1.1, Spring 2010
ISSN 2044-4109

Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

A Biannual Publication

Articles

Book Reviews

Conference Reports

History, Museums and National Identity in France

Government ministries and museums have enjoyed a long history in France, and twenty-first-century cultural, political and social developments have transformed this relationship in new and often intriguing ways. On 21 November 2009 the front page of the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* included an entry—'Albert Camus au Panthéon?'—by the well-known political cartoonist Plantu that highlighted the complexity of President Nicolas Sarkozy's desire to move Camus' remains to the Panthéon. In the cartoon, Sarkozy is seen standing behind a podium bearing a French flag and the wording 'Sarko-Malraux' and singing 'Entre ici l'étranger'—an obvious reference to Camus' most well-known novel *L'Etranger*—indeed an association further reinforced by the presence of a winged and airborne Camus holding a copy of his novel, the recognizable structure of the Panthéon in the background, and juxtaposed with a police officer ordering a black man with the familiar 'tu' ('Toi, tu rentres ici!') to get in to a police vehicle. The allusion to Sarkozy's instrumentalization of immigration through the creation of a Ministry of Immigration, National Identity, Integration and Co-Development (www.immigration.gouv.fr), highly-publicized arrest and deportation statistics, and controversial debate on national identity are evident. Here, Plantu points to the political capital Sarkozy has calculated by embracing a cultural icon such as Camus, thereby cautiously selecting, privileging, and memorializing components of the complicated colonial history of Algerian-French contact (and thereby appealing to electoral constituencies among *pied-noir* communities), while also underscoring the contradictions inherent to such mechanisms given the prevalence of repressive immigration policy and xenophobic tendencies that have come to characterize the contemporary French political landscape. The insertion of Camus into these debates emerges as a particularly opportunistic choice when one considers equally meritorious figures; but what becomes clear is both the acceptability of the 'Algerian' Camus juxtaposed here with the undesirable immigrant or, simultaneously, with an author such as Jean-Paul Sartre whose presence in the Panthéon remains unimaginable at this moment in history, not least as a result of his anti-colonialism.[1]

There are of course numerous precursors to this latest debate concerning the panthéonisation of historical figures, most notably as far as the commemoration and status of Black figures are concerned, including Félix Éboué (the colonial administrator), Louis Delgrès (a mulatto leader in the struggle against the restoration of slavery in 1802), Toussaint Louverture (who played a key role in the struggle for Haitian independence),[2] and notably demonstrated by the petition launched in 2007 'Pour la panthéonisation d'Olympe de Gouges [eighteenth-century French author and anti-slavery activist] et Solitude [a slave who fought alongside Delgrès against the restoration of slavery]'.[3] Associating André Malraux with these matters proves to be

[1] See, for example, Patrick Williams, 'Roads to Freedom: Jean-Paul Sartre and Anti-Colonialism', in *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, pp. 147–56.

[2] See, for example, Laurent Dubois, 'Haunting Delgrès', *Radical History Review*, 78 (2000), 166–77, and his *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Nick Nesbitt, *Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2003); and *Contested Histories in Public Space*, ed. by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

[3] http://olympedegouges.wordpress.com/qui-sommes-nous/, first published in *Le Monde*, 8 March 2007.

significant in multiple ways; he was, after all, the inaugural Minister of Culture appointed in 1959 by President de Gaulle, his own remains were moved to the Panthéon in 1996, and as Herman Lebovics has argued, 'The great man in the Panthéon has become one of the most frequently invoked markers of the glory days of the French nation and French culture.'[4] French cultural and political institutions have, historically, enjoyed symbiotic connections, precisely because of Malraux's appointment to the Ministère des Affaires Culturelles (today the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, www.culture.gouv.fr) from 1959 to 1969. Numerous events were planned in 2009 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this ministry, and half a century later, the 'Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication s'attache à valoriser et développer les patrimoines dans les domaines de l'architecture, des archives, des musées, ainsi que du patrimoine monumental et de l'archéologie' and continues to occupy a central role in national politics, fostering Gaullist notions of 'grandeur' but also in supporting a policy of international 'rayonnement'.[5] Notable appointments have included Jack Lang (1981–86 and 1988–93), the catalyst behind the ambitious architectural transformations known as the 'grands travaux' that transformed the Parisian landscape (the Institut du Monde Arabe, the Musée d'Orsay and Opéra-Bastille); Jacques Toubon (1993–95), the forceful advocate and protectionist of the French language; and more recently Frédéric Mitterrand (former President Mitterrand's nephew) has been a no less controversial figure.

Since 2007, President Sarkozy's policies have included a broad range of interconnected and inter-aligned operations between various ministries. Foremost among these have been concerns with history and national identity, in other words with the preservation of the 'patrimoine' and definition of 'memory'. In recent years, several cultural and social projects have come to fruition in France; most notable among these was the opening of the Musée Quai Branly in 2006 (a museum that has centralized French holdings in the arts of Africa, Oceania, Asia and the Americas) and in 2007 of the Centre national de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI, a space designed to address the legacy of the history of immigration in France) located at the Porte Dorée in eastern Paris in the building that had formerly housed the Musée d'arts africains et océaniens (MAAO), a site with a fascinating transcolonial history since it was initially created in 1931 to house the Musée permanent des colonies.[6] Of course, when one considers the complex practices utilized to display human subjects *and* objects during the colonial era, and then subsequently the manner in which these have been updated during the postcolonial era with the Musée du Quai Branly specializing in the history of acquisition of *art* objects and the CNHI concentrating on the migratory apparatus, namely human subjects, then the connections to the Panthéon *as* a museum space that narrates the multiple chapters of a *national* history become in and of themselves all the more compelling.[7] The Musée du Quai Branly was clearly an inheritance from the Chirac era, and Sarkozy's own interpretation of colonial history signals his discomfort with this, especially when one takes into consideration the efforts he has made to

[4] Herman Lebovics, *Mona Lisa's Escort: André Malraux and the Reinvention of French Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. ix.

[5] http://www.50ans.culture.fr/demain/missions/valoriser/1.

[6] See Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), and Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[7] See Pascal Blanchard et al., *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires*, trans. by Teresa Bridgeman (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), and Dominic Thomas, 'Object/Subject migration: The National Centre of the History of Immigration', in *Museums in Postcolonial Europe*, ed. by Dominic Thomas (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 126–38.

secure electoral support from former 'colonials'. To this end, the shift in museology has been striking since, rather than directing his efforts towards largely state-controlled initiatives like the Musée Quai Branly that are connected to new conceptualizations of museum spaces, whereby 'The aim of reaching broader audiences and improving the accessibility and pertinence of museums—of *democratizing* museums—is certainly understood as an important aspect of museology today, and all the more so within a postcolonial context',[8] Sarkozy has preferred to encourage populist endorsements of historical revisionism. While such revisionism and nationalism had defined Sarkozy's activities as Minister of the Interior (2005–07), these significant developments also coincided with the final years of Jacques Chirac's presidency, and an election campaign during which disquieting nationalistic elements surfaced.

Today, globalization and French cultural and national identity have emerged as central concerns in national politics; observers have evoked a 'crisis' of French identity, pointing to France's failure at negotiating the demands, exigencies, and realities of the new world order, while others have drawn on certain 'symbols' (headscarves, veils, Burqas, and so on) as indicators of the widespread erosion to the fabric of French society. Brice Hortefeux (now Minister of the Interior) was the first to head the new Ministry of Immigration and National Identity, initially devoting his attention to the regulation of border control and population flows and, building on France's presidency of the European Union from 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008, to lobby for E.U.-wide support *for* and standardizing *of* policy through the E.U. Pact on Migration and Asylum.[9] Éric Besson replaced him in 2009 and has amplified the debate on national identity by launching a national debate on 2 November 2009 (through public debates, speeches, web-site activities, and conferences) on the following question: 'Pour vous, qu'est-ce qu'être français aujourd'hui?' (www.debatidentitenationale.fr). Whereas the CNHI's organizing principle is structured around a statement according to which 'Leur histoire est notre histoire' (Their history is our history)—whereby the 'est' operates in such a manner as to encourage constitutive and inclusive notions of *Frenchness*—, the imperatives and priorities of the new ministry place this verb under pressure since the current political climate and official rhetoric might well lead one to hear the word as 'et' and as indicative of tangential histories in which hierarchies, different forms of belonging, citizenship and adherence are to be found.[10] Not surprisingly, such a tenuous relationship between twenty-first-century cultural, economic, political and social aspirations and the past/history and competing multiculturalisms frame governmental policy-making and museal developments. To this end, President Sarkozy commissioned a report that would seek to outline what a Museum of French History might look like—a project diametrically opposed in its aims and aspirations to the conceptions of French history that have defined the CNHI.

This report was completed by Hervé Lemoine on 16 April 2008, and entitled 'La Maison de l'Histoire de France: *Pour la création d'un centre de recherche et de collections permanentes dédié à l'histoire civile et militaire de la France*.' Sponsored by the Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication and the Ministre de la Défense, the aim of the report was 'proposer des solutions concrètes en vue de la réalisation du *centre de recherche et de collections permanentes dédié à*

[8] Dominic Thomas, 'Museums in Postcolonial Europe: An introduction', in *Museums in Postcolonial Europe*, p. 9.
[9] Dominic Thomas, 'Sarkozy's law: The institutionalization of xenophobia in the new Europe', *Radical Philosophy*, 153 (2009), 7–12.
[10] See, for example, Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom, *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009).

l'histoire civile et militaire de la France',[11] a further indication of the kind of collaborative measures between various ministries that we have witnessed in recent years. These efforts have proved to be all the more significant given that the debate on national identity is inextricably linked to broader questions pertaining to the very definition and understanding of French history, as confirmed by the special section on the ministry's website called the 'bibliothèque' (to which we shall return) and that includes a recommended reading list with accompanying abstracts.[12] These texts therefore enable us to identify the kinds of works that have structured official thinking on a broad spectrum of twenty-first-century issues but are also related to the choice of Camus for the Panthéon mausoleum precisely because this site, whose façade is inscribed with the phrase 'Aux Grands Hommes La Patrie Reconnaissante', strengthens the indissociability of 'greatness' with the 'homeland'.

