

Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

A Biannual Publication



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‘L’humain n’a pas de frontière’: An Interview with Hubert Haddad

Hubert Haddad is a Francophone Maghrebi writer who was born in Tunisia a year before the nation-state of Israel was founded in 1948, to an Algerian Jewish mother with French citizenship and a Tunisian father with Judeo-Berber origins.¹ The family immigrated to France a few years later,² where Hubert Haddad was to establish himself as a writer through poetry, novels, *récits*, short stories, essays, and literary workshops. Haddad has played a key role in the resurgence of the genre of the short story in France, most notably through the two-part collection *Nouvelles du jour et de la nuit* (Zulma, 2011), but also through *Vent printanier* (Zulma, 2010), which takes the infamous Vél d’Hiv as its subject matter. He recently initiated the journal *Apulée: Revue annuelle de littérature et de réflexion* (named after the Berber writer Apuleius), which has a Mediterranean emphasis but is not restricted to the basin.³ The aim of the journal is to decentralize elitist world literature structures, situating itself within the wider framework of literatures from across the world, and adopting a multilingual as well as a multicultural approach.⁴ Haddad has also written two novels about Japan: *Le Peintre d’éventail* (Zulma, 2013)—accompanied by a collection of haikus—and, more recently, *Mā* (Zulma, 2015).

Exile and conflict are key themes for Haddad. He is perhaps best known for his novel *Palestine* (Zulma, 2007), which won the Prix des cinq continents de la Francophonie (2008) and the first Prix Renaudot Poche (2009). One of his earlier novels, *Les derniers jours d’un homme heureux* (Albin Michel, 1980), centres on the Algerian War of Independence which overshadowed his youth, while a more recent novel, *Opium Poppy* (2011), follows the journey of an Afghani child soldier. Yet Haddad is also interested in wider themes of memory, identity, and the creative process, to which his *œuvre* testifies. *Coïncidences exagérées* (Mercure de France, 2016), which begins with the Paris attacks of November 2015 and the death of Hubert Haddad’s brother in hospital on the same day, explores philosophical questions of life, death, and (non-)belonging.⁵ I met Hubert Haddad at a *rencontre croisée* between him and Cécile Oumhani, author of *Tunisian Yankee* (Elyzad, 2016), in October 2016 at the Librairie Les Oiseaux rares in Paris.

REBEKAH VINCE: On reproche aux défenseurs du concept de ‘la littérature-monde’ d’être euro-centriques, cosmo-optimistes et néo-impérialistes (notamment dans le bilan linguistique).⁶ Comment *Apulée* se différencie-t-elle de ce concept?

HUBERT HADDAD: Nous sommes très proches des Étonnants Voyageurs et de Michel Le Bris. Beaucoup des collaborateurs d’*Apulée* participent au festival à Saint-Malo et dans le monde. Il

¹ See Hubert Haddad, ‘D’ailes et d’empreintes’, *Une enfance juive en Méditerranée musulmane*, ed. by Leïla Sebbar (Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule: Bleu autour, 2012), pp. 173–82; ‘L’été d’un loir’, *Enfances tunisiennes*, ed. by Leïla Sebbar (Tunis: Elyzad, 2010), pp. 112–21; ‘Hubert Haddad, *La langue française vue de la Méditerranée*, ed. by Patrice Martin and Christophe Drevet (Léchelle: Zellige, 2009), pp. 73–77.

² In *Le Camp du bandit mauresque* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), a *récit d’enfance*, Haddad writes about his childhood years as a member of a Maghrebi Jewish immigrant family in Paris.

³ *Apulée n°1 – Galaxies identitaires*, ed. by Hubert Haddad (Paris: Zulma, 2016). See Khalid Lyamlahy, ‘Revue Apulée n°1 – Galaxies identitaires’, *Francosphères*, 5 (2016), 130–33. *Apulée n°2 – De l’imaginaire et des pouvoirs*, ed. by Hubert Haddad (Paris: Zulma, 2017).

⁴ All contributions not originally written in French feature in their original language, accompanied by a French translation for reader accessibility.

⁵ Part of the ‘Traits et portraits’ collection initiated by Colette Fellous in 2004.

⁶ See *Pour une littérature-monde*, ed. by Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), and Kebir M. Ammi, Azouz Begag, François Bégaudeau and others, *Je est un autre: pour une identité-monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010). See also *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*, ed. by Charles Forsdick, David Murphy and Alec G. Hargreaves (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010); and *Trajectoires et dérives de la littérature-monde: poétiques de la relation et du divers dans les espaces francophones*, ed. by Cécilia W. Francis and Robert Viau (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013).

n'empêche que j'interroge ce concept plutôt spécieux d'identité-monde [dans *Apulée*],⁷ pour les raisons que vous dites... Au sortir de la guerre d'Algérie, le grand Kateb Yacine déclarait aux arabisants qu'il ne fallait pas pour autant délaisser la langue française, il parlait même de 'butin de guerre', quand un autre écrivain algérien, lui exclusivement francophone, Malek Haddad, arrêta d'écrire, désemparé, comme privé de légitimité. Même si la langue est l'outil discriminant des conquêtes, une fois acquise par le colonisé, elle lui appartient intimement, puisqu'elle porte sa mémoire et sa pensée. Apulée, auteur berbère romanisé, a écrit un chef-d'œuvre de la littérature mondiale en langue latine: *Les métamorphoses* ou *l'Âne d'or*. La langue appartient à qui la fait vivre. Aujourd'hui le français, la littérature de langue française, se manifestent de manière souvent bien plus exemplaire en Afrique et dans maints pays francophones que dans l'Hexagone, lequel s'en trouve revivifié.

RV: Qu'entendez-vous par 'la Méditerranée'? Avant on la considérait comme un carrefour des religions.⁸ Maintenant dans les études postcoloniales on évoque la décolonisation du terme.⁹ Que veut dire la Méditerranée, selon vous? Faut-il décoloniser ce terme?

HH: Dans l'éditorial [d'*Apulée*], c'est d'entrée qu'il est question de la Méditerranée, puisque la revue voudrait exprimer par la réflexion et toutes les formes littéraires cette entité multiple, vraie mosaïque de cultures, de langues, d'influences et de métissages, dont témoigne dans sa complexité, aujourd'hui comme hier, cette civilisation qu'il faudrait appeler 'orientalo-occidentale'.¹⁰ La Méditerranée, c'est évidemment transnational, fractal, un espace protéen avec cette mer au milieu qui permet justement des échanges et où naquirent, s'incarnèrent et se réformèrent au gré des disparitions, des renaissances et des métamorphoses ce qu'on appelle les civilisations, ces phénomènes d'accrétion dynamique concernant la vie intellectuelle, artistique et matérielle depuis la Mésopotamie, depuis Sumer, toutes les grandes civilisations à travers les guerres, les conquêtes et les colonisations successives. Il n'empêche que le résultat, c'est que toute notre culture vient de là, elle vient de la Méditerranée, de ses rivages et de ses mille odyssees. Évidemment aujourd'hui, dans une situation inquiétante de constriction nationale, religieuse et ethnique, il est vital d'exalter cet espace trans-identitaire, par-delà les déterminismes stériles et les politiques agressives ou isolationnistes. C'est en le revendiquant avant tout comme espace de culture qu'il semble possible d'échapper aux positions conflictuelles.

Les religions elles-mêmes participent de la dimension civilisatrice. Toutes les religions ont construit peu ou prou par la mise en activité des savoirs le paysage méditerranéen; mais il y a bien sûr une dialectique du fait religieux, de l'imaginaire et du pouvoir. L'esprit des Évangiles n'a rien à voir avec les Croisades, et il se retrouve intact dans Cimabue et Giotto: le Christ de la Passion n'est pas le Christ-Roi. La sublime culture arabo-musulmane n'a jamais été plus éloignée de l'esprit du djihad qu'aux premiers siècles de la Conquête mahométane, une fois la Perse, la corne de l'Afrique, le grand Maghreb et la péninsule ibérique apparemment convertis. L'âge de raison d'une civilisation correspond au décrochement de ses valeurs religieuses, au passage de la vérité hégémonique à celle des mythes et légendes comme paysage réflexif et esthétique. Ce qu'André Malraux appelait 'l'imaginaire de vérité', celui du religieux dogmatique, se transforme peu à peu, avec les siècles, en 'imaginaire de beauté', ça devient de la culture, de l'humanisme, un horizon d'accueil. Les religions sont faites pour être dépassées, pour devenir cet imaginaire de beauté en soi universel, propre à une communion des sensibilités et des intelligences. Évidemment, aujourd'hui, nous en sommes loin. Il y a des conflits nés entre autres du religieux, de son retour archaïque, symptôme des conflits économiques et territoriaux toujours couplés.

⁷ Hubert Haddad, 'Le monde n'appartient à personne', *Apulée n°1 – Galaxies identitaires*, pp. 174–79.

⁸ *Méditerranée, carrefour des religions*, ed. by Jean Daniélou (Paris: A. Fayard, 1959). Contributions by Emmanuel Levinas and André Chouraqui among others.

⁹ See Claudia Esposito, *The Narrative Mediterranean: Beyond France and the Maghreb* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), *passim*.

¹⁰ Hubert Haddad, 'L'énergie des lointains', *Apulée n°1 – Galaxies identitaires*, pp. 9–11.

Au temps de la dislocation des empires coloniaux occidentaux, dans l'après-guerre, les mouvements de révolution nationale, des peuples colonisés, ne s'inspiraient guère de la religion, mais trouvaient leurs références en Occident, du côté de Marx, du côté du castrisme et des combats pour la libération des femmes. Au temps de cette guerre dite 'de pacification' en Algérie, la résistance arabe était d'espèce humaniste, malgré ses violences, inspirée entre autres par un libérateur emblématique, l'émir Abd el Kader. Les femmes et les hommes n'allaient pas invoquer le religieux, même s'ils l'étaient, ils pouvaient l'être, beaucoup l'étaient, et là il y a un retour, un retour du refoulé on pourrait dire, c'est-à-dire que finalement il y a eu décolonisation, avec ses aléas, il y a eu indépendance, mais ça n'aura pas suffi. Ces indépendances, au Maghreb, au Moyen-Orient, en Afrique, elles sont en grande partie tronquées, parce qu'il y a une emprise non seulement économique mais aussi idéologique; les impérialismes sont toujours présents à travers l'exploitation des richesses naturelles et de la pauvreté, vivier de la fortune néo-coloniale, un certain visage de l'industrie touristique aussi, nos modes de pensée élitistes et inconsciemment raciales. L'économie, portée par la mondialisation, est toujours coloniale. Alors évidemment, par réaction quasi-pathologique, les replis défensifs, vengeurs, irrationnels, se manifestent sous les bannières du religieux, seul capable d'unité face aux dislocations sociales que les dictatures laïques ont naguère féroce ment jugulées, et c'est le grand drame de ce qui peut se passer aujourd'hui et qu'il faut comprendre, c'est que l'islam longtemps pacifié devient une bannière contre une réalité coloniale invasive qui a pris d'autres visages.

RV: Quand vous parlez d'*Apulée*, vous évoquez une sorte d'utopie. N'est-ce pas trop idéaliste?

HH: L'utopie, c'est tout simplement vouloir que les choses évoluent et créer les conditions du changement par une réflexion solidaire riche des leçons cruelles de l'Histoire. On ne peut pas être minimaliste dans un combat pour la liberté. Il faut inventer tous azimuts, et partager ses découvertes. Sortir résolument de ses positions de défense, de l'attentisme cynique, du sectarisme clanique. L'utopie, c'est un projet, c'est un élan, la construction partagée du désir, c'est une ouverture, un appel libertaire. La volonté dans ce sens est une valeur d'espérance.

RV: J'ai l'impression que vous utilisez les mots 'exil' et 'exode' de manière interchangeable. Où est la différence, s'il y en a une?

HH: La différence, c'est que l'exil, c'est toujours individuel, c'est toujours une vie. L'exode, ça concerne des populations entières, en référence au deuxième livre de la Bible, la fuite d'Égypte du peuple hébreu conduit par Moïse.

RV: Donc c'est collectif.

HH: C'est collectif, et puis l'exode, c'est souvent transitoire. Lors d'une guerre il y a des déplacements de populations, il y a des exils provisoires, comme lors de l'occupation allemande en 1940. Souvent globalement elles vont revenir, ces populations déplacées, mais une partie ne reviendra pas, et pour ceux qui ne reviendront pas, c'est l'exil. Dans l'exil, il y a une dimension d'adieu sans retour, et par ailleurs, l'exilé se trouve déporté de son environnement, de son milieu, de sa famille, et tente de se reconstituer ailleurs, dans un ailleurs étrange, un ailleurs qu'il faut apprivoiser.

