandianin	26	11 ✓	Les pauvres vivent de la mendicité
12. zégé travay roulé lafiant	26	11 ✓	Les scarabées roulent des boulettes d'excréments.
13. médsin pasé nou nan san	27	12 ✓	La purge nous a purifié le sang.
14. nou fouré chez lan rèt sindindin	27	12 ✓	Nous avons chassé les importuns. ✓
15. bakoulou filé yon pintadi-n anbachal	27	12 ✓	Un amateur rusé a introduit une pintadine dans le gallodrome.
16. yon kòk mannil pèdi sou prémié boulva	28	12 ✓	Un coq ventru et balourd a capitulé au premier affrontement.
17. nou séré ploum-nan pou pita	28	12 ✓	Nous disposerons plus tard de sa dépouille.
18. yo pa ni rouchadò...	29	13 ✓	Ils ne sont ni des éleveurs de coq ni des parieurs.....
19. biskèt kouri désann	31	14 ✓	Dislocation de la poitrine
20. maché bobis	31	14 ✓	Demarche bancale
21. sièl kasélézo	36	17 ✓	Gronnements et roulements d'orages pluvieux
22. djayi sou zinglin, fè mayilò nan sal razoua	49	25 ✓	Voltige vivement sur des tessons, tourbillonne dans un espace piégé.
23. Zo-kòt griyin vidé mizik akòdéyon lan bèl Réklam malcité	58	31 ✓	Les saillies des côtes semblent jouer une musique d'accordéon exposant l'arrogance de la misère <i>arrogance de la misère</i>

Dear Ellen,

It seems the work of the translator as that of the editor is never done. Here is hoping this is the last fiddling (at least on my part) with the text of the *Dézafi* translation.

First, this minor change in my translation of a phrase toward the end of the novel, in the penultimate paragraph. **I am replacing the phrase “words with the liberating virtue of salt” with the construction “salty words.”** Given that the pagination varies from one file to the next, I thought it best to indicate the location of the section where I make the change by reproducing said section here and highlighting the change. Here we go then:

In the midst of all this wild commotion, Jéròm is running hither and thither preaching **salty words** with the liberating virtue of salt, magical words, uplifting words, soaring words, words with teeth, words with wings: “Just one grain of salt under your tongues and you’ll start suckling at life’s tits. Before you dip your feet in the water, purge your souls, get rid of the bad spirits in your heads, of the old dank matted hairs in your armpits. The journey is long. The journey may last many harvests, the journey may have many ups and downs. You must get it all off your chests, vomit all the phlegm, fill up your calabashes with clean water, steel your wrists to fend off every ferocious beast that tries to rip off your gizzard on the high road. At every crossroads, draw vèvè signs in the dust with your toes so that those who follow you will know on which foot to dance. The dézafi never ends. The dézafi has no limit. Gamecock owners will forever groom their roosters. Life is but one huge dézafi. We mustn’t let bad sleep bring us close to death...”

Parenthetically, I decided to make the change after a long discussion with a colleague who disagreed with the earlier translation insisting that it was verbose and editorializing and inconsistent with the construction of the original and the rhythm of the sentence. I decided he was right, hence the new translation, which metaphorically echoes the “salty broth” Siltana had fed Klodonis earlier.

Second, please find attached a color-coded manuscript of the Dézafi translation designed to facilitate the layout and typography of the book so that they mirror the layout and typography of the original 1975 Fardin edition.

1. Headings on page introducing each of the novel’s three sections

- *Big cursives as in original*

2. Sections with yellow background

- *Italics 12 pt*

3. Sections with ochre background

- **Calibri 12 pt.**

4. Section with green background

- **Bold Times New Roman 12 pt.**

5. Section with blue background

- **Calibri 11 pt.**
- **Laid out as a column occupying 2/3 of the page flushed and justified right**

6. Section with light purple background

- **Calibri 12 pt., regular margins**

7. The page with the broken cross representing a stylized vèvè framed by words in italics and a couple of lines laid out diagonally (page 281 in the original)

- **Should be designed as per original.**

I hope you find this useful. In any case, I remain available should you need further clarification. Once again, I greatly appreciate your help in completing this project. We’re almost there, I think.

Best regards,

Asselin

**On Frankétienne, whom the *New York Times* called “the father of Haitian letters”:
Some English Publications**

Douglas, Rachel

Frankétienne and Rewriting: A Work in Progress. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009.