The response to Besson's initiatives has been quite surprising. On the one hand, Besson has chosen to interpret the thousands of 'hits' on the official website as confirmation of the public interest in this question (although they had to admit to deleting multiple blog entries—*dérapages* as they were called—because of their explicitly offensive racist and xenophobic tone), while in turn his initiatives have triggered widespread opposition and drawn further attention to the disconnection between the government authorities and public sentiment on the question. The online journal *Medipart* announced that 'Nous ne débattrons pas!' and launched a petition (www.medipart.fr); SOS Racisme joined ranks with 'Arrêtez ce débat, Monsieur le Président!' (www.arretezcedebat.com); and gay rights organizations Panthères roses/Act Up released a badge stating 'Mon identité n'est pas nationale'. Besson's official 'Lettre de mission' outlined the rationale for his initiatives:

> La promotion de notre identité nationale doit être placée au cœur de votre action [...] En étant nous-mêmes fiers d'être français, nous faciliterons l'intégration des étrangers que nous accueillons. Comment leur demander d'aimer la France si nous ne l'aimons pas nous-mêmes? Nous devons non seulement assumer mais aussi célébrer, au regard du monde et des nouveaux migrants, la fierté d'être français [...] Vous prendrez part, aux côtés du ministre chargé de la Culture, à la mise en place du Musée de l'histoire de France, qui contribuera à faire vivre notre identité nationale auprès du grand public.[13]

With these guidelines in mind, Besson's 'digital' debate confirmed his commitment to this *mission*:

> Bonjour. Bienvenue sur ce site qui est le site que nous avons créé pour le débat sur l'identité nationale. Ça répond à une promesse de Nicolas Sarkozy lorsqu'il était candidat. Il avait dit: 'Je veux valoriser notre identité nationale, valoriser la fierté d'être français et associer le peuple français à ces valeurs fondamentales, les valeurs républicaines.' Donc nous allons le faire ensemble et sur ce site nous vous posons quelques questions simples. Pour vous 'Qu'est-ce que c'est d'être français?'[14]

During the electoral campaign, then candidate Sarkozy relied heavily on the importance of expressing undivided and unqualified pride in French history, beliefs encapsulated in his oft-

[11] Hervé Lemoine, 'La Maison de l'Histoire de France: *Pour la création d'un centre de recherche et de collections permanentes dédié à l'histoire civile et militaire de la France*', 16 April 2008, p. 2.
[12] See http://www.debatidentitenationale.fr/bibliotheque/.
[13] Cited in *Douce France: Rafles, Rétentions, Expulsions*, ed. by Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison (Paris: Seuil/RESF, 2009), pp. 291–92.
[14] www.youtube.com/ministereimmigration#p/u/8/lkNPlgOv-YU.

repeated 'La France, tu l'aimes ou tu la quittes'. Not surprisingly, such notions have infiltrated statements made subsequently by Besson, whereby 'être français, c'est aimer la France, c'est-à-dire connaître son histoire.'[15] Let us consider how Besson interprets this history:

> Notre Nation s'est constituée au fil des siècles par l'accueil et l'intégration de personnes d'origine étrangère. Ce grand débat doit permettre de valoriser l'apport de l'immigration à l'identité nationale, et de proposer des actions permettant de mieux faire partager les valeurs de l'identité nationale à chaque étape du parcours d'intégration. Comment mieux faire partager les valeurs de l'identité nationale auprès des ressortissants étrangers qui entrent et séjournent sur le territoire national?[16]

These efforts have also entailed a systematic recuperation and mainstreaming of some of the central tenets associated with the extreme-right-wing policies of the Front National since the 1970s, including the national anthem: 'Prévoir que l'ensemble des jeunes français', Besson claims, 'devront chanter au moins une fois par an, le cas échéant, après une séance pédagogique sur ce thème, l'hymne national.'[17] These campaign strategies and post-election discourse have come under heavy criticism, not least from academics: 'Cette instrumentalisation est une stratégie à triple visé: brouiller les pistes, flatter (pour la détourner) l'attention de l'électorat et définir en creux une certaine conception de l'identité nationale [...] Car les innombrables listings de personnages ou d'événements produisent une sorte de concentré spatio-temporel qui perd toute sa densité historique. On assiste à la combinaison d'un usage compulsif de l'histoire et d'un mécanisme de consécration du passé.'[18]

The Lemoine report reiterated the importance of France's 'longue tradition historiographique', insisting that 'la *culture historique* occupe dans l'identité nationale et dans le sentiment national des Français une place centrale',[19] and in a speech, 'Vœux aux acteurs de la Culture', given by the President in Nîmes on 13 January 2009, he also validated this project: 'Nous avons donc décidé la création d'un Musée de l'Histoire de France. Ce musée sera situé dans un lieu emblématique de notre histoire, un lieu qui reste à choisir et qui sera choisi'.[20] Historian Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison has deconstructed this language in an incisive analysis of these processes, arguing that 'La mobilisation d'un passé monumental permet de faire croire au retour de la grandeur et de la puissance et de rétablir la croyance et la confiance en un avenir radieux, puisque ce qui a été doit pouvoir être à nouveau.'[21] In light of such analysis, the aforementioned 'bibliothèque' (www.debatidentitenationale.fr/bibliotheque/) on the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity's web-site thus becomes all the more revealing. Of course, those included tell us as much as those who were excluded—the President and Minister may well call for 'debate', but for the most part the selected texts adhere to Republican ideals and values, espouse nationalist and patriotic tendencies, and are not indicative of the diverse range of scholarship

[15] Published interview with Marc Vignaud, www.lepoint.fr/actualites-societe/2009-12-02/interview-gallo-en-chaque-francais-il-y-a-un-etranger/920/0/400886 (2 December 2009).
[16] Eric Besson, 'Faire connaître et partager l'identité nationale', www.debatidentitenationale.fr/propositions-d-eric-besson/faire-connaitre-et-partager-l.html (31 October 2009).
[17] Eric Besson, 'Valoriser l'identité nationale', www.debatidentitenationale.fr/propositions-d-eric-besson/valoriser-l-identite-nationale.html (31 October 2009).
[18] Laurence de Cock, Fanny Madeline, Nicolas Offenstadt, and Sophie Wahnich, 'Introduction,' in *Comment Nicolas Sarkozy écrit l'histoire de France*, ed. by Laurence de Cock, Fanny Madeline, Nicolas Offenstadt, and Sophie Wahnich (Marseille: Agone, 2008), pp. 15–19.
[19] Lemoine, 'La Maison de l'Histoire de France', p. 16.
[20] Lemoine, 'La Maison de l'Histoire de France', p. 16.
[21] Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *La République impériale: Politique et racisme d'État* (Paris: Fayard, 2009), p. 372.

and thinking on questions of national identity, minority/ethnic politics, debates on reparations, or for that matter of inroads that have been made in recent years in France in the field of postcolonial studies. Included authors and works range from Max Gallo's *Fier d'être Français* (2006) and *L'âme de la France: une histoire de la nation des origines à nos jours* (2007) and Daniel Lefeuvre's and Michel Renard's *Faut-il avoir honte de l'identité nationale?* (2008), to non-threatening 'apologist' narratives such as Gaston Kelman's *Je suis noir et je n'aime pas le manioc* (2005) and Léopold Sedar Senghor's 'Prière de paix' (1948), not ignoring of course well-known and celebratory speeches such as those made by Charles de Gaulle—the Discours de Bayeux (1946) and Discours de Rennes (1947)—and André Malraux's Discours du 4 septembre 1958 (in defence of the Fifth Republic) and the 'Discours sur Jean Moulin' (on the occasion of the transfer to the Panthéon of the remains of the French resistance hero in 1964).

Some fifty years have now passed since the official end of the French colonial presence in most of francophone sub-Saharan Africa, and one can only be struck by the failure of the French authorities to address this colonial legacy, to reconcile this history with the challenges of globalization, immigration policy, and minority politics. Late in 2009, President Sarkozy anticipated the terms of the debate on national identity in a speech he delivered to farmers in Poligny in the Jura on 27 October 2009, 'Un nouvel avenir pour notre agriculture':

> La France a un lien charnel avec son agriculture, j'ose le mot: avec sa terre. Le mot 'terre' a une signification française et j'ai été élu pour défendre l'identité nationale française. Ces mots ne me font pas peur, je les revendique. La France a une identité particulière qui n'est pas au-dessus des autres mais qui est la sienne et je ne comprends pas qu'on puisse hésiter à prononcer ces mot 'identité nationale française'. Ils ne sont agressifs envers personne. Ils sont simplement l'expression du devoir que nous devons aux générations qui nous ont précédés et qui ont fait, au prix de leurs vies et de leur sang ce que la France est devenue. Eh bien, la terre fait partie de cette identité nationale française. Et cette identité nationale française est constituée notamment par le rapport singulier des Français avec la terre.

One cannot but be struck by these metaphorical inferences to 'la terre' and by the broader allusions to colonial territorial expansion, reaffirmed in the unmistakable links that can be made with the Algerian landscape in Camus' writing. Yet, paradoxically, another dimension exists that relates to the consequences of these imperial ambitions and the resulting political consciousness exemplified by such influential works as Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (prefaced of course by Sartre!), whereby 'Pour le peuple colonisé, la valeur la plus essentielle, parce que la plus concrète, c'est d'abord la terre: la terre qui doit assurer le pain et, bien sûr, la dignité. Mais cette dignité n'a rien à voir avec la dignité de la personne humaine. Cette personne humaine idéale, il n'en a jamais entendu parler…'.[22] The transcoloniality of these mechanisms is thus confirmed here, revealing longstanding constructs pertaining to the formation of otherness.

During a session at the French National Assembly held on 8 December 2009 devoted to the debate on national identity, Besson claimed that 'Si chacun a son histoire individuelle et peut être fier de ses racines, il existe en même temps un creuset: celui de la République et de la nationalité française, qui, pour moi, instaure une hiérarchie entre les appartenances'.[23] Paradoxically, rather than fostering neo-universalist sentiments among populations with different historical links to France and strategically capitalizing on colonial paradigms according to which Frenchness was not at issue because of its perceived synonymity with wider

[22] Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002; first published 1961), pp. 47–48.

[23] National Assembly, file:///Users/cdhuser/Desktop/French%20history/Assemblee.Debate.webarchive [accessed 1 January 2010].

notions of humanism, the authorities have instead promoted hierarchies and structures of differentiation. Naturally, these have triggered all kinds of alternative commemorative movements and practices (the Comité pour la mémoire de l'esclavage, the Exposition Kréyol Factory at the Parc la Villette, etc.) and counter-measures and multiple incarnations of oppositionality (such as the creation of the association *Divers-Cité*, the *Appel pour une République multiculturelle et postraciale* and the statement 'Identité nationale et histoire coloniale' by the collective *Pour un véritable débat*, etc.).[24] Thus, thinking about processes of commemoration, reflections on national identity, and the analysis of museology will invariably introduce the necessity of accounting for and then reckoning with these entangled histories. As the acclaimed Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk has lucidly written, 'Anyone remotely interested in the politics of civilization will be aware that museums are the repositories of those things from which Western Civilization derives its wealth of knowledge, allowing it to rule the world, and likewise when the true collector, on whose efforts these museums depend, gathers together his first objects, he almost never asks himself what will be the ultimate fate of his hoard'.[25]

DOMINIC THOMAS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

[24] See Lilian Thuram et al., *Appel pour une République multiculturelle et postraciale*, *Respect Mag*, no. 10 (January–March 2010), and http://www.achac.com/?O=204.
[25] Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*, trans. by Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), p. 73.

Universal Envy:
Taking Sides in the Trouillot-Hallward Debate

In a very complimentary review of Peter Hallward's *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment*, Slavoj Žižek proposes the following thought experiment: 'ask a leftist how he stands towards Aristide, and it will be immediately clear if he is a partisan of radical emancipation or merely a humanitarian liberal who wants "globalisation with a human face"'.[1] How Hallward stands is, of course, not in doubt: his sympathetic portrayal of Aristide and his identification of 'the mobilization of Lavalas as the decisive event of contemporary Haitian politics', along with his damning analysis of 'how and why a small handful of powerful people, both in Haiti and abroad, undertook to contain the consequences of this event',[2] certainly qualify him as a 'partisan of radical emancipation', someone who is not discouraged by the inevitable failures and the possible violence that accompany any such emancipation and that invariably provoke, as Žižek puts it elsewhere, 'the horror of sympathetic liberals, always ready to support the revolt of the poor and dispossessed, so long as it is done with good manners'.[3]

As Žižek's thought experiment suggests, there are a good many such liberals out there, in practice if not in name, whose desire for 'a human face' has made it impossible for them to stand alongside Hallward and continue to defend Aristide as someone who 'has done more than any other Haitian politician to translate—with limited yet unprecedented success—widespread popular demands into a viable political project for social change'.[4] The failures were too many, the violence too great, the hopes of emancipation revealed as a prophetic hoax perpetrated, as one authoritative commentator puts it with no small degree of satisfaction, by 'an all-too-ordinary and traditional president who, like all the others who came before him, was using state power for his and his allies' personal gain'.[5] Political projects collapse, or are represented as collapsing, and what is left amid their (seeming) rubble? If post-politics is 'a politics which claims to leave behind old ideological struggles and instead focus on expert management and administration',[6] then this is the post-political question *par excellence*. For many of those who can no longer stand alongside Hallward, but nonetheless insist upon the desirability of a (well-mannered, cosmopolitan) alternative to neo-liberalism/colonialism, some of the most plausible—the most 'human'—answers to that question, when it comes to Haiti, are those being offered by a small handful of powerful, far-from-ordinary, literary and cultural producers. With the (apparent) demise of politics, culture—its eternal amanuensis and bitter rival—takes on a newly masterful role (a mastery that literary and cultural critics have, to be sure, always been canny enough to recognize and promote).