RV: Comment vous identifiez-vous: comme écrivain français d'origine tunisienne ou écrivain tunisien d'expression française?

HH: Justement, je ne me définis pas, pourquoi serais-je plutôt ceci ou cela? La notion d'identité, je l'ai toujours contestée, c'est la prison d'un rêve où l'on s'enferme en geôlier de soi-même. Dans *Apulée*, il y a un bel entretien avec Albert Memmi sur le sujet.¹¹ Il faut absolument lire *Portrait du*

¹¹ Albert Memmi and Catherine Pont-Humbert, 'Entretien', *Apulée n°1 – Galaxies identitaires*, pp. 12–18.

colonisé,¹² j'adhère à peu près à toutes ses positions.

RV: Mais il a changé un peu ses idées depuis...

HH: Pas l'essentiel, même avec l'âge. Et l'on peut s'en tenir à son œuvre vive. Évidemment, comme Memmi l'explique si bien, il y a des appartenances, et c'est une richesse. Je suis né en Tunisie, côté paternel, ma famille pleinement arabisée a vécu là pendant des générations, sans qu'on puisse savoir du fond des siècles, avec leurs vagues d'invasions et de conversions, de quelle lignée, berbère ou judaïque. Du côté de ma mère, c'est l'Algérie sépharade, de Constantine, de Bône aussi (l'antique Hippone aujourd'hui Annaba), et de celui d'une arrière grand-mère maternelle, c'est probablement le Maroc: ne serais-je pas un peu Maghrébin? Je demeure à Paris, et c'est dans la langue française que j'écris exclusivement, n'en connaissant point d'autres à fond. Alors, revendiquer une identité, la plus aliénante des illusions, quelle absurdité ce serait pour moi. De l'humain surgit ici ou là à travers l'espace-temps et se modèle au gré des langages d'accueil et des expériences vécues, dans cet espace d'interprétation que sont les langues en écho des mœurs, d'une certaine doxa subconsciente et des représentations esthétiques: tout ce fond se module, se perd et se retrouve, s'épanouit dans l'étonnement et la perplexité propres à notre condition de créature. De cette lente fusion se constituera telle individuation particulière en chacun, telle subjectivité, laquelle prendra la couleur de son environnement et la forme de son questionnement et d'une critique intériorisée qu'on peut appeler conscience.

Mais d'une certaine manière, si on fait une sorte de déplacement total de toutes ces contingences qui semblent être des effets de nature, mais qui ne sont que circonstanciels, chaque individu va être pour le fond absolument identique, du moins dans son être intime, à quiconque est né sur cette planète, fût-ce il y a dix mille ans, serait-ce aux antipodes. Il n'y a pas de différence substantielle entre telle ou telle créature surgie par énigme sur la poussière Terre au bord d'une galaxie-spirale riche de centaines de milliards de soleils; il y a simplement de l'humain qui se désigne dans le langage, et c'est d'abord le langage, cette manière d'incrété, cet infini de nuances, qui permet ce surgissement, qui configure cet exil intime dont on parlait tout à l'heure. Le langage, l'espace symbolique où gîte la psyché humaine, implique un questionnement, l'appel à un ailleurs, mais aussi de la fuite et du retrait parfois, une certaine soumission animale, du mimétisme, du profond sommeil, une force négative incoercible. Car cette identité-là ne porte en soi aucune valeur même si elle ouvre à tous les possibles: universelle et neutre, c'est une sorte de grand vide traversé de hantises, peuplé par tous les démons et tous les anges, mais disponible à la liberté, à l'invention, au miracle de la coprésence. Ce qu'on appelle l'imaginaire, chose du monde la plus partagée, c'est cela l'humain en soi, lieu où l'univers se révèle à lui-même dans une procession illimitée.

RV: Vous avez dit dans *Apulée* qu'Albert Memmi aime se définir comme 'juif arabe'.¹³ Pourtant il fait souvent une distinction entre les Juifs et les Arabes dans ses livres, et il a écrit un article qui met en question cette identité hybride, à la suite d'un colloque avec le Colonel Kadhafi où ce dernier a dit 'Rentrez donc! Retournez dans votre pays natal! N'êtes-vous donc pas des Arabes comme nous, des *Juifs-Arabes*?'. Voici la réponse d'Albert Memmi: 'Des *Juifs-Arabes*, nous aurions bien voulu l'être; si nous y avons renoncé, ce sont les Arabes musulmans qui nous en ont systématiquement empêchés, pendant des siècles, avec mépris et cruauté; et il est bien trop tard pour le redevenir'.¹⁴ Que veut dire être 'juif arabe' ou bien 'juif-Arabe', selon vous?

HH: La réponse de Memmi au dictateur sanguinaire Kadhafi est circonstancielle et ciblée. Même dhimisés, les juifs arabes ont vécu longtemps dans une relative harmonie chez eux, au Maghreb. Lors les mouvements d'indépendance, beaucoup se sont rangés du côté des 'indigènes', selon la

¹² Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1957).

¹³ 'Albert Memmi', *Apulée n°1 – Galaxies identitaires*, p. 395.

¹⁴ Originally published in the Jewish magazine *L'Arche*, Memmi included the article in his book *Juifs et Arabes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), pp. 49–59. See p. 50 in particular.

terminologie coloniale, l'étant eux-mêmes. C'est le décret Crémieux, cette prise en otage positive de la minorité juive, qui a coupé celle-ci de leur pays d'origine, l'Algérie. Il y a eu des périodes où les Juifs d'Orient, scribes, commerçants, artisans, se sont parfaitement accordés de leur arabité; ils partageaient la même culture, la même cuisine, la même langue que leurs frères musulmans. Par ailleurs, quand on parle des Juifs de la diaspora, en Orient comme en Europe, il s'agit de ceux qui ne se sont pas convertis, beaucoup se sont plus ou moins assimilés, nombre de chrétiens et de musulmans sont d'origine juive, et inversement, au Maghreb, des tribus qui pratiquaient l'animisme, ont pu se convertir au judaïsme.

Qui est qui, à travers les siècles? Personne ne peut revendiquer une identité qui remonterait au pays originel, au sein d'Abraham ou à une quelconque antériorité naturelle, celtique, aryenne, nipponne. Personne. Adam n'est que l'emblème mythique du fait humain, du premier homme. Les Juifs qui revendiquent l'origine ancestrale, défendent en fait une culture forte, une civilisation, un peu comme si, gardant l'enseignement humaniste de Sumer, on se prétendait les descendants de Gilgamesh, c'est à peu près la même chose. Nous nous revendiquons tous d'une culture qui ne nous appartient pas de manière héréditaire mais culturelle et éthique. Mais bon, qu'est-ce qui fait l'unité d'une communauté de croyances et d'habitus? C'est cette décision arrêtée d'appartenance, cette loyauté à des traditions acquises qui en l'occurrence sont spirituelles mais pas seulement, il s'agit aussi de coutumes, d'une philosophie, d'invocations rituelles, de mille liens intriqués de mémoire par manière d'immersion subconsciente. Tout cela, cette cohésion quotidienne, elle tient chez les juifs d'une promesse, la promesse messianique d'un retour au cœur de leur célébration quotidienne de la vie avec l'avènement d'un nouveau Moïse.

Je publie cet hiver *Premières neiges sur Pondichéry* (Zulma, 2017), un roman qui se passe en Inde où il est question des Juifs qui s'exilèrent de Jérusalem à la suite de la chute du deuxième Temple, de Babylone aussi, et plus tard d'Espagne après la Reconquista, d'un peu partout dans le bassin méditerranéen. Ils sont venus par vagues se réfugier en Inde du sud, dans le Kerala, mais aussi à Bombay ou à Calcutta, et ils y ont prospéré librement en lien fort avec la culture hindoue. Il y aurait même eu un royaume juif, le royaume de Cranganore, c'est le sujet de mon livre, dans le Kerala, sur la côte de Malabar, à proximité de Kochi. Les Juifs y ont vécu paisiblement du commerce des épices jusqu'au 16^{ème} siècle, avec l'arrivée des conquérants portugais flanqués de la Sainte Inquisition, lesquels ont détruit Cranganore. Les survivants se réfugièrent à Kochi. La Pardesi, une belle synagogue, en témoigne. On peut garder ses traditions dans l'adversité comme dans l'accueil, et c'est en soi une belle chose, dès lors qu'il y a respect réciproque des croyances et des consciences. On se souvient d'une certaine lettre de Voltaire au sujet du Prophète: 'Pourquoi obéirais-je en aveugle à des aveugles qui me crient: haïssez, persécutez, perdez celui qui est assez téméraire pour n'être pas de notre avis sur des choses mêmes indifférentes que nous n'entendons pas'.¹⁵ L'Occident chrétien n'avait rien à envier à l'Empire ottoman à l'heure des conquêtes. Et la plupart des empires, au nom de leurs dieux, se sont comportés à l'identique. Il n'y a pourtant de salut que par une culture de l'altérité, seule humaine, l'accueil des savoirs et des différences.

RV: Pensez-vous qu'il y a un lien entre le colonialisme et l'antisémitisme, comme le constatent Albert Memmi, Aimé Césaire et Hannah Arendt?¹⁶

HH: Évidemment, parce que l'antisémitisme dans ses phases destructrices, apocalyptiques, c'est le colonialisme qui l'a théorisé et institué, à l'époque des conquêtes, dans l'idéologie impérialiste. Le racisme institutionnel est né avec l'expansionnisme colonial, dès le XVIII^e siècle, mais c'est surtout au XIX^e siècle qu'il s'est constitué en idéologie. Un auteur apprécié comme Joseph Arthur de Gobineau a théorisé 'l'inégalité des races humaines', toutes étant considérées comme inférieures à

¹⁵ Voltaire to Frederic II of Prussia; *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. by Louis Moland (Paris: Garnier, 1877–83), 50 volumes; 35: *Correspondance; année 1740*, 557–61 (p. 559).

¹⁶ See Memmi, *Portrait d'un colonisé* and *L'homme dominé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968); Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme* (Paris: Éditions Présence Africaine, 1955); and Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 2004 [1951]).

la dite race blanche, et donc sujettes à sa domination. L'antisémitisme est une forme de racisme amplifiée par le fond chrétien anti-judaïque, rendant, par alibi réactionnaire, par exaltation des superstitions, le juif responsable de tous les maux de l'humanité. Parue en 1886, *La France juive*, énorme best-seller d'Édouard Drumont (le fondateur de la 'ligue antisémite de France') en atteste abondamment.¹⁷ Tout se mit alors en place pour le plus épouvantable crime de l'Occident christianisé, les Nazis et leurs alliés objectifs ayant adopté clefs en main l'idéologie antisémite française. Mais cela participe par rebond du racisme colonial. À partir du moment où les impérialistes s'emparent de continents qui ne leur appartiennent pas, où ils n'ont aucun droit légal, il faut que les habitants soient infantilisés, il leur faut intérioriser la supputation de leur infériorité sur le plan humain. Sinon tu ne peux pas maîtriser ton égal, tu ne peux pas l'inféoder, le malmenier pour qu'il travaille, en faire un esclave. Il y a toute une imprégnation idéologique (qui a commencé avec la traite négrière qui est en soi une monstruosité absolue) et ce mouvement même de colonisation prépare la Shoah, sorte d'aboutissement apocalyptique d'un pacte aberrant de mauvaise foi.

La culture des camps de concentration, c'est d'abord en Afrique, en Afrique du Sud-Ouest, où on a spolié et massacré des centaines de milliers d'Africains avec des méthodes industrielles déjà, les Anglais principalement en Afrique noire, les Allemands et les Belges au Rwanda. En inscrivant les particularités culturelles des Tutsis et des Hutus sur les cartes d'identité, le Royaume de Belgique a inventé nommément les races au Rwanda, à des fins utilitaristes de division, ce qui a mis en place une sorte de cadre à la fois technique et vertueux pour l'accomplissement du génocide de 1994. On peut même penser que dans ce mouvement-là de racialisation, d'idéologie raciale européenne, la folie du processus impérialiste et colonial s'est retournée contre lui-même. Ainsi l'Allemagne nazie, lésée de sa part de butin, s'est comportée avec le continent européen comme toutes les grandes puissances avec l'Afrique, l'Asie ou l'Amérique. Tout d'un coup, les Européens invaincus devenaient les indigènes. Il y avait bien sûr des hiérarchies dans cette offensive raciste programmée: les Juifs ont été les premiers visés, massivement, mais ils n'étaient pas les seuls, l'Allemagne et ses alliés avaient alors de grandes perspectives d'extermination, des Roms, des Slaves, etc.

