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Reparations for Slavery in the French Republic: A National Debate?

Introduction: A National Debate?

The past twenty years have given rise to an enormous volume of memory work relating to the European-led 'slave trade' and its systems of enslavement.[1] This has sought to redress the failure to recognize the importance of this history in shaping modern and contemporary society. At the heart of this movement lies the work of social movements dedicated to seeking recognition for slavery and its ongoing repercussions in society today. But while the importance of memory has been largely recognized, reparations remain a political taboo. As yet, none of the former states involved in the enslavement of African, Indian, Malagasy and other indigenous peoples have been willing to engage in discussions, and France is no exception, even if it is the only European country to have passed a national law recognizing slavery as a crime against humanity.[2] Faced with widespread hostility and suspicion, reparations have not been subject to any official public debate in France. As such, to provide an *état présent* of the reparations 'debate' is to piece together a discussion that does not officially exist and that has been repeatedly silenced, quite unlike the so-called 'guerre des mémoires' of 2005–2006 that led to an entire 'Mission d'information sur les questions mémorielles' or, indeed, the 'Mission d'étude sur la spoliation des Juifs de France' that endorsed the restitution of stolen Jewish goods and laid the groundwork for monetary reparations to be paid to the orphaned descendants of those who had been murdered in the Holocaust.[3]

Political silence has meant that reparations where slavery is concerned have become a largely misunderstood and misrepresented subject that tends to provoke uninformed knee-jerk responses from public and politicians alike. The interest in assessing the state of this 'debate' thus lies first in understanding the work of social actors and the multiple strategies used to legitimize their struggle, and second in identifying the repeated attempts of the French state to shut the debate down and deform its content by any and all means possible. To that end, this article will look at four separate occasions when reparations have been subjected to limited public and/or political scrutiny: first, during the debates over the wording of the Taubira law (1998–2001); second, during the bicentenaries of the death of Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution (2003–2004); third, after the first legal attempts to hold the French state to account (2005–); and fourth, during Hollande's presidency (2012–2017) when the question of reparations was raised each year alongside France's national day for remembering slavery, the slave trade and their abolitions (10 May). The purpose of this article is therefore to explore the ways in which this 'debate' is circumscribed by a political refusal that has sought to delegitimize the internationally recognized concept of reparations for crimes against humanity.

[1] This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Network Grant AH/P007074/1.
[2] 'Loi n° 2001-434 du 21 mai 2001 tendant à la reconnaissance de la traite et de l'esclavage en tant que crime contre l'humanité', 21 May 2001, http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000405369 (accessed 25 September 2015).
[3] Bernard Accoyer, 'Rapport d'information au nom de la Mission d'information sur les questions mémorielles', 18 November 2008, http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/084000719/index.shtml (accessed 7 September 2017). Jean Matteoli, 'Mission d'étude sur la spoliation des Juifs de France: Rapport général', December 2000, http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/004000897/index.shtml (accessed 4 September 2017); Décret n°2000-657 du 13 juillet 2000 instituant une mesure de réparation pour les orphelins dont les parents ont été victimes de persécutions antisémites, https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000582825 (accessed 4 September 2017). See also *Les guerres de mémoires: La France et son histoire, Enjeux politiques, controverses historiques, stratégies médiatiques,* ed. by Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Paris: La Découverte, 2008).

Reparations: Defining a Global Social Movement

Before examining the subject of reparations for slavery within the context of the French Republic, it is worth providing a working definition of this term and outlining the broader international and historical contexts from which social movements relating to reparations have emerged. A useful and necessarily open definition is attempted by Appiah who reminds us that reparations tend to operate within a 'territoire moral' and are driven by a desire to repair the damage caused to a victim after injury. Although he does not conclude in favour, he nonetheless suggests three possible ways that repair might be achieved: through the return of material goods and access to resources; through the recognition of responsibility for the wrong committed; and through the reconciliation of relations adversely affected as a result of the harm inflicted.[4] Appiah's rejection of reparations is reflective not only of their potential inadequacies to deal with the trauma of a crime against humanity, but also of the fact that this 'belated' struggle is being carried forward by what Terray terms 'victimes indirectes' who cannot hope to represent the victims of the past.[5]

Such an arguement fails to recognize fully the consequences of enslavement and its links to contemporary socio-economic and discriminatory issues.[6] Moreover, reparation activism has arisen due to the failure of the different states to provide reparations to the formerly enslaved alongside abolition. For example, during the debates over abolition in France, the question of reparations, although briefly raised by the abolitionist Victor Schœlcher, was pushed aside in favour of indemnity payments to the former slave owners (echoing the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act in Britain).[7] Instead of payment, those who had suffered under slavery received the 'gift' of freedom, and as Vergès notes, 'qui dit don dit dette — dette dont les affranchis doivent s'acquitter en devenant de bons colonisés, de bons chrétiens, de bons travailleurs'.[8] Indeed, it was not until 1946, with the departmentalization law ending colonial rule over the French plantation colonies and the Houphouët-Boigny law abolishing forced labour in the overseas territories, that universal rights would be granted to all French citizens.[9]

In the US, the 13th amendment (1865) abolishing slavery at