What I aim at in this brief intervention is to reflect upon the (ever-decreasing number of) friends and (ever-increasing number of) enemies of Aristide and the Lavalas movement in the academic circles I myself frequent and, more broadly, the differing (yet also entangled)

---

[1] Slavoj Žižek, 'Democracy versus the People', *New Statesman*, 14 August 2008; http://www.newstatesman.com/books/2008/08/haiti-aristide-lavalas [accessed 1 December 2009].
[2] Peter Hallward, *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment* (London: Verso, 2007), p. xxxvii.
[3] Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 177.
[4] Peter Hallward, 'Lyonel Trouillot, or The Fictions of Formal Democracy', *Small Axe*, 13.3 (2009), 174–85 (p. 182).
[5] Alex Dupuy, *The Prophet and Power: Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the International Community, and Haiti* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p. 170.
[6] Slavoj Žižek, *Violence* (New York: Picador, 2008), p. 40.

investments in politics and culture that play a crucial role in maintaining and exacerbating this division. I do so by asking: what happens when one of the more lionized cultural producers in Haiti—a fervent critic of Aristide in the waning days of his rule and an eager contributor (as *directeur de cabinet* in the Ministry of Culture) to the 'political pacification of Lavalas' in the months following the democratically elected president's U.S.-supported ouster on 29 February 2004—gets a hold of Hallward's *Damming the Flood* and sees himself portrayed not in the flattering light to which he has become accustomed, by virtue of his status as a masterful writer (and, in a 'natural' corollary, as a well-mannered spokesperson for the virtues of 'civil society'), but as merely one all-too-ordinary and traditional cog in the repressive machinery of the Haitian elite?

On the surface at least, this is not a very difficult question to answer, and the predictably outraged response can be found in the pages of a recent issue of *Small Axe*, where acclaimed writer Lyonel Trouillot provides an aggressive rebuttal of Hallward and his ardent defence of 'the delirium of a corrupt man'.[7] The title of Trouillot's article says it all: 'Hallward, or the Hidden Face of Racism'. As far as the author of celebrated novellas like *Rue des Pas-Perdus* is concerned, Hallward's pro-Aristide account of the last twenty years of Haitian history is generated by the most nefarious of neo-colonial impulses, namely, the racist arrogation of the 'right to name the other's reality in the other's stead' (p. 132). Its hundreds of carefully-documented pages chronicling the repeated depredations of the Haitian elite and their allies amount to nothing more than 'a systematic undermining of the historical truth' (p. 128); it betrays 'an inexcusable ignorance on the part of a researcher, of Haitian social structures and social relationships', and could only have been written by someone who 'does not know the abc's of Haitian reality' (p. 129). Indeed, Trouillot comes right out and accuses Hallward of 'lying' (p. 129), and concludes that his book is generated by the 'madness of a fanatic' (p. 135).

What interests me here is not the general opposition between Hallward-the-(white)-'fanatic' and Trouillot-the-(black)-'other'-who-voices-the-will-of-his-people, but the way in which this opposition takes the specific rhetorical form of a doubling between (bad) intellectual and (good) artist. As I argue in a closely related article on Trouillot's involvement in the 'Pour une littérature-monde' manifesto,[8] this doubling is symptomatic of the scapegoat mechanism upon which the very institution of 'literature' (or, even more broadly, 'culture') and its accompanying rituals of consecration are founded. What Trouillot is disavowing in his portrayal of Hallward is his own identity as a 'scribe', that is, someone whose writerly identity cannot be detached from his membership of an intellectual elite charged with mediating various forms of institutional power.[9] The displacement of this scribal identity onto another, purportedly, lesser cultural producer is an obligatory move for anyone interested in laying claim to the status of 'great' writer, and to the masterful authority that comes with it.

In order to lay this claim, Trouillot begins his article by entertaining the fanciful thought that *Damming the Flood* might actually have been written by Aristide, and then goes on to speculate that it could only be the work of a team 'of the most zealous of propagandists working for him', because, he recalls (in a significant nod to 'great' Latin American writers), 'ever since

[7] Lyonel Trouillot, 'Hallward, or The Hidden Face of Racism', trans. by Nadève Ménard, *Small Axe*, 13.3 (2009) 128–36 (p. 136).

[8] Chris Bongie, '(Not) Razing the Walls: Glissant, Trouillot, and the Post-Politics of World "Literature"', in *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-monde*, ed. by Charles Forsdick, Alec G. Hargreaves and David Murphy, Francophone Postcolonial Studies, 1 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, forthcoming 2010).

[9] See Chris Bongie, *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), especially pp. 31–33.

[Roa Bastos's] *I the Supreme* and [García Márquez's] *Autumn of the Patriarch*, we know that dictators have as many ghost writers as clones'.[10] He quickly abandons this conceit, however, and clarifies that Hallward 'really exists and teaches philosophy in a university far, far away from Haiti' (p. 128). This distance from Haiti, of course, 'naturally' disqualifies whatever Hallward might say about the country, but more interesting for the purposes of my argument is Trouillot's insistence that the non-Haitian philosopher's status as an *intellectual* is what ultimately explains the book's failures. To read *Damming the Flood* is, Trouillot asserts, to discover 'the hidden discourse as well as the internal torment of the "progressive intellectual"' (p. 128). It is not, in the final analysis, a book on Haiti, but 'on those intellectuals well (or uneasily) installed in their careers in the bosom of the empire, incapable of acting upon the social realities of their countries and societies, who go looking elsewhere for outlets to ease their consciences' (p. 132). Pursuing this critique in more colourful language, Trouillot then informs us that the empire-embosomed intellectual 'found in Aristide his black saint, his Haitian rooster to defend his conscience in a cockfight where Hallward had nothing to lose, apart from his fantasies' (p. 132).

One might well pause, when confronted with this 'authentically' Haitian metaphor of the cockfight, and ponder the masculinist (and, indeed, homoerotic) undercurrents that inform this denunciation of a man like Hallward who installs himself in bosoms and fantasizes about Haitian cocks—cocks, moreover, that have now lost out to the other, more powerful ones that were backed by the crowing author. More to the point, however, is the fact that this scapegoating of the (bad) intellectual cannot go without a compensatory emphasis on the (good) intellectual—no bad cock without good, as it were. Trouillot's denunciation of 'progressive intellectuals' is thus doubled in the article with a glowingly positive usage of the phrase 'artists and intellectuals' (p. 129 and p. 130), where the two beings are seen as versions of one and the same thing, rather than in opposition to one another.

In one of his most outrageously falsifiable statements, Trouillot accuses Hallward of 'condemn[ing] all Haitian intellectuals', going on to fulminate: 'Has he read Hurbon and the others he attacks? Has he seen one of Peck's films? He is not interested. The Western "progressive intellectual" does not want Haitian peers' (p. 132). (In fact, what Hallward states is merely that 'the great majority of intellectuals and academics in Haiti are conservative as a matter of course'.[11]) With this *ressentiment*-laden statement, Trouillot allows for the possibility of 'intellectuals' who are the equals of pure 'artists' (and, to be sure, in so doing conveniently secures for himself the valued identity of 'intellectual' in addition to that of 'artist'). What all these (good) 'artists and intellectuals' have in common is their non-scribal identity, which ensures the quasi-ontological difference of their cultural productions from 'the endless masturbation of speechifying prelates and bureaucrats' in the service of dictatorial politicians, to quote from the Prologue to *Rue des Pas-Perdus*.[12] The deprecation of bureaucracy in Trouillot's attack on the (bad) intellectual Hallward is relentless: 'What', Trouillot asks, 'would Hallward be without Haiti? A petit-bourgeois participating in the proper functioning of the ideological apparatus of the empire'.[13]

It does not, of course, take a great act of imagination to turn this sort of class indictment

[10] Trouillot, 'Hallward, or The Hidden Face of Racism', p. 128.
[11] Peter Hallward, *Damming the Flood*, p. 194.
[12] Lyonel Trouillot, *Street of Lost Footsteps*, trans. by Linda Coverdale (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska, 2003), p. 3 [first publ. as *Rue des Pas-Perdus*, 1998].
[13] Trouillot, 'Hallward, or The Hidden Face of Racism', p. 132.

on its head, to throw it back in Trouillot's (seductively 'human') face; it is not difficult, that is, at least for anyone interested in relating the work of this 'artist and intellectual' to its material conditions of production, to see in it the expression of a particular *habitus*, namely, 'the complacent bigotry of Haiti's privileged few, people whose background, education and world view help blot out the less privileged as invisible *moun andeyo*'.[14] What the doubling of good and bad intellectuals in Trouillot's response to Hallward ultimately suggests, then, is the impossibility of definitively separating the one from the other: even if what Trouillot says about his enemy were true, would it not be necessary to pose the same questions about the scribal role of the petit-, to say nothing of the grand-, bourgeois Haitian intellectuals who participate in the proper functioning of the ideological apparatus of 'literature'-as-a-(hegemonic)-social-institution as one does of their non-Haitian doubles like Hallward who are condemned to 'masturbate' in the service of Empire?

Before commenting on the troubling implications of this all-encompassing scribal doubling, it is only fair to convey a little bit of Hallward's remarkably restrained response to Trouillot's vitriolic attack… an attack which, it has to be stressed, may well have hidden virtues that the literary critic can lay bare, but which judged according to the dictates of academic discourse must seem—even to Trouillot's greatest admirers, the vocal defenders of his 'universal greatness'[15]—surprisingly and sadly blundering in its handling of the niceties of that discourse. In his response, 'Lyonel Trouillot, or the Fictions of Formal Democracy', Hallward effectively swats away some of the more ridiculous accusations of the aggrieved petit-bourgeois artist-intellectual: he points out numerous examples of Trouillot's 'creative use' of selective quotations from *Damming the Flood*;[16] he identifies any number of chronological errors or egregious misrepresentations of the factual record (as when Trouillot claims, of the 2000 elections, that 'the competing parties split the vote… in an election in which one of these parties won 72 out of 83 parliamentary seats' [p. 177]); and he laments that most of his opponent's claims about Aristide 'are so far removed from reality that it's hard to know whether Trouillot has simply invented them out of thin air' (p. 177). Understandably, Hallward insists upon the class biases that so obviously inform Trouillot's insider-outsider account of what the Haitian masses really desire: 'He knows his countrymen so well, after all, why should he bother to ask any of them for their opinions?' (p. 180), Hallward comments, in a sarcastic reference to Trouillot's inability to explain why—despite the 'broad-based' opposition to Aristide's rule that was promoted by elite organizations like Trouillot's *Collectif Non*—the vast majority of Haitians continued to vote for and support their elected President. And, to be sure, throughout the article, Hallward affirms the unshaken belief in Aristide that earned him the epithet of the deposed Haitian President's 'ghost-writer' from Trouillot: 'The poor have supported Aristide, and continue to support Aristide, because during the decisive moments of the popular struggle he was the person who found the courage to say the things they wanted to be said' (p. 182).

Notwithstanding the reasoned prose of Hallward's rebuttal in the face of Trouillot's feverish onslaught, to read Trouillot's blast and Hallward's counter-blast is, regardless of allegiances (and it should be obvious that mine are entirely with the latter), to be made uncomfortably aware of the common ground these sworn enemies must first occupy in order to attack one another. Neither Trouillot nor Hallward are 'of' the people: their projects of

[14] Hallward, 'Lyonel Trouillot, or The Fictions of Formal Democracy', p. 182.
[15] Madison Smartt Bell, '*Sa Nou Pa We Yo* (The Invisible Ones): A Reply to Four Readers', *Small Axe*, 12.1 (2007), 209–16 (p. 211).
[16] Hallward, 'Lyonel Trouillot, or The Fictions of Formal Democracy', p. 176.