Haitian Revolutions in Literature: The Case of Linguistic and Visual Inventiveness in Frankétienne. *Small Axe* 27 (2008): 58-70.

This article argues that there is a conspicuous lack of representations of the Haitian revolution in most contemporary Haitian writing. Rather than writing explicitly about the Revolution, many Haitian writers “perform” revolutions in their own work. Frankétienne’s work provides us with a particularly good example of such revolutions through the visual and linguistic inventiveness that characterizes his oeuvre in general and his practice of rewriting his previously written works in particular. His rewriting offers new perspectives on the key concepts that have shaped his artistic work: the spiral and quantum writing.

Glover, Kiama

Haiti Unbound: A Spiralist Challenge to the Postcolonial Canon. Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2010.

Jonassaint, Jean

Beyond Painting or Writing: Frankétienne’s Poetic Quest. *Research in African Literatures* 35.2 (2004): 141-156.

Frankétienne is known first and foremost as a writer. It is his paintings, however, that this article examines,

for they are the most relevant to understanding the poetics of what Frankétienne calls the spirale, and also to explaining how these works—produced in the wake of his literary experiences linked partly to the French nouveau roman—enrich and transform his writing with *L’oiseau schizophone* (1993) and more radically with *H’Éros-Chimères* (2002). Indeed, this later book, more than other francophone works, pushed to its furthest limit the integration of image and text into one great whole. No one has a complete knowledge of Frankétienne’s visual production since 1973. Therefore, this first incursion into this universe is mainly focused on some paintings and key moments of this huge artistic work to show its governing principles, which are quite different from those of well-known Haitian artists such as Duffaut, Télémaque, or Basquiat.

On Frankétienne: The Course of an Opus [transl. Christopher Lemelin and Mariana Past], *Sirena* 1 (2008): 112-120.

Special issue on Frankétienne, (ed.) *Journal of Haitian Studies* 14.1 (2008), 247 pages [Including Excerpts of Frankétienne’s works translated into English: *L’Amérique saigne: Gun blesse America* (1995), *H’Éros-Chimères* (2002); essays by Alessandra Benedicty, Isabelle Cata, Rachel Douglas, Kiama Glover, Seanna Sumalee Oakley, Alvina Ruprecht, Marie-Denise Shelton].

McFee, Mollie

Beyond Translation: The Matrice of Frankétienne’s *Dezafi*. *Comparative Literature Studies* 54.2 (2017): 381-405.

Oakley, Seanna Sumalee

Le Masque Blessé/The Afflicted Mask: Romantic selves, Vodounist selves in Frankétienne's *Fleurs d'insomnie*. *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* 4.1(2007): 67-85.

Past, Mariana

Articulating Haitian Conflicts in a New York City Basement: The Global Stakes of Franketyèn's *Pèlin-tèt*. *The Global South* 4.2, Special Issue: The Caribbean and Globalization (2010): 76-98.

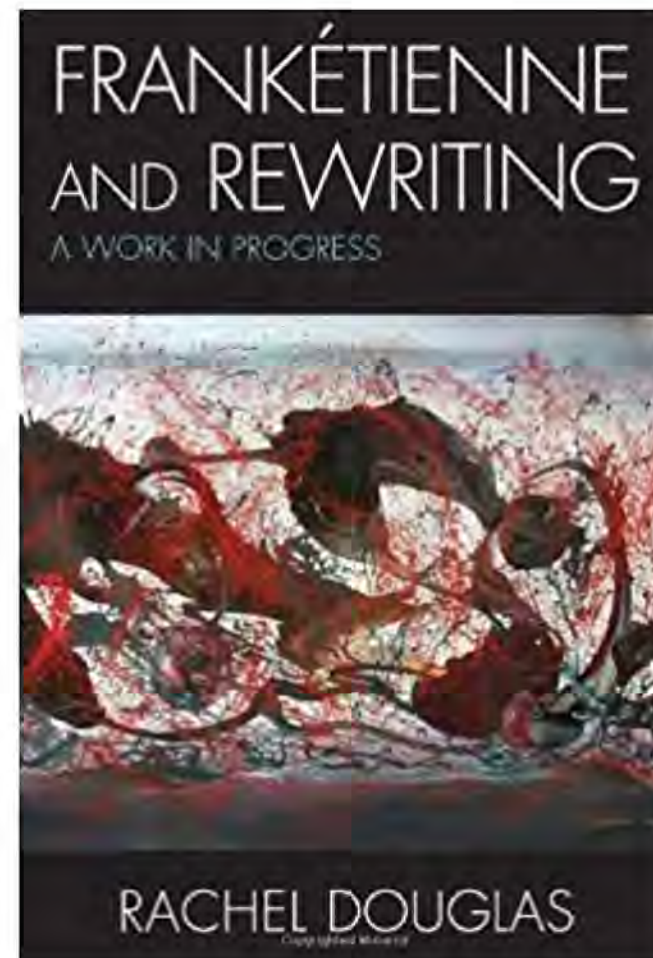
Through the lens of Haitian popular theater, this article examines the impact of globality on the experience of displaced Haitians, demonstrating how the United States serves both literally and metaphorically as a space for negotiating entrenched political, economic, and cultural tensions originating in Haiti. These Caribbean conflicts are inscribed in dramatic works published in Kreyòl by the prolific writer and artist Franketyèn/Frankétienne.

