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**‘La traduction a été pour moi une désaliénation’:
Translating Césaire and Glissant from French into Creole.
Interview with Rodolf Etienne (Part II)***

AC: Dans cette deuxième partie de l’entretien, je voudrais revenir sur ton parcours personnel d’écrivain et de traducteur. Quel rôle a joué la traduction, par exemple, dans ton cheminement vers l’écriture?

RE: La traduction a eu pour moi un effet désaliénant. Traduire m’a permis de gommer toutes les aspérités de mon être créole. J’ai eu une éducation française, je veux dire francophone plutôt. Il me semble intéressant de le dire, parce qu’il y a, chez nous, un vieux cliché, disant qu’on nous a enseigné ‘nos ancêtres, les Gaulois’. Et face à ce cliché-là, on en pose un autre qui dit que nos parents, nos aïeux, nous interdisaient la langue créole. Moi, je n’ai jamais subi cette éducation, d’autant que dans ma famille, composée à 75% de dits mulâtres ou assimilés, les ancêtres gaulois n’étaient pas si loin que cela. Ma relation au créole était par conséquent beaucoup plus subtile, à mon sens. Les adultes se parlaient souvent en créole, c’était la langue de la familiarité dans mon environnement enfantin. On s’adressait aux enfants en français, c’était une manière de marquer, d’insinuer le rang de la famille. Les enfants pouvaient s’ils le voulaient se parler en créole, c’était la langue du jeu, de la moquerie, des blagues entre copains, mais il était strictement interdit, sous peine de réprimandes de s’adresser à un adulte en créole. Un adulte, lui, pouvait vous adresser la parole en créole. Il s’agit donc vraiment d’une autre relation à la langue créole. Ainsi, j’ai quand même minoré la langue dans mon parcours personnel. J’ai acquis, malgré moi, la conviction que la langue créole était la langue basse et que la parler était dévalorisant, avilissant plutôt... Pour autant, je prenais toutefois extrêmement plaisir à parler le créole avec d’autres populations, qui, elles, étaient beaucoup plus dans cet univers. Cela me donnait une sorte de prétention, un doux sentiment de domination. Quand j’y pense j’en ai presque honte, mais les murs étaient beaucoup plus épais qu’aujourd’hui entre les différentes populations et la langue était encore très empreinte de ces préjugés de classe et de race. Quand j’ai donc commencé à traduire en créole, je me suis rendu compte de tous ces atavismes, de toutes ces tares et surtout des idéaux qu’ils véhiculaient en moi. C’est pour cela que je parle de désaliénation au niveau des préjugés de classe et de race véhiculés à l’insu de la langue. À travers la traduction, je me suis rendu compte que je me réappropriais cette langue, que je l’épurais à mesure du temps et que, de plus en plus, elle prenait des couleurs, de la vigueur, du sens pour moi, elle devenait une réalité tangible, une dynamique féconde de ma pensée, de ma mémoire, de ma réflexion.

AC: Je pense à l’acte de la traduction. Tu dis que le créole est une langue orale, une langue liée à une spécificité culturelle, parfois même territoriale, les mots étant reliés à des choses, à des objets, à des techniques, à la nature. Je me pose donc la question du choc qu’il peut y avoir entre une langue orale, comme le créole, et une langue littéraire, comme le français. Et là, dans un travail de traduction entre ces deux langues, des impossibles surgissent continuellement, non? Il faut inventer... Prenons un exemple concret: quand tu as traduit *Les Indes*¹ d’Édouard Glissant, qui est un poème écrit dans un français littéraire, reposant sur une longue tradition de poésie française (symbolisme, surréalisme), comment l’as-tu abordé avec le créole? Cela n’a pas dû être facile...

* The first part of this interview between Rodolf Etienne and Louise Hardwick and Alessandro Corio appeared in issue 5.1; see ‘Créolité, Pan-Créolité and Creole Translation: “Quoi écrire, pour qui écrire, comment écrire?” Interview with Rodolf Etienne (Part I)’, *Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, 5.1 (2014), 8–17.

¹ Édouard Glissant, *Les Indes, Un Champ d’îles, La Terre inquiète* (Paris: Seuil, 1965).

RE: Eh bien justement! Cette question est très pertinente. J'ai découvert qu'en moi la langue créole était complètement déstructurée. Par conséquent, mon intellect s'est véritablement engagé dans une relation très intime avec la langue créole—ce qui n'avait jamais été le cas. On parlait créole pour s'amuser, pour dire une connerie, pour lâcher une bonne blague avec un bon pote. Tu prenais un air créole, ça pouvait être sensible, ça pouvait être beau, mais ça n'était jamais très réfléchi. Mais le fait de rentrer dans une pratique très intime avec la langue, et dans l'écrit, ce qui, là encore, est un univers totalement nouveau pour cette langue, impose des choix évidemment. Des mots n'existent pas, des situations n'existent pas. Et il faut effectivement donner corps à des idées, des émotions. Tout le travail consiste donc à créer une langue, ou tout au moins, à défaut d'une langue, à recomposer un imaginaire—car la notion d'imaginaire est importante—un imaginaire dans l'écrit, pour qu'il y ait des explosions dans l'écrit.

AC: Et est-ce qu'en traduisant tu t'es fondé sur ceux qui avaient déjà écrit en créole, qui avaient essayé de construire une langue littéraire en créole, sur les travaux de linguistes comme Jean Bernabé?

RE: Oui et c'est là où le travail est le plus intéressant. En peu de temps d'existence dans l'écrit—en fait des balbutiements au regard des littératures du monde—la langue créole a subi d'énormes modifications. La langue n'a jamais été fixée à un moment donné, définitivement, puis, à partir de là, utilisée. Au contraire, elle a subi des transformations permanentes, comme des réajustements, des mises à jour. Des premiers écrits à aujourd'hui, en 200 ans d'histoire dans l'écrit, la langue, sa graphie en particulier, s'est clairement 'métamorphosée'. Et cela aussi, c'est un engagement pour l'auteur créole, qui doit être en relation très intime avec la créolité de l'écrit de son époque, mais qui ne peut se départir du travail fait avant lui. Tout au moins, jusqu'à ce que la langue soit définitivement fixée pour l'écrit, ce qui n'est pas encore acquis même avec tout le travail déjà fait. De tous temps, la langue créole a cherché un positionnement dans l'écrit, un positionnement qui se suffise à lui-même. Elle s'est à l'origine beaucoup appuyée sur la langue française. On écrivait le créole presque comme on écrivait le français, on suggérait plutôt un autre imaginaire, les graphies étaient proches, tellement proches. Au fur et à mesure du temps, à elle seule, la créolité devient une réalité. Elle se cristallise dans des attitudes permanentes, des traits culturels particuliers, une spécificité de zone, une identité, une culture propre et elle cherche aussi, par conséquent, une expression dans l'écrit qui soit fidèle à cette nouvelle position. Le traducteur créole, pour ce qui le concerne, doit donc être en permanence à l'écoute, poreux aux nouvelles vibrations de la langue, fidèle à ses moindres soubresauts pour donner à l'écrit toute sa légitimité. Pour le cas, je parle du traducteur comme des autres littérateurs créoles.

AC: Pour traduire une œuvre poétique comme *Les Indes*, est-ce que tu as dû faire des choix, pas seulement au niveau du lexique, mais aussi au niveau de la métrique, du rythme? Comment cela s'est-il passé? Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait une tradition métrique en poésie créole, sauf si l'on regarde le langage oral des contes, des comptines, des chansons.

RE: La langue créole, même si elle est jeune, même si elle a des contradictions, des interdictions, et malgré sa position délicate, menacée, tremblante, est très malléable. Elle se prête à l'expérience nouvelle, comme toutes les langues du monde. Elle se laisse mener, et même s'il faut créer, elle joue le jeu, elle innove. Elle est ouverte, elle se laisse guider. Donc, traduire *Les Indes* en créole, c'était vraiment un très bel exercice sous cet aspect-là. Il fallait oser et c'était ça le plus édifiant, au niveau intellectuel. Tout était à refondre: le vocabulaire, car le vocabulaire de *Lézenn* est très riche, la syntaxe, parce que la syntaxe de Glissant est

déroutante, la métrique, parce que la métrique de Glissant est toutes en percussions, toutes en syncopes pourrait-on dire.

AC: Oui, et puis parce que le rythme change tout le temps.

RE: Oui, la métrique de Glissant... De fait, c'est la métrique qui m'a servi de socle. C'est à partir du rythme de Glissant que j'ai considéré ma traduction. Le rythme de Glissant, dans l'absolu et de la manière dont je l'ai perçu, c'est comme un roulement de tambour, avec les intonations particulières du tambour. Et ce rythme a été un pont vers le créole. La métrique du tambour est non seulement polyrythmique mais aussi arythmique. Le tambour peut être polyrythmique *et* arythmique. Le tambour va raconter une histoire mais aussi déconstruire l'histoire racontée. Et ainsi, c'est le rythme du mot qui permet de traduire toute la complexité de Glissant. Je ne sais pas si j'ai bien réussi cet exercice, mais en tout cas, c'était cette volonté que j'avais en permanence en tête: rendre compte du rythme de Glissant, et d'un rythme qui est essentiel. Le rythme de *Lézenn* est vraiment celui de la reconstruction, de la métamorphose, de la transe, le rythme de la transformation.

AC: Il y a aussi des rythmes très différents, si je prends, par exemple, le premier chant et le chant sur la traite. Le premier chant paraît beaucoup plus classique, avec des vers classiques (décasyllabes, etc.), alors que la partie sur la traite est une partie en prose, et suit donc tout un autre rythme. J'imagine que ce n'est pas simple de rendre ces aspects-là dans la traduction en créole.

RE: Oui, d'autant qu'un autre aspect de *Lézenn* qui m'a aussi marqué, c'est l'aspect symbolique, la valeur donnée au symbole dans l'œuvre. Je considère *Lézenn* comme l'un des plus beaux poèmes de Glissant, dans son organisation, avec le chant de l'épopée... C'est vraiment une œuvre qui se veut fondatrice, un peu comme le *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Je me suis donc offert un certain nombre de libertés dans ma traduction. Et j'ai commis le crime de lèse-auteur: je me suis mis, moi, dans la peau de l'auteur, et j'ai franchi quelques barrières. Mais ces barrières me semblaient franchissables, parce que la démarche même de l'œuvre de Glissant, en français, est aussi une démarche de transgression, notamment en ce qui concerne la forme syntaxique. C'est vraiment une forme qui manifeste une rupture avec une logique de la réflexion. Et c'est cela aussi qui a été très intéressant dans la traduction de *Lézenn*. Il s'agissait, effectivement, de manière fondamentale, de recréer un imaginaire, en l'occurrence un imaginaire créole, de le reformater. C'était individuel et personnel, mais avec la prétention d'être collectif.

LH: Et est-ce toi qui a eu l'idée de traduire *Les Indes*, ou bien est-ce un éditeur?

RE: Non, c'est moi. En réalité, je voulais d'abord traduire *Kôd Yanm* en français, mais cela a été fait par quelqu'un d'autre. Et je me suis dit, mais pourquoi vouloir traduire du créole vers le français, ça se fait partout, ça se fait tout le temps. Pourquoi ne pas imaginer l'inverse, traduire du français vers le créole? Et, de plus, en choisissant des auteurs de chez moi, à l'époque, cette démarche était totalement novatrice. On traduisait des auteurs français, on ramenait des œuvres du patrimoine français dans le patrimoine créole. C'est très intéressant, mais, à mon avis, le fait de ramener des œuvres locales, qui sont dans l'imaginaire français, à l'imaginaire créole, qui est aussi local, permettait d'apporter une réponse à un conflit, à une opposition. Il y avait un déséquilibre entre ces deux imaginaires, à tel point que pour valoriser l'un, on faisait appel à l'autre. Non! On devait trouver des solutions beaucoup plus simples, en choisissant des auteurs de chez nous, qui sont des auteurs reconnus, internationaux, qui se sont exprimés en français, et qu'on pouvait donc traduire en créole.

Ainsi, on abordait les deux aspects de notre identité, de notre imaginaire, parce que tout ce qu'on pense en français, de manière consciente ou inconsciente, on le traduit immédiatement en créole. Nous sommes bilingues de manière totale. Notre créolité est transcendante, elle ne s'exprime pas nécessairement par des mots mais elle s'exprime par des articulations entre les mots, des accents. Tout cet imaginaire créole transcendant se transmet aussi par la littérature en français. Tous les auteurs du monde développent une particularité, liée à leur manière de voir le monde, à leur culture, à leur pratique langagière, et nos auteurs, eux aussi, sont très imprégnés de cette force de rupture qui donne à leur langage un double sens. Ce second sens est créole. Ainsi l'idée de lier les deux imaginaires créole et français, c'est une façon de retrouver la paix dans les identités. Car nous avons une identité créole minorée face à une identité française, ou francophone, valorisée. Et si nous gardons cela en nous, c'est un conflit que nous portons. C'est comme une déchirure, en plus de la déchirure de l'esclavage. Notre imaginaire est fendu par une cicatrice, celle du rapport à la langue créole. Et c'est une forme d'aliénation à soi-même que de considérer que l'identité créole, la part créole, la langue créole n'ont pas forcément de sens face au grand monde. C'est comme une atrophie de la pensée qu'on s'impose. Et la pan-créolité,² c'est aussi cela, c'est aller plus loin. C'est offrir un autre espace au corps, au lieu de s'enfermer dans une créolité minorée. Au contraire, dire non, élargissons!