RV: Justement j'ai lu votre nouvelle 'Vent printanier' sur les Roms.¹⁸

HH: Près de l'ex-camp de Drancy, cette fameuse Cité muette où des familles vivent tranquillement aujourd'hui, il y a une petite gare, l'ancienne gare de Bobigny, d'où partaient les trains pour Auschwitz. Chaque année les officiels y font une commémoration en mémoire des déportés, ils font des discours. Il y avait un campement de Roms près de la gare, sur les terrains vagues. La police est venue détruire tout ce camp et chasser les bohémiens, parce que ça faisait vilain dans le décor. Comment peut-on commémorer la déportation des Juifs, aussi des Roms, en chassant brutalement ces derniers? Ce petit fait-divers tout à fait absurde m'a inspiré la nouvelle-titre ('Vent printanier' était le nom de code de la rafle du Vel d'hiv, en 1942).

RV: Le sionisme est-il un mouvement de libération face à l'antisémitisme ou plutôt une sorte de colonisation?

HH: Au départ, c'était un mouvement de libération des Juifs d'Europe persécutés. Le sionisme est une réaction de survie face à l'antisémitisme envahissant, du temps des pogroms meurtriers en Russie et en Europe de l'est, que l'affaire Dreyfus est venue couronner sur un plan médiatique. L'affaire Dreyfus, c'était l'ignominie de trop, on prend un honnête homme et parce qu'il est juif, on en fait un traître qu'on bafoue et emprisonne. Les Juifs étaient forcément des traîtres dans l'imaginaire patriotique de l'époque coloniale. Pourtant les Juifs étaient souvent bien intégrés, ou du moins en avaient le désir, dans les pays où ils vivaient depuis des siècles, comme n'importe quel

¹⁷ See Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (Paris: Les Pléiades, 1874); and Édouard Drumont, *La France juive: Essai d'histoire contemporaine*, 2 vols (Paris: Flammarion, 1886).

¹⁸ See Hubert Haddad, 'Vent printanier', *Vent printanier* (Paris: Zulma, 2010), pp. 17–34.

citoyen reconnu par les lois constitutives. Beaucoup de Juifs avaient un sentiment national très fort, ils avaient besoin d'être acceptés et reconnus. Les exemples sont nombreux de femmes et d'hommes exemplaires dans les domaines de la pensée, de l'art et de la science. Ce mouvement sioniste socialiste est né d'un constat d'échec, avec cette idée de retrouver les terres originelles où échapper aux nouvelles persécutions montantes.

Il n'y avait pas l'idée de colonialisme dans le sionisme originel, même si objectivement il s'inscrit dans ce cadre. La Palestine était un territoire administré par l'Empire ottoman, sans frontières bien définies, où vivaient des tribus bédouines, des populations éparses, arabo-musulmanes, druzes, chrétiennes ou juives, aussi les Karaites et les Samaritains. Des milliers d'israélites n'avaient pas bougé depuis les temps antiques. Parmi les gens qui vivaient là, chrétiens ou musulmans, beaucoup étaient probablement des descendants des tribus supposées perdues d'Israël. Qui est qui, une fois de plus? Cela dans un contexte où la légitimité territoriale n'était pas fondée encore. C'était avant la Première Guerre mondiale. Durant l'Empire ottoman, cette entité géographique comprenait Bilad el-Cham, l'actuelle Syrie, le pays des deux fleuves (l'Irak), les régions de la Galilée, de la Samarie et de la Judée rassemblées de manière assez floue sous le nom de Palestine et d'autres territoires qui deviendront le Liban et la Jordanie actuels, mais ces pays n'existaient pas au temps de l'Empire ottoman. Après l'effondrement de ce dernier, Français et Anglais constituèrent de nouvelles colonies, avec leurs frontières artificielles. Toutes ces frontières arbitraires au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique seront cause d'épouvantables tragédies, guerres fratricides, révolutions sanglantes, déportations et génocides, parce que ces découpages frontaliers se sont effectués au détriment de la réalité vivante, tant géophysique qu'ethnographique.

Avec l'avènement du nazisme, dès les années trente, le sionisme idéaliste de Théodore Herzl est devenu le seul recours contre le plan d'extermination qui se mettait en place dans presque toute l'Europe. Les camps de la mort, la Shoah par balles, les massacres, l'anéantissement avec des méthodes industrielles, l'épouvante absolue: imaginez-vous cinq minutes dans la peau d'un Juif encore en vie en Pologne ou en France en 1942. Alors évidemment, aujourd'hui, c'est facile de dire que c'est de la colonisation au sens commun. Mais qu'est-ce que vous avez fait de vos Juifs, pourrait-on demander, à tous ceux qui falsifient l'histoire par des amalgames où les survivants se retrouvent sur le banc des accusés? C'est aussi pour ça que j'ai écrit *Palestine*, roman résolument acquis à la cause du peuple palestinien dans ses droits fondamentaux, pour que l'on sorte du manichéisme, cette mécanique perverse de haine et d'ostracisme.

Aujourd'hui, Israël se trouve dans une situation de guerre larvée permanente, avec un gouvernement d'extrême-droite qui mène une politique coloniale inadmissible, mais ce n'était pas à l'origine l'objectif du sionisme, ce n'était pas sa nature non plus. Il s'agissait paradoxalement de réfugiés, de migrants fuyant l'Europe génocidaire, pas de colons à la manière impérialiste, même si les conséquences peuvent sur certains points s'apparenter et même coïncider du fait d'un état de guerre permanent qui verrouille toute solution. Depuis la guerre dite des Six Jours, l'idée de sionisme s'est lentement dévoyée. Aujourd'hui, le sionisme a pris le visage de l'apartheid, il n'est plus qu'un credo qui sert ce gouvernement d'extrême-droite et tous ces fondamentalistes, tous ces maximalistes, ces gens qui vivent finalement dans une sorte de psychose. On ne peut pas vivre dans un blockhaus entouré d'avant-postes colonisateurs. Je sais bien quel traumatisme les motive: c'est une blessure inguérissable que celle des rescapés de l'enfer. Il faudra bien pourtant qu'Israël sorte de cette prison identitaire, cesse cette colonisation absurde et inique des territoires palestiniens et qu'il y ait enfin un règlement. Si tous les peuples revendiquaient pour des motifs religieux ou nationaux les terres où leur histoire s'est en partie faite il y a deux mille ans, le monde entier serait en guerre. Un règlement pacifique entre Israël et la Palestine changerait probablement la face du monde aujourd'hui.

Et que ferait-on alors de tous ses colons, peut-on logiquement se demander? Tous ne sont pas d'irréductibles fanatiques. Si on donnait enfin une vraie indépendance à la Palestine, si la paix était entière et qu'ils préféreraient rester, pourquoi ces colons devenus résidents ne travailleraient-ils pas au sein de l'État palestinien, après tout! Il y a bien un million d'Arabes d'origine palestinienne qui travaillent et vivent en Israël, leur pays de plein droit. Tout cela dans un échange de bons

procédés entre deux États enfin pacifiés. Il faudrait certes un changement radical des mentalités et des perspectives. Mais cela scellerait un contrat de partage et d'échange des compétences. Les Israéliens dont beaucoup viennent d'Orient doivent intégrer pleinement la dimension sémitique qu'ils partagent avec les Arabes, ou plus justement s'harmoniser au monde moyen-oriental qui les entoure. Cette fédération de deux États en synergie inventive pourrait changer la face du monde. Nous sommes bien sûr en pleine utopie encore, mais on peut y travailler et y penser.

RV: Qu'entendez-vous par 'Palestinisraël'?¹⁹ Cela m'a fait penser à Edward Saïd qui a dit 'je suis un Juif-Palestinien'.²⁰

HH: La Palestine était le nom donné à ces territoires par les Juifs de la diaspora bien avant le jour de la déclaration d'indépendance de l'État d'Israël, nom de baptême promu par David Ben Gourion, alors le chef du gouvernement provisoire. On aurait très bien pu l'appeler d'un autre nom, Sion, Juda, Palestine ou Judée. À l'origine, comme en témoigne une stèle égyptienne, Israël ne désignait pas une terre mais une peuplade du pays de Canaan. Après la mort de Salomon, son royaume se scinda en deux, de Juda et d'Israël. Ce dernier fut le premier à disparaître au VIII^e siècle avant l'ère chrétienne. Les Grecs déjà appelaient ces régions Palestine, à l'est du Jourdain et au nord du Sinai, après la destruction du Royaume de Juda, et plus tard l'empereur Hadrien l'institua pour en finir avec les révoltes juives. Aux derniers siècles, jusqu'au sortir de la seconde guerre mondiale, c'est le nom que tout le monde avait aux lèvres, même les Juifs. Ma grand-mère algérienne analphabète n'avait pas intériorisé qu'Israël existait: pour elle, c'était la Palestine. C'était avec une émotion folle qu'elle invoquait la Palestine, pour elle la terre promise. Aujourd'hui, certaines sectes ultra-orthodoxes, des haredim, prétendent qu'Israël ne devrait pas exister, du moins tant que le Messie n'est pas venu. Mais ce sont des mots, tout ça, et même juif, c'est un mot. L'humain est sans frontière. C'est pourtant sur les mots qu'on se trouve acculé à défendre sa peau, pas son identité, sa peau vraiment. Toutes les guerres et les persécutions nous l'apprennent.

RV: C'est quoi le message de *Palestine*, s'il y en a un?

HH: Il n'y a pas de message au sens didactique. Un roman, c'est un monde fabriqué avec la langue commune qui doit porter une singularité et une émotion, et qui a un objectif d'abord esthétique. Au départ, c'est cela, un sentiment intime qui se nourrit de mille affects, travaillé par autant de contradictions que, au meilleur des cas, l'écriture va transfigurer en une œuvre. C'est vrai aussi que j'ai écrit ce livre parce que je suis traversé par ce drame, je suis déchiré par cette histoire. Au Maghreb ces dernières années, à Tanger, à Rabat ou à Alger, il y a des lecteurs, des musulmans, qui sont venus me voir, me parler avec chaleur et intelligence, parce qu'ils ont pleinement adhéré aux enjeux explicites de ce livre, pas seulement parce que j'y défends les Palestiniens, mais parce que j'interpelle les Israéliens sur leurs droits et leurs devoirs, parce que je refuse l'archaïsme envahissant de la haine et de l'exclusion. C'est vrai qu'il y a eu une vraie réception pour ce livre, du côté des consciences qui s'interrogent et des pacifistes, peut-être aussi du côté de ceux qui commencent à douter de leurs certitudes.

RV: On vous a aussi accusé d'être anti-Israël.

HH: Je ne suis pas 'anti-Israël', évidemment que je ne puis l'être à aucun moment, mais dès qu'on se refuse à prendre parti de manière violente et sectaire, on est accusé et par les uns et par les autres. Toutefois là-bas, des deux côtés du mur et des barbelés, beaucoup de gens de bonne volonté

¹⁹ See Valérie Marin La Meslée, 'Hubert Haddad: "Je ne suis pas un écrivain maudit"', *Le Point*, 28 April 2011; http://www.lepoint.fr/grands-entretiens/hubert-haddad-je-ne-suis-pas-un-ecrivain-maudit-28-04-2011-1324933_326.php [accessed 4 March 2016].

²⁰ See Ari Shavit, 'Zekhut ha-shiva sheli', *Haaretz*, 18 August 2000. For the translation in English, see 'My Right of Return', *Powers, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Saïd*, ed. by Gauri Viswanathan (New York: Vintage, 2001), pp. 443–58.

veulent sortir de cette impasse qu'est le manichéisme idéologique et guerrier.

RV: Faut-il oublier ou se rappeler du passé pour atteindre la paix dans la région?

HH: L'oubli, ce n'est jamais bon, parce que l'oubli, c'est aussi une forme de la mémoire, mais une mémoire qui remonte du subconscient, d'une manière irrationnelle, tronquée. L'opinion se nourrit des préjugés et des superstitions de l'oubli: cet irréfléchi, ce passionnel disponible à toutes les violences et enrégimentements. Donc il faut toujours garder en mémoire le passé, mais pas comme un instrument de négation et du rejet de l'autre, il faut partager le passé, l'approfondir et l'éclairer sans cesse. Au Rwanda, il y a eu tout un travail de réconciliation entre Tutsis et Hutus après le génocide de 1994. Le nouveau président rwandais a commencé par abolir la peine de mort. Comme les Hutus génocidaires constituaient une majorité, la réconciliation autour de mémoriaux était vitale pour le pays. Il y a eu tout un travail de mémoire et d'éducation afin de sortir de cet épouvantable épisode sans déni, ni risque majeur de répétition.