'translating' popular demands into viable political projects for social change (Hallward) or social consolidation (Trouillot) remain just that, the projects of 'artists and intellectuals' whose work, in order to be fully appreciated, needs to be viewed not (just) as the expression of a visionary artist, which many literary critics believe Trouillot to be, or of a trail-blazing intellectual, which Hallward indubitably is, but (also) as the work of 'speechifying prelates and bureaucrats' who are indeed, as Trouillot rightly asserts, *peers*. The difference between their pro- and anti-Aristide positions could not be more evident, and yet their every attempt at differentiating themselves from one another is haunted by a mimetic rivalry that draws these peers closer to one another and further from the 'truth' they would convey (a rivalry that, as I have argued on more than one occasion, is a fundamental dimension of intellectual life in the post/colony).[17] In this scribal exchange, neither man's words can escape the gravitational pull of the other's polemical disposition, the obvious envy and resentment fuelling the Haitian novelist's attack on 'progressive intellectuals' prompting a recourse to satirical language and rhetorical posturing on Hallward's part that might well seem incompatible with the 'universal principles' the radical philosopher expounds. What emerges in the interstices of this seemingly black-white dialogue is a veritable 'theatre of envy', as René Girard would say, in which each man averts his gaze from the discomfiting scribal identity that links him to the monstrous other, and aggressively performs never-adequate acts of differentiation that will rid the stage of this unwanted double, and that are in turn duly replicated by his rival.

Having identified the 'theatre of envy' in which Trouillot and Hallward act out their differing parts, we need to ask in closing: what is to be done with the knowledge of this envious rivalry and the resentments to which it gives rise, the scribal entanglements that seem like the inexorable *supplément* of any poetics or politics of truth, be it the assertively anti-universalizing literary and cultural truths of the 'universally great' author Trouillot or the militantly universalizing political ones of the philosopher Hallward? What to do with the negative affect that attaches as indubitably to the principled arguments of a Hallward as the spewing invective of a cock-fighting Trouillot (and, just as surely, to the formal 'successes' of the latter's self-styled 'non-partisan' novellas like *Rue des Pas-Perdus* or *Bicentenaire*)? The most 'reasonable' response to this question might well be to adopt the viewpoint of what I call the 'sceptical humanist',[18] and take it upon oneself to wish a plague on both houses.

Wishing that plague on Aristide and his supporters is certainly a common enough response these days, even (and perhaps especially) when it comes to those who would characterize their own politics as 'leftist' or 'anti-hegemonic'—to recall Žižek's little thought-experiment. As Žižek maintains, however, the well-mannered 'alternative' offered, in theory, by sceptical humanism (or its more forceful and 'committed' variants, such as sympathetic liberalism, dialogic pluralism, etc.) is hardly one in practice, because it inevitably ends up deferring to any and all 'reasonable' re-inscriptions of the status quo promoted by those who oppose the likes of Aristide, and thus participates, willy-nilly, in 'the vast cultural counter-revolution whose political mark is the withdrawal from radical emancipatory politics, and the refocusing on human rights and the prevention of suffering'.[19]

As Žižek also suggests, those who embrace this post-political withdrawal—and its consequent scepticism with regard to an Aristide and the 'partisans' who defend him (or, even, who attack him with too much gusto), and who thereby apparently doom themselves to the

[17] See Bongie, *Friends and Enemies*, pp. 24–35.
[18] Bongie, *Friends and Enemies*, pp. 223–27.
[19] Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, p. 246.

acting out of an unenviable scribal role in a predictably scripted ideological drama—are in no way free from the very thing they denounce in others, namely, the corrosive affect that so obviously infuses the Trouillot-Hallward exchange. Speaking of German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk's *Rage and Time* (*Zorn und Zeit* [2006]) and its 'denouncing of every global emancipatory project as a case of envy and resentment', Žižek provocatively asks: 'What if *this very urge is sustained by a disavowed envy and resentment of its own, the envy of the universal emancipatory position*, which is why one HAS to find some dirt in its foundation which would deprive it of its purity?'.[20] Just as Trouillot lays claim to his authority by virtue of his status as an artist and (good) intellectual, and through a strenuous disavowal of his scribal identity, so the avowedly 'mature' critic of 'universal emancipation' like Sloterdijk must secure the legitimacy of his position by disavowing the (affective, institutional, class, etc.) investments that make it possible, and projecting them onto his opponents.

There is dirt in every foundation, purity in none, and it has to be acknowledged, of course, that Žižek's insistence on the envy and resentment driving Sloterdijk's attempt at reducing 'the MIRACLE of ethical universality… to a distorted effect of "lower" libidinal processes' (p. 194) lays itself open to a version of the same accusation. For René Girard, of course, the only possible way out of this vicious circle of envy and resentment is to 'resist the mimetic mechanism' by 'choosing Christ or a Christlike individual as a model for our desires';[21] another way, though, might be to gamble on the possibility that such mimetic entanglements do not simply detract from the validity of universalizing emancipatory projects, and might indeed provide a legitimate stimulus toward their realization, which is why Žižek provocatively suggests that 'we need to rehabilitate the notion of resentment'.[22] When it comes to distinguishing between the friends and enemies of social justice, everything depends, in the final analysis, not upon the envy and resentment, but upon the specific *object* to which their 'bad faith' attaches.

Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau have recently remarked that 'l'utopie est ce qui manque au monde, le seul réalisme capable de dénouer le nœud des impossibles'.[23] As is only 'natural', the authority that comes with being among the most venerated producers of francophone postcolonial literature allows these two authors to identify what is missing from our world and to claim for themselves a certain privileged relation to this utopianism, the anti-universalizing ethos of which makes it, or so they claim, the *only* 'realistic' option when it comes to transforming a closed world of impossibilities into something more openly possible. Utopia, however, has never been lacking to the world; it is merely a question of what sort of utopias one is talking about, and what sort of values they promote. From the perspective of those who obstinately hold to the 'universal emancipatory position', it is imperative, and easy enough, to argue that the particular brand of utopian 'realism' being offered up by literary and cultural producers such as Glissant, Chamoiseau, and lesser lights such as Trouillot, is precisely the affective outlet a post-political world order requires, as a consoling 'alternative' to the otherwise untrammelled triumph of neo-liberal imperialism; however, as Žižek makes clear, this diagnosis, and the ease with which it is produced, cannot be simply detached from a resentful envy that stems in part from not being on the (at present and for the foreseeable future) winner's side.

---

[20] Žižek, *Violence*, p. 194.

[21] René Girard, *Evolution and Conversion: Dialogues on the Origins of Culture* (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 222–23.

[22] Žižek, *Violence*, p. 189.

[23] Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, *L'Intraitable beauté du monde: Adresse à Barack Obama* (Paris: Galaade Éditions, 2009), p. 35.

As is suggested by the title of one of Žižek's most recent books, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, those who remain committed to other utopias than the ones imagined by post-political thinkers whose claim to have left behind old ideological struggles has supposedly afforded them special managerial insight regarding how best to disentangle the impossible entanglements of our globalized world may well have to settle for an untimely, hardly possible, and anything-but-consoling fidelity to 'the emancipatory potential that was not realized due to the failure of the past attempts and that for this reason continues to haunt us'.[24] Trouillot was not wrong in his initial speculations regarding the authorship of Hallward's book on Haiti: it was indeed penned by a ghost writer, someone whose inescapably melancholic attachment to 'universal emancipation' and the unrealized potential of political projects for social change such as the one spearheaded by Aristide and the Lavalas movement cannot but undermine, systematically and (for some) hauntingly, the presently dominant versions of 'historical truth' to which living writers such as Trouillot lend credence and that will have become even more compelling, and even more compulsory, than ever, in the tragic aftermath of a 'natural' catastrophe and an 'humanitarian' crisis that, seemingly, render entirely 'academic' the sort of scribal disputes between the friends and enemies of Aristide analysed in the preceding pages.

Who, after all, when faced with the horrors of 12 January 2010, can dispute that, in the words of the Haitian Minister of Culture, the earthquake and its aftermath is 'a non-political event'?[25] How can one speak of enemies, when the self-styled 'Friends of Haiti'—the U.S. government and its military first among them—are so visibly engaged in benign acts of 'reconstruction and stabilization' which, in spectacular fashion, confirm the essentially 'human' face of globalization and put paid to resentful claims that, as the author of *Damming the Flood* was quick to argue in the days following upon the earthquake, an overwhelming concern with 'human rights' and the 'prevention of suffering' is by no means incompatible with, and perhaps essential to, containing 'the ever-nagging threat of popular political participation and empowerment' in Haiti?[26] How, in short, can one take sides at a time like this? In the face of such big questions, a little debate in the pages of *Small Axe* would be scarcely worthy of commentary, were it not for the fact that, as I have tried to suggest, the thought experiment of situating ourselves in relation to the rival claims of Trouillot and Hallward is an extremely effective way of getting a sense of where one stands in relation to those big and seemingly rhetorical questions, and whether those questions might actually be, all appearances to the contrary, deserving of the real, if untimely, answers they solicit. How *does* one take (political) sides at a (post-political) time like this?

CHRIS BONGIE
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, ONTARIO

[24] Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, pp. 393–94.
[25] Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassegue, quoted in John Ibbitson and Paul Waldie, 'Postpone Election, Haitian Minister Urges', *The Globe and Mail*, 25 January 2010, p. A11.
[26] Peter Hallward, 'Securing Disaster in Haiti', *HaitiAnalysis.com*, 22 January 2010; http://www.haitianalysis.com/2010/1/22/securing-disaster-in-haiti [accessed 23 January 2010].

In response to Chris Bongie's review article '"On or About 1991": Jennifer Yee, *Exotic Subversions in Nineteenth-Century French Fiction*', *FPS* 7.2 (2009)

I am grateful to the editors of *FPS* for allowing me to respond, briefly, to Chris Bongie's review of my book. The review offers, however, remarkably little specific criticism, operating in a citationary mode that splices together textual fragments and leaves comment to be deduced. I am ashamed to admit that I preferred Bongie's style in *Exotic Memories*, since my admiration for his publication of 1991 would only serve to confirm how out of date my reading is. And yet my own volume appears to have irked him largely because it pursues a critical agenda rather distant from that put forward by Edward Said as long ago as... 1978.

Despite this 'founding' disagreement, and with a few notable exceptions, Bongie's review is alarmingly accurate. I do indeed accept '"literature" as [my] chosen and delimited field of study' (though I try to see that field as part of a broader history). And he is entirely accurate in saying that I see the subversions offered by nineteenth-century literature as largely falling short of 'true resistance'. I am not sure why this led him to accredit me with the idea that such literature was nevertheless 'revolutionary' in a political sense. I confess to having little faith in the ability of a novel, even one written in 2010, to provoke a revolution (I have little faith in the ability of Western politics to do that either at present, but as has been pointed out I tend to limit my writings to my 'delimited field of study'). Despite (or because of?) this bourgeois defeatism, I would regret it were I to see evidence of a complete separation of the political from the aesthetic, which Bongie considers the most important tendency of postcolonial criticism since the 1990s. It is certainly possible to approach texts in a way that gives priority to their role as ideological 'symptoms' and all but evacuates generic or aesthetic considerations. But I am not alone in wishing to see these two sides as imbricated; this is, for example, the central argument of Deepika Bahri's 2003 book *Native Intelligence*, which takes its inspiration from Adorno's modernist aesthetics. Among other recent critics who approach the political via an aesthetics of subversion one could cite Saree Makdisi in *Romantic Imperialism* (which I still find relevant, despite its publication date of 1998).