AC: Je voudrais poser une dernière question sur la traduction des *Indes*. J'ai eu l'occasion de voir, en 2009, lors du Prix Carbet en Martinique, une représentation théâtrale de la traduction des *Indes*, en parallèle d'une représentation théâtrale de la version française. Et là, j'ai eu vraiment l'impression d'un passage dans un autre univers, en passant de la version française à la version créole. J'ai été très frappé par la force et la dynamique de la langue, mais aussi de la mise en scène, de l'acteur. Donc, avez-vous travaillé ensemble, toi et l'acteur qui s'appelle, si ma mémoire est bonne, Ruddy Sylaire?

RE: Ah oui, avec Ruddy, travailler c'est toujours un plaisir. Il a en lui cette percussion dont je parlais tantôt. Nous avons eu plusieurs séances de travail, on a commencé par faire des coupures dans le texte, on a épuré, parce que nous étions dans une représentation de théâtre minimaliste. Là aussi, on aborde une des contraintes créoles, dans la production culturelle: le manque de budget. Nous sommes donc, à chaque fois, dans des stratégies d'adaptation. Nous avons réduit le texte, nous avons choisi des extraits qui vont à l'essentiel, et qui rendent compte de la volonté manifeste de Glissant dans l'œuvre. Car, vraiment, quand on considère l'œuvre de Glissant, on a, au départ, un homme, un colon qui jette un grand rêve sur le monde et, au final, on a un homme qui se libère des contraintes imposées par une situation, mais des contraintes de manière générale. À la fin, l'homme est libre. Et à travers l'œuvre, ce colon de l'origine, de l'incipit va se transformer progressivement pour devenir un Indien, un nègre, et pour devenir finalement un homme libre. *Les Indes*, c'est un petit peu cette transformation, cette métamorphose permanente, du colon jusqu'au nègre libéré, ou jusqu'au libéré tout court. Et il va être soleil, il va être mer. C'est de tout cela dont on a voulu rendre compte. Ce qui fait la beauté de *Lézenn*, c'est le fait que le rêve ultime, partagé par tous les hommes et en dépit des contraintes, c'est la liberté. Ce colon de l'origine porte en lui toute la complexité du monde qu'il va découvrir: il va faire des choix qu'on peut lui reprocher, il va tuer, il va massacrer, mais nonobstant, il va porter cette terre dans son sang, cette terre qu'il aura gagnée, volée, peu importe. En tout cas, il va vivre la relation humaine jusqu'à se libérer. Et c'est cela la grande utopie de Glissant, un monde qui se libère de ses contraintes. C'est pour cette raison aussi qu'il était anti-globalisation: son intérêt manifeste était de nous faire

² See Part One of this interview, for an in-depth discussion of *pan-créolité*; 'Créolité, Pan-Créolité and Creole Translation: "Quoi écrire, pour qui écrire, comment écrire?" Interview with Rodolf Etienne (Part I)', p. 10 and pp. 11-16.

atteindre une conception positive de nous-mêmes, où l'utopie serait partagée. Et Ruddy Sylaire est justement cet homme de la transformation par sa présence scénique, sa voix qui porte tellement haut, son charisme. Il est né en Haïti, avec toutes les difficultés qu'on connaissait à l'époque quand on s'engageait dans quelque chose, même dans la voie culturelle. Il fait ensuite des études de médecine, qu'il va abandonner pour se lancer dans le théâtre. C'est certainement donc un homme de la transformation, de la métamorphose.

LH: Tu as dit que, dans chaque travail de traduction, il y avait des changements dans ton approche. Ainsi, il y a une évolution dans ta traduction de Césaire,³ par rapport à ta traduction de Glissant. Peux-tu en parler un peu?

RE: Il faut reconnaître que la sortie de *Lézenn* en 2005, a provoqué quelque chose, une rupture et lancé une nouvelle trajectoire créole. J'en suis très fier, à postériori. La réaction des dits-pontes de la créolité a été très brutale, très violente, très contestataire, mais l'ouvrage a marqué, c'est indéniable. Et à partir de là—il me semble—la relation à l'écriture créole a changé. Avec les traductions suivantes, j'ai voulu être au dernier point de la graphie, suivre de près les modifications qui ont été apportées à l'écriture créole, au sein du GEREC,⁴ rester à l'écoute de ce qui se faisait et interroger moi-même mon propre laboratoire et faire mes propres choix. L'un des conflits les plus connus entre le traducteur et l'œuvre à traduire en créole concerne le vocabulaire, mais ce n'est pas la seule contrainte. L'un des plus grands paris pour nous, marqueurs, c'est de rendre la langue la plus facilement abordable, faciliter la lecture de l'œuvre en créole. C'est un gros travail, parce que la fluidité n'est pas acquise, puisque les locuteurs ne sont pas lecteurs et qu'aucun apprentissage de la langue ne se fait dans le système éducatif local, ou si peu. Pour lire le créole aujourd'hui, beaucoup sont gênés, il faut qu'ils lisent à haute voix, pour s'entendre en réclamant le soutien de l'oral donc. Pour d'autres, la traduction doit être simultanée, ils doivent entendre le français de manière juxtaposée au créole. Il y a donc une grande différence de fluidité entre le traducteur et le lecteur, un véritable fossé entre celui qui pratique la langue dans l'écrit et qui lit relativement vite et assimile relativement vite ce qu'il lit et les autres, les lecteurs lambda, qui eux ont du mal à lire et comprendre de manière simultanée. Il faut donc pour le traducteur, là encore adopter et adapter des stratégies de langage, trouver des moyens d'accès à la lecture et à la compréhension. Et là encore, la notion de rythme prend tout son sens, parce que c'est de cela dont il s'agit pour le coup. Il faut faire une place à part au rythme, trouver des articulations de phrase, de paragraphe entier, afin de rendre la lecture de plus en plus rapide, faire en sorte que la compréhension générale et particulière soient de plus en plus claires. Il faut bien reconnaître, même si le constat est tragique pour l'auteur qu'en dépit de tout et malgré toutes les avancées, le peuple, de façon générale, ne lit pas en créole. Cette relation aux lecteurs peut être vécue comme une trahison par l'auteur, comme une exclusion, comme un rejet alors qu'il réclame la parole au sein d'un groupe. C'est en tout cas, une relation des plus complexes et des plus troublantes. Cette position de l'auteur créole est donc très déséquilibrante, très déroutante. À ainsi œuvrer, on s'exclut, se marginalise inévitablement. La traduction, pour parler d'elle, relève du challenge permanent.

LH: Et quand tu traduis, as-tu un lecteur idéal en tête? Quel lecteur t'imagines-tu?

RE: Là, on aborde un aspect politique de l'œuvre. Car mon lecteur parfait, c'est celui qui peut partager avec moi les émotions essentielles que je veux faire passer. Il y a bien évidemment plusieurs rapports à l'œuvre, plusieurs rapports dans l'œuvre, il y a plusieurs

³ Rodolf Etienne, *Trajédi Rwa Kristof*, traduction en créole de *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* d'Aimé Césaire (Martinique and Guadeloupe: Caraïb'Éditions, 2010).

⁴ *Groupe d'Études et de Recherche en Espace Créolophone*, founded in 1975 by Jean Bernabé.

compréhensions, plusieurs niveaux de lecture, plusieurs niveaux de conception même de l'œuvre. Il y a donc plusieurs lecteurs. Il y a un lecteur lambda, qui va lire et le plaisir justifiera la lecture. Ensuite, il y a d'autres lecteurs qui vont entrer plus dans le corps du texte, qui vont s'intéresser au mode de traduction. Et donc, j'essaie d'avoir un maximum de lecteurs en tête, avec une contrainte qui est claire, c'est que la langue créole aussi a ses limites en matière de lecteurs. Et à partir de là, il faut donc trouver des moyens de s'ouvrir. Dans la formulation, on m'a ainsi, par exemple, reproché mon créole trop francisé, ce qui est un choix personnel pour atteindre mon lecteur. C'est un choix que j'ai fait, un choix politique, parce que je ne conçois pas d'exclure des populations, des groupes de population, en suivant le concept de déviation maximale, qui doit absolument s'éloigner de la graphie et de la syntaxe françaises. En Martinique, un phénomène nouveau, depuis le début des années 90, est le fait que beaucoup de blancs-France, des 'zoreilles', des métropolitains, appelez ça comme vous voulez, s'installent et vivent en Martinique, en Guadeloupe ou en Guyane, pour ne parler que des Antilles françaises. Suivant les mouvements indépendantistes, les auteurs d'*Éloge de la créolité*, qui sont les tenants de l'idéologie de déviation maximale, se sont opposés à ce mouvement général de population. 1989, c'était l'époque où on voyait apparaître sur les murs l'expression 'Fransé dèwò—Français dehors!' Je n'ai jamais adhéré à un tel concept et ces slogans n'ont été pour moi rien d'autres que des slogans racistes et xénophobes. La relation politique et notamment indépendantiste, n'avait pour moi aucun sens, aucune résonance concrète. J'ai considéré que cette population, une fois passée le premier mouvement de colère générale, allait effectivement s'installer et s'implanter et qu'elle représentait pour moi un lectorat potentiel, à côté du manque criant que je reconnaissais en la matière par ailleurs. Mon choix a vite été fait. Il fallait aussi écrire pour cette population qui allait invariablement évoluer culturellement, si je peux m'exprimer ainsi, vers la créolité. Il lui fallait des outils, en tout cas, pour pénétrer notre culture. J'ai osé penser ainsi et on m'en a voulu terriblement pour cela. De la déviation maximale, il fallait donc passer à la déviation relative. J'ai ainsi incorporé des formes syntaxiques, du vocabulaire, un imaginaire, une façon d'aborder l'imaginaire par le côté français. En tout cas le français, ce qui est aussi une vieille tradition créole, a plus de place dans mon travail. Cela m'a été reproché, mais tant pis, l'avenir dira qui a eu raison.

AC: Pour conclure, je voulais t'interroger un peu plus sur ta deuxième traduction littéraire, *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* d'Aimé Césaire. Pour rebondir sur la question de Louise, comment s'est effectué ce passage de Glissant à Césaire, vu que celui-ci, normalement, n'est pas associé à une dimension créole? Es-tu d'accord avec ce point de vue? Qu'as-tu trouvé dans ce texte? Pourquoi as-tu choisi *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*, et pas d'autres textes de Césaire?

RE: D'abord, sur la relation de Césaire au créole, ou à la créolité, je ne suis pas aussi catégorique que d'autres. Il faut prendre en compte une donnée essentielle, qui est la donnée politique, le rapport politique à l'œuvre de Césaire. La droite martiniquaise, dans les années 1970–1980, a comme argument contre Aimé Césaire, qu'il fait de grands discours français, avec une belle langue française, au nom du peuple, alors qu'il ne parle pas la langue du peuple, ou tout au moins qu'il ne l'écrit pas. Pour moi, je trouve cela complètement lamentable. Beaucoup l'ont dit, on a reproché à Césaire son rapport à la langue créole comme pour prendre position au-dessus de lui. Mais lorsqu'on interroge l'œuvre de Césaire avec beaucoup plus de pertinence, beaucoup plus de sérieux, de rigueur, on se rend compte, et les études sont là pour le prouver, que la langue créole, l'imaginaire créole, ont trouvé leur place dans cette œuvre. Et une interview donnée par Césaire lui-même clarifie sa position, puisqu'il donne cette explication essentielle, pour ceux qui l'acceptent: 'J'ai décidé d'employer le français; peut-être à cause de la culture, c'est vraisemblable—mais j'ai voulu l'employer dans des conditions très particulières. J'ai voulu mettre le sceau imprimé, la marque mère—ou la

marque antillaise sur le français; j'ai voulu lui donner la couleur du créole'.⁵ Et quand on remonte un petit peu plus tôt dans la relation qu'entretient Césaire avec la littérature, et en particulier avec la littérature ou l'imaginaire créoles, on se rend compte qu'il a aussi, dans *Tropiques*, pris position de manière très nette, vis-à-vis de la créolité ou du créole. Il déclare, en effet, vouloir valoriser toutes les composantes identitaires martiniquaises. La position de la langue créole dans l'écrit, à l'époque, est tellement minorée qu'on imagine mal, vue la dimension qu'occupait déjà Césaire dès son entrée dans la sphère culturelle ou politique, qu'il ait pu employer la langue créole comme faire-valoir. Oui, c'était la langue française son faire-valoir, et quel faire-valoir!