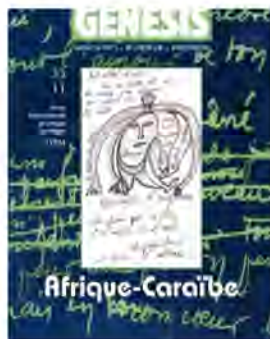
Wittrock, Mary Cobb

Frankétienne's spirals: chaos theory, minor literature and generic limits *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 13.1 (2010): 103-129.

This article elucidates the distinct relationship between Frankétienne's spiral writing and Ilya Prigogine

and Isabelle Stengers' contemporary chaos theory demonstrating that chaos theory is an important paradigm to consider in literary analysis of the twentieth and twenty-first century. (...) As a result, this analysis will examine how two of Frankétienne's works, *Ultra-vocal* and *H'Éros-Chimères*, challenge the limits of traditional genre theory, and will show that his schizophonic writing exists in a state 'far from equilibrium' allowing a deleuzian minor language and literature to be exposed.





This catalog, *Chasing Frankétienne's Creativity: Production/ Reception of a Work*, written, designed and edited by Jean Jonassaint, was printed in ten copies, all numbered and signed by the curator and collaborators, who thank the generous Syracuse University sponsors (Albert George Fund; College of Art and Sciences; Community Folk Arts Center (CFAC); Department of African American Studies; Department of Art and Music Histories; Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics; English Department; Humanities Center; Program on Latin America and the Caribbean; Syracuse University Bookstore; Syracuse University Libraries), for making it possible to hold this exhibition at the Bird Library from March 22nd to 31st 2019.

Frankétienne, a profile

by Jean Jonassaint, an updated version of the introduction of his 2004's article, "Beyond Painting or Writing: Frankétienne's Poetic Quest."

It "is in 1975, with the publication of the first novel in Haitian Creole, *Dézafi*, that Creole literature found its patent letters of nobility. The author is Frankétienne. It is the revolution. Creole writing suddenly reached the most modern, daring, and talented aspects of world literature at this time—the nouveau roman." Patrick Chamoiseau et Raphaël Confiant, *Lettres creoles*

"Speak the name of Frankétienne anywhere within the Caribbean, and you will be greeted with instant recognition. The 80-year old is one of Haiti's most renowned artists and intellectuals, commanding admiration from all who are familiar with him." *Kreol Magazine*

Frankétienne is known first and foremost as a writer. Since his first collections of poems in 1964, *Au fil du temps* and *La Marche*, he has published more than forty books: poems, novels, plays, and spirals (the genre of all genres that he launched in the early 1970's). Some of these works —such as *Ultravocal* (1972), *Dézafi* (1975), *Pèlin-Tèt* (1978), *Kaselezo* (1986), *Adjanoumelezo* (1987), *L'Oiseau schizophone* (1993), *H'Éros-Chimères* (2002) and *Galaxie Chaos-Babel* (2006)—, are among the most remarkable of the Francophone world. As the critic Bernard Loupias put it in a 1998's article in the French weekly magazine *Nouvel Observateur*, "he is the greatest Haitian writer." Frankétienne indeed is the only Haitian author with both a national and international readership as well as a popular and academic audience. He is also, more than anyone, a "Haitian writer," obstinately attached to his country. Yesterday, seismograph of the much too long Duvalierist nightmare, now, interpreter of the never-ending chaotic transition toward democracy: "each of his great works is deeply rooted in Haitian contemporary history, and each of them, despite Frankétienne's will to remain primarily an artist, bears witness to a moment of the national consciousness."

It is this monumental production that we tried to chase in this catalog.