RV: *Palestine*, est-il un livre d'espoir ou de désespoir?

HH: Un roman qui proclamerait de manière déclarative un espoir, ça serait absolument inefficace. *Palestine* est une tragédie, un roman qui pourrait être une tragédie au sens grec, avec sa charge cathartique. C'est toujours par la tragédie qu'une figure d'éveil est possible, dans l'éclairage d'une violence irrésolue, irréductible à la simple raison, par la tension que procure cette situation dramatique. Mais alors, espoir, désespoir, ce n'est plus important. L'espérance ne saurait être une posture béate d'attente, elle est d'abord un acte. Outre le fait qu'un roman, s'il préserve ses ambitions, échappe sur le fond au contexte politico-social dans sa solitude esthétique, un peu comme, disons, le *Guernica* de Picasso, lequel, au-delà du massacre de Guernica, met le tragique en scène de manière atemporelle. Mais il arrive qu'un roman puisse ouvrir l'esprit, faire tomber les préjugés de principe, dénouer les carcans, bouleverser même. On peut y être hostile aussi.

Quand j'ai écrit ce livre, j'avais ce drame en moi depuis longtemps, incessamment ravivé par l'actualité. Il n'avait pas *a priori* de destination morale ou politique, sinon je n'aurais pas pu l'écrire, sinon ça n'aurait pas fonctionné. On écrit un roman, un jour l'histoire advient par mille fils, mille échos, et des voix pressantes, des coïncidences, un jour la fiction s'impose dans cette réalité ou une autre. Je devais écrire *Palestine*. Et puis je m'y suis mis sachant en l'écrivant tout ce que j'ai pu vivre de contradictions, avec cette situation, avec ce que j'entendais, avec toujours près de moi ce frère suicidé de retour de Jérusalem, et puis à la fin ça a donné un récit qui me laissait perplexe, dans une grande solitude.

Effectivement, c'est un livre qui peut être lu comme un message d'espérance par certains. Mais ce n'était pas mon objectif, ce qui est dit et raconté, c'est mon être intime, mes sentiments. Je voulais simplement essayer de rendre compte dans un court récit, de la manière la plus intense possible de tout ce que j'ai pu vivre dramatiquement et intensément, avec le suicide de mon frère, avec toute cette vieille histoire de mémoire qui me hante depuis l'enfance, avec cette tragédie qui n'en finit pas.

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A Conversation with Véronique Tadjó: Writing as a Duty to Remember the Rwandan Genocide

'Rwanda' is alive: it is not a story that stopped with the genocide, contends Véronique Tadjó, at the close of this interview. In doing so she highlights the ongoing construction of Rwanda the country—particularly, perhaps, in a Western imagination—as 'Rwanda': an abstract territory emblematic of unimaginable horror, of what Omer Bartov called the 'event which destroys our ability to imagine it'.¹ This interview offers an insight into the various ways Tadjó encountered and wrote about post-genocide Rwanda—and the ties between the living, the dead, and the earth that endure in the aftermath of genocide. In *The Shadow of Imana*, Tadjó prefaces an account 'On the road to Butare' with the question: 'If we are absolutely nothing, why take the trouble to write?' (p. 18), reminding us that the reconstruction of lives is not only a physical process.

L'Ombre d'Imana: Voyages jusqu'au bout du Rwanda (translated into English as *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*) was produced in association with the Fest' Africa project *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire* (Rwanda: Writing as a Duty to Remember). The project, funded by the Fondation de France, enabled a group of African writers to travel to Rwanda and to visit some of the genocide memorials there, as well as to meet with survivors, prisoners and NGOs. *L'Ombre d'Imana* has been translated into English, Italian, German, Spanish and Portuguese, with translations in Chinese and in Kinyarwanda forthcoming. The book was also co-published in Africa by eight Francophone African publishers for their local markets. *L'Ombre d'Imana* has been described as a 'travel narrative', structured as it is around the two journeys Tadjó made into Rwanda.² But it is also a book of stories—stories of lives in turmoil, of lives disrupted or of lives that must go on, and of lives that have been ended but which endure in spirit. *L'Ombre d'Imana* presents stories in numerous ways: poetic vignettes and vernacular tales are interleaved with personal reflection, affective impressions, frictional encounters, and testimony-style accounts.³ What Tadjó makes clear in this interview is that these are stories remembered through a process of writerly mediation, through an archiving of experience.

Tadjó travelled to Rwanda in 1998, four years after the genocide, and wrote *L'Ombre d'Imana* in London, just after moving there from Nairobi. Almost twenty years later, we met up, just after Tadjó's second move to London, this time from Johannesburg. Having recently visited Rwanda, and having made several other trips there after her initial journeys in 1998, Tadjó observes, towards the close of this interview, how the landscape of cultural memory has changed over the last two decades or so. New forms of cultural expression—those outside of institutional memory—need to emerge. A new generation of Rwandan writers, she suggests, might be able to tell new stories that respond to the complex legacies of the genocide—legacies that are not bounded by Rwanda's geographical borders.

FRANCES HEMSLEY: You have written elsewhere about the circumstances that led to your involvement in the Fest' Africa Project.⁴ Was there any discussion of the brief 'Rwanda: writing as a duty to remember' and what response that might entail, or who the readership would be?

VÉRONIQUE TADJÓ: Before the organizers of the project contacted us formally with an invitation to take part in the project, we had talked about it during the Fest' Africa festival in Lille in 1994. We all knew one another and were familiar with each other's works. We were very aware of

¹ Omer Bartov, 'Defining Enemies: Making Victims: Germans, Jews and the Holocaust', *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998), 771–86 (p. 798)

² Nicki Hitchcott, 'Travels in Inhumanity: Véronique Tadjó's Tourism in Rwanda', *French Cultural Studies*, 20 (2009), 149–64 (p. 150).

³ Véronique Tadjó, *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2002), p. 36 and p. 17.

⁴ Véronique Tadjó, 'Writing in Troubled Times', in *Über(W)Unden: Art in Troubled Times*, ed. by Lien Heidenreich-Seleme and Sean O'Toole (Johannesburg: Jacana/Goethe Institut, 2012), pp. 22–27.

what the project entailed. I took part in the project as a writer. Our presence in Kigali was known to the people we met. Those who came into contact with us were aware that we had come as writers and that we would most probably write books about our experience. We went to Kigali out of solidarity and to mourn with Rwandans. We also wanted to use literature as a means to shed a different light on the genocide and post-genocide Rwanda. On the other hand, we did not discuss publishing before going to Rwanda. In fact, the organizers told us that we were under no obligation to write. We were there to learn about post-genocide Rwanda.

FH: If literature was to be a means of shedding light on this context, then were the work of mourning and the work of writing connected? Was writing also a means of illuminating mourning itself, in the context of post-genocide Rwanda, or did mourning simply occur separately from writing?

VT: Mourning and writing were connected. By working on the genocide in Rwanda, by going through the process of trying to understand and formulate responses to it you went through a process of mourning. That is what mourning is. When you mourn, you look back over the life of the person you were connected to: you probe and probe and try to reassess all sorts of things. Writing was also mourning in the sense of giving names to the dead, giving the dead a burial that they didn't have.

FH: What was it like to travel as a group of writers and did this affect your creative life? Do you think you would have written a different kind of text had you visited Rwanda alone?

VT: On my first trip I did not go with the group. I couldn't as at the same period I was moving from Nairobi to London. Alternative arrangements were made and I was able to go twice to Rwanda—hence 'Le premier et le deuxième voyages'. I was never alone, though. Nocky Djedamoun and Maïmouna Coulibaly were there each time and also other members of the group like Abdourahman Waberi.

FH: During your account of 'The Second Journey' in *The Shadow of Imana*, you write about readying your mind to 'face the day' (p. 84) and describe your own visceral reaction to reading a Human Rights Watch document 'Aucun témoin ne doit survivre'.⁵ I can only think to write on the genocide must have been a very difficult task psychologically? Were you able to write while in Rwanda?

VT: When I was in Rwanda, I took notes everywhere I went. But mostly, it was in the evening, back in my room, that I would go over what I had seen and heard, what the people I had met had told me. It was a time of reflection. Only when I went back to London did I start thinking about the form and how I could arrange my notes. A great part of my time was also spent on doing more research to fill in the missing gaps.

FH: In your essay 'Genocide: the changing landscape of memory in Kigali', you mention some of the initial anxieties you had about undertaking the project: that you were 'wary of the potential danger of not being free to write the way we wanted to', although this happened not to turn out to be the case.⁶ In what ways were you worried that your freedom as a writer might be confined?

VT: I wanted to keep an open mind and be independent. As you can imagine, the genocide is a politically charged subject. The failure of the UN and of the international community in preventing

⁵ Alison Des Forges, *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre* (Paris: Karthala, 1999). The 1999 Human Rights Watch document, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* by Alison Des Forges, was published simultaneously in a French translation, *Aucun témoin ne doit survivre*.

⁶ Véronique Tadjo, 'Genocide: The Changing Landscape of Memory in Kigali', *African Identities*, 8 (2010), 379–88 (p. 381).

it, as well as the involvement of France with Opération Turquoise, meant that we could have been under all sorts of pressure. Moreover, we did not want to fall into one unique possible narrative. Who was going to take us around the country and would we be able to meet anybody we wanted to talk to? I wanted to go to a prison to speak with those who were incarcerated. But it was difficult to obtain the authorization to go there. It was resolved in the end but for a while I feared I would be going back to London without having been able to visit a prison, which for me would have been a disaster. We went to Rwanda in 1998, four years after the genocide, and it was still a completely chaotic situation: the prison was like something out of this world...

FH: I am also wondering about the inverse: in writing *The Shadow of Imana* was there anything you felt you wanted to censor or to exclude?

VT: There could have been that danger. And because it was still very early days there was a fear of becoming a mouthpiece of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—a fear that we would have to be as militant as the RPF, and that wasn't our idea.⁷

FH: A fear that then you would end up instrumentalizing the genocide?

VT: Exactly. That was not our idea, or my idea. As much as possible I wanted to be looking at this on a personal level.

FH: In your essay 'Writing in Troubled Times', you note that in approaching the project you had 'made a key decision: to write as an outsider, not as a witness', because you yourself had no particular links with the country. How did you conceptualize writing as an outsider, as opposed to as a witness?⁸

VT: It was important to make clear right from the start that I wasn't writing as a witness of genocide but as an outsider who had come to offer a personal vision of what post-genocide Rwanda was, four years later. Distance is always necessary when writing 'fiction'—as opposed to writing testimonies. You cannot be too close to your subject. We had a 'natural' distance because we were coming from elsewhere. This allowed us to talk about what had happened in a way that was still too raw, too difficult for Rwandans. Today we see that, with the passing of time, more and more fictional texts are coming out of Rwanda.

FH: Was this sense of distance easy to maintain while you were in some senses writing about your own journey, a personal journey, and while you portray your subjects with such intimacy?

VT: There was distance in the sense that I had no real connection to Rwanda, I had just one friend who was from there. But going to Rwanda was also a personal journey for me, because what was happening in Côte d'Ivoire at that time was showing signs of transforming into a full-blown conflict. There was also the fact that I had just lost my mother. So when I made this trip it became much more intimate than I expected: it became a personal journey and also an interrogation on the meaning of death. We are all going to die—that is a fact—so it all comes down to what kind of death you are going to have: what is an acceptable death, what is not an acceptable death. Rwanda is distant (in terms of miles) but in fact I quickly found out that it was very close to me, that the people there did not appear foreign to me at all: they looked like people I knew and could identify with. I thought I was going to a foreign land but it immediately struck me as something familiar, and that started the whole internal journey. I couldn't say 'them' anymore: that it's just 'them', just what happened to 'them'...

⁷ The Front patriotique rwandais is the ruling political party in Rwanda and has been since its armed wing ended the Genocide in 1994.

⁸ Tadjo, 'Writing in Troubled Times', p. 23.

FH: There is a particular section in *The Shadow of Imana* titled ‘Froduard, young farmer turned murderer’ that reads like a prisoner testimony—it is entirely enclosed within quotation marks.⁹ This particular section is not bracketed by any rendering of character or setting of scene as is usually the case elsewhere: does this indicate a desire for you to distance yourself from this kind of testimony, to keep it separate? It reads like a direct transcription...