Néanmoins, Césaire a toujours défendu, au niveau local, la dimension locale de notre identité. L'un des hommes dont il était très proche, tout au moins jusqu'à la rupture avec le Parti Communiste Français en 1958, c'était Georges Gratiant. Et celui-ci était, lui, un intellectuel engagé de manière très nette, puisqu'il a écrit en créole, dans la valorisation de l'identité créole. Le docteur René Ménil, qui était aux côtés de Césaire, était aussi un homme très engagé dans cette valorisation. Césaire, utilisant la langue française comme arme au niveau international, côtoyait au quotidien des hommes qui étaient tous engagés dans la valorisation de l'identité locale créole. Il n'était pas, sur un plan intellectuel, si éloigné des problématiques créoles comme d'autres veulent le faire croire. *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* que j'ai traduite est, de mon point de vue, l'œuvre la plus créole de Césaire. Et sur cette œuvre en particulier, Césaire lui-même valide cette idée que cela a été un prétexte pour rendre compte de nos particularités à nous, et notamment de la particularité haïtienne. Quand on sait la place qu'occupait le créole en Haïti à cette époque, quand Césaire y va en 1944, quand il va se laisser un petit peu inspirer par la culture haïtienne, et quand on considère la position de la langue créole à cette même époque en Martinique, il y a une totale différence. Le Martiniquais, certes, parle partout le créole et Césaire en est conscient. L'Haïtien parle partout également le créole et Césaire en est aussi conscient. Mais il sait que sur cet aspect-là, nous avons des complexes. Et Césaire a toujours été celui qui a voulu gommer nos complexes. Il s'est attaché dans son œuvre à gommer tous nos complexes, et le complexe créole tout autant. D'autant que les créolistes qui ont suivi, les créolistes patentés, Chamoiseau, Confiant, Bernabé, se réclament de cette première explosion, l'explosion nègre, qui va donner la liberté à l'identité créole. Car, à partir du moment où la désaliénation est engagée via l'œuvre de Césaire, l'aliénation se décharge d'abord de la relation au colon, mais elle se décharge aussi au fur et à mesure des stigmates de cette relation. Une fois qu'on s'est libéré du regard du colon posé sur soi, on a encore à faire face au regard de nous-mêmes portant sur nous-mêmes, consécutif au regard du colon. Et *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*, de fait, à traduire en créole, c'est effarant, c'est impressionnant. La traduction est automatique. Une phrase de Césaire en français, à traduire en créole, c'est du tout cuit, c'est tellement évident. Et plus on rentre dans la traduction, plus on vit la pièce de manière créole, et plus tout devient évident.

AC: Le créole fonctionne comme un substrat dans l'œuvre...

RE: Oui et ça donne une double lecture, qui, à mon avis, évoque la réalité même de notre être créole. Sur un plan intellectuel, c'est aussi, toujours dans la relation à la désaliénation, une relation de l'ordre de l'explosion. Car, comment concevoir qu'une œuvre écrite en français, en langue française, de manière tellement aboutie, puisse être, dans la volonté d'un homme, d'un auteur, d'un écrivain, également un hommage profond à l'identité et à la culture créoles? C'est-à-dire qu'il y a une autre dimension de l'homme que l'on découvre: Césaire, le créole,

⁵ Aimé Césaire, interview in *Le Magazine Littéraire*, first published 1969 and reproduced online in 2008 to mark the poet's death: http://www.magazine-litteraire.com/actualite/hommage/aime-cesaire-poete-politique-17-04-2008-31380?quicktabs_commentaires=1 [accessed 7 January 2014].

qui est aussi, symboliquement, représentatif de notre relation collective au créole. Le créole nous habite dans l'imaginaire, même si nous nous exprimons en français, même si nous exprimons des attitudes françaises. Moi, je lis Césaire de cette manière aujourd'hui; chaque fois que je lis une phrase en français, je sais qu'il y a eu, en-dessous, la même idée exprimée ou ressentie, vécue, portée, en créole.

AC: Est-ce que vous avez déjà essayé de la mettre en scène? Ce serait très intéressant.

RE: On est en train de le faire. Mais concernant Césaire, c'est très intéressant, parce qu'il y a ici un phénomène lié à Césaire, que l'on ne peut pas nier et qui a longtemps perduré, même si aujourd'hui il a tendance à s'atténuer. C'est le fait que les spécialistes de l'œuvre de Césaire ont souvent été extérieurs. Ce n'est pas péjoratif ni négatif ce que je dis, c'est un fait. Les grands spécialistes de l'œuvre de Césaire étaient ou sont, en majorité, de l'extérieur. Il y a donc une lecture de l'œuvre de Césaire qui est totalement extérieure à nous, et qui finalement crée une sorte de distanciation avec l'œuvre et avec l'homme. Et quand on dit que Césaire n'est pas créole, cela fait de lui un autre que nous-mêmes, ce qui est absolument faux! Parce qu'il est totalement nous, et il l'est aussi de manière créole. Cela le ramène vers nous. Dans le fait de le traduire en créole, la volonté, la dynamique, le souhait, c'est bien de ramener Césaire à nous, et de dire qu'il est comme nous, qu'il a un imaginaire double, qu'il est engagé dans cette relation très conflictuelle avec cet imaginaire, et qu'il y a apporté, à sa manière, à son époque, avec ses outils, des solutions. J'ai compris Césaire de manière totalement nouvelle, à partir du moment où j'ai considéré que c'est un créole qui parle. Et nous, aujourd'hui, osons la relation créole à l'œuvre de Césaire, car elle est très riche, elle nous ramène à Césaire.

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Postgraduate Work in Progress Algiers, Paris, New York: Migrating Terror

If the humanities has a future as cultural criticism, and cultural criticism has a task at the present moment, it is no doubt to return us to the human where we do not expect to find it, in its frailty and at the limits of its capacity to make sense.¹

The Algerian civil conflict of the 1990s—the *décennie noire*, as it is more commonly known in the country, and the Algerian ‘tragédie nationale’,² as it has been subsequently labelled by the Algerian state—erupted after the cancellation of the second round of the first democratic elections in Algeria’s history, which the prominent Islamist party, the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), was poised to win. The initial violence gave rise to a ruthless crackdown by the army; the conflict, which continued throughout the 1990s, would ultimately be characterized as a fight against Islamic terrorists seeking to take revenge for the cancellation of the 1992 elections.³ A range of testimonial literature, more widely known as an ‘écriture de l’urgence’ was published throughout this period by Algerians in Paris, in what Charles Bonn and Naget Khadda have called the ‘retour du référent’,⁴ and which sold to a thriving French market. In a highly referential and realist style, this literature sought to document the daily lived horrors of the conflict which claimed the lives of up to 200,000 people. By contrast, Algerian literature of the post-civil conflict has tended to move both back to publishing houses inside Algeria and beyond the testimonial narratives of the 1990s, beginning to consider the complex origins of the violence of recent years within increasingly layered spaces of fictional representation.⁵ Various strategies of representing violence emerge through fictional narratives encompassing not just allegory and metaphor, but increasingly oneiric (dream-like) and fantastical spaces.⁶

This article suggests that a number of Algerian authors have attempted to move beyond the trauma of the 1990s by layering representations of recent violence—a violence which pertains not just to a physical but also to that of a symbolic world of language, myth and spectacle. It is my contention that more recent Algerian literature effectively remythifies the figure of the terrorist in order to contest the overly reductive vision of the terrorist as ‘Ogre, Monstre, Sauvage, Maléfique, Diabolique...’.⁷ In mutating and migrating their settings

¹ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), p. 151.

² See the official document: ‘Charte pour la paix et la réconciliation nationale’, *Journal officiel de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire* 11 (2006), p. 7; http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/-collections/commissions/Algeria-Charter_ordinance06-02.pdf [accessed 12 June 2014].

³ On this period, see Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria, 1988–2002: Studies in a Broken Polity* (London: Verso, 2003) and the latter sections of Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 102–251.

⁴ Charles Bonn and Naget Khadda, ‘La littérature maghrébine de langue française’, *Limag* (1996): <http://www.limag.refer.org/Textes/Manuref/lmlf.htm> [accessed 12 June 2014].

⁵ Hadj Miliani has described this as a ‘délocalisation symbolique’ in a recent chapter, ‘La production romanesque algérienne de langue française, éditée en Algérie depuis 2000—Devoir de témoignage et expérimentations esthétiques’, in *Le roman maghrébin de langue française aujourd’hui: rupture et continuité*, ed. by Habib Ben Salha (Tunis: View Design International, 2008), pp. 29–40 (p. 30).

⁶ Salim Bachi’s first novel, *Le Chien d’Ulysse* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001) is an important, and perhaps foundational, example of this shift in representational modes.

⁷ Mohamed El Amine Roubai-Chorfi notes how the figure of the terrorist was depicted as such during the 1990s; see ‘Le personnage du terroriste dans le roman algérien: un mythe moderne?’, *Synergies Algérie*, 3 (2008), 105–12 (p. 106). Literature of the subsequent period seems to follow Roland Barthes’s assertion that, ‘la meilleure arme contre le mythe, c’est peut-être de le mythifier à son tour, c’est de produire un mythe artificiel’; *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 181.

and plots, recent fictions from Algeria have taken on a polysemic form, sitting between the specific and the universal, both in terms of representation of a history of violence and of a contemporary market which consumes these novels. I suggest here that what is commonly hidden across the discourse on ‘terror’—from Algiers, to Paris and to New York—is a history, a poetics and a politics of the human, that questions the de-humanization of the ‘terrorist’ in much political and media discourses.⁸ In restaging the figure of the human at the very edge of the reader’s capacity to understand, I seek to ask whether the novel as a migratory and transnational form can offer, at once, a challenge to and an escape from a self-perpetuating and affective binary, which has predominated in the wake of moments of contemporary violence. In the case of the examples cited here, such a history and politics is imagined through a transnational poetics not of migrating writers, but of migrating plots, characters and settings, unsettling the accepted narratives, and literary markets, of ‘terror’.⁹

Before introducing the novels to be explored in the article, it is necessary to signal a distinction between the terms ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’. Commenting on the official US response to the September 11 attacks, Michael Rothberg underlines the ideological terminology of ‘war on terror’—the term ‘terror’, drawing not on a specific act or acts of ‘terrorism’, but centring rather on a ‘feeling’, that is to say an ‘affective level of politics’.¹⁰ Rothberg sets up the divide, then, between the staging in official discourse of acts of ‘terrorism’ as a universal or global ‘terror’ and the ability of literature to stage its response to the official rhetoric. The article explores principally the Algerian author Salim Bachi’s recent short novel published in France in 2012: *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*.¹¹ It also briefly mentions another of his works, *Tuez-les tous*,¹² and the work of two other Algerian authors: the comedian-cum-writer Fellag and the playwright Slimane Benaïssa; these last three texts imagine fictional terrorists in relation to September 11. Benaïssa’s 2003 novel, *La dernière nuit d’un damné*, is a first-person account which puts the reader in the mind of Raouf, a would-be terrorist hijacker in the September 11 attacks.¹³ While Benaïssa’s protagonist never actually goes through with the attack, the fragile state of mind of the ‘radicalized’ Muslim is explored.¹⁴ Fellag’s 2005 short story ‘Alger–New York’ simultaneously stages two separate historical and geographical moments by presenting a narrative which alternates between the cities of New York, in 2001, and Algiers, in 1995. The comedian sketches the tragicomical fate of Algerian protagonist Hocine, who, having fled Algeria because of violence in the late 1990s, comes

⁸ This issue of the politics of the human, and the varying degrees to which human lives are considered grievable, whereby the contemporary dominant discourse has stripped certain subjects of their common humanity, has recently been addressed by Butler in her collection of essays; see Butler, *Precarious Life*, *passim*.

⁹ The market of ‘terror’ might be defined in relation first to the body of ‘fiction’ published in Paris during the Algerian conflict of the 1990s and, more recently, in relation to an emerging genre of post-9/11 literature. See, for example, the following selection of volumes on literature and September 11: *Literature after 9/11* ed. by Ann Keniston and Jeanne Quinn (New York: Routledge, 2008); *From Solidarity to Schisms: 9/11 and after in Fiction and Film from outside the US*, ed. by Cara Cilano (New York: Rodopi, 2009); Martin Randall, *9/11 and the Literature of Terror* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); and Richard Gray, *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). It is perhaps worth noting that much of this criticism, and indeed literature, has hitherto been published outside France.

¹⁰ Michael Rothberg, ‘Seeing Terror, Feeling Art: Public and Private in post-9/11 Literature’, in *Literature after 9/11*, ed. by Ann Keniston and Jeanne Quinn (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 123–42 (p. 124).

¹¹ Salim Bachi, *Moi, Khaled Kelkal* (Paris: Grasset, 2012).

¹² Salim Bachi, *Tuez-les tous* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).

¹³ Slimane Benaïssa, *La dernière nuit d’un damné* (Paris: Plon, 2003).

¹⁴ Carine Bourget, who has recently published a chapter on Bachi’s and Benaïssa’s religious intertexts in their ‘9/11 novels’, has argued that the simplistic means with which Benaïssa treats the subject matter (for instance, in the preface to the novel, the author apologizes ‘en tant que musulman’ for what he calls ‘l’intégrisme international’ (*La dernière nuit*, p. 11)) actually creates further single-minded animosity towards Muslims in the wake of the attacks. See ‘Portrait of a Terrorist: Slimane Benaïssa and Salim Bachi’s 9/11 Novels’, in *The Star, the Cross, and the Crescent: Religions and Conflicts in Francophone Literature from the Arab World* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012), pp. 141–60.

only to be accused in New York of being involved in the attacks on the World Trade Centre. Fellag's story stages a racism which determines the fate of the protagonist, albeit in this case one who is innocent of any crime.

