

Sea Imagery in Derek Walcott's The Sea at Dauphin

Amra Raza

This study explores how Derek Walcott consciously employs sea imagery to generate structural, thematic and technical complexities in his short play The Sea at Dauphin. In the course of the exploration I will show how the sea is used as a contextual and conceptual device to characterise both landscape and mindscape.

The action of Walcott's play is plotted on a windswept Island in the West Indies on the Atlantic sea coast, populated by a sparse and predominantly masculine fishing community, ranging over three generations. Much like the fishermen Achilles, Philocrete and Hector in Omeros¹, in The Sea at Dauphin, we have Afa, Gacia and Augustin. But there are also references to dead fishermen such as Bolo, Boileau, Habal, Arnelles and Raphael. Then there is the young boy and old Hounakin. Thus landscape setting, its inhabitants and even the drowned are defined in terms of the seascape. In fact, the creation and continuity of the spatial and generational, is attributed to and recorded by the Sea as history when Hounakin remarks, "The Sea have many navels, many waves, and I did feel to die in Dauphin Sea, so I could born, "(p.69). This is corroborated when Afa says, "Ask it where Bolo's bones and Rafael's and friends I did