



## Facing diasporic trauma [ self-representation in the writings of John Hearne, Caryl Phillips, and Fred D'Aguiar /

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Brill Rodopi,  
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Monografía

"Fictional writing has an important mnemonic function for the Afro-Caribbean community. It facilitates an encounter between contemporary societies and their historical origins. The representation of diasporic trauma in the novels of Fred D'Aguiar, John Hearne, and Caryl Phillips challenges territorial understandings of nationality and raises awareness of the eurocentric basis of Western historiography. Slavery is a recurring motif of the nine novels analysed in this study. They narrate the fates of silenced victims who all share the traumatic experience of racial violence even if otherwise separated through time, space, gender and age. These charismatic fictional characters facilitate an empathic access to the history of slavery that goes beyond the anonymity of traditional historical sources. Their most private and intimate sorrows make the traumatic conditions of slavery appear much less remote and reveal their suffering. The euphemistic and distorting selection of the events that has been passed down by the dominant culture is thus countered by a relentless display of historical violence. These literary images establish an important symbolic repertoire and introduce powerful founding myths of the diaspora. In spite of the traumatic foundations of the community, the nine novels display considerable optimism about the possibility of a convivial future that transcends racial boundaries. The capacity and willingness to improvise and adapt to new environments and to do so even in face of a traumatic heritage can be regarded as the most important precondition for positive future developments within the matrix of a rapidly transforming global environment." --

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