Salim Bachi's first novel to address the figure of the terrorist, *Tuez-les tous*, is set in the hours leading up to the September 11 attacks in New York. It follows one of the pilots who will hijack and fly a plane into one of the World Trade Centre towers. In this complex, richly intertextual and indeed controversial novel, Bachi employs fiction to introduce and interrogate, what he will call, the myth of the contemporary terrorist:

Je m'intéresse aussi au mythe agissant, au mythe contemporain comme le 11 septembre par exemple [...] Je me suis intéressé à la violence en Algérie en tant que mythe moteur de son Histoire [...] La figure du terroriste est pour moi une figure mythique, un mythe violent qui me fascine.¹⁵

In *Tuez-les tous*, the Algerian civil conflict is a latent trauma for the protagonist. As Carine Bourget has pointed out, the title of the novel itself is an expression which can be traced back to a number of historical moments of 'terror', finding its root in the thirteenth-century Albigensian Crusade, specifically from a command given by the abbot of Cîteaux, Arnaud Amaury, at the massacre at Béziers in 1209. In response to the question of how to distinguish Cathars from others in the town, the abbot apparently answers: 'Tuez-les tous, Dieu reconnaîtra les siens'. Bourget informs us that the expression was also used by American soldiers in Vietnam: 'kill them all, let God sort them out', and in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, when one of the film's characters proposes destroying a whole species of bird in response to the attacks.¹⁶ The image of 'the birds' for the planes, and the subsequent 'kill them all' reference, of course also functions as an analogy for the attacks of September 11 and the subsequent US response. What is also hidden in this story, though, is the human being, trapped within this complex narrative of trauma; by migrating the plot, character and setting from terrorist attacks in Algiers to terrorist attacks in New York, while also creating a historical constellation of terror, the author both undermines the image of an affective 'terror' reproduced in the wake of local sites of terrorism, and proposes a new myth, a competing site of 'terror', in literature, to undermine and combat the official sites of 'national tragedy' from Algeria to the US.

In 2012, Bachi published a further short novel, *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, which he had been invited to write for a series by the publishing house Grasset entitled 'Ceci n'est pas un fait divers'. This fiction follows the real-life protagonist Khaled Kelkal, a 24-year old Algerian, who moved to France as a child with his family and was suspected of planting a bomb in the Paris metro which exploded at Saint-Michel in July 1995; Kelkal was subsequently shot dead by police in an ensuing man-hunt.¹⁷ The novel imagines Kelkal's voice from beyond the grave, exploring his upbringing in the *banlieues* of Lyon, suggesting a postcolonial itinerary for the

¹⁵ Patrick Crowley, 'Myth, Modernism, Violence and Form: An Interview with Salim Bachi', *Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, 4.1 (2013), 2–11 (p. 8).

¹⁶ Bourget, pp. 150–51. More recently in 2004 (still before the publication of Bachi's novel) 'Tuez-les tous' was the title of a French documentary on the Rwandan genocide; *Tuez-les tous! Rwanda: Histoire d'un génocide sans importance*, dir. by Raphael Glucksmann, David Hazan and Pierre Mezerette (Dum Dum Films, 2004).

¹⁷ 'Moi, Khaled Kelkal' was initially the title given to an interview, published after Kelkal's death in October 1995, by a German sociologist who had been conducting doctoral research on the Lyon *banlieues* in 1992. Dietmar Loch had interviewed Kelkal as part of a wider research project studying young people of North African origin living in the Lyon suburb of Vaulx-en-Velin. His study is published in German as *Jugendliche maghrebinischer Herkunft zwischen Stadtpolitik und Lebenswelt. Eine Fallstudie in der französischen Vorstadt Vaulx-en-Velin* (Weisbaden: VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005). After the events of 1995, Loch's interview with Kelkal was published in *Le Monde*, 7 October 1995 (p. 10), and can be read here: <http://upvericoriano.files.wordpress.com-/2009/06/dossier-khaled-kelkal.pdf> [accessed 20 June 2014].

young man who would, as the novel states, become the ‘ennemi public no 1’.¹⁸ It is thought that the attack—and a series of other attacks that same year—was orchestrated by the Algerian Groupe islamique armé (GIA), an extremist group which had already been blamed for attacks in the conflict ongoing in Algeria. Shortly after the publication of this novel, the Franco-Algerian Mohammed Merah—another so-called ‘radicalized’ young Muslim—shot dead seven people in the city of Toulouse;¹⁹ in scenes resembling the Khaled Kelkal case, the police man-hunt finally caught up with Merah and he was shot dead. While Kelkal’s killing had been filmed and broadcast on French television, Merah had filmed the shootings he committed using a camera which had been strapped to his body; the footage was obtained by the news broadcaster *Al-Jazeera*, but not shown.²⁰ In the days following Merah’s death, the French newspaper *Le Monde* commissioned Bachi to write an article, entitled ‘Moi, Mohammed Merah’, which like the novel reimagined the voice of Merah from beyond the grave.²¹ The author in effect asks the same questions he asks in his novel on Khaled Kelkal, in an article which, again, gave rise to fierce debate in France.²²

The novel itself is staged in five sections (five acts) as a tragedy. Composed, for the most part, in the first person, Khaled Kelkal returns as a ghost and recounts his childhood growing up in the *banlieues* of Lyon;²³ his expulsion from school leads to a life stealing cars and, having unwittingly committed the ‘crime impardonnable’ of stealing the BMW belonging to the chairman of the Olympique Lyonnais football team, Kelkal finds himself in prison.²⁴ The reader learns of Kelkal’s upbringing, his parents’ memories of Algeria (what he calls their ‘prison de souvenirs’)²⁵ and their investment in the fabled image of return to an Algeria that, as we soon find out, does not in reality exist.²⁶

Ils avaient été chassés du paradis [...] parlaient d’y retourner, enchantaient leur mémoire, se lamentaient de ne plus y être, se plaignaient sans cesse et n’agissaient plus, emprisonnés par leurs fantasmes.²⁷

The reality, when Kelkal and his family do return to Algeria, is that they are stopped by customs, viewed with suspicion, made to wait for hours while their belongings are searched. ‘[F]ouillés comme des criminels’ in what has now become the ‘paradis infernal’,²⁸ Kelkal and his parents are ‘absolument étrangers dans les deux pays’.²⁹ The author thus recognizes the myth associated with the trope of migrant literature itself—the myth of return to the mythologized homeland—and stages this alongside the myth of the terrorist Kelkal will become.

It is in prison, of course, that Kelkal discovers religion and meets those who will help

¹⁸ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 65.

¹⁹ Three of the victims were French paratroopers of North African descent, three were Jewish children and one a Rabbi and teacher.

²⁰ See ‘Al-Jazeera opts not to air Merah shootings video’, *BBC News*, 27 March 2012; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17526424> [accessed 2 September 2014].

²¹ Salim Bachi, ‘Moi, Mohamed Merah’, *Le Monde des livres*, 30 March 2012; <http://www.paperblog.fr/5477915/317-moi-mohamed-merah-article-de-salim-bachi-et-les-reactions/> [accessed 12 June 2014].

²² In his recent interview with Bachi, Patrick Crowley helpfully points us towards a selection of articles which appeared at the time. See Crowley, pp. 4–5.

²³ Indeed, in both *Tuez-les tous* and *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is never far away.

²⁴ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 55.

²⁵ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 29.

²⁶ Such a myth of return is recounted by Alec Hargreaves in his chapter, ‘Perceptions of place among writers of Algerian immigrant origin in France’, in *Writing across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, ed. by Russell King, John Connell and Paul White (London, Routledge, 1995), pp. 89–100.

²⁷ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 29.

²⁸ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 30.

²⁹ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 32.

make the bomb he will later plant on the RER train. The prison in which he was placed and rejected by French society is the same space in which he is 'radicalized' and will seek revenge. But this is not the only prison in the story. The prison also acts as a metaphor for memory, for the Lyon *cit * in which Kelkal grew up, the prison of the colonial past which (over-)determines a post-colonial present, the prison of monolithic thought, the singular text (the Koran he studies) and indeed to some extent the text in front of us here. Hereafter, the lines of text in front of us become fragmented (the lines themselves begin to break up and run on without punctuation), especially when Kelkal makes a visit to Algeria at the behest of his parents, who are increasingly worried about the trouble he keeps finding himself in. The disordered prison of the Algerian conflict of the 1990s is thus reinforced: 'on me conduisait en une autre prison, plus redoutable,   l' chelle d'un pays sous le soleil des mouches, abasourdi de lumi re'.³⁰ Kelkal's ultimate despair is caused by the prison and all the forms it seemingly takes around him: 'la prison t'a rendu malade de haine il vaut mieux fumer et r ver   la destruction du monde,   la mort des nations,   l'amour des demoiselles infernales...'.³¹

After the attack, Kelkal is described as being hunted 'comme un animal' by *gendarmes* and their dogs. In the final scene, he is shot by three *gendarmes*, who can apparently be heard shouting 'finis-le, finis-le'.³² In the final passage Kelkal's ghost recounts: '[j]e m'attendais donc   mourir comme j'ai v cu, ni simplement, ni tragiquement, mais sur sc ne, face aux cam ras, sous les coups d'une mauvaise fortune. A-t-elle jamais  t  cl mente pour moi et les miens?'³³ Kelkal is shot by police and his death broadcast on the television news that same evening. The act of violence by the *gendarmes* is, of course, questioned, but it is also staged as a kind of spectacle of terror. Bachi's novel creates a dialogue between the two supposed sides and sites of terror, offering not just a voice, but a myth, a history and a stage to the otherwise hidden human being who, supposedly, planted the bomb. It is the human being who seems to be staged as trauma here, where the delayed act of terrorism emerges in the tragic theatre of twenty-first-century terror, played out in a pattern of post-trauma. Indeed, in the theatre of 'terror', killing Kelkal—before any legal trail has been allowed to take place—is played out not just as an acceptable catharsis, but one which was inevitable and predetermined.

In drawing our attention to the staging of multiple realities, the novel returns us to Rothberg's distinction, made at the outset, between the act of terrorism and an affective 'terror'. While the act may be in the past, it is the affective image, the story, the theatre which remain, and there is, if not an accepted, certainly an *unacceptable* way to speak of such acts in their aftermath, as we saw with the reception of Bachi's Mohamed Merah piece for *Le Monde*. For Bachi, though, the writer must occupy a space of sitting between the specific and the universal; the author, self-admittedly, takes his distance in order to get closer, stepping outside in order to better understand the inside: 'Pour  crire des livres sur l'Alg rie, il fallait prendre de la distance [...] Paradoxalement, il faut s' loigner pour se rapprocher de son pays et faire  uvre d' crivain'.³⁴ Therefore, it is perhaps the migration of literary space itself, the staging of the plot elsewhere, which allows for the reconfiguration of not just the singular myth of the terrorist, but the very myth of the singular—the prison and all its forms—which forces the reader, the viewer, the *spectator*, to take sides in the first place. As Judith Butler has suggested, in relation to the attacks of September 11, such spectacular moments of violence must be mourned outside the perpetually self-replicating binary, the myth of which merely

³⁰ Moi, *Khaled Kelkal*, pp. 75–76.

³¹ Moi, *Khaled Kelkal*, p. 79.

³² Moi, *Khaled Kelkal*, p. 84.

³³ Moi, *Khaled Kelkal*, p. 128.

³⁴ Bachi cited in Ali Remzi, 'Salim Bachi: Les qu tes fertiles d'un  crivain', *La D p che de Kabylie*, 20 July 2010; <http://www.depechedekabylie.com/culture/84737-salim-bachi-les-quetes-fertiles-dun-ecrivain.html> [accessed 12 June 2014].

reproduces the spectacle it seeks to eliminate.³⁵ By means of conclusion, might we suggest Bachi's almost palimpsestic migration of 'terror' allows for a reassessment of the fast-consecrated memory and myth of these events of violence in their aftermath?³⁶ The novels create a dialogue where the events themselves are staged—for what they often are for so many, watching from the comfort of their living rooms—as spectacle, as myth, in an attempt to prevent the often (and perhaps deliberately) rushed consecration of memory into history—what the author himself calls the danger of the 'mythe' which becomes a 'moteur de [...] Histoire',³⁷ where the label of 'tragédie' marks an end to questioning, not the beginning. After all, Kelkal refuses to die tragically: '[j]e m'attendais à mourir ni simplement, ni tragiquement, mais sur scène [emphases added].'³⁸ On the one hand, then, in its capacity to re-imagine continually and re-stage myth and memory, fiction has no fixed place—to write is, necessarily, to migrate. Yet, as we have seen, to write is also to stage, to mythologize, and to present that very stage, and mythologization, as the battleground upon which our affective wars of memory—be they of Algiers, Paris or New York—are played out in a seemingly inescapable and increasingly global politically constructed bind.

In restaging the human 'at the limits of its capacity to make sense',³⁹ in moving beyond a self-perpetuating affective binary, might the novel itself offer the reader an escape from the above-mentioned bind, in the sense that the novel (as form) is never really about recounting what happens, in the event itself, but rather what the event becomes in its aftermath—the very possibility of the event beyond its material occurrence? As the Franco-Czech writer and critic Milan Kundera has put it, '[L]e roman n'examine pas la réalité mais l'existence. Et l'existence ce n'est pas ce qui s'est passé, l'existence est le champ des possibilités humaines, tout ce que l'homme peut devenir, tout ce dont il est capable [...] Il faut donc comprendre *et* le personnage *et* son monde comme *possibilités* [sic].'⁴⁰

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³⁵ See Butler's final essay in her *Precarious Life*, pp. 128–51.