There are some issues raised by Bongie's review that do seem important even from within my narrow field (the study of nineteenth-century literature in its historical contexts). Although Bongie places great emphasis on the dates of contributions to criticism, his review oddly neglects the historical specificity of the works of nineteenth-century literature discussed. The subversive qualities of Hugo's *Bug-Jargal* (1820/1826) are, for example, to be understood in this light: the novel reflects a certain unease with the power-relations of slavery, but does not reject them outright or explicitly and is therefore complicit with them (in a way that was typical of much French writing on slavery in the period, given that the British abolition of the trade made abolitionism seem anti-patriotic). *Bug-Jargal* is also subversive of the idea of an integral, coherent European Self in a way that reflects Romantic preoccupations with something that would later be called the unconscious. Hugo's use of blackness and particularly of mixed race to suggest the dark side of the self is indeed racist; I do not see this as incompatible with subversive intent. Nor does this amount to seeing Hugo's work as nothing but a 'trial balloon for postcolonial literature', though there are certain similarities that should encourage us not only to read the

literature of the past with an eye to its internal contradictions, but also to be wary of idealizing more recent literature.

Bongie goes on to conflate my distinction between exotic dialogism in the works studied with non-exotic dialogism in works of literary masterpieces, thus seeing my argument as applicable to literature in general. This is to make abstraction not only of linguistic differences, but, once again, of historical context. By situating Chateaubriand's early work *Les Natchez* (largely written by 1799, though published in 1826) as a literary 'failure' that falls between genres I sought to expose the untimely nature of its exotic dialogism, which—far from being a general trait of literature as a whole—arose from a new, Romantic emphasis on the foreign and the particular. The need for a historical understanding of exoticism is clear, too, in the relative lack of success of Segalen's *Les Immémoriaux* at its publication in 1907: today's readers are better prepared to deal with its experiments in exotic dialogism. Exotic dialogism is rather different from dialogism that brings into play idiolects taken from within a single national language, which are less disturbing for primarily monolingual readers. Bakhtin himself makes a distinction between heteroglossia and polyglossia; as an instance of the latter he gives Hellenic Greek society, in which different national languages lived in close proximity. This is a far cry from the much more limited exotic dialogism of the nineteenth-century works I discussed, and, with its glimpse of an earlier version of 'globalisation', suggests a situation more like that of our own mixed societies.

Although these considerations are crucial to my book, Bongie has disregarded them because they do not address what is really at stake for him, that is, the question of how postcolonial criticism, or literary criticism as a whole, should approach the relationship between political commitment and literature. Bongie appears to be frustrated by the dilemma of the politically engaged literary critic. Is literature and its study a crucial element not just in understanding, but changing, world politics, and if so what is the role of properly literary or aesthetic considerations in this primarily political phenomenon? Or, if literature is of secondary importance in striving for actual change, what is the role of politics in something that is above all governed by its own internal laws? One senses Bongie's regret for the clarity of Said's position in 1978, when literature was both crucial to the understanding of politics and to be dealt with in an essentially non-literary way. He is irked by the continuing tendency of studies inspired by Said to react against him in order to address what are primarily literary considerations, while still reading them as necessarily political. At times he also appears to desire a clear-cut distinction between masterpieces, to be dealt with as 'real' literature, and the rest of textual production, to be dealt with in a tone of 1970s denunciation—though such a view is contradicted by the subtlety of his own approaches to literary and cultural phenomena, in 1991 and more recently. Personally, I prefer an inclusive conception of literature, and one that situates it within evolving contexts that are both generic *and* historical. Of course the literature of the nineteenth century is racist according to our modern definitions; but racism is so vast and insidious a phenomenon that it is not in itself analytically useful and requires careful historical nuancing. In any case, although I am most interested in an approach that combines aesthetic and political concerns, and would regret such a rigid separation as Bongie appears to think necessary, I also differ from him in my belief in a supple and many-voiced criticism that does not need to dictate one single mode of textual analysis. As for Bongie's self-declared aim to undo 'the neo-colonial, neo-liberal world order', it is, I agree, a 'properly political' project, and it has my respect. I am left somewhat puzzled as to how he proposes to bring this revolution about, and

hope that it is not through literary criticism alone.

JENNIFER YEE
CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

BOOK REVIEWS

Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature. By CHRIS BONGIE. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008. 416 pp. Hb £65; Pb £25. ISBN-10: 1846311438 (Hb); ISBN-10: 184631142X (Pb)

'What sort of Thermidorean am I?' (p. 83). This question asked by the author Chris Bongie (about Franco-Haitian author Jean-Baptiste Jacques Picquenard and, I suspect, himself) is an epigrammatic expression of the tone and, in part, the content of the brilliant *Friends and Enemies: The Scribal Politics of Post/Colonial Literature*. Thermidor is, of course, the uncomfortable period of moderate politics that followed Robespierre's sanguinary enactment of the ideals of the French Revolution and preceded the moment of political reaction embodied by Napoleon. What does Thermidor have to do with post/colonial (Bongie's typographical rendering of the epistemic complicity between the colonial and postcolonial) studies? In a word, everything, at least as it concerns Haiti, whose literature and history is a primary instantiation in *Friends and Enemies* of the difficulties of situating oneself after a revolution. It is in a similarly uncomfortable space that most postcolonial critics situate themselves, somewhere between an engagement with the 'properly political' (Robert Young, Peter Hallward, Benita Parry, et al.) and the promotion of the cultural politics of 'memory' (Gayatri Spivak, Paul Gilroy, 'the always cutting edge Emily Apter' (p. 11; I cite this to give a sense of Bongie's withering irony) et al.). Bongie probes the ambivalent choices and positionings that authors, critics, and post-revolutionary commentators of different kinds have made in the last two hundred years regarding the former French colonies in the Caribbean, and if we are not always satisfied with the answer he provides, this is by design: Bongie, an avowed Derridean, is less interested in providing the definitive responses to the questions that trouble the field of postcolonial studies and, more particularly, Francophone Caribbean studies than he is in going all the way down the blind alleys of its unspoken assumptions and critical reflexes. *Friends and Enemies* is divided into three main parts, each introduced by an 'Incursion' that lays out the debates covered in the subsequent chapters through the prism of a contemporary critical issue. The first part, 'Humanitarian Interventions: The Haitian Revolution in Translation, 1793–1833', is devoted to humanist and humanitarian responses to the Haitian Revolution in the works of Jean-Baptiste Piquenard (chapter 1), the writings of Baron de Vastey, and nineteenth-century translations of Victor Hugo's *Bug-Jargal* (both in chapter 2). It is in the second chapter that the trope of 'friends and enemies' is elucidated. It is all fine and good, Bongie remarks, to articulate a sentiment of our common humanity, but matters become much more complicated when that sentiment is 'translated into a political one that can distinguish between friends and enemies' (p. 115). In other words, it is when violence and writing about violence become involved that one is forced to choose one's side, and he returns to this problem repeatedly throughout. The second key trope of the book is that of the post/colonial 'scribe', which is probed to a greater extent in Parts 2 ('Between Memory and Nostalgia: Commemorating Post/Colonialism, 1998–2004') and 3 ('Exiles on Main Stream: Browsing the Franco-Caribbean Canon'). 'Scribe' is a term Bongie borrows from Régis Debray, only to turn it masterfully against him. In chapter 3, devoted to Debray's infamous January 2004 report on Haiti that served as (the at least implicit) justification of the 'coup-knapping' of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, Bongie describes the collaboration

between Haitian writer René Depestre, an apostate of revolutionary politics, and Debray in this way: 'Depestre's presence by the side of France's representative in Haiti [...] uncovers the real conditions of the production of (his) francophone thought, rendering manifest the scribal politics that informs the cultural work of even the most "solitary" of "great writers"' (p. 179). Serving as scribe in some form or other is part of the generally unacknowledged conditions of literary production in the Francophone Caribbean, at least for those authors who are published in Paris and who are beholden to some extent to the centre. Chapter 4 is concerned with the contemporary appropriations of Martiniquan abolitionist Cyrille Bissette by the lesser-known Martiniquan writers Guy Cabort-Masson and Tony Delsham, neither of whom is beholden to the centre because both are ignored by it. Chapter 5, for its part, excoriates Derek Walcott's recently republished 'Haitian trilogy' for profiting in bad faith from the very kind of historical engagements he has otherwise spent his career avoiding. The two chapters in Part 3 portray the critical love affairs with Maryse Condé and Édouard Glissant respectively as symptomatic of our penchant for ignoring the mechanisms that allow their works occupy the elevated position they do. For Bongie, Condé's works are the quintessence of what he calls the 'postcolonial middlebrow' (they interest both the wider reading public and academics), yet commentators, exemplified here by Françoise Lionnet, pursue exclusively 'modernist' readings of them ('almost to the point of parody', p. 297), which is to say that their popularity (not their representation of popular culture) is wholly passed over. In chapter 7, Bongie returns to and 'strategically amend[s]' his take on Glissant, pointing to the 'forgetting' of the later works that is required to make of Glissant anything other than a 'post-political' thinker. In sum, those who appreciated Bongie's previous contribution to the field, *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (1998), are likely to find much that is useful and compelling in *Friends and Enemies*. A number of the figures examined in that earlier work—Cyrille Bissette, Victor Hugo, Édouard Glissant—appear in this one, but in a different light. Moreover, the arguments are tighter, the evidence more detailed, and the engagement with the 'properly political' implications of literary and cultural studies taken more seriously. The latter is, in fact, the most substantial difference between the two works: Bongie's serious engagement with what the 'neo-Jacobin' or 'unreformed' critical Left has to say about literature, culture, and revolution is of serious benefit to a field that largely ignored Peter Hallward's devastating critique of postcolonial theory in *Absolutely Postcolonial* (2001). For instance, whereas *Islands and Exiles* held up Glissant as the master thinker of our contemporary creolized world, *Friends and Enemies* is more than circumspect regarding late Glissant's politics (including the charge that 'this consecrated author can [...] be seen as filling a clerical function that aligns him with the very power from which he must give the appearance of having detached himself', p. 353). But for all his sympathy for Hallward's argument, Bongie's project is wracked by a sort of doubt that keeps him from fully embracing it. So what sort of Thermidorian is Bongie? The kind that remains sympathetic to the aims of Robespierre (or his modern, critical avatar in *Friends and Enemies*, Slavoj Žižek) without being able to follow him to the guillotine. One complaint: for all the useful questioning of critical doxa in *Friends and Enemies*, framing the work as a critique of Francophone postcolonial studies as he does in its early pages seems a use of tremendous critical firepower to eliminate a target of (avowedly) dubious importance. In *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World* (2009) and elsewhere, Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, the main exponents of the field, such as it is, have been careful to characterize the consolidation of critical work as provisional and for the purposes of allowing debate to take place (p. 4). Bongie reduces the field to a caricature, attacking Francophone postcolonial studies as if it were a legion of critics marching in lockstep.

Still, many of the local critiques of the characteristics 'moves' of those working in the field are important and have the ring of truth. Regarding the book's composition, parts of the chapters in *Friends and Enemies* previously appeared as journal articles, but it would be wrong to refer to the book as a 'collection of essays'. Bongie meticulously ties the known material together with previously unpublished work to create an organic, coherent, and eminently readable argument. Readers must come armed with patience and time; at nearly four hundred densely argued pages, *Friends and Enemies* constitutes a commitment. But it is also the book, paraphrasing Derek Walcott reviewing Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, that I would press into the hands of every student and scholar who wants to know what might be wrong with (Francophone) postcolonial studies and where we might be headed next.

Reviewer's postscript: I was finishing this review when a massive earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and its surrounding areas. Making a plea for the importance of literary and cultural studies in a time when people are buried under rubble can seem absurd, but Bongie's dissection, especially in his chapter on the Debray report, of the duplicitous forgetfulness in so much of what we write and say about Haiti—and the disastrous consequences of that forgetting—lends an additional urgency to the arguments of *Friends and Enemies*.