VT: That was the whole point. But the section is totally fictionalized. It came to me after having listened to so many people, after having read so many testimonies. Suddenly I wanted to hear the voice of a young man, a young man who had gotten involved in the genocide. It was never a question of deciding whether I needed to fictionalize or to stick to factual information—I played with the two. I allowed myself to do that simply because I met a lot of Rwandans who asked me: ‘Where is the truth?’ So many people kept the truth for themselves because it wasn’t possible for them to even begin to explain what happened, how it happened, what they did. And that’s why in the book one of the main questions is: ‘Where were you in 1994?’ That is the big question: ‘Where were you?’, ‘What were you doing?’, and if you survived (which is often an untold story) ‘How did you survive?’, ‘What did you have to do in order to survive?’, ‘Did you get involved in the killings?’ All these questions were always hanging in the air. Rwandans told me themselves: ‘look, truth is difficult’.

FH: In your essay ‘Writing in Troubled Times’ you mention that ‘in the culture [which you] grew up with in West Africa, the dead are not dead, they are still around us, and continue to influence our existence’.¹⁰ In ‘The Wrath of the Dead’ section of *The Shadow of Imana* you figure the ongoing consciousness of the Rwandan dead, sharing in the social and, as you put it, ‘paying regular visits to the living’.¹¹ Can you say a little about the experience of writing the dead?

VT: There is a beautiful poem by Birago Diop titled ‘Le souffle des ancêtres’. It is about this sense of invisibility; the idea that the Dead continue to influence the Living and that there is a bridge between them. This belief is prevalent in traditional religion. As someone who was raised in Côte d’Ivoire, it is a way of looking at life and death I am used to. Therefore, you don’t fear the Dead as such. They are not angry ghosts coming at you for no reason. If you respect them and pay homage to their past lives, they become positive influences who guide you and protect you. That’s why traditionally before any ceremony, people pour some libation on the earth in order to salute the Dead and ask their permission to carry on with whatever they plan to do. This is especially valid when several people are involved.

FH: I was particularly affected by your description in *The Shadow of Imana* of a man ‘whose head had been cut off and who was angry with everyone’. He has an ‘ally’ in ‘torrential downpour’, and it is through environment, through weather systems, that he is able to express both his rage and his continued attachment to the earth.¹² For me, this brought home with full force the incomprehensible magnitude of all the lives—lives with all their many and intricate attachments—that were cut short: people who were in the middle of things, who had their business to attend to, their routines to continue. In ‘The Wrath of the Dead’ was there a sense of nature acting as a witness to genocide?

VT: It is this idea that nature is an intrinsic part of our life. It also comes from traditional culture. Our actions affect the earth and the elements in turn react to what we do. It is the belief that everything in nature has a vital force. Today with climate change this doesn’t seem so far-fetched. It is now known that conflicts and wars damage the environment. Agriculture cycles are perturbed

⁹ Tadjó, *The Shadow of Imana*, p. 102.

¹⁰ Tadjó, ‘Writing in Troubled Times’, p. 24.

¹¹ Tadjó, *The Shadow of Imana*, p. 41.

¹² Tadjó, *The Shadow of Imana*, p. 42.

and the land is neglected and becomes barren. Yes, the angry spirit expresses what you've said: many lives cut short in the most horrible manner.

FH: In your conversation with Janis Mayes in *African Writing* you discuss Rwanda's breath-taking countryside and the idea that beauty does not necessarily forestall violence.¹³ In *The Shadow of Imana* you frequently refer to Rwanda's fertile green hill territories and to Rwanda as the land of a thousand hills. Did you find that this experience of the landscape in Rwanda influenced you as a writer? Did you find that the Rwandan landscape—fertile and beautiful as it is—posed a kind of imaginative provocation, as a backdrop to the unimaginable horror of the genocide?

VT: Absolutely, I found it hard to reconcile the beauty of the landscape with the violence that engulfed the country. It did not make sense. How can you wake up in the morning, see the hills covered in mist, the green grass, the dark earth and plan genocide? I have indeed asked myself many times what the function of beauty was. Does it make us better people? But I guess I was extremely naïve in thinking that beauty could be a barrier against anger and violence. Once hate of the Other was implanted in people's minds, beauty just disappeared. It was not visible anymore. Or perhaps it was the very idea of losing the beautiful land that unleashed the killings. The *génocidaires* believed they were in danger of losing their country to 'Tutsi foreigners'. To this, you must add the fact that these hills isolated farmers and cut them off from the outside world. This made them more vulnerable to manipulative and ill-intentioned politicians. Beauty in the midst of poverty and poor education was not a consolation. Lastly, genocide is generally an urban phenomenon. It is easier to identify potential victims and to track them down in cities than in the countryside.

FH: I did feel that your writing was often at its most beautiful and most powerful when invoking these rural landscapes; at one point you give a painfully beautiful description of Rwanda's hill territories, when, as you put it: 'Early in the morning on the winding road to Butare, in the distance the hills are making love to the sky. And their silent groans create those floating clouds you see'.¹⁴ Is there a sense in which beauty aids mourning, perhaps by offering a means of re-humanization after the dehumanization and inhumanity of genocide?

VT: My idea was that you cannot talk about the genocide without going straight to all the big questions surrounding us: 'What are we doing with our time on earth?', 'What can we believe in?'. The idea of beauty in writing, and of striving to attain the ideal of beauty, despite the fact that beauty failed, is connected with something more spiritual than just re-humanization. It is an attempt to elevate the human soul because that soul has been crushed so hard.

FH: So to respond to genocide you have to go beyond the human?

VT: You've got to go beyond just the facts, and that's why I did not hesitate to delve into the sense of invisibility that exists in African religion, where it is believed that forces in nature are not things that you are able to see with your own eyes...

FH: In *The Shadow of Imana*, you begin the story of your journey in South Africa, in Durban. Why do you begin here, in this geography?

VT: The two countries are linked historically in the sense that the genocide started on 7 April 1994 and the first democratic election that led Nelson Mandela to become the first Black president of South Africa took place on 27 April of the same year. Both countries have known traumatic events

¹³ Janis Mayes, 'Véronique Tadjo: A Conversation with Janis Mayes', *African Writing Online*, <http://www.african-writing.com/four/veroniquetadjo-interview.htm> [accessed 5 February 2017].

¹⁴ Tadjo, *The Shadow of Imana*, p. 17.

that have divided their nations and generated a lot of suffering. It is difficult to ignore this link. There is also the fact that on my way to Kigali for my first trip as part of the project 'Rwanda: Writing as a Duty to Remember', I did meet a Rwandan car guard in Durban on the beachfront. He inspired me to write the character at the beginning of the story. It was therefore the natural beginning of my book. This beginning also showed that the impact of the genocide was felt far from Rwanda on the African continent and all over the world because of the migration of Hutu and Tutsi refugees fleeing the tragedy and its aftermath.

FH: Throughout *The Shadow of Imana*, you make reference to Rwanda as the land of a thousand hills, even referring at one point to a 'necklace' of hills—a word that seems to evoke a violent South African historical context. In your writing, were you seeking to draw connections between South Africa and Rwanda?¹⁵ (The connection I am drawing here is that Rwanda, as Mahmood Mamdani has pointed out, was the genocide that happened, while South Africa was the one that did not.)¹⁶

VT: Yes, I think this is also a valid connection. Many terrible scenarios were predicted for South Africa during the tense and violent years preceding the negotiations between the ANC and the National Party. There was so much anger, so much bitterness, that an explosion could have easily happened. It was touch and go. Everyone was expecting complete devastation and mayhem and this did not happen. Ever since, the issues of justice and reconciliation have dominated South African society. In South Africa there is always a fear that ethnic tensions will explode one day; when you look at the type of violence that is unleashed by xenophobia, for example, you understand that it is there, that it could happen. You cannot make a direct comparison between South Africa and Rwanda, of course, because these are two different situations: historically, geographically, and even in terms of sheer size, but both countries share a set of common problems, which have still not been adequately solved. The burning issues of justice and reconciliation are found in both countries.

FH: You have recently visited Rwanda again. How did your experiences of the country compare with those of the two trips made in 1998 for the Fest' Africa project? Was there a particular motive, this time, for your trip?

VT: The Fest' Africa project was an experience that marked a turning point in my writing and in my understanding of human nature. I kept my interest in the country and continued to follow events as they developed there. I returned several times for brief visits. But as the years went by, I was tempted to think that the situation in Rwanda had evolved so much that it was time to move on. However, for the twentieth anniversary of the genocide, myself and a number of other writers from 'Rwanda: Writing as a Duty to Remember' were invited to attend ceremonies and take part in cultural activities. And what I saw fascinated me. Kigali has become a very efficient city. It must be the cleanest place on the African continent! The streets are so neat you'd think it is surreal. There is a community cleaning exercise every last Saturday of the month. All the citizens are required to participate. There is low criminality, that is to say mainly petty crime. Noise pollution and pollution in general are taken seriously and the use of plastic bags has been banned. There is a definite buzz: new constructions seem to spring up everywhere and the city is like a huge building site. Rwanda is now among the top three easiest places to do business in Africa. But beyond the success story of Rwanda's post-genocide economic development, I was interested in what I may have missed during my initial visits in 1998. So during June I returned to Kigali just to observe daily life and to talk to people from different backgrounds, both Rwandans and foreign nationals. My wish is to understand the extent of the reconciliation process and whether trauma has been

¹⁵ Tadjó, *The Shadow of Imana*, p. 87.

¹⁶ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 185.

overcome in the younger generation.

FH: Rwanda has more recently been dubbed the ‘Singapore of Africa, because of all the ecological, technological and economic advances that have been made there. This development takes on an added dimension when we consider that for about a decade after 1998 a large percentage of Rwanda’s national budget derived from foreign aid money—due, in part, to the genocide. Is there a sense in which environment continues to be inflected by the genocide? Or did you find the city very much ‘cleansed’ of those kinds of associations?

VT: To say that Rwanda is the ‘Singapore of Africa’—that is the dream, the objective, but it hasn’t been reached yet. Kigali is the capital and like all capitals, it attracts a lot of attention. Its progress demonstrates how much Rwanda has evolved, how much it wants to shed its past. I haven’t spent enough time in the rural areas to make a strong pronouncement, but the little that I have seen so far shows a strong contrast between Kigali and the rest of the country. Rwanda’s economy has progressed tremendously but the country is still poor. It is densely populated with very scarce natural resources. If we look, for instance, at the issue of coltan mining in Rwanda, we can see that this area, this source of revenue, is still inflected by the genocide. The military invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Rwandan forces after *génocidaires* infiltrated refugee camps there marked a turning point in the economic involvement of Rwanda in Congo.

FH: So we might say, on the one hand, that the situation—economic, social, environmental—has evolved almost beyond recognition, and on the other hand, that the repercussions of the genocide are still being lived out in new ways, with military incursions into surrounding territories that were initially about targeting *génocidaires* taking on a new—mineral—focus. I wonder how, with the changing social landscape, how the landscape of cultural memory and modes of memorializing genocide in Rwanda might be changing. Did you encounter new forms of cultural memory during your recent trip?

VT: In 1998, we visited several memorials during our stay but at that time they were really ‘lieux de mort’ —places where the remains of the dead had been amassed hastily and exhibited to show the world the magnitude of what had happened. On my recent visit, I went back to Nyamata and Ntarama. They have received funding and are now in a state of renovation. But it is the Kigali memorial in particular that is in total contrast with the old site. It stands now as a contemporary and modern memorial built with the help of the Ageis Trust based in England. It is a striking example of institutionalized memory.

It seems to me that the most important forms of memory being produced today concerning the Rwandan genocide are to be found outside ‘institutionalized memory’. As time goes on, the memory of the genocide evolves and becomes more complex. New forms of expression are necessary. You can find them in the arts and in literature. In this sense, Rwanda still has a long way to go: there are private initiatives here and there inside Rwanda but for the most part, the artistic production comes from outside. Rwandan writers, musicians and visual artists living abroad have succeeded in creating a memory of the genocide viewed from the diaspora. For the Rwanda government, art has yet to be put on the agenda.

FH: You often return to the idea that it is the duty of all nations to try to understand what happened in Rwanda—that is it is our collective humanity, as well as Rwandan lives that are at stake. Is there a sense, for you, that Rwanda can be, and needs to be, a place invested with transformative potential?