³⁶ The image of the palimpsest has most recently been used in the field of memory by Max Silverman, although the French literary theorist, Gérard Genette, had previously used the 'palimpsest' as a figure to demonstrate the 'transtextual' nature of literature. See Genette's *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (Paris: Seuil, 1982). This image of erasure, overwriting and recall was identified as a figure for human memory by Sigmund Freud in a 1925 essay entitled 'A note upon the "Mystic writing Pad"'; see Silverman's *Palimpsestic Memory* (New York: Berghahn, 2013), pp. 24–25.

³⁷ Crowley, p. 8. While myth and history are, of course, traditionally thought of as distinct, the novelist seems to suggest that their (con)fusion has been common in the making of national histories: from the myth of Algerian independence, to the myth of 'reconciliation' of the civil conflict of the 1990s, to the events of September 11 and the pervasive myth of 'terror' in the twenty-first century.

³⁸ *Moi, Khaled Kelkal*, p. 128.

³⁹ Butler, p. 151.

⁴⁰ Milan Kundera, *L'art du roman* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 57.

BOOK REVIEWS

Africa and France: Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism. By DOMINIC THOMAS. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. 329pp. Pb £18.99. ISBN: 978-0-253-00670-7

Africa and France: Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism explores debates surrounding the social, political and cultural effects of migration and globalization in France in the twenty-first century. The ten essays examine the articulation between French government policy and cultural activity in wider European and global frameworks. What emerge are the inextricable links between social and political contexts and the analysis of literature, film, theatre and museums (p. 129).

While its wide-ranging title suggests two separate spaces (both physical and imagined) of France and Africa, the strengths of this volume rest on its dissection of the 'and' that binds them. What ongoing pressures are applied by that yoking together of Africa and France and its entangled histories (p. 5)? How, as critics and teachers, can we understand and respond to this multivalent relationship in the twenty-first century? Exploring these questions through an extensive range of material, Dominic Thomas provides an erudite distillation of political and cultural debates over the past ten years concerning France's postcolonial identity. The interdisciplinary remit and reach beyond the metropole extends the analysis of the tensions of *la Françafrique* in Thomas's path-breaking *Black France* (2007) to consider the European setting and draw on vigorous debates that 'Black Studies' à la française continues to generate.

Beginning with a discussion of France's idiosyncratic centralization of cultural policy, museums and national *patrimoine*, the opening chapters outline the French authorities' apparent 'failure at negotiating the demands, exigencies and realities of the new world order' (p. 4). Long-running debates surrounding the musée du Quai Branly and the Centre national de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI) are unpacked to situate both institutions within global coordinates. Thomas draws out the implications of a shift in European museological practices from collecting to exhibiting over the past century in the light of each institution's attempt to coalesce a consistent, heterogeneous, postcolonial narrative from within the French national space (p.18, p. 29).

The book's most polemical sections take aim at the Sarkozy presidency (Chapters 2, 3 and 4), in particular its role in generating immigration policies, the instrumentalization of particular ideas of National Identity, and the ongoing impact of the neocolonial *Françafrique* configuration. Close-reading of speeches by Nicolas Sarkozy and Eric Besson given between 2007 and 2012, and policy documents surrounding the creation of the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and National Identity in 2007, sketch a landscape defined by economic, political and social asymmetries. The urge to control—or to police—movement of human beings within 'Fortress Europe' (p. 73), particularly from what has come to be categorized as the global South, is shown to operate partly in response to France's particular stance on immigration over the past decade. One of the unifying strands in this discussion of national and supranational government policy, European border politics, and cultural production, is the recourse to what Thomas terms—building on Roland Barthes—a 'new grammar of migration' (Chapter 8).

The second half of the book analyses the work of a rich array of writers and filmmakers (including Tahar Ben Jelloun, Abdourahman Waberi, Mahi Binebine, J. R. Essomba, Med Hondo, Idressa Ouedraogo) in response to themes, and grammars, of migration. There is a particularly insightful reading of Faiza Guène's short films, alongside her fiction, in the context of 'banlieue writing' and the artist collective, *Qui fait la France?*, and in contradistinction to vociferous debates surrounding world literature. The analysis shows

how the bureaucratic language of policy and migration law which patrols European borders is poorly equipped—deliberately so, even—to address the complex nuances of human experience. One highly charged chapter discusses Philippe Loiret's film, *Welcome* (2009) and Olivier Adam's *A l'abri de rien* (2007) which depict 'exit points of the *global south*', namely France's northern border space with the UK, the camps of Sangatte and the lived experience of their inhabitants. Here France is re-staged as 'merely' a transit zone, while Thomas interrogates the coining of a powerful new 'language of migration' in European migration policy from the 1980s onwards. This terminology defines the legal status of migrants and the institutional procedures that shadow them. It is shown to be both metaphorically meaningful and conveniently vague. As these readings suggest, cultural production troubles the sedimentation of such monolingual formations and reveals—if only ever to a limited extent—the lived experience of detention zones, forced repatriations, filtering systems and return directives (pp. 171–73).

Thomas's reiteration of ongoing tensions surrounding postcolonial studies in France also highlights the challenge of disciplinary borders. The final chapter provides an assessment of the globally uneven context of modern languages education in the Anglophone world, itself under renewed pressures within the current 'world order'. It confirms the interdisciplinary avenues that French Studies must take to address the global circulation of French language and Francophone identities against political realities, for example, of Eric Besson's National Identity Debate in 2009 and ongoing attempts to galvanize reductive national French myths (p. 228).

These essays will be of great interest to researchers and graduate students in particular, while the overarching methodological point that cultural analysis can be brought to bear on political analysis, and vice versa, is salutary. Throughout, the many examples and expansive body of critical material spark interest and invite further study. This said, the frequent shifts between political reports, speeches, policy briefs and literary or filmic texts, at times leaves the reader to discern the different valencies of these discourses and what their contrasting circumstances of production, circulation and reception might imply for their counter-discursive impact (p. 181), or their 'effectiveness in humanizing individual and collective experience' (p. 10). We also might have hoped for more-sustained scrutiny of the suggestion that there is a need to work against a past founded on scientific methodologies and that cultural institutions might instead privilege the individual and collective formation of myths and legends (p. 31). The Barthesian tow raises underlying epistemological questions regarding the transmutability of history in a global context. That questioning encourages further reflection and points to the need for careful contextualization, a directive which this generous book will certainly enable.

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Frantz Fanon: A Biography. By DAVID MACEY. London and New York: Verso, 2000, 2nd Edition 2012. 639 pp. Pb £16.99. ISBN: 978-1-84467-773-3

It is no surprise that Macey's biography of Frantz Fanon is into its second edition. When it was published in 2000 it received widespread critical acclaim and since then it has become the standard reference for scholars and for writers more generally. Here are two examples. In his 'Foreword: Framing Fanon' (2004) that accompanies a new translation of *Les Damnés de la*

terre, Homi Bhabha describes Macey as Fanon's 'most brilliant biographer' (p. x) and takes his cue from Macey's belief that the time is right to reread Fanon. The novelist, John Edgar Wideman, makes special reference to Macey's work in the Acknowledgements of his novel *Fanon* (2008) citing it as 'an indispensable source book for Fanon's life, thought, and times' (p. 229). And so it is. Macey's superbly balanced biography brings us through Fanon's life and work from his childhood in Martinique to his death in a hospital in Bethesda northwest of Washington DC in 1961. Working with archives, drawing on interviews and through close readings of Fanon's texts, Macey brings us into the detail of Fanon's experience of the Second World War; his time as a medical student in Lyon; the importance of François Tosquelles in his development as a psychiatrist; and, above all else, the fundamental impact that the Algerian War of Independence had on Fanon's life and work. Macey's study is invaluable in that it judiciously places Fanon's life within these contexts of place and time in a way that allows us not only to know more about Fanon but about his times and ours.

Such was the force of Fanon's personality and such is the rhetorical charge that continues to energize his work that it would be understandable if his life and work were to become fused within a hagiographical narrative. Macey rejects such a temptation and re-affirms the importance of objective biography based on evidence. He is always quick to correct versions of 'Fanon' that might lend themselves to mythologization. He writes for example, that 'Fanon's reforming role [in the psychiatric hospital of Blida, Algeria] has become the stuff of legend, but not all the stories that are told are necessarily true.' (p. 225) Here Macey draws on other accounts of the hospital in Blida that indicate that chains were never used to restrain patients. But Macey does more than correct the over-enthusiasm of other biographers such as Irene Gendzier; he portrays Fanon as so driven by his commitment to the Algerian Revolution that truth was to be a casualty. On the FLN massacre of some 500 Algerians in Melouza in May 1957 Macey notes that the FLN initially claimed that the killings had been orchestrated by French forces. Fanon, shortly after his arrival in Tunis, was called upon to give a press conference offering the FLN viewpoint; which he did. Macey writes: 'Whether or not Fanon knew what actually happened at Melouza, or whether or not he believed what he told the press conference, cannot be established with any certainty. Other episodes reveal a considerable discrepancy between what he said or endorsed in public and what he said in private, and indicate that his definition of 'true' was decidedly instrumental' (p. 352). This assertion is supported by a citation from *Les Damnés de la terre*: 'Truth is that which protects the natives and destroys the foreigners. In the colonial context, there is no truthful behaviour' (p. 352). Cited after Macey's detailed description of the massacre at Melouza, the reference to truth as 'that which protects the natives' presents Fanon in a harsh, but necessary, light. Macey also refers to Fanon's idealism, in particular his 'highly idealized picture of both the peasantry and the lumpenproletariat' (p. 479), and extends this to his view of the FLN military campaign in the Algerian countryside, or at least in Wilaya III under Colonel Amirouche. Macey, rightly I think, writes that as 'a black outsider who was both intellectual and urbanized to his fingertips, Fanon [...] would not have survived long in Amirouche's company' (p. 479). Macey also takes critical issue with aspects of Fanon's, overgeneralized and possibly erotized, reading of the veil (pp. 399–405).

Though Macey criticizes Fanon there is never a sense that he is unsympathetic to his subject. On the contrary, his prose conveys his admiration for Fanon's indefatigable pursuit of social justice, it captures the vitality of Fanon's thought and it affirms the pertinence of Fanon's work to our contemporary world. Macey's passion for his subject is nowhere more clear than in the Foreword and Afterword that serve to frame the biography. Macey comments that Fanon advocated and justified 'a violence I can no longer justify' (p. xvii) but he remains convinced by Fanon's anger. This new edition includes references to events in France that remind Macey that *Peau noire, masques blancs* 'is still relevant to any analysis of racism in France' (p. xix). Anger is an energy, and Macey clearly shares the view that one

should be angry given the fact ‘that the wretched of the earth are still with us’ (p. xv). Macey judiciously channels his anger, his desire for global justice, into writing a carefully researched and lucidly written biography. There will certainly be a third edition and this will be an opportunity to correct two typographical errors: the coup against President Ben Bella took place in 1965 and not 1956 (p. 2), and Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt began in 1798 and not 1793 (p. 216).

Though Macey comments on the neglect of Fanon’s work in France, Macey’s biography—as well as changing social and economic conditions in France—have served to bring Fanon back into mainstream consideration. On 4 November 2011, *Le Monde des Livres* marked the publication of the French translation of Macey’s biography, along with two other works—Matthieu Renault, *Frantz Fanon: De l’anticolonialisme à la critique postcoloniale* (2011) and André Lucrèce, *Frantz Fanon et les Antilles* (2011)—with a review article of all three works and the sub-title ‘Un demi-siècle après sa mort, le dénonciateur du colonialisme et du racisme reste d’une actualité brûlante’ (p. 1). Sadly, David Macey passed away only a few weeks prior to the publication of *Le Monde’s* review. But as the wretched of the earth will remain with us into the future there will be further editions of Macey’s magisterial biography of Fanon and the righteous anger both biographer and subject share will, one hopes, continue to prompt thought and action.

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The Narrative Mediterranean: Beyond France and the Maghreb. By CLAUDIA ESPOSITO. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2014. 183 pp. Hb £49.95. ISBN: 978-0739168219

In a book, which in many ways itself narrates the contemporary Mediterranean, Claudia Esposito brings together a number of contemporary writers who trace their roots to the Maghreb and Mashreq and whose connections, so often drawn along the lines of nation and language, might otherwise be overlooked. The book attempts to move away from a postcolonial lens whereby cultural production from France’s former colonies is viewed, in a ‘centre-periphery’ relationship, through the former *métropole*. Following Pascale Casanova’s notion of the ‘world literary republic’, Esposito attempts to move towards a transnational framework of interpreting contemporary literatures circulating in the Mediterranean today; beyond both the reductive limits of the nation state and an often essentialized or exoticized image, the Mediterranean is said to offer a space of relational ‘contestation and infinite translation’ (p. xiv) The case is made for literature, more precisely fiction, to be seen as a form which tells not simply a counter-history, but which relates and co-exists in a ‘mutually defining bond’ with history (p. xxi), removed from its respective national articulations. Following the Algerian writer Maïssa Bey, Esposito posits the Mediterranean—in its very in-between nature—as a metaphor for literature itself; hence the ‘narrative’ Mediterranean of the title.