RICHARD WATTS
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE

***Postcolonial Eyes: Intercontinental Travel in Francophone African Literature*.** By AEDIN NI LOINGSIGH. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009. 224 pp. Hb £65. ISBN 9781846310492

Seeking to address the 'critical neglect of representations of travel by African writers and the failure to develop a coherent theoretical framework within which to analyse the connections between ethnicity and textualizations of travel' (p. 2), Ní Loingsigh's clearly written and engaging book aims to initiate the delineation of a field of intercontinental travel in Francophone African literature. Through a series of thorough close readings of carefully selected case studies, Ní Loingsigh skilfully charts a path through a broad corpus of texts and argues persuasively for the importance of considering the contributions sub-Saharan Francophone African writers have made to the field of travel writing. The detailed and astute introductory chapter establishes the broad interdisciplinary theoretical framework adopted and provides an overview of European colonial travel writing on Africa. It also critically analyses the 'overly restrictive categorizing tendencies' (p. 3) of travel writing's generic identity and the recurrent dematerialization of travel practices within criticism so as to suggest how African representations of travel might challenge the dominance of Western and Eurocentric norms within critical frameworks of travel writing and indicate changes that may be necessary when contemporary theories of travel are translated to African contexts. Arguing that attempts to identify an African literature of travel must necessitate a reassessment of Western travel writing's boundaries, Ní Loingsigh convincingly shows how the term 'travel' itself must consequently be destabilized when considering the Francophone African representations of

travel selected for study. Six subsequent chapters analyse in detail a range of broadly chronological case studies, highlighting how socio-historical specificities have impinged upon notions of intercontinental travel within African contexts. Chapter 1 examines Ousman Socé's *Mirages de Paris* as an example of the distinctiveness of colonial African intercontinental travel writing and the crucial contribution it makes to the genre of travel writing more widely. Chapter 2 builds upon this by analysing another text that focuses on the lure of Paris as seat of colonial education—Aké Loba's *Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir*—whose protagonist's travel experiences are similarly marked by feelings of alienation and exile. It also importantly initiates discussion of transport and travel technologies: a theme that re-emerges in later chapters. Chapter 3 concentrates on another Paris-based text but one that questions the pre-eminence of the French capital as colonial centre: Bernard Dadié's *Un Nègre à Paris*. By examining its innovative approach to travel writing, Ní Loingsigh illustrates how Dadié's appropriation and subversion of the Western travelogue subjects France and the French to the critical gaze of a colonized traveller and poses difficult questions for French readers about the supposed superiority of metropolitan French society and cultural values. The following two chapters, however, shift attention away from metropolitan France and Europe to scrutinize examples of black transnational Atlantic exchange in the portraits of America in Lamine Diakhaté's *Chalys d'Harlem* and Bernard Dadié's *Patron de New York*, and Tété-Michel Kpomassie's journey to the Arctic in *L'Africain du Groenland*. In doing so, they suggest alternative possibilities for travel relations from the well-worn routes between Africa and France so frequently seen in Francophone African literature and indicate the diversity of topographies that can be traced within this field. Chapter 6, meanwhile, engages explicitly with representations of female experience and sexuality through its cogent analysis of Calixthe Beyala's *Le Petit Prince de Belleville* and *Maman a un amant* and underlines how both engage with ideas of travel, highlight the importance of economic migration within the development of Francophone African travel writing and privilege the experiences of women within intercontinental travel. The final afterword provides a succinct conclusion that reasserts the study's aims and helpfully signals areas for future study, including representations of travel within pre-colonial African culture and oral literature, and comparison between the Francophone corpus identified here and non-Francophone African equivalents. In short, *Postcolonial Eyes* provides an illuminating examination of a range of representations of intercontinental travel in Francophone African literature and navigates a welcome path that others hopefully will pursue on the strengths of Ní Loingsigh's important work.

JOSEPH MCGONAGLE
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Postcolonial Thought in the French-speaking World. Edited by CHARLES FORSDICK and DAVID MURPHY. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009. 357 pp. Hb £65; Pb £19.95. ISBN 9781846310546 (Hb); 1846310555 (Pb)

Wide-ranging in scope and comprising twenty-four chapters written by leading specialists, this impressive volume represents a major disciplinary intervention in the Francophone postcolonial field, and focuses specifically on theories and ideas associated with Francophone postcolonial thought. The book is divided into two parts: section one explores twelve key thinkers, while section two engages more generally with 'themes, approaches, theories' associated with French-speaking postcolonial thought, dealing with different geographical contexts, temporal periods, disciplines, and forms of thought—anthropology and history, film and fiction. This arrangement splits the book equally in terms of number of chapters, although contributions in the second section tend to be longer, more diverse in terms of subject matter, and less rigidly structured than the relatively brief introductions to the key thinkers, which all start with a biographical overview and summary of the thinkers' publications. Although the bipartite structure leads to a certain degree of overlap between a couple of essays from different parts of the book—there are points of convergence, for example, between chapters by Mary Gallagher, David Murphy and Richard Watts on Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor and 'Négritude, Présence Africaine, Race' respectively—the end result is both informative and complementary with the two-pronged approach revealing different facets of individual thinkers' thought and its larger contexts. Particularly useful is the editors' substantial introduction which provides an *état présent* of important new publications and directions in Francophone postcolonial scholarship since the publication of Forsdick and Murphy's previous edited volume *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction* in 2003. As the introduction makes clear, this 2009 publication represents an updating and refocusing of that previous collection, squaring more firmly on thinkers, thought, ideas, and theories. One of the main aims of this volume is to trace the contours of Francophone postcolonial thought in a manner which is as representative as possible. As the editors themselves make clear, they have made selections for inclusion based on 'e.g. gender, period, location, genre, politics' (pp. 22–23). Indeed, represented here are a diversely eclectic gamut of thinkers (including Ho-Chi Minh), innovative reappraisals of the relevance of postcolonial thought to various places (France, the Caribbean, the Pacific, North Africa, Indochina, sub-Saharan Africa, Quebec), times (the end of the *Ancien Régime* and Republican Empires), and of far-reaching assessments of current post/colonial debates in France. Many of the key thinkers singled out here are, however, relatively well-established figureheads of Francophone postcolonial thought, and so it comes as no real surprise to find them listed here. While new and quite often provocative readings of these canonical figureheads are offered (see Chris Bongie's chapter, among others), there is a danger that this type of selection of twelve key thinkers risks reifying the postcolonial canon while it is still emerging. Despite the fact that the editors are acutely aware of the necessarily partial nature of their choices, more could have been made of problematic gaps. Why no Haitian writers, for example? Where the tracing of genealogies is concerned, Jean-Price Mars's *Ainsi parla l'oncle* was a key forerunner to many of the most important ideas emerging from the Caribbean region. Also relatively sidelined are those writers who choose not to write theory *per se*, but who express important ideas in ways other than programmatic statements which have had, or perhaps should have, an impact on the contours of Francophone postcolonial thought. Mary Gallagher and Nicholas Harrison do,

however, foreground thinkers Aimé Césaire and Assia Djebar who mostly transmit their ideas through the medium of their literary work. Continuing the dialogue between scholars working on Francophone and Anglophone postcolonial issues, this book persists in challenging postcolonialism's previous monolingualism, and offers a highly complex overview of ways in which postcolonial thought and theories have travelled to new contexts and meanings. Great emphasis is placed by the editors on the need to elaborate the postcolonial field in a manner which is genuinely transcolonial and comparative. This book constitutes a crucial and considerable leap in that direction. Beyond 'writing back' to, adapting, and uncovering the Francophone origins of Anglophone postcolonial thought, it will be interesting to see how the contours of postcolonial thought change further as scholars continue to go beyond Anglocentrism—and perhaps Francocentrism—to cross the old linguistic divides of colonial rule, while looking for more connections with other time periods, places and regions, most notably Latin America. In this volume, all of the contributions are of an exceptionally and consistently high standard, and for a book written by twenty-five different people the degree of cohesion achieved is impressive. Boldness and comprehensiveness mark out many of the essays from both sides of the structuring divide. Polemical interventions are provided by several contributors who achieve the feat of interrogating some current critical orthodoxies surrounding certain postcolonial thinkers and theories, while at the same time providing essential introductions to these key ideas and intellectuals. In addition to acting as introductory surveys, there are thus chapters which constitute crucial additions in their own right to the current postcolonial debates outlined within them, taking them in new directions. Overall, *Postcolonial Thought in the French-speaking World* is an innovative scholarly collection which will be a resource of immense value for students, researchers, and also a useful starting point for structuring lectures and other lessons around the key thinkers, themes, approaches, and theories. Each chapter is followed by a short list of further reading, and the work is kept 'light' and accessible through the relative paucity of footnote references.

RACHEL DOUGLAS
UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

François Maspero et les paysages humains. Edited by BRUNO GUICHARD, JULIEN HAGE AND ALAIN LÉGER. Lyon: A plus d'un titre/La fosse aux ours, 2009. 336 pp. Pb. 20€. ISBN 978-2-35707-006-6

A pioneer of internationalist, anti-colonial 'édition engagée', François Maspero's career as bookseller, editor, publisher, translator and writer spans the past fifty years. His work with fellow editors, including Fanchita Gonzalez Batlle, Emile Copfermann, and later Albert Memmi, was strongly motivated by reaction to the Algerian war (1954–62). Censored titles sold or published by Maspero, such as Henri Alleg's *La Question* (1957, Éditions De Minuit), and Paulette Péju's *Les Ratonnades à Paris* (1961, Maspero), a rapidly printed response to the state-endorsed massacre of Algerian demonstrators in Paris in October 1961, caught the attention of the OAS. Both books were seized shortly after being displayed, although copies were successfully

exported and sold by sympathetic booksellers in Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. More sinister were attacks on Maspero's bookshop, La Joie de Lire, which led to night-time vigils in the shop and a state of tension that Maspero fictionalizes in his 1988 novel, *Le Figuier*. In the late sixties and seventies, in addition to censorship rows, Maspero was denounced for profiting from the 'revolution', caught in the bind of selling anti-capitalist texts, albeit for negligible monetary gain. State-sponsored moves against Maspero, along with ongoing court cases, eventually crippled the publishing house financially. This comprehensive catalogue accompanies an exhibition held in Lyon and Strasbourg in 2009, and soon to arrive in Paris in 2010, marking fifty years since the founding of Éditions Maspero.

The publisher's exemplary transnational backlist, reprinted here in its entirety, includes first editions and translations of works by Frantz Fanon, Ernesto Che Guevara, Bertrand Russell, Louis Althusser, Eduardo Galeano, Hocine Bouhager, Marek Hadded, Paul Nizan, Daniel Guérin, Amilcar Cabril, Jomo Kenyatta and Nâzim Hikmet. Éditions Maspero published 1,350 titles across thirty collections from 1959 to 1982 and oversaw ten journals, including *Partisans* and the French edition of *Tricontinental*. The primary material provided by the editors of this book, including forty pages of colour illustrations and archival photographs, will be invaluable for future critical analysis of publishing practices in the period. The second half of the book usefully reprints past interviews with Maspero himself, together with a transcript of Chris Marker's documentary on Maspero, *Les mots ont un sens* (1969). Julien Hage's historical account of the bookshop and publishing house accompanies articles by those connected to Maspero, who offer anecdotal insights into the quotidian tasks and tensions of book production, and testify to the symbolic capital of Maspero's books. In one interview, Patrick Chamoiseau describes how the imprint became, 'un mantra d'initiés… un bout de formule secrète qui inaugurait la mise en transformation de moi-même et du monde' (p. 92).