VT: There is no doubt that the big challenge for the future stability of Rwanda is in its ability to evolve into a more inclusive society. Is the nation-state a reality today? Is there a binding sense of

nationhood? As the country recovers economically, it needs to also be imbued with a transformative power so that an increasing number of Rwandans feel part of the general progress. 'Rwanda' is alive: it is not a story that stopped with the genocide, it is not finished, and it is an ongoing process. It is a constant negotiation between a remembering and a letting go of the past. This is especially relevant for the new post-genocide generation that bears a resemblance to the 'born free' of South Africa. They, too, do not want to be held responsible for the sins of their parents.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Caribbean Globalizations, 1492 to the Present Day. Edited by EVA SANSAVIOR and RICHARD SCHOLAR. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015. 281 pp. Hb £75. ISBN: 9781781381519

If globalization is generally assumed to be a recent, modern phenomenon that sprouted and proliferated on Western soil, the present volume explodes this Eurocentrist myth by mapping, in true postmodernist fashion, its Caribbean origins and alternative histories. Indeed, the collocation of the terms ‘Caribbean Globalizations’ in the title finds its full justification in the well-founded argument, upheld by the editors, that the ‘Caribbean may be said to have shaped globalization just as globalization has shaped the Caribbean’ (p. 15). What is remarkable about the collection is the reinstatement of the Caribbean to the centre by Western scholars as the ‘hub of trade’ (p. 83), the ‘laboratory of globalization’ (p. 19), as demonstrating a ‘precocious global modernity’, and being in the ‘vanguard of change’ (p. 84), through a diverse range of interdisciplinary case studies. The wide timeframe, from 1492 to the present, conveys the vast ambition of the book to flesh out the historical context of globalization outside Europe (the Caribbean), in order to give depth and meaning to the understanding of the present, while the organization of the collection along temporal lines in two sections (‘Globalisations in the making’ and ‘the Complex present’), brilliantly retains the focus of a comprehensive analysis.

The first section relating to the early modern period treats themes as diverse as ethnographic writing of the *isolario* genre, human labour in Spanish trade practices, environmental challenges and experimentation, slavery of the white man and the exposition of paradoxes in the essay form. Apart from the grim reality of inhuman economic exploitation that they convey, a more human cultural relativism is often apparent alongside hegemonic practices. Christopher L. Miller’s article on white slavery entitled ‘Slaves in my family: French modes of servitude in the New World’ is noteworthy in changing the perspective of slavery from being exclusively linked to race. The second section on the ‘complex present’ embodies intriguing case studies on the changing contexts of globalization, such as the consequences of the commodification of tobacco, the change in nomenclature of ‘indigenous’ amaranth, nationalization of the Jamaican bauxite industry, exclusionary policies of the Dominican Republic and versions of apocalyptic thinking. The ‘local’ and the ‘national’ now emerge as powerful categories within the global economic circuit resulting in self-conscious, and at times racialized, friction of identities and interests. Judith Misrahi-Barak’s discussion on ‘glocalisation’ retains particular interest in the renewed context while Charles Forsdick’s apt framing of the controversial *littérature-monde* manifesto gives the flavour of the contestatory temperament of the times.

At the heart of the book are intertwined two interpretations of globalization which are problematized in the Introduction: a humanist conception as diverse interconnected humanity marked by difference and creative potential, forwarded prominently by Caribbean intellectuals, Édouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau and Maryse Condé, and an economic conception that forces ‘planetary cultural homogenization’ and the suppression of individuality as advanced by Stuart Hall (p. 19). Richard Scholar admirably situates this paradox in the postcolonial context by bringing Glissant’s ‘Globality’ and ‘Globalisation’ face to face in his article, ‘The Archipelago goes Global: Late Glissant and the Early Modern Isolario’, wherein Caribbean eagerness to join creatively the global mainstream is thwarted by demands of cultural specificity, and although a crossing over between economics and poetics is questionable, integration into a single global world order is still a far-fetched dream. One feels in the volume the absence of a part of Caribbean intellectual history, most importantly the work of C. L. R. James, who epitomizes the cosmopolitan spirit of international global modernity. This criticism notwithstanding, on the whole, the volume is commendable for offering a dialogized, balanced view of Western and Caribbean perspectives

on the Caribbean, of vital importance to globalization and postcolonial studies.

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L'Exotisme: La littérature coloniale. By LOUIS CARIO AND CHARLES RÉGISMANSET. Critical edition by Patrick Crowley in collaboration with Roger Little. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2016. xl + 183 pp. Pb 21.38€. ISBN: 9782343085104

In his excellent introduction to the re-edition of *L'Exotisme: La littérature coloniale*, first published in 1911, Patrick Crowley asks, 'À quoi sert cette nouvelle édition de *L'Exotisme*? Pourquoi récupérer ce discours colonial au risque de le faire revivre et de lui donner une vie ultérieure?' (pp. xxxii–xxxiii). As its twenty-first-century editor, Crowley suggests that such interest resides in the deliberation on the relationships between and among what the two authors consider to be the innovative forms of literary practice that have emerged since colonization and the expansion of the French colonial empire: literature that is 'colonial[e]', 'exotique', 'exotisme sans mystère', 'cosmopolite', 'de tourisme' and/or that was produced, often quiet poetically, by travellers whose primary purpose was to serve the Empire in another capacity, that is 'techniciens'—explorers, oceanographers or surveyors. Most intriguingly, what strikes the twenty-first-century reader is the contemporariness of the interrogations of Cario and Régismanset as regards the relationship between otherness and literary practice. As Crowley notes, given the scope of *L'Exotisme*, from the Middle Ages through the early twentieth century, even if awkward and ethically questionable, the literary study offers scholars and pedagogues in all 'periods' of French literature a valuable tool for understanding how literary critics accorded value to a literary work at any given moment in time. Also of interest is the particular attention paid to literary production depicting Indochina, Haiti, North Africa and North America.

But first, it is worthwhile to outline the publication circumstances of 1911, the principal argument offered by Cario and Régismanset, as well as the structure of the book and its methodology. *L'Exotisme: La littérature coloniale*, first published with Mercure de France in 1911, is the title of the literary history of colonial literature in French, which privileges for the most part works by French authors traveling abroad, both within the French Empire and non-French spaces. The book takes place chronologically, using as its starting reference the figure of Marco Polo, whom the authors argue is the first travel writer to recount his work in French. They do not name Marco Polo's text, but presumably it is Rustichello da Pisa's *Le Devisement du monde*, an account in French (*langue d'oïl*) of Polo's voyages. It follows then that their corpus constitutes principally 'œuvres de langue française', but also 'ouvrages de renommée universelle' mostly from English writers such as James Cook or Rudyard Kipling (p. 3). The authors of *L'Exotisme* were Régismanset (1877–1945) and Cario, the latter having written his thesis under the aegis of the former. The dates of Cario's life are unknown. Cario's thesis in law, which he defended in 1904, was titled 'La concurrence des colonies à la métropole', and, as such, the book actively engages with an especially British colonial literary practice. For his part, Régismanset, who aspired to win the Prix Goncourt, which was established in 1903, also wrote narrative fiction, under the pseudonym Carl Siger (p. xvi).

L'Exotisme is composed of three parts titled 'Les origines', 'L'activité coloniale' and 'Littérature coloniale: conclusions'. Most importantly, the book pivots around one text, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1788), to which an entire chapter is dedicated. In contrast, the other chapters are titled with much more general categories: for example, 'voyageurs' or 'tourisme'. In putting *Paul et Virginie* on centre stage as it were, Cario and Régismanset propel their double argument: first, that exoticism enriches literary practice (p. viii and p. 156); and second, such

literature demands that literary practice be conscious of humanitarianism, that is ‘l’humanitaire rousseauiste’ (p. 68 and p. 88). In fact, while they do not state it quite so clearly, Cario and Régismanset suggest that the move from ‘colonial’ to ‘exotic’ literature is focused on a cosmopolitanism that is no longer interested so much in the Renaissance man who can *do* everything, but rather it favours the socially conscious writer—mostly male, but also female, notably George Sand (p. 72) and Mme de Staël (p. 65)—who is able not necessarily to *care* about everyone and everything, but at least experiences the suffering of others as tragedy or melancholia, especially those affected by their relationship to the colonial experience. As such, one of the literary texts dominating the last chapters of their book is Chateaubriand’s *Atala* (1801).

For his part, as presenter of the re-edition, Crowley compellingly suggests, *L’Exotisme* initially leaves the reader, especially the twenty-first-century reader, wondering if in fact the only way to understand our ontological status is to nurture the exotic. Crowley writes: ‘tout l’intérêt de l’enjeu théorique qui caractérise leur ouvrage réside précisément dans le rapport entre l’exotisme et l’existence, ou non, du roman colonial’ (p. xiv). The question then becomes, is all literature defined by its relationship to otherness, or is it just French literature? Citing present-day literary scholars such as Denise Brahimi, Charles Forsdick (who is credited as the esteemed inspiration for the re-publication of *L’Exotisme*, through his work on Victor Segalen), and Jean-Marc Moura, Crowley’s introduction questions whether or not the resistance of the late-twentieth-century French public sphere to the concept of the postcolonial (Robin 2016; Rosello 2010; Forsdick 2007) is in fact a way of mourning the closure of France’s Empire. In other words, if the analyses by Cario and Régismanset and their descriptions of literary scholarship in France in the early 1900s are completely devoid of a language of fear, and take place in the mode of the celebratory, how is it that the twenty-first-century literary establishment in France (not to mention the larger public sphere) is only reticently moving into an era in which it can engage non- (or less) exotically with an author such as recent Goncourt prize-winner Leïla Slimani?

Furthermore, Cario and Régismanset adamantly argue that it is the relationship to the non-French, which is the very source of the continuous wealth of French literature. Cario and Régismanset clearly proceed from the position of the comfortable and benevolent colonizer, a travel writer, with a clearer idea of what it means to be ‘français’; whereas a twenty-first-century public sphere includes writers who are reshaping the variables of Frenchness. *L’Exotisme* is notable because it forces us to take account of the fact that from 1911 to the early 2000s, the discursive space which the French public sphere used to deliberate on ontological existence privileged the binary between the self and the other. Yet *L’Exotisme* also reveals that the relationship to the colonial other is, and might still for a while be, a part of the French being, only now, just recently in the past decade, the focal point is no longer that of a French metropolitan traveller looking out onto a (post)colonial other, but rather one that is *d’emblée* multiple: in one of her recent interviews, Slimani explains, ‘La nationalité n’est pas un mérite, c’est un ensemble de valeurs et une inscription dans une histoire’ (<http://www.elle.fr/Loisirs/Livres/News/Leila-Slimani-Je-suis-feministe-et-je-le-revendique-3411470>). And so, as to Crowley’s question as regards the pertinence of re-publishing *L’Exotisme*? In short, the answer is: to read *L’Exotisme* and Crowley’s preface allows a *longue durée* approach (in terms of both scope from Marco Polo’s voyages in the mid-1200s and critical stance from 1911 to the present day), which enables literary theoreticians to take account of the (radical) changes in the French public sphere over the past decade, maybe, but more so over the past century. Moreover, reading such a layered re-publication is to consider France’s relationship to its own colonial past, but also, as Crowley suggests, is valuable to those engaged in comparative colonial and postcolonial literary studies.

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Ex-Centric Migrations: Europe and the Maghreb in Mediterranean Cinema, Literature, and Music. By HAKIM ABDERREZAK. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. 284 pp. Pb \$35.00. ISBN: 9780253020758

Ex-Centric Migrations is no ordinary book. It unfurls with the full seduction of the titular sobriquet, a sombre bouquet of black flowers, each stem prying apart the interlaced petals of eccentric story after ex-centric story. The title impresses upon the reader the turn away from stories of migration to France. In their unfolding, the chapters slip the knot of France's central pull amid the post-colonial power dynamics of globalization. The book presents unsettling stories that entreat the reader to a journey through the less marked paths of migration 'in, under, across, and around the Mediterranean Sea' (p. 14).