One twentieth-century writer who cannot be avoided is of course the French-Algerian, *pied-noir*, Albert Camus. After outlining the controversies surrounding Camus’s posthumous legacy in this contested space, Esposito offers a reading of the author’s vision of the Mediterranean (and the founding of what has since been called Camus’s ‘Mediterranean Humanism’) in his lyrical and political essays, and later in his posthumously published unfinished autobiographical novel, *Le premier homme* (1994). The following chapter deals with

the work of the Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf and the Tunisian writer Fawzi Mellah. For these writers, the Mediterranean becomes a fluid time-space which both inspires and allows for the rewriting of a number of histories, from fifteenth-century Andalusia to the present day, where history becomes doubled in a Deleuzian literary space of telling a 'what was' as a 'what is not yet' (p. 46)—the past is thus posited as a site of imagining possible futures.

In a second section, 'Beyond the Binary', two further chapters explore the subversion of accepted gender norms and again posit the Mediterranean, decolonized of the patriarchy—a Mediterranean 'unmanned' (p. 69)—as a space in which non-conformative genders and sexualities can be written. Explored are the semi-autobiographical works of Franco-Algerian Nina Bouraoui, which testify to the difficulties of breaking free from fixed categories of sex and gender, and the novels of Tahar Ben Jelloun which, in their 'baroque poetic' (p. 94) are shown to reach across and beyond the France–Maghreb frame of interpretation, as well as the reductive rhetoric of the 'clash of civilizations' between East and West.

The third and final section, 'Crossing the Straits and Moving the Center', keeps one hand in with Ben Jelloun while also reaching to a fellow Moroccan, Mahi Binebine. Here, Esposito identifies a fissure between nation and narration, where the figure of the *harrāga*—the clandestine immigrants who burn their identity papers before leaving on often fatal attempted crossings of the Mediterranean by boat—is one who lives and ultimately dies beyond the borders of the nation state. Narratives such as Binebine's *Cannibales* (1999) and Ben Jelloun's *Partir* (2006), must themselves migrate (in this case, beyond the mode of literary realism) in order to represent effectively such figures and their (quite literal) transnational experience. In a final chapter, the author explores the phenomenon of Maghrebian writers *not* writing in French. Abdelmalek Smari, Moshen Melliti and Amara Lakhous are all writers from the Maghreb who have written and published in Italian, in spite of their French-language education in Algeria and Tunisia. Esposito recounts Amara Lakhous's intriguing technique of what she calls 'self-pirating' (p. 147), where the act of translation becomes an act of rewriting: with no involvement of an external translator, the author is said to place his Italian and Arabic texts alongside each other in order to recast the text in the new language, adding and changing details as he goes. In addition, the problematic of language is itself staged in the narratives, which are creatively reshaped by the author. Such bilingualism is shown to exist also in form: Melliti, who is both novelist and filmmaker, creates an 'accented' and 'dialogical' literature (p. 134), by writing his novels in a filmic style.

In the creative wake of these contemporary authors, Esposito reaffirms the importance of the Moroccan linguist and writer Abdelkebir Khatibi's work on plurilingualism in the Maghreb, extending his theoretical models to what was earlier called a 'postcolonial Maghrebi-Mediterranean literature' (p. xiv). As well as a transnational literature in the Mediterranean, we now see what Esposito calls the 'transnational Mediterranean-in-literature' (p. 156). Put simply, Italy offers these writers the ever-elusive 'third space', where an aesthetic project takes new precedence over a still heated identity politics of language in North Africa. Returning to some of the questions posed at the outset of the book, the author advances yet more questions as a means of highlighting the ongoing process of writing in the Mediterranean and the work still to be done in thinking through its increasingly plural, transnational and transcultural poetics. The approach taken, then, undermines the hegemonic presence of both France and the French language in the contemporary Mediterranean. The monograph, which almost certainly breaks new ground, will have broad appeal to scholars and students in Francophone and Italophone Studies, as well as to those studying the continually evolving space of the literary Mediterranean. Alongside the writers presented here, Esposito challenges the reader to look beyond the notions of identity, race and language fixed within the limits of the nation state. It is, as the

book seems to suggest, only across and beyond national borders that we can begin to articulate and appreciate the true nature of the fluid and porous Mediterranean in narratives and the equally fluid narrative (in the) Mediterranean.

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The Cross-dressed Caribbean: Writing, Politics, Sexualities. Edited by MARIA CRISTINA FUMAGALLI, BÉNÉDICTE LEDENT, AND ROBERTO DEL VALLE ALCALÁ. Charlottesville, VA, and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013. 320 pp. Pb \$35. ISBN: 978-0-8139-3523-2

With the completion of my PhD on Caribbean cross-dressing in sight, the news that the latest publication from J. Michael Dash's *New World Series* would be entitled *The Cross-Dressed Caribbean* provoked equal feelings of panic and curiosity on my part. While most recent studies (King, 2014; Tinsley, 2010; Glave, 2008) have focused on the specificity of non-normative sexualities within the region, Fumagalli et al.'s volume, as I am acutely aware, provides a much-needed focus on the multiple functions of cross-dressing in the creation of opaque and creolized Caribbean subjectivities. In the introduction, cross-dressing is posited as a subversive strategy within a larger project of anti-colonial resistance that both highlights and challenges not only gender binaries, but also the racial, patriarchal and class divisions that continue to underpin Caribbean society as a legacy of colonialism and slavery. The subsequent collection of essays, which commendably traverses the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone and Dutch-speaking islands, covers cross-dressing in literary and filmic works as 'play', 'act' and metaphor for the blurring of these inherited colonial categories.

The colonizer's initial emasculation of the colonized as a means of legitimizing their subjugation, worked to uphold a binary logic of active masculinity versus passive femininity (p. 75). Michael Niblett examines this colonial framework early on in the collection in reference to the work of Patrick Chamoiseau. His analysis draws first on Richard D. E. Burton's sociological study of France's imposition of a Judeo-Christian nuclear family paradigm in Martinique (1994), particularly in the period leading up to *départementalisation* (1946), and then turns to the seminal work of Édouard Glissant (1981) to explore the refusal of this structure through reconfigurations of *l'anti-famille* (p. 76). Niblett explores how for Chamoiseau's characters, individual gender identity becomes subsumed under a collective liberation struggle. Yet in their 'narration of the nation' they crucially reveal the possibilities and openings offered by refashioning subjectivities from within the dominant patriarchal paradigm, thus moving beyond 'the binary oppositions that characterized Negritude, evoking instead a diversity of histories the creolization of which thwarts any attempt to reconstruct a pure line filiation for Martinique' (p. 79).

Glissant's theories on rhizomatic connections and the fluidity of 'Relation' (1990) in dismantling the linearity of origin (and colonial/imperial genealogy) prove particularly relevant to discussions of cross-dressing in the Caribbean as a practice that reroutes and reweaves inflexible and 'legitimate' lines of gender, race and class. Contributors Roberto del Valle Alcalá (writing on Reinaldo Arenas), Wendy Knepper (on Nalo Hopkinson), Mayra Santos Febres (on transvestism) and Isabel Hoving (on the transvestite in Surinamese writing) all use Glissant's relationality to analyse the cross-dresser or border-crosser as an

embodiment of illegitimacy.

While not exclusively tackling gender transgression, the book includes cases of both male-to-female and female-to-male crossing. The reader is also rightly reminded that the practice of cross-dressing does not always constitute a liberatory deconstruction of repressive colonial values (p. 16) and holds the potential to reinforce and repeat historical stereotypes. An example of how cross-dressing serves to reproduce normative identity can be found in the masquerade performances of carnival, which while seeking to comment on contemporary gender relations, often involve the parody and sometimes spectacular denigration of particular social groups, such as women or homosexuals. The potential for carnivalesque performances to invoke a more convincing critique of hegemonic structures and communicate the nonlinear complexity of gender identity in the region is foregrounded in this book by Karina Smith in her study of the Jamaican Sistren Theatre Collective, Knepper's analysis of Nalo Hopkinson's masked *Midnight Robber* figure and Lizabeth Paravisini's discussion of the traditional Saint-Lucian *Paille-banane* dance in Derek Walcott's epic poem *Omeros*. Carnival masquerade in these examples is shown to be a useful cultural tool for exploring the specific contexts and creolized histories of gender expression and sexuality in the region.

As you would expect in such a collection, Fanon's now infamous theories on homosexuality and cross-dressing provide a pivotal, if contentious, point of reference. In their essay on 'Cross-Dressings in the Religious Imaginary of *Aelred's Sin*', Lee Easton and Kelly Hewson seek to counter their interpretation of Fanon's assertions somewhat ironically with Marjorie Garber's theories on cross-dressing in Western culture as a marker of 'category crisis' (1992). The wider historical context of Fanon's writing on the 'un-Caribbeanness' of homosexuality and the cultural nuances of cross-dressing, particularly the critique of Eurocentric impositions of gender that his theories offer, is unfortunately not addressed in the body of their argument. While Garber's *Vested Interests* remains a key reference for scholars working on the gender, racial and social politics of cross-dressing more broadly, there does seem to be an over-reliance on her text in this volume. An alternative approach is adopted by Roberto Strongman in his chapter on cross-gender possession in Vodou, who challenges Fanon's contention by privileging the importance of gender fluidity and same-sex desire in the work of Haitian authors René Depestre and Frankétienne.

While the cross-dresser is often examined through his/her visuality and ability to 'pass' or not through appearance, section three of the book, 'Theories in the Flesh,' suggests a multiplicity of sensory forms of social transgression. Focus is instead given to music, movement and voice in this part by contributors Santos Febres, Shani Mootoo, Lawrence Scott and Carine M. Mardorossian. It is Santos Febres in particular who provides one of the most compelling and resonant readings of the trope of cross-dressing in the Caribbean. As I put the finishing touches to my thesis, the one quotation which I will be attempting to incorporate from this volume comes from Santos Febres, who in her historical framing of the region brilliantly asserts, 'the Caribbean is transvestism.'

CHARLOTTE HAMMOND
ROYAL HOLLOWAY

France's Colonial Legacies: Memory, Identity and Narrative. Edited by FIONA BARCLAY. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013. 283 pp. Hb £95.00. ISBN: 978-0708326671

In 2012, France commemorated fifty years since the end of the Algerian War, and Algeria celebrated fifty years of independence from colonial rule. Controversy surrounding the commemoration of French colonialism, and its accommodation in the national narrative, has been ongoing since the *Marches pour l'égalité et contre le racisme* of the 1980s, though the debate on collective memory reached its apogee when the use of torture during the war was brought to national attention in 1999–2000. Fiona Barclay's edited volume, *France's Colonial Legacies: Memory, Identity and Narrative*, published in 2013, is a timely and wide-reaching resource for researchers and students who hope to understand more about this period of collective memory and the associated debates. In her foreword to the volume, Françoise Vergès highlights the tendency for Algeria's prominence in scholarship on colonial memory to mask other colonial crimes (p. ix). While there is a strong focus on Algeria in several chapters of the volume, a quality of the work is the impressive range of contexts in which colonial memory is seen to play a role. From football matches to transnational adoptions, from literary salons to contemporary film thrillers, the volume shows that the legacy of colonialism continues to permeate French culture in numerous, nuanced ways.

The volume will have considerable appeal to scholars and students of contemporary French politics and society, with its close attention paid to recent political shifts. Thomas Martin's analysis of anti-racist pressure groups highlights a fundamental flaw whereby the group *SOS Racisme's* ideology of promoting a 'real' republicanism, that lives up to its doctrine of fraternity, ends up playing into the hands of conservatives, teetering on the brink of promoting concepts of national identity. Moreover, the real change and recognition brought about by such pressure groups and memory activists is questionable: Nicola Frith draws on Dominique LaCapra to raise crucial and insightful questions about the interrelationship between memory and politics, asking whether 'the ritual performance of remembrance has resulted in nothing more than "a political poster campaign" that appropriates and instrumentalises memory' (p. 229). Cathal Kilcline demonstrates, meanwhile, how this ritual performance has even made its way onto the football pitch, with her fascinating account of the 2005 France–Costa Rica match in Martinique, and its 'timely' coincidence with the riots in France.

The volume does not limit itself to analyses of the contemporary echoes of colonialism, also giving examples of the era's resonance earlier in the twentieth century: worthy of particular note is Joanna Warson's unpacking of the historical stakes at play during the French involvement in Rhodesia of the mid-twentieth century. A rigorous use of primary sources serves to demonstrate the complex economic and political dynamics that led to a French presence in Anglophone Africa, bringing a forgotten dimension of French empire-building out of the shadows. Meanwhile, William Kidd strikes a poignant note in his analysis of the suitcase in *pied-noir* memory. He traces the remarkable iconic status afforded to this emblem of departure, migration and the associated loss from the 1960s to the present-day.

The book moves fluidly between the public and private, demonstrating the interplay between them. If politics and collective debate form the focus of much of the volume, the family unit, its constitution and its stability is seen elsewhere to be equally imbued with colonial dynamics. Zélie Asave's reading of *Sous la clarté de la lune* shows the potential metaphorical role the family can play in representation, highlighting transnational frictions and their legacy. Meanwhile, Fiona Handyside's reading of *Il y a longtemps que je t'aime* proposes a prismatic, as opposed to linear, reading of history. The transnational family of the film is, she states, emblematic of the discontinuities of the colonial legacy in France. Handyside

interprets this family structure to make a convincing plea for a reading of national histories 'as multiple relations rather than a linear inheritance' (p. 184), or as 'a-colonial' (p. 171) rather than postcolonial. She provides scholars in the field with a convincing and important challenge.

