Présence Haitienne: The revolutionary beginnings of littérature-monde

In his 1938 work, *The Black Jacobins*, CLR James saw that what made the Haitian revolution central was the fact that in Haiti for the first time Africans in the New World became aware that they had created a modern people and that this vision of black modernity ought to be considered the ideological patrimony of the colonial world as a whole. In the words of Edouard Glissant, Haiti had become the “nouvelle terre-mère”, a site where the anti-colonial struggle had produced a new way of conceiving of national and racial identity. Despite ostracism, the Haitian imaginary functioned in terms of the ideals of a littérature-monde from the outset and in so doing anticipated our contemporary transnational time.