Hakim Abderrezak's polyglotism imparts distinctive perspectives on the role of linguistic politics in contemporary migratory phenomena. In the opening 'Note on Translation and Transliteration', Abderrezak explains his refusal to abide by transliteration standards for Arabic. He privileges 'a non-systematic method instead', for he 'juggle[s] a wide variety of forms of Arabic [...] along with Arabized French, which contains a notable quantity of Arabic loan-words. While it is expected', he maintains, 'to use a codified form of transliteration for classical and Modern Standard Arabic, it is not common to do so for variants of Arabic often referred to as "dialects"' (p. xiii). Elsewhere, Abderrezak's wide-ranging poetic attunement to the *vocable*—infinite arrays of a word's linguistic permutations, containments of words within words—convincingly reshapes our attitudes toward such a common, yet diverse, and misconceived, phenomenon as migration. He reveals the 'uneven linguistic power relations' between French and Arabic, and how such translingual relationships 'point to transnational economic, political, and ideological hierarchies' (p. 159). For instance, discussing the protagonist Réda's journey, against his will, to Mecca with his father in Ismaël Ferroukhi's film *Le Grand voyage* (2014), Abderrezak writes (pp. 33–34): 'The father is seeking a remedy of another nature as well. Apart from the religious redemption he hopes to achieve for his son, he has a further goal of "detoxifying" Réda. In French, one would say that he is *désoxidant* his son, and by the same token *dés-occident* (de-Westernizing) Réda, for according to the French dictionary *Litttré*, in alchemy *occident* is not only "darkness, which is the first hue of the masterpiece", but also, in the same dictionary, the word signifies "fall, ruin". Moreover, the patriarch deoccidizes his son by taking him eastward, thus symbolically de-Westernizing the young man.' The architecture behind *Ex-Centric Migrations* relies on such a continual chain of reversals, reversals of reversals, and really just 'reversing everything' (p. 35). Ensnared in the homophonies (*désoxidant*, *dés-occident*) of linguistic *cæsura* (the auditory pause provoked by the hyphen in *dés-occident*), the book is equal parts ideal, vision, and artistic iterology.

Abderrezak's precise prose embosses the language of critical enquiry with an entire suite of original, forceful concepts. Each invention ('disimmigration', 'illiterature', 'methical returns', the 'Maghrobal') intervenes upon recent and new migratory patterns in and around the Mediterranean littoral, and invests them with the weight of the author's careful attunement to the ethics and politics of language. He talks us through the (dead) end of Francophilic migrations (pp. 1–6), eccentric ex-centeredness (p. 16), reverse migrations (pp. 46–53), and migratory blind spots (pp. 32–39). He sings of and laments migratory host(age)s (pp. 25–32), burning the sea (pp. 67–76), and UFOs (unidentified floating objects, p. 76). Nowhere is the emotional charge of criticism and Abderrezak's quick conceptual dexterity more palpable than in the section dedicated to a close analysis of Yasmine Kassari's film *El ragued* (*L'enfant endormi*, 2004). A trilingually punned subtitle reveals '*The Sleeping Child*, or, the "Sleeping Penis" of Men on the Verge of *Demanicaption*' (p. 176).

The narrative thrust in *Ex-Centric Migrations* emerges in light of a series of important historical shifts in migrant culture (p. 162, p. 168, p. 172, p. 185, p. 198), such as the generation of French-based Maghrebis who are now dying (p. 220). What becomes of the new generation? Where do they go? What do they do? To where do they (re)turn? When? What path awaits them now? The book's multifaceted responses sidestep 'the well-known dyad of the Maghreb and France' (p. 221), and delve deep into 'the margin[s] of the Maghreb-France axis' (p. 206) instead.

Across six chapters and a vast corpus of primary material—films tackling identitarian tourism such as Tony Gatlif's *Exils* (2004); invective political lyrics by Manu Chao (*Clandestino*, 1998); dancey rai n'b compilations by Kore & Skalp (*Rai n'b fever*, 2004) and Kore & Bellek (*Rai n'b fever 2–3*, 2006–2008); liminal poetic passages in Mahi Binebine (*Cannibales*, 1999) and Tahar Ben Jelloun (*Partir*, 2006)—Abderrezak's study excels in unveiling committed artistic engagements with migratory politics, even when a work's primary concerns might, at first sight, seem to lie elsewhere. The author's verbal talent shines through etymological explorations of Arabic in literature and film, and close readings of Spanish song lyrics. *Ex-Centric Migrations* plunges the reader into a tour de force across radically divergent artistic responses to Mediterranean migration. Indeed, the book offers the additional benefit of critically engaging the burgeoning transdisciplinarity of Mediterranean Studies: 'By revisiting the notion of transgression,' writes Abderrezak, 'the discussed artistic productions invite the reader, spectator, and listener to rethink the concept of Mediterraneanness' (p.14; see also pp. 64–65, p. 86, p. 144 and p. 216). In its fresh, long view of Mediterranean cinema, literature, and music, the book conveys, much like the primary sources it examines, a sustained reflection on alternative, ex-centric migrations.

The stories Abderrezak follows follow no set path. He is a master of the neologistic pun, and for a committed cause. As a visual artist, it is appropriate that the vision that he conveys resemble, in his own words, 'a blank canvas where there is no pre-drawn picture that must be erased before new sketches can be begun' (p. 38).

YASSER ELHARIRY
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Being Contemporary: French Literature, Culture, and Politics Today. Edited by LIA BROZGAL and SARA KIPPUR. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. 288 pp. Pb £22.50. ISBN: 9781781382639

In the early pages of *Being Contemporary*, volume editors Lia Brozgal and Sara Kippur explain the theoretical as well as the practical stakes of the concept of 'the contemporary'. Using Susan Suleiman's seminal 1994 study *Risking One Who Is* as their point of departure, Brozgal and Kippur note that 'the contemporary' can be understood 'as a temporal marker, as a state of existence, and as a relational notion' (p. 2). The word 'contemporary' can refer to a time period perceived as current, to a mindset considered somehow modern or timely, or as a relationship to a different era with values seen as separate or distinct. This multiplicity of meanings leads to many difficulties and risks for scholars of contemporary phenomena, who find themselves positioned 'at a temporal crossroads for interpreting the past [...], for understanding one's place in the present [...], and for positing a vision for the future' (p. 2). With this explanation Brozgal and Kippur cogently articulate one of the fundamental challenges facing scholars of current material: we are necessarily analysing sources that can be considered part of 'the present' while we are working on them but that will become 'the past' by the time our work is published. There is no choice but to embrace this temporal paradox, one that Suleiman terms 'the contemporary triad' (p. 2).

Despite such difficulties, however, Suleiman as well as the volume's editors also observe that the necessity of keeping in mind three temporalities also provides the scholar with unique opportunities to engage with current social, political, and cultural movements and productions. Indeed, this challenge is at the heart of the volume by Brozgal and Kippur: in their words, the volume arose by asking the questions 'What, then, does it mean to be contemporary in the context of twenty-first-century French studies? In what ways can Suleiman's notion of a "risk" in the very idea of "being contemporary" guide and challenge our understanding, twenty years later, of the place of the contemporary critic?' (p. 5). As many of the volume's contributors note, recent political

surprises in the United States and Britain as well as the rise of populist politics in France have all made the place of the humanities scholar more fraught and more important than ever for understanding the world we live in and the risks we currently face.

The volume is well organized in six sections of three to five essays each. The first section, 'Conceptualizing the Contemporary', features thought-provoking and inter-disciplinary contributions regarding definitions of contemporariness by leading scholars from different fields: Rouso considers the challenges of 'contemporary history' through the lens of Holocaust survivors, while Apter considers the relationship between periodization and power and how the academy defines eras of study. Noland combines her expertise as a scholar and practitioner of dance to consider current thinking on the body and movement in relation to conceptualism. Each of these essays foregrounds much of what follows in subsequent sections, which tackle the contemporary from historical and cultural perspectives as well as for what it means for the scholar and practitioner today.

The second section, 'Contemporary Politics and French Thought', explores French intellectual history through readings of political thought (Robin), Derrida (Kritzman), Sade and Blanchot (Mehlman), and Samuels (Badiou). The third section, 'The Second World War and Vichy: Present Perspectives' features provocative essays by several leading scholars of the era (Golsan, Sapiro, Lothe, Ezrahi and Kacandes), each of which delves into questions of memory, institutions, and Vichy's afterlives. The fourth section approaches the notion of the contemporary from a personal perspective by considering the relationship between scholarly work and the individual undertaking it. Wieviorka looks at her family's experiences during World War II, while Conley reads Suleiman alongside Marc Augé. Jardine considers her own relationship to Kristeva while writing an intellectual biography of the feminist scholar, and Sheringham considers Annie Ernaux's memories of and writing about an illegal abortion she had as a college student.

In the final sections, 'Novel Rereadings' and 'Memory: Past and Future', contributors explore the relationship between cultural production and current ways of reading. Bal explores the potential of anachronism to open up new avenues of study to shed new light on even the oldest paintings, while Beizer rereads Colette, McDonald tackles Beckett, and Kaplan considers Kamel Daoud's recent *Meursault, contre-enquête*. Bouju, Jenson, and Hirsch focus on the relationship between the past and the present with regard to trauma (Bouju and Hirsh) as well as the transmission of trauma and related pathologies (Jenson with regard to Proust, Hirsch in terms of postmemory).

While this brief overview cannot do justice to the richness of the essays in this volume, the contributors all tackle broad questions regarding the relationship between the scholar and the era in which he/she lives. The interest in this volume therefore lies at two levels: the specific material discussed in its pages and the broader philosophical questions it raises for academics today. I am tempted to say that such philosophical questions are exceptionally pressing and timely today, but contributors also point to the fact that each period tends to define itself as particularly challenging and complicated. This observation is both worrisome and reassuring in the context of these essays: as the volume's editors and contributors show us, humanities scholars have a crucial role to play in the analysis of the contemporary moment, one that requires a great sensitivity to temporality as well as to the positioning of the scholar and the artist in the societies in which they live. This volume is, therefore, a foundational consideration of the academic's position in time as well as a fitting tribute to Susan Suleiman, one of our field's most influential, humane, and engaged scholars.

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from 1806 to 1897. By JACQUELINE COUTI. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. 224 pp. Pb £85.00. ISBN: 9781781383018

Jacqueline Couti's rich and thoroughly researched work sets out to examine the relationship between sexuality and the conceptualization of French nationhood in the overseas French Caribbean territory of Martinique during the nineteenth century. The reader is introduced to a corpus of under-researched white Creole literature, as well as to a new perspective on the genealogy of the eroticization of the female body as colonial Other or national allegory.

Couti examines how between the Caribbean and France a 'cross-cultural pollination' (p. 18) of concepts of nationhood, race, and gender was established by the transatlantic circulation of texts written by white Creole historians and writers of fiction. White Creole literature as defined by Couti in her book comprises works written by members of the plantation-owner class in Martinique: *créoles/békés*. The term 'Creole' is used to define this group for the purpose of this study, though Couti does point out in her introduction that the meaning of the term has undergone many fluctuations, and now refers to all those born in the French Antilles.

Dangerous Creole Liaisons covers literature written in the period between 1806 and 1897, and is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on a romance novel *Les Amours de Zémédare et Carina et description de l'île de la Martinique* (1806) by Auguste-Jean Prévost de Sansac de Traversay, who sought to assert the contribution of the white Creole classes to French nation-building, and expose the threat Revolutionary ideals posed to the Creole way of life. The second chapter discusses the works of two writers during the Bourbon Restoration, Jules Levilloux's *Les Créoles, ou la vie aux Antilles* (1835), and Louis Maynard de Queilhe's *Outre-mer* (1835), that manifest a concern with the decadence of Creole culture by employing the Gothic genre. The third chapter looks at the rewriting of Creole literature by Lafcadio Hearn in the novel *Youma: The Story of a West-Indian Slave* (1890) and the travel narrative *Two Years in the French West Indies* (1890), and by Jenny Manet in the serialized novel *Maiotte* (1896), and their contribution to the foreign and continental French ideologies regarding the French Antilles. The fourth chapter examines *Le triomphe d'Églantine* (1897) by René Bonneville, which conveys a more positive vision of the woman of colour as agent of progress, modernity and nationalism in the context of the Third Republic (1870–1940), a period that curtailed the privileges of the white Martinican oligarchy.

History and fiction are heavily imbricated in the white Creole works under study in this monograph that are products of a social class's reaction to ground-breaking events—the French Revolution, the abolition of slavery, and a rapid succession of monarchies and republics throughout the nineteenth century—which threatened their way of life. Couti's analysis is heavily laden with historical contextualization and references, to give the reader a grasp of the significance of events for white Creoles and the consequent impact on their literary creation. A 'Coda' between chapters two and three outlines the dialogue between Creole historians and fiction writers, presenting their sometimes shared, sometimes diverging views on a previously glorious Creole society on the verge of collapse.