For students, intellectuals, activists, and curious passers-by, Maspero's shop in rue Saint-Séverin was a key place to browse and acquire books, as well as discuss and exchange ideas concerning France's changing role on the world stage. Although the most regular customers 'chez Masp' were evening commuters waiting for their train at the nearby St Michel station, the focus on 'vente par correspondance', meant that books also reached beyond the metropolitan intellectual centre. In a wry aside, Maspero comments that to be seen buying the latest book on third world militancy often substituted actually reading the text. A contemporary account by Christian Baudelot recalls, 'certes, on achetait plus de livres qu'on en lisait' (p. 47).

Since selling Éditions Maspero in 1982 to the founder of La Découverte, for a symbolic price of one franc, Maspero has worked as a novelist, translator, journalist and travel-writer, often operating at and probing the junctions of these different modes. He has translated from Spanish, Italian and English, including works by Joseph Conrad, Jorge Luis Borges and Eduardo Mendoza. His documentary travelogue of the Parisian banlieue, *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (1990), with photography by Anaïk Frantz, has received sustained critical attention, especially following the 2005 riots in France. Eleven other novels, discussed perhaps a little too briefly here, trace mainly autobiographical themes, narrating the joys and frustrations of half a century spent promoting internationalism in an increasingly globalized world. This book emerges in a moment of increased interest in the application of book history in literary study to remind us of the material origins of the now-outdated margin to centre model in postcolonial study. Kristin Ross (2004), in her *Mai 68 and its afterlives*, has argued that Maspero was instrumental in relaying the ideas of third-world militants and socialist thought to Left Bank intellectuals. We can now begin to explore the reciprocal symbolic value of the Maspero imprint for those writers living outside the metropole. As Patrick Chamoiseau comments, 'le son *Maspero* c'est ma partie rebelle

la plus brute… Les complexifications concernant le Tout-Monde viendront après' (p. 90). The impressive collective work behind this catalogue's focus on Maspero's 'paysages humains' provides invaluable groundwork for necessary further analysis of Maspero's writing and publishing practices.

RUTH BUSH
WOLFSON COLLEGE, OXFORD

Le Récit de voyage français en Afrique noire (1830–1931): Essai de scénographie. By ALEX DEMEULENAERE. Berlin: LIT, 2009. 320 pp. Pb €39.90. ISBN 978-3-643-10101-3

The French travel narrative in sub-Saharan Africa is a genre that poses difficulties for analysis for various reasons, including its somewhat haunting links with taxonomical anthropology, as well as its propensity to narrate a French experience rather than an African one. There are a few approaches that attempt to contemplate the complex and variable nature of French colonial exoticism. *Le Récit de voyage français en Afrique noire*, however, opts for a scenographic analysis. The term 'scenography' applies to people, places and objects which encompass the pre-colonial and colonial experiences of the French voyager. By applying scenography to postcolonial theory, Demeulenaere promises to offer a perspective on the French travel narrative of sub-Saharan Africa throughout the French pre-colonial, early colonial and late colonial eras. The book seeks to elucidate links and disparities between a chronological series of discourses on Africa by writers from the Hexagon. The theoretical axes on which Demeulenaere builds his argument are Edward Said's idea of 'Orientalism' as a way to understand the concept of an 'Africanism' as well as Homi Bhabha's idea of hegemony emerging through zones of contact between the French self and African other. The study combines these two ideas in order to open the discussion about the practical analytical point of view offered by scenography. Borrowing from Jean-Marc Moura and Dominique Maingueneau, Demeulenaere explains his use of scenography in the analysis of the portrayal of the French self, the African other and the spatial framework which encompasses them both. The approach builds on Moura's research in *Littératures francophones et théorie postcoloniale* (1999), in which it is proposed that a scenographic analysis of differing perspectives of French legitimation would meaningfully compare their points of enunciation. Maingueneau's work supplements this idea of enunciation with the notion of a mise-en-scène which takes place between self, other and space, developed in his *Discours littéraire: Paratopie et scène d'énonciation* (2004). Through a series of nine case studies of travelers, *Le Récit de voyage français en Afrique noire* discusses the representation of this scenographic relationship in works by authors ranging from Jean-Baptiste Douville to Albert Londres. In his analysis of the pre-colonial era narratives of René Caillé and Paul du Chaillu, Demeulenaere examines the tension between the traveler's desire for scientific legitimation and a desire of readership for fantastic storytelling. In the early colonial era, the study portrays legitimation as a process whereby the individual plays a role in a broader system of social organization, whether governmental, religious or touristic. A social role is represented by a job (or lack of one): explorer, missionary or tourist. Consequently, the other is observed from the perspective of this role. Moving on to the late colonial era, Demeulenaere

characterizes legitimation of the voyage as a tenuous and nuanced process, in which the individual traveler reconciles experience of the other with socially-driven representations of the other. Michel Leiris, for example, negotiates between self-interest and social interest in his representation of the sub-Saharan African milieu. The cases examined in the study display a variety of contradictory motivations for travel and exploration. More often than not, Demeulenaere presents the traveler's motivation for exploration as incidentally coinciding with a public investment in state exploration, and later, colonization. In the course of the study, the goals of these travelers suggest that their professional loyalties were to themselves and to other social groups, and not necessarily to the French state. Consequently, the unification of these narratives under a developing state project of exploration and colonization might be reconsidered. Despite this shortcoming, Demeulenaere uncovers a problem with which future research can engage: making sense of the multiple conflicts of interest in sub-Saharan Africa during these eras. While French colonialism may be a pervasive force in the production of travel narratives from 1830–1931, the individual still plays a substantial role in shaping perceptions of the other in sub-Saharan Africa. The writers themselves have goals which contradict the logic of a state-driven motivation for travel. For example, the tourist Mandat Grancey and the missionary Joachim Buléon travel for leisure and on behalf of a religious organization, respectively. Overall, Demeulenaere approaches the French travel narrative in sub-Saharan Africa in an innovative way that will connect the genre to colonial and postcolonial studies more fluidly than before. The scenographic analysis in *Le Récit de voyage français en Afrique noire* considers an imagined, yet nuanced and evolving, relationship between self and other. This volume will be of interest to Francophone postcolonial scholarship because of its link between French exploration and exoticism through scenography, and especially to those studying French travel writing in Africa.

BART MILLER
UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Decolonizing Translation: Francophone African Novels in English Translation. By KATHRYN BATCHELOR. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing, 2009. 282 pp. Pb £22.50. ISBN 978-1-905763-17-7

This comprehensive study of all sub-Saharan Francophone African fiction available in English aims to further the debate on the ethics and politics of translation by analysing the implications of translation decisions in a postcolonial context. Kathryn Batchelor shifts the emphasis onto the (often innovative) language of the primary texts and, rather than entering the argument on whether that language is a decolonizing and decentring device or merely a means to embed African oral heritage within the former colonizer's language, takes an interest in the multiplicity *within* the source language (however unequal the relationship between linguistic influences) and focuses on the translation and transfer of that inherent multiplicity instead. The micro-level decisions involving translators have a direct bearing on a text's ability to convey its linguistic and cultural particularities and therefore significance, and the author here emphasizes the role

of translation as key to questions of post-colonial linguistic and editorial power relationships. The book places considerable emphasis on the idea of 'traces' of culture within translations, reflecting previous decades of scholarship since the cultural turn in translation studies. However, *Decolonizing Translation* points to the limitations of previous studies on postcolonial translation, arguing that existing literature only offers broad outlines for the challenges posed by the practice of translating postcolonial texts rather than constituting exhaustive investigations into possible translatory approaches. Batchelor is right to point out that the poetics put forward by Paul Bandia and Tejaswini Niranjana (drawing heavily on Lawrence Venuti) do not provide any practical methodology for how to solve the conundrum of preserving 'difference' within a text. The author, on the other hand, defines her study as a continuation of Bo Pettersson's plea for a 'shift from "philosophical, conceptual analysis towards empirical research"' (p. 6), a goal achieved through working with a tightly defined corpus of existing translations, while at the same time scrutinizing the theoretical framework proposed by Homi Bhabha, Lawrence Venuti, Maria Tymoczko, and Gayatri Spivak. Batchelor rightly expresses frustration at the gap sometimes present between the practice and theory of translation in recent decades, explaining that 'the limits and applicability of "post-colonial translation theory" thus become a matter for debate, in much the same way the taxonomy and boundaries of postcolonial studies itself have become open to discussion and dispute' (p. 231). The future of a decolonized translation practice, indeed, lies in the possibilities of creative solutions available to the translator. On the notion of the untranslatable, Batchelor quotes Barbara Cassin who offers a philosophical—and positive—approach to the practice of translation in the following terms: 'Parler d'intraduisibles n'implique nullement que les termes en question [...] ne soient pas traduits et ne puissent pas l'être—l'intraduisible, c'est plutôt ce qu'on ne cesse de (ne pas) traduire' (p. 230). Here, Batchelor illustrates the complexity of translation issues through a discussion of the tools available to the translator when faced with examples of 'visible traces', relexification, wordplay, basilectal and mesolectal features and dialect. Failing the possibility of multiple translations being presented to the reader in the same volume (unlikely in the current publishing market, as Batchelor discusses in her early chapters), she advocates maximum visibility for the translator (via the front and back cover and possible addition of a translator's foreword, notes, etc.) to draw the reader's attention to the text as a 'reading' and interpretation of the source text. The strength of *Decolonizing Translation* lies in its scope, its completeness, as well as its ability to combine the minutiae of individual translation examples with a larger theoretical framework. The author sets about her task in a methodical, empirical manner, covering previously largely unchartered territory in her choice of translated material. Linguistic and theoretical vocabulary is carefully introduced along the way, thus bridging the gap between linguistics and literary theory. The sheer wealth of descriptive analysis could easily have staunched the flow of the argument, but this is successfully averted through the volume's organisation into small, manageable chapters with subheadings. This layout, akin to that of an academic textbook, is effective in establishing the work as both a great introduction to the field and a detailed study of specific translation examples. *Decolonizing Translation* makes an admirable and informative contribution to the field of postcolonial translation studies and will become a useful research tool for scholars of postcolonial translation and postcolonial Francophone Africa.

CLAIRE BISDORFF
CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Frankétienne and Rewriting: A Work in Progress. By RACHEL DOUGLAS. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2009. 206 pp. Hb £39.95. ISBN 0739125656