The book moves equally fluently between reality and its representation. The work of memory that is achieved by literary and cinematic works such as Assia Djebar's *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, and Michael Haneke's *Caché* or the television documentary *Cinq colonnes à la une* is well documented. Meanwhile, the controversial links between political contexts and the success of certain literary works is unravelled clearly by Gabrielle Parker. Noteworthy among the analyses of the creative representation of colonialism is Fiona Barclay's discussion of the 2006 film *Mon Colonel*, in which she expertly demonstrates how Herbiet explores the ambiguity of legal structures and their relationship to concepts of justice, open to interpretation by those that enforce them. Scholars of colonial memory often refer to the paradox of committing colonial crimes and yet hailing the nation's historical role in conceptualizing the 'rights of man'. Barclay's discussion is one of the most convincing explorations of this theme which I have encountered.

In her foreword, Vergès draws our attention to the urgent question facing postcolonial nations: 'What is our responsibility long after the crime has occurred?' (p. x). In raising awareness of the multiple and long-lasting implications colonialism has had for the French nation, its citizens and its postcolonial Others, Barclay's volume plays an important role in answering this question.

ISABEL HOLLIS
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Dany Laferrière: Essays on his Works. Edited by LEE SKALLERUP BESSETTE. Toronto: Guernica Editions, 2013. 208 pp. Pb \$20.00. ISBN: 978-1-55071-741-9

Lee Skallerup Bessette introduces her edited volume with a nod to Kathleen Gyssels's reformulation in 2010 of the title to Laferrière's acclaimed first novel, *Comment faire l'amour avec un Nègre sans se fatiguer*. Entitled 'How to Read Dany Laferrière Without Getting Tired', Skallerup Bessette's introduction points to the multiple layers to be found in Laferrière's works and the insights which can be drawn from the careful readings that the contributors to this volume offer. The journey through the main themes of class distinction and transgression, marginalization, and the complex notions of identity and hybridity that her introduction provides serves to situate the essays that follow clearly within the wider body of criticism that exists of Laferrière's extensive *œuvre*. Yet, the fresh perspectives offered throughout—such as Ng'ang'a wa Muchiri's comparative piece on Laferrière's and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's representations of political violence and dictatorship in their respective homelands of Haiti and Kenya, and Lucy Brisley's insightful analysis of exile, nostalgia and return in *L'Énigme du retour*—distinguish this volume as a welcome addition to the lively conversation that Laferrière's works have engendered.

The overarching theme of memory, and the many forms of trauma that can be associated with it, is explored in numerous ways across the essays that comprise this compilation, from the subjugation of popular culture by the agents of the dictator in *Le Goût des jeunes filles* and Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*, examined by Muchiri, to Laferrière's own struggles with the multiple traumas of exile and remembering explored across his ten-

volume *Autobiographie américaine*, as Skallerup Bessette exemplifies with particular reference to *Éroshima* and *Je suis un écrivain japonais*. Indeed, the multiple returns—literary, cultural, metaphorical and physical—depicted in *L'Énigme du retour* are framed in terms of an 'unresolved dilemma' by Gabrielle Parker, who examines this 'portmanteau novel' as 'a series of reappraisals of places, people, and texts previously encountered' which sees the author-narrator both physically return to Haiti and reformulate his relationship with the country of his birth (p. 72).

It is upon this very 'homecoming' that Brisley focuses, adroitly negotiating criticism and theory regarding nostalgia and melancholia to inform her analysis of Laferrière's portrayal of exile and subsequent return. Rather than positing a submission to melancholic nostalgia, as she argues the author-narrator has in exile, Brisley concludes that it is through new ways of imagining the relationship with the homeland that Laferrière suggests 'homecoming' is made possible, a process she suggests is the result, in part at least, of the discord between the nostalgic image of Haiti he had recreated in his psyche and the reality of his experience once he is back there: 'The "enigma" of the return', she writes, 'is that [...] home is no longer a territory but a state of being' (pp. 116–17).

This complex notion of return serves as the point of departure for Lynn Penrod's contribution, which addresses Laferrière's comparatively recent turn to children's writing. Focusing on the two books of the trilogy that had been published at the time of writing, Penrod engages with Sandra Beckett's research to demonstrate that Laferrière is a 'crossover writer', but one who crosses the border between adult fiction and children's literature by retelling the stories he selects in a new way. Aided by the vivid illustrations that accompany his prose, Laferrière enables access to a world of Haitian spirituality and sensuality of which his own children, as well as other Haitian children living in exile, have little experience, if any at all.

Amy J. Ransom's essay, the final of the volume, reprises the theme of cultural memory through a close reading of the interweaving of Greek mythology and Vodou in *Le Cri des oiseaux fous*. Following in the footsteps of Félix Morisseau-Leroy with his *Antigone en créole*, Laferrière knits these two traditions together into an account that Ransom concludes to be a reflection of 'the postcolonial, hybrid position of the in-between described by [Sherry] Simon' (p. 166). The result, she suggests, is an espousal of the 'entre-deux of cultural hybridity' that provides both Laferrière and his avatar, Vieux Os, with a framework within which to situate their experiences of loss, exile and, by extension, physical return (p. 167).

Leading her compilation full-circle, Skallerup Bessette closes with an interview by correspondence with Dany Laferrière, followed by a brief biography, which invoke the author's own voice just as the first instalment of his *Autobiographie américaine* did. Laferrière's pithy responses echo Skallerup Bessette's initial observation that a little scratching beneath the surface can reveal much when reading his works. The various contributions to this volume offer some new and fruitful perspectives on the multiple forms of memory, exile and return in Laferrière's works, with the multifaceted nature of identity recurring as a source of interest throughout. It introduces a number of thought-provoking discussions to the large body of existing criticism, for which the editor's informative bibliography serves as a helpful resource.

PAUL HUMPHREY
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Guerre d'Algérie/Guerre d'indépendance: Regards littéraires croisés. Edited by BIRGIT MERTZ-BAUMGARTNER AND BEATE BURTSCHER-BECHTER. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2013. 167 pp. Pb €32.00. ISBN: 978-3-8260-5085-5

While scholarship on the Algerian War has grown since the 1990s, most of this work has been conducted within the Anglophone and Francophone academies. This collection of essays, edited by Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner and Beate Burtscher-Bechter (both from the University of Innsbruck), brings together the work of academics working in Germany and Austria, providing an additional but welcome perspective to this field of study. The collection comprises seven chapters, each analysing the relationship between history and fiction (necessarily a key concern in studies of this kind), and shedding light on the role of literary texts in contributing to our understanding of the Algerian War and the ways in which it is remembered in the contemporary period. The ensuing chapters consist of examinations of the work of authors from different backgrounds, French and Algerian, including François Bourgeat, Philippe Doumenc, Jacques Syreigeol, Laurent Mauvignier, Arno Bertina, Rachid Boudjedra, Assia Djebar, Maïssa Bey and Boualem Sansal. The primary corpus is intended to be strictly contemporary, consisting of works published between 1989 and 2011.

The unifying theme linking the essays and constituting the book's main focus of analysis is the role of the literary text in problematizing the memory of the war and, in particular, representing the intersecting of divergent memories of the war. As the introduction makes clear, these intersections occur within the primary corpus between memories of groups that are regularly set in opposition to one another (for example, FLN group memories versus the memories of French veterans, and Algerian immigrant memories versus the memories of *harkis*). Such intersections of memory, the editors argue, challenge the existence of singular group memories which reinforce and legitimize group identification and consequently maintain conflicts with other, apparently competing group memories and identities. Each chapter conducts a close examination of the narrative techniques and aesthetics of the texts under discussion in order to show that it is precisely through this use and manipulation of language that the literary text is able to present a multitude of intersecting memories of the Algerian War. In this way, the book distinguishes the role of the writer of fiction from that of the historian, and argues for the potential of fiction to contribute to our understanding of the history in question.

Structurally, the book claims not to be an edited collection at all in fact, but a 'monographie "en commun"'. The reasoning behind this organization of the book lies in the opinion that edited collections present individual articles which become thematically isolated from one another, while this study seeks to retain a clear link between its different chapters. Overall, the book is successful in its aim of maintaining focus throughout, although I do not necessarily view the perceived disparity in more conventional edited collections as a major problem. However, the absence of a conclusion tying together the various chapters and reinforcing the underlying argument of the volume seems to go against the book's intention to emphasize a collective line of reasoning throughout. For this reader at least, a short conclusion would have helped to emphasize the book's valid points with regard to the ways in which memories of the Algerian War come into contact and overlap in literature.

A potential point of contention lies in the book's rather simplistic definition of what constitutes a 'French' or 'Algerian' writer. Indeed, there is no problematization of these categories within the volume: instead, Doumenc, Syreigeol, Bourgeat, Mauvignier and Bertina are classified as French; Boudjedra, Djebar, Bey and Sansal are classed as Algerian. Thus, Syreigeol's Algerian roots (he was born in Oran) are never really addressed, although the chapter which discusses his work does recognize his place of birth. Furthermore, though his work is not analysed in great detail within the volume, the writer and director Mehdi Charef is referred to as Algerian in different chapters, even though he was brought up in France and

has lived there since an early age. But it is perhaps the categorization of Djébar as an Algerian author that is most problematic. Though born in Algeria, she became the first North African writer to be elected to the Académie Française in 2005. Thus, the example of Djébar points towards the porosity of national boundaries, a porosity which becomes all the more crucial, of course, when working within the field of Postcolonial Studies. Admittedly, challenging the fixity of national categories does not constitute the focus of this book but, to a certain extent, questions of identity are intrinsic to questions of memory (see, for example, the edited volume by Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, 2003). Finally, the lack of any problematization of the categories of 'French' and 'Algerian' seems to overlook the notion, as argued by Paul A. Silverstein (2004), that France/Algeria constitutes a transpolitical space, which again emphasizes that national boundaries are not always clear cut. Nonetheless, the contributions to this collection are helpful in illuminating the complex relationship between fiction and history, as well as the particular ways in which literary texts can contribute to a fuller understanding of history.

JONATHAN LEWIS
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Édouard Glissant: A Special Issue. Ed. by CELIA BRITTON. *Callaloo*, 36.4 (2013), 841-1046. Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press. ISSN: 0161-2492

Glissant leaves a legacy in Francophone Caribbean literature which is not easily summarized, in my opinion. His notion of *relation* is not supposed to be straightforward; he does not promise clarity, concision or even resolution. Instead, he offers multiplicity through his notions of *opacité*, *détour* and *créolisation*. The frustration with Glissant's writing that follows from this underpinning principle of *relation* is something scholars are vexed by because of the assumed end goal of knowledge sharing. For Glissant, himself a lifelong scholar, this knowledge could be shared, so long as it was mastered in a way that permitted a limitless improvisation upon it. This is one of the several interpretations that one could infer from reading Glissant's own epitaph, 'Rien n'est vrai, tout est vivant'. In spite of all this, as I was reading this special issue, I could not help but remark how well the articles captured Glissant's insistence upon adaptability and flexibility. This statement is a compliment to all the scholars involved in the production of this collection, but I am unsure where this leaves the untranslatability or the *opacité* of Glissant himself.

The volume is meant as a commemorative issue of *Callaloo*, and so includes a remembrance of Maryse Condé of reading *Les Indes* for the first time, several translations of Glissant's poems by Mary Ann Caws, a selective bibliography of Glissant's works and a translation of a speech given by Glissant, 'Éloge du différent et de la différence', by Britton. This reflection and the translations included introduce the main body of criticism which mainly discusses aspects and applications of Glissant's poetry and essays. This set of articles effectively highlights, elaborates and interrogates most of the main tropes in Glissant's works. I would like to state briefly that Condé's sincere reflection upon *Les Indes* is a fitting framework for the rest of the issue because it recounts her initial attempt to remain unattached from the text, as a professional scholar would do. Then, it navigates through the highly personal and invested nature of the poetry, causing Condé to reflect upon her research and teaching in a way which stops to question the broader implications of understanding of *Les Indes*. She asks a writerly question about the literature rather than a critical one: 'Isn't it

enough to love it?' (p. 867).