White Creole literature has often been relegated by scholars of French Caribbean literature to the category of sub-literature, for lack of literary merit. This is detrimental, Couti claims, and she writes: 'If scholars oversimplify or ignore the issues discussed by the white elite, they will prevent themselves from gaining an accurate understanding of an intricate colonial social structure whose effects continue to influence the Caribbean today and shape its future' (p. 219). At a time when revisions of *Négritude* are taking place in the academy, Couti's study is of particular import, since it puts into perspective twentieth- and twenty-first-century movements of *Négritude*, *Créolité*, *Antillanité*, to demonstrate that experimentation with and literary exploration of Creole identity had been underway before the 1930s, and that the participants in these movements, having been exposed to, and in dialogue with, early Creole writers, may have been victims of instrumentalization by the colonial structures against which they were protesting.

Emphasizing the need for a broader contextualization of French Caribbean literature, Couti fends off all possible presumptions of her work endorsing a white colonial literature. The

author's work does not come as a critique of movements of *Négritude*, *Créolité* and *Antillanité*, but as part of a more comprehensive reassessment of these movements within French Caribbean studies, which in her opinion should include white Creole literature. Couti even puts into perspective the study of works by French metropolitan and foreign authors, some having shaped the French cultural imaginary of the French Antilles, such as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, as well as others who have influenced the writings of contemporary French Caribbean scholars and writers, such as Lafcadio Hearn.

Couti's work explores the thesis that sexualization and exoticization of black women's bodies stemmed from discourses of colonialism and nationalism that through transatlantic dialogue and cross-pollination infiltrated the French and foreign imaginaries of the French Antilles. This image of the black Caribbean woman then infiltrated the writing of Creoles and influenced their conception of racial and regional identity in a way that is still observable in French Caribbean society today. Woman is portrayed in the first three chapters as instrumentalized by the white Creole writer as an allegory to convey patriotic and racialized values. In the final chapter Couti demonstrates how the trope of the *mulâtresse*, vilified in previous works, is used to convey a positive image of the social benefits of the Third Republic.

Dangerous Creole Liaisons is divided between exploring these issues of gender reification and initiating the reader to a neglected 'sub-literature', and occasionally Couti's emphasis falls on one aspect at the expense of the other. When the two themes are juxtaposed, however, the study provides a fascinating argument on the construction of French Caribbean identity and colonial stereotypes. As Couti herself states in her conclusion, her work opens the way for new debates in the field of French Caribbean literature and Francophone postcolonial studies.

VANESSA LEE
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Contesting Views: The Visual Economy of France and Algeria. By EDWARD WELCH and JOSEPH McGONAGLE. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013. 236 pp. Hb £70.00. ISBN: 9781846318849

This co-authored study—which in itself renders visible the successful imbrication of two 'separate' perspectives—examines an extensive selection of representations of the Franco-Algerian relationship in past and present visual culture. Such representations, it suggests, have gained increasing currency in contemporary media, reflecting and reinforcing the intense affective ties and socio-political significance which that relationship continues to embody for French and Algerian civilians, whatever the resolute state silences on the matter. Indeed, Benjamin Stora, the French historian most closely associated with the Franco-Algerian war, has 'argued that French amnesia in relation to the war could be linked to the lack of visual images in circulation subsequent to it' (p. 39). *Contesting Views* seeks to redress this historical invisibility by focusing on still and moving images from the colonial past to the post-colonial present, images not solely related to the conflict, but always originating in a Franco-Algerian locus. Combining an assured and comprehensive historical backdrop with a skilful interdisciplinary foreground, this work underlines the importance of situating these images within an explicit visual economy, in other words, of commenting not only on the resultant visible objects, but on the politics of production, circulation and reception of these objects, and on the national and cultural hegemonies inflecting them.

The work adopts a broadly chronological approach and is divided into two parts, of three chapters each. The first part deals with past photographic and, briefly, newsreel representations of events related to the Franco-Algerian War, even if only tangentially in the case of the first chapter which examines photo-books capturing an idealized Algeria for a *pied-noir* audience now based in

metropolitan France, yet desperate for a photographic tour of its childhood home. This *piéd-noir nostalgérie*, comprising colonially infused images of spatial dominance, offers a fascinating contrast with more radical, people-centric and future-focused collections of photographs collated by authors such as Pierre Bourdieu, who, espousing a very different political agenda, documented rural communities in Kabylia and their destruction at the hands of ‘colonial planning policy and spatial intervention’ (p. 34). As *Contesting Views* observes, however, both types of images exercise a disruptive function in that they serve to substantiate the growing presence and influence of Franco-Algerian visual culture in an *Hexagone* which would often rather occlude it. This first section then discusses photographs documenting the struggles and ‘resolution’ of the Franco-Algerian war, before examining visual representations of the Paris massacre of 17 October 1961 in the third chapter.

The second part focuses principally on filmic representations of Franco-Algerian relations in the contemporary period: on the predominance of the male child in French films dealing with Franco-Algerian war and its repercussions; on the importance of the Mediterranean Sea in Franco-Algerian visual culture; and, finally, on the key role played by space and place in the articulation of identity in the post-colonial era, from national, collective, and individual perspectives. If the remit of this final chapter remains somewhat porous and all-encompassing, in that space and place inevitably figure in all previous chapters, it serves to bring Algeria back into the picture by discussing contemporary Francophone cinema which uses the country as its prime location.

Contesting Views charts the increasing mood of national reconciliation between France and Algeria to which these visual representations bear witness. Yet, as the final chapter remarks, even a very recent photo-book project promoted as a unifying transnational vector for Francophone audiences—‘as an object around which different communities with a stake in Algeria can gather and share memories’ (p. 178)—is one whose discourse of consensus is contested by its visual modalities which prioritize ‘the perspective and prerogative of the powerful’ (p. 178). This ideological ‘imbalance’ is perhaps mirrored in the inevitably greater focus given to visual images of French origin in this study as a whole, to the Northern European perception of the Franco-Algerian relationship. *Contesting Views* attributes this material disparity to practical difficulties of geopolitical access, to the persecuted status of those seen to engage in intellectual or cultural pursuits in Algeria, particularly during the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s, and to a general national hostility towards the photographic image and its historical role. Indeed, given the work’s repeated emphasis on the photograph’s status as key signifying document, as active visual agent engaged in constituting historical accounts, rather than mere passive appendage decorating pre-existent ‘logocentric’ versions, there may appear to be relatively few visual reproductions included, particularly in the first part; there is none in the first two chapters. The reader is tantalized by a description of an Algerian family in Algiers’ Casbah (p. 32) as portrayed in Philippe Lamarque’s *Alger d’antan*, for example, yet never shown it (thereby paradoxically illustrating the subsection’s heading, ‘(Not) Seeing the Casbah’), while other more readily accessible pictures—in the form of book or magazine covers—are provided in subsequent chapters. The book does discuss the important visual documentation produced by photographer Mohamed Kouaci and the current indifference of the Algerian authorities to his photographic archives, and also comments on Algerian mediatic responses to specific events, as in *el Watan*’s reaction to 17 October 1961 or, particularly in the final chapter, to films made in Algeria, but this remains perforce a predominantly French perspective on events, albeit a heterogeneous one. Welch and McGonagle believe these contesting viewpoints will become more expansively dialogic and integrated as Algeria continues to experience greater economic and political stability, as past wounds recede ever more from the present, and as technological and digital culture facilitate the ongoing preservation and circulation of visual images.

Contesting Views is a meticulously researched work, brimming with relevant references to a range of secondary literature on Franco-Algerian relations, and one which also demonstrates a welcome gendered awareness of female invisibility in many of the images discussed. This insightful and wide-ranging study recognizes the significant and, until now, underrepresented role played by

the visual in informing pre- and post-colonial views of Franco-Algerian relations, and will thus appeal to both general and specialist readers with an interest in such relations, and in visual culture as a whole.

STOBHAN McILVANNEY
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Publishing Africa in French: Literary Institutions and Decolonization 1945–67. RUTH BUSH. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. 224 pp. Hb £75. ISBN: 9781781381953

Over a decade ago, as a wide range of research began to coalesce in the emerging field of Francophone Postcolonial Studies, it was often remarked that, if this field were to flourish, it would have to overcome its profound presentism. For, despite the obvious interest in the significance of colonialism as an historical reality, there was at that time little engagement with material from the colonial period itself and a distinct preference for research on writers active from 1960 onwards. Thankfully, numerous projects have taken on the task of giving greater historical depth to the field—from Roger Little's 'Autrement Mêmes' series to Kate Marsh's excellent work on the legacies of French imperialism in India—often entering into dialogue with historians of French colonialism such as Frederick Cooper, Gary Wilder and Todd Shepard whose research has promoted new understandings of the colonial past and its impact on the postcolonial present.

Ruth Bush's important and timely volume on the creation, mediation and dissemination of African literature in the two decades after the Second World War is an outstanding contribution to this body of research, exploring the build up to, and the immediate aftermath of, decolonization (a period that has been central to recent historical volumes by Cooper and by Wilder). The volume is built on some deeply impressive archival work, which has seen Bush trawl through the files of many key Parisian-based publishers, such as Le Seuil and *Présence Africaine*. The volume comprises six chapters, divided into two sections, each of three chapters: the first section examines the role in this period of Paris-based literary institutions (publishing houses, magazines, prize-awarding bodies, etc.) in publishing writing about Africa (by both French and African authors); while the second section, 'Mediations', looks at specific case studies that allow the author to explore the ways in which these institutions packaged Africa for a French audience.

The introduction provides a methodological, historical, and archival background to the main areas of concern, drawing particular attention to the ways in which the thesis uses and questions Pierre Bourdieu's conception of the cultural space of literature as a 'literary field'. The thesis is also consistently in dialogue with Pascale Casanova's own take on Bourdieu in *La République Mondiale des Lettres* (1999), focusing principally on Casanova's use of the centre-periphery model, and her assumption that the periphery is passively annexed to and by the centre.

The first section on 'Institutions' opens with a chapter on the creation of anthologies of black writing and the critical role of Le Seuil. Chapter 2 then moves on to the journal and publishing house *Présence Africaine*, while chapter 3 examines the prize-awarding body the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer (ANEMOM) and its contribution to 'the processes of legitimation and consecration for literary representations of sub-Saharan Africa' (p. 23). The second section, 'Mediations' provides a series of fascinating case studies of the mediation of the work of individual authors. Chapter 4 examines the now largely forgotten popular author, Christine Garnier, who published her bestselling novel, *Va t-en avec les tiens!* (1951) under an assumed African name, alongside Abdoulaye Sadjji's *Maimouna* (1952). Chapter 5 analyses the readers' reports on what would become landmark works by Cheikh Hamidou Kane and by Malick Fall, and reveals their ambivalent reception, which turned on notions of authenticity and perceived universal literary norms. Finally, Chapter 6 examines the published French translations of key

works by Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and Peter Abrahams, and emphasizes the translator's role as 'cultural mediator'. The short conclusion to the volume usefully draws together the central idea of the book, in particular the call for authorial agency to be examined in relation to 'the agency of literary mediators' with the aim of acknowledging 'more fully the process of producing and consuming literature as a collective human undertaking' (p. 220).

The book is extensively researched, meticulously presented, and lucidly written, and it complicates a number of received narratives in an engaging and convincing fashion. The second chapter, for instance, which focuses on the anthologies of African poetry that Le Seuil published immediately after the war, opens up the 'tension between universalist representations of the Union Française and racial particularism in *négritude* writing' (p. 23), a tension that in fact runs through the book as a whole, particularly in the next chapter on *Présence Africaine*. In their various ways, all the chapters on individual authors persuasively show that when we use archival evidence to look in detail at the inner workings of the publishing process, covering everything from editorial revisions and readers' reports to book production and marketing, then the grand narratives of annexation championed by Casanova begin to fracture. This kind of thinking is also implicit in Bourdieu's theory of the field, which, for all its strengths as a means of guiding an institutional analysis, is conspicuously weak when it comes to dealing with writing itself as an active force. We are shown, for instance, how Damas's address to readers in the preface to his anthology *Latitudes françaises* offers an 'active negotiation of the ways in which new poetic voices could enter and potentially transform the literary field' (p. 54); and, conversely, how Senghor's endorsement of Peter Abrahams in the preface to *Une couronne pour Udomo* tells us much about Senghor but almost nothing about what Abrahams's own writing itself does (p. 202).

In conclusion, this is an excellent monograph, which challenges a number of received views and brings a wealth of new evidence into the debates about Francophone post-war literature about Africa. In particular, its mining of a largely untapped archive opens up new directions for research which other scholars will no doubt follow.

DAVID MURPHY
UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

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The deadline for the receipt of articles to be included in the autumn 2017 issue is 15 August 2017.

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