A writer imprisoned in solitary confinement and deprived of food is forced to consume his own politically subversive book, page by page. This autophagic scene from the opening pages of *L'Oiseau schizophone* (1993) stands out as emblematic of the Haitian writer and artist Frankétienne's aesthetic practice of cannibalizing and reworking his own writings, as this detailed and persuasive study by Rachel Douglas attests. *Frankétienne and Rewriting* offers a new focus on the work of one of the most prolific and neglected writers currently working in the Caribbean. Published over five decades, Frankétienne's œuvre of over forty texts in French and Creole began during the political repression and violence of François Duvalier's Haiti in the 1960s and continues to the present day. This insightful study takes some of the most commented-upon aspects of Frankétienne's work by critics, including Haiti's zombification under dictatorship, degradation of the Haitian landscape, quantum energy, and the stereotype of the cannibal as a starting point, in order to argue that these are precisely the aspects chosen by Frankétienne to amplify and extend in more recently rewritten editions of his work. Following the sequence of Frankétienne's published rewritings, from *Les Affres d'un défi* in 1979 to the major eight-volume project reworking *L'Oiseau schizophone* into *Les Métamorphoses de l'Oiseau schizophone* in the 1990s, Douglas traces the evolution and specificity of Frankétienne's 'Spiralist' aesthetic in the broader context of a Caribbean tradition of rewriting. This has included postcolonial re-workings of canonical texts, as well as self-rewriting often for an international audience. Her 'postcolonial approach to literariness' (p. 9), as she describes it, allows Douglas to negotiate successfully between a detailed textual analysis of Frankétienne's 'hypotexts' and rewritten 'hypertexts' (Genette), and a wider awareness of contemporary political contexts and conditions of publication. Different editions are juxtaposed in citations throughout the study, with later additions bolded, and longer extracts are also included as an appendix, enabling the reader to follow the changes made to his work by Frankétienne over time. Frankétienne's practice of rewriting is described as an updating and amplification process, typically consisting of a large number of additions which subject the original text to his preferred methods of '*cannibalization*, *clarification*, *recapitulation*, and *hyperbolization*' (p. 127). These textual practices coincide or resonate with tropes such as deciphering, degradation and cannibalism which have been given renewed emphasis in Frankétienne's rewritings of his early work, as Douglas points out. The second chapter of *Frankétienne and Rewriting* examines the amplified rewritings of two early texts, *Mûr à crever* (1968) and *Ultravocal* (1972), which—a quarter of a century on—reflect the altered political context, as well as the development of the theoretical frameworks created by Frankétienne, from the continued Spiralist ideal of the open, unfinished text to new ideas on quantum writing, textual energy, and the need for active, *creative reading*. The final two chapters, which look at Frankétienne's huge *Métamorphoses de l'Oiseau schizophone* project, emphasize the extent to which metaphors of cannibalism and grotesquely magnified appetites have been deployed in later rewritings in order to reflect the exploitation of Haiti by both internal and external forces. Frankétienne's inversion and complication of the traditional stereotype of Haiti as the 'cannibal cousin' of the United States (John Craige, 1934) is given a postcolonial reading by Douglas, who argues that the presence of stock colonial characters like the greedy, corrupt priest and the vicious planter, and their anachronistic deplacement in contemporary Haiti in *Métamorphoses* typifies Frankétienne's view of the cyclical history of colonial and neo-colonial

intervention from outside in Haitian politics. Rewritten in the wake of the embargo and US military intervention in 1994, *Métamorphoses* is particularly critical with regard to these foreign 'cannibals' and their 'étranges goûts culinaires' (*Métamorphoses* 5, p. 91, cit. Douglas, p. 103), and their dictatorial Haitian counterparts, who 'nous dévorent jusqu'à la moelle' (*Métamorphoses* 6, p. 199, cit. Douglas, p. 106). Frankétienne's writing repeatedly denounces the rulers of Haiti as 'grands mangeurs', over-indulging themselves while the people starve, and Douglas shows in chapter 3 how the carnivalesque excesses of the body are magnified in *Métamorphoses de l'Oiseau schizophone*, parodying the grotesque excesses of those in power. The significance of rewriting from a literary point of view, according to Douglas's analysis of Frankétienne's work, begins with this concept of *cannibalization* ingesting and regurgitating the text in another form, much as the writer at the beginning of *Métamorphoses* is forced to ingest his own work. The idea of the (re-) writer as 'cannibale de moi-même' (*Métamorphoses*, 5, p. 193, cit. Douglas, p. 132) is central to Douglas's understanding of how Frankétienne attempts to keep his texts in a state of perpetual transformation—a concept which, as she suggests, has wider implications for a theory of rewriting in Caribbean postcolonial literature.

KATE HODGSON
WILBERFORCE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF
SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION
UNIVERSITY OF HULL

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Francophone Postcolonial Studies: Past, Present and Future
SFPS Annual Conference

Institut Français du Royaume-Uni, London, 20–21 November 2009

This year's conference marked twenty years since the launch of ASCALF with stimulating papers on topics ranging from audiovisual culture to literary texts, cultural production, politics, theory, and translation. Old and new members reflected on the society's progress and achievements to date, the present shape of the field of postcolonial studies and its future development.

The opening panel demonstrated the lively and interdisciplinary nature of the conference. Peter Hawkins presented an informed discussion of the evolution of ASCALF and its current incarnation, SFPS, and the various forces that have directed its course. Edwin Hill Jr.'s close reading of rap song and video, 'L'Angle Mort', by the collective Casey, Zone Libre and La Rumeur, showed the need for a contingent repositioning of critical and theoretical criteria in a contemporary pluricultural context. Lastly, Patricia Caille sketched the institutional challenges faced by Francophone Postcolonial film studies in France, based on her research on film production and circulation in Tunisia.

In the first pair of parallel sessions, Ursula Haskins Gonthier's paper on Champlain's Canadian Dream in *Les Voyages de la Nouvelle France* (1642) drew on the relationship between illustration and text to analyse representations of colonial authority in the period. This paper, together with Berny Sèbe's presentation on the cross-fertilisation of imperial/colonial history and Francophone Postcolonial Studies, were among the few at the conference to deal with pre-twentieth century texts. The imbalance in attendance at these sessions perhaps reflected later comments on the issue of latent presentism in Francophone Postcolonial Studies.

The panel on postcolonial translation delivered two thought-provoking papers. First, Georgina Collins' discussion of translating Senegalese women's literature in English set out the complex cultural negotiations that such translation entails. Secondly, Julia Waters' investigation of Ananda Devi's translation of David Dabydeen explored the mediation of such minor transnationalism by hegemonic Metropolitan publishing houses. Lively debate suggested the need to further define the use and meaning of 'postcolonial translation' as a practice. To end the day, Alec Hargreaves' keynote address provided an invigorating whistle-stop trip through the transatlantic history of Francophone Postcolonial Studies stretching back to the nineteenth century.

Saturday's morning panel analysed a range of 'postcolonial visual culture'. Siobhán Shilton examined the work of contemporary visual artists in Paris and their engagement with questions of postcoloniality. Marie-Christine Press's nuanced survey of the work of Zenib Sedera and Yto Barrada, which challenges authored versions of history, explored the postcolonial or nomadic experience through photographic tropes, as in Barrada's evocative project, *A Life Full of Holes: The Strait Project* (2005). The need for appropriate tools and language to read complex registers of visual culture neatly linked to Jane Hiddleston's valuable analysis of

helpful and unhelpful aspects of anxiety brought about by increased interdisciplinarity. Her paper returned to the central theme of the conference and reminded us of the frequent need to reconfigure the challenges and aims of a discipline which is always 'tense, restless, and alive'.

The final panel indicated three stimulating future directions for Francophone Postcolonial Studies. Nick Nesbitt explored the current position of politics in the field, while Lydie Moudileno considered the insidious highbrow/lowbrow categorisation that underlies canon and curriculum formation. Lastly, Richard Watts tackled the confluence between postcolonial studies and ecocriticism, suggesting another fruitful new direction in the field.

The round table brought together several key themes arising from the two days of discussion: the need to broaden regional and generic focus and the 'anxiety' that can result; the challenge of monolingualism and monoculturalism (particularly in the current UK context); the success of Francophone Postcolonial Studies in questioning monolithic French paradigms and institutional challenges still faced. The conference concluded that Francophone Postcolonial Studies represents a strategic and provisional set of critical practices that must continue to play a strong role in shaping a curriculum to address issues of the twenty-first century. Discussions and debates fostered by SFPS over the past twenty years continue to be vital to this future development.

RUTH BUSH
WOLFSON COLLEGE, OXFORD

Going Caribbean: New Perspectives on Caribbean Literature and Art

Centro de Estudos Comparatistas, University of Lisbon, 2–4 November 2009

The conference, organized by a collective from the Centre for Comparative Studies at the University of Lisbon, set itself the ambitious aim of exploring new perspectives through the comparative study of fiction and art from the broader Francophone, Hispanic, Dutch, and Anglophone Caribbean as well as their respective diasporas. As the introduction to the conference provided by Kristian Van Haesendonck highlighted, a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective urges us to unveil hidden connections, influences and dialogues between writers, artists and intellectuals. The question of how a Caribbean nation can be imagined beyond geographical and linguistic boundaries was at the heart of proceedings. For three days, the conveners of 'Going Caribbean' brought together academic expertise from across linguistic barriers (papers were presented in four languages: Spanish, Portuguese, French and English), with the view to rethinking approaches to the Caribbean by bridging the linguistic divide within the broader field of Caribbean Studies. The diverse backgrounds of invited keynote speakers and artists further reflected the ambition of the project.

The first day started with Aart Broek's keynote on the destructive powers of shame. As a criminologist with an interest in the Dutch Caribbean, Broek sketched the psychological factors behind some societal issues and concluded with analysis of what he termed a 'primary need for

belongingness'. Kathleen Ghyssels then delivered her excellent keynote tracing the evolution from *Créolité* to *Littérature-monde* in Martinican intellectual manifestos, with particular emphasis on Glissant's aesthetic discourse. This stood as a clear antithesis to the narrative of shame expounded by Aart Broek, focussing instead on the search for dignity within Franco-Antillean intellectual life.

Over the course of three days, the panels tackled such diverse issues as new Caribbean geographies and exiles, identity politics, poetics of dislocation, as well as the translation and 'rewritings' of Antigone in the Caribbean. Scheduling four panels in parallel inevitably frustrates potential listeners and sometimes makes for sparse audiences, but panels were largely well attended. Among the most memorable papers of the first day, Judith Misrahi-Barak's contribution on Amerindian Ante-Coloniality in contemporary Caribbean writing presented an interesting account of survival and resilience in the literary 'traces' of the Amerindian figure in Wilson Harris' fiction. Véronique Bragard explored the Indian migration to the French Antilles and Joséphine Marie's paper traced the development of a Caribbean identity in the work nineteenth-century Cuban writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. Also worth mentioning was Cécile Roudeau's paper on Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott's reworking of *Antigone*, in which Roudeau successfully argued the link between the untranslatability of Antigone's law and the act of questioning concepts of equivalence.

The conference's highlight was the invitation of several artists and intellectuals working on and coming from the Caribbean: Thomas Glave gave a riveting justification for his 2008 edited volume of Lesbian and Gay Writing from the Caribbean. The celebratory mood was only shortly dampened by the fact that no one from the French speaking Caribbean had come forward with a piece of writing for the volume. Mimi Barthélémy's career as a performer, a traditional *conteuse*, made her contributions to roundtables exciting and insightful and Brinda Mehta's paper followed the *fil conducteur* of food and ingestion as a metaphor for filiation and relation in Caribbean feminism. Finally, Theo D'Haen's closing keynote 'Going Caribbean, Going Global' looked beyond the conference into the future and made a fitting tribute to a project which had brought together scholarship spanning centuries and linking the varied linguistic and geographical landscapes of the Caribbean and its diasporas.

For more information of the conference, its speakers and paper abstracts, please consult the conference website: http://goingcaribbean.blogspot.com/.

CLAIRE BISDORFF
CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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), conference reports (500 words max.), and calls for papers, should also be sent to the editorial team.

The deadline for the receipt of articles to be included in the autumn issue is 31 August 2010.

Editorial Team
Dr Kate Marsh, School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, University of Liverpool
E-mail: clmarsh@liv.ac.uk
Aurélie L'Hostis, King's College, Cambridge
E-mail: aurelielh02@yahoo.fr
Claire Bisdorff, Clare College, Cambridge
E-mail: cjb205@hermes.cam.ac.uk

Advisory Board
Professor Charles Forsdick, School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, University of Liverpool
E-mail: craf@liv.ac.uk

The SFPS logo, designed by Caomhán Ó Scolaí, is based on a Téké mask from the Upper Sanga region (Congo-Brazzaville).

SFPS Membership

Membership of the Society includes:

- Subscription to *Francophone Postcolonial Studies* (published by Liverpool University Press), and the biannual electronic *Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies*;
- Reduced rates on the purchase of back copies of ASCALF/SFPS publications;
- A complimentary copy of new titles appearing in the SFPS critical studies series;
- Admission to the annual SFPS conference (and other SFPS-sponsored events) at reduced rates;
- Electronic mailings on conferences, study days and publications of interest to SFPS members;
- Access to SFPS grants for conference/colloquia organisation is available to SFPS members;
- To join SFPS and renew your membership, please download the membership form, which lists membership rates for the current year: http://www.sfps.ac.uk/.