This is a difficult position from which to approach critical and scholarly work on Glissant, and it does not divide the articles that follow, but it does pose a challenge to them to examine Glissant's *œuvre* as interconnected, yet sometimes in contradiction with itself. Most articles speculate about the broader implications for Glissant's development of an open system of thought, while a couple of them focus upon the significance of Glissant's accounts of history and their overall place within Caribbean literature. François Noudelmann (in translation) offers some overarching thoughts about the broad scope and constant reframing of Glissant's main philosophical interventions, and his critique of universalism and replacement of this idea with a more localized and personal sense of transmission (p. 869, p. 871). For Adlai Murdoch, Glissant's contribution to thinking represents 'a complete revision of traditional systems of thought' (p. 882). Murdoch makes reference to the 'archipelagic', or disconnected, systems of thought which Glissant articulates, and marks a point of departure for 'possibilities of inclusion' (p. 885, p. 889). Alexandre Leupin writes about Glissant's rejection of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic in terms of the concept of *jouissance* (enjoyment, fulfilment, orgasm, property rights, usufruct (p. 900)): that whereas hegemonic relationships grasp a sense of immediate *jouissance* at the expense of one's 'other', Glissant conceives of a *jouissance* which includes relation to one's 'other' and shares in it. Michael Wiedorn explains that the 'excess of meaning' in *Philosophie de la relation* serves to transform the writing into what the writing seeks to accomplish; i.e. the pluralistic tendencies of the writing are in fact attempts to work out *opacité* in practice (pp. 902-15). Articles by Alessandro Corio and by Carine Mardorossian approach Glissant's work from biopolitical perspectives which trace and develop how Glissant's work can be situated in postcolonial thought, with Corio discussing the notion of relation as an 'affirmative biopolitics' (p. 924) and Mardorossian examining the precise reason that Glissant's work can 'provide a bridge between environmentalist and postcolonial considerations' (p. 988). In their articles, Charles Forsdick and Nick Nesbitt examine decidedly more problematic aspects of colonial and postcolonial history in Glissant's work up to and including *Le Discours antillais* in their analyses, relating Glissant's philosophical focus to his lifelong engagement with politics. While Forsdick examines the trope of the inspiration of and cautionary example of Haïti as constructing an intellectual framework 'in order to create cross-Caribbean connections that would serve as the basis for restoring dignity and for recognizing diversity in the region' (p. 965) in Glissant's work, Nesbitt offers a counterpoint. Stating that Glissant's critique of late French colonialism is 'in the mode of *lamentation* and *mourning*' (p. 939), Nesbitt reminds us that the underpinning *Discours* is a deep-seated dissatisfaction, the tragedy of colonialism. Articles by Christina Kullberg and by Heidi Bojsen read into the ethnographic formation of Glissant and how scholars in development studies might apply Glissant's notions of *relation* and *opacité* in order to engage in cultural exchange without losing cultural heritage in the process. Valérie Loichot closes the volume with a fascinating examination of Glissant's grave in Martinique: its design, significance and the reflection of his aesthetics in its space.

Overall, this issue is an impressive contribution to the study of Glissant's life, works and poetics. As noted earlier, in reading the reflections and the dozen or so articles, I felt that I got to know Glissant: the essence of his poetics was articulated so well that I would recommend this volume as essential reading for anyone studying Glissant. With some very minor drawbacks that are few and far between, it makes Glissant accessible and relatable. The almost singular focus on the author, for example, might have benefited in some cases from a more inclusive comparison of his contemporaries, or those who were less than a generation apart from him. To some degree, this is rectified by Loichot's mention of Glissant's primary vocation as a poet as what drew him to Aimé Césaire's birthplace late in life (p. 1029). This mention of a draw to 'Papa Césaire' is not a weakness but I think part of Glissant's commitment to the effort of remaining open-minded, imparting a legacy of *relation*

that aspires to connect generations.

BART MILLER
INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Childhood, Autobiography and the Francophone Caribbean. By LOUISE HARDWICK. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013. 248pp. Hb £70. ISBN: 978-1-84631841-2

Louise Hardwick's *Childhood, Autobiography and the Francophone Caribbean* takes as its object of study a largely unexplored domain of the now burgeoning field of Francophone autobiography: the Francophone Caribbean *récit d'enfance*. The starting premise of Hardwick's study is the inadequation between Western models of autobiography based on the definition of an individual, sovereign self and a Francophone Caribbean tradition of life writing preoccupied with giving voice to the points of interface between the individual and the community. On this basis, Hardwick argues for the need to bring attention to the cultural and historical specificity of the Francophone Caribbean *récit d'enfance*. Hardwick's commitment to bringing to light the distinctiveness of this form of writing in turn provides the conditions of possibility for the comparative focus of this study. One of the undoubted benefits of this focus is the range of Francophone Caribbean works addressed. However, the culturally exclusive definition of the *récit d'enfance* that subtends Hardwick's introduction imposes an a priori self-reliance on this form of writing that is to the detriment of substantive engagement with the diversity of intertextual connections which the works establish with traditions of autobiographical writing that extend beyond the Francophone Caribbean.

Chapter One, 'The Emergence of a Tradition', identifies Joseph Zobel's *La Rue Cases-Nègres* as the foundational text for a tradition whose origins are dated to the mid-twentieth century (1950s–1970s). In this respect, Zobel's *La Rue Cases-Nègres* (along with its sequel *La fête à Paris*) is read as providing the defining problematic of a self-consciously representative tradition: the critique of the colonial education system's alienating impact on the individual that is addressed explicitly to Antillean readers. Through its network of insightful juxtapositions, the chapter is equally concerned with sketching out a type of pre-history for the *récit d'enfance* in the poetic works produced from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century by literary pioneers such as Saint-John Perse and Léon-Gontran Damas.

Building on the formative role ascribed to the colonial educational system, Chapter Two, 'Apples and Mimic Men: Patrick Chamoiseau's *Une enfance créole*', aims to read Chamoiseau's autobiographical trilogy in the light of Homi Bhabha's theorizations of mimicry. The first two instalments of Chamoiseau's trilogy, which provide the focus for the chapter, offer vivid depictions of the fraught relationship between Creole and French through the paradigmatic experiences of the child narrator subjected to the indoctrinations of a colonial French education system. In spite of the chapter's title, both Bhabha's mimicry and the final part of Chamoiseau's autobiography, *A bout d'enfance*, are in fact marginal to the chapter's main arguments. The result is a missed opportunity to integrate both works into a productive discussion of Chamoiseau's gradual progression across the trilogy from *créolité* towards a position that 'approaches Glissantian conceptualizations of literature' (p. 79).

The ways in which ethnic diversity inflects the scene of recognition provide the focus for Chapter Three, 'The Poetics of Ethnicity in Raphaël Confiant's *Ravines du devant-jour* and *Le*

Cahier de romances. It is the first of the two works which provides the basis for the detailed exploration in the chapter of the relationship between the narrator's positioning (imposed and claimed) on an ethnoclass hierarchy as a *chabin* and his simultaneous emergence as social subject and writer. The *chabin*'s outsider status offers, furthermore, multiple points of reflection on the fixed power relations that position other identities within the ethnoclass hierarchy. The chapter's conclusion reads in the uncompromising vision of prejudice and racial tensions offered by Confiant's texts, the paradox of a *créolité* whose dream of achieving cultural unity is always frustrated by seemingly intractable social divisions. Yet, Confiant's claiming of the *béké* writer, Saint-John Perse, as a precursor suggests that literature may offer as yet unexplored possibilities for challenging even the most historically engrained determinisms.

The questioning of the viability of *créolité* leads to a focus in the subsequent three chapters on authors who—with varying degree of self-consciousness—diverge from this school's political and aesthetic prescriptions. This cycle of chapters begins with a discussion of one of the most vocal critics of *créolité*, the Guadeloupean author Maryse Condé. In Chapter Four 'Alienation and Estrangement in Maryse Condé's *Le Cœur à rire et à pleurer*', the bourgeois social status of Condé's childhood protagonist leads to a foundational experience of alienation that takes the form of being 'coupée de la réalité profonde du pays' (quoted on p. 112). The chapter tracks instances of this alienation in Condé's retrospective portrayal of a childhood self that is often painfully at odds with her familial and social context. While acknowledging the manipulation of fact and fiction suggested by 'contes vrais', the chapter does not address the possibility that the text's exploitation of the fluid boundaries between fact and fiction may in fact serve Condé's claiming of strategic postures of alienation and self-estrangement in relation to the range of cultural and political prescriptions shaping her global field of reception.

Chapter Five, 'Childhood, the Environment and Diaspora', reads Daniel Maximin's *Tu, c'est l'enfance* and Gisèle Pineau's *L'Exil selon Julia* for the contrasted portrayals they offer of the child narrator's experience of place and space. A key preoccupation of the chapter is therefore to cast light on how this experience is shaped by the dislocations wrought by emigration from Guadeloupe to France. In both texts, separation from the native land is a prompt for often elegiac acts of memory in which individual, familial and collective frames of reference blur and overlap. However, while broadly speaking, Maximin and Pineau may be considered as part of the same generation of diasporic Francophone Caribbean writers, their works provide distinctly different responses to the recovery of the native land. In this respect, an implicit and potentially problematic contrast is drawn between the self-reliance and coherence of Maximin's narrative and the dependence (on the memories of others) and fragmentation that characterize Pineau's text.

Chapter Six, 'Thwarted Expectations?', considers the conflicting forces of change and stasis in two childhood narratives (*L'Odeur du café* and *Le Charme des après-midi sans fin*) by the global Haitian writer Dany Laferrière. The chapter situates astute readings of the dramatization of time in these works in the context of the iconoclasm of Laferrière's cycle of novels (of which these works are a part) 'Une autobiographie américaine'. The chapter is alive to stylistic tensions within the cycle, between the clear, 'gentle' style of the *récits d'enfance* and the provocative claiming of identities (in the context of often fragmentary narratives) in the rest of the works. Through his work's insistent claiming of an 'American identity', as Hardwick observes, Laferrière marks his distance from the other Francophone Caribbean authors discussed (p. 178). Yet, this assertion of difference necessarily raises the broader question of the terms of the inclusion of Laferrière's work within a study of *récits d'enfance* from the Francophone Caribbean.

Chapter Seven's exploration of parental paradigms and stereotypes serves as the

pretext for a further extension of the corpus of texts discussed to include, for example, more recent works by Maryse Condé and Gisèle Pineau. But against the grain of the diasporic vision of the Francophone Caribbean endorsed in previous chapter, this final extension of the corpus has the paradoxical effect of reinforcing a somewhat insular view of the Francophone Caribbean as co-extensive with the DOM. It is left to the afterword to project towards comparative possibilities beyond the Francophone Caribbean, possibilities that are well served by Hardwick's valuable testament to the richness and diversity of Francophone Caribbean writing on childhood.

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Migrations in Francophone Contexts

SFPS Postgraduate Study Day
University of Warwick, 5 June 2014

This year's Postgraduate Study Day, which was held thanks to generous sponsorship by the SFPS and the French Studies department at the University of Warwick, saw an exciting variety of papers showcasing current research around the theme of migration in Francophone contexts. In the opening panel, Claudio Svaluto (Warwick) explored the stereotypical figures of Italian migrants in the area of *québécois* cinema. Esther Liu (Cardiff) then drew on the fiction of Mongo Beti to consider the colonial missionary as a figure whose movement is 'never fully achieved'.

In the next panel, speakers addressed a number of different sites of migration. Elizabeth Lowenstein (Leeds) problematized theories of nomad subjects by exploring the concrete signifiers of migration found in a number of texts written in French by Iranian female authors. David Cummings (QUB) then examined the uneasy position of the European colonial migrant into Algeria through the work of the writer, Emmanuel Roblès, whose family history meant he occupied the interstitial space between French, Spanish and Algerian cultures. The final contribution in this panel came from Joseph Ford (Leeds), who provided insight into the contemporary writing of Salim Bachi, and argued that space is made for fresh depictions and observations of the terrorist within Bachi's re-staging of violence.

In the session devoted to early careers, Dr Lucy Brisley (ENS Lyon) provided a helpful and comprehensive presentation on getting started in academia. Drawing from recent experience, she emphasized the importance of publications, advising on the best steps to take and the questions to ask. She also gave an overview of the different employment opportunities available to postgraduate researchers, giving details of CV and interview preparation.

The final panel focused on the presentation of models of identity in the context of migration. Edward Still (Oxford) explored Derrida's conceptualization of linguistic identity in terms of plurality in singularity, stressing both the inherent coloniality of language and Derrida's own identity as exile *ab initio*. The paper by Olivia Sheringham (Oxford) approached the movement from *créolité* to *relation* from a sociological viewpoint, drawing on fieldwork interviews conducted in Martinique to examine the different concepts of identity currently prevalent among Martinicans.

The day ended with a keynote by Professor Charles Forsdick, who drew together many elements of the day's papers in his talk on 'Translating Francophone Cultures'. Although he recognized the important and urgent work in examining translation in a global context, highlighting, particularly, the need to find new ways in which to do so, he also articulated the important work of translation in a more domestic sphere. Introducing his audience to the work of the AHRC 'Translating Cultures' theme, he outlined some of the major projects currently taking place which foreground the importance of understanding and researching translation and cultural exchange at home, as well as abroad. In doing so, he reminded us that, as Michael Cronin posits, 'translation is a dual experience of limits in language and culture'.

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Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

Contributions on any topic related to Francophone Postcolonial Studies are invited for inclusion in future issues. Authors should submit electronically two copies of their article, 4,000 words maximum, in English or French to a member of the editorial team. Articles should conform in presentation to the guidelines in the *MHRA Stylebook*, providing references in footnotes, rather than the author-date system. All articles submitted to the *BFPS* will be refereed by two scholars of international reputation, drawn from the advisory and editorial boards. To facilitate the anonymity of the refereeing process, authors are asked that their manuscript (other than the title page) contains no clue as to their identity. Book reviews (between 600 and 1000 words in length) and conference reports (500 words max.) should also be sent to the editorial team.

The deadline for the receipt of articles to be included in the spring 2015 issue is 15 January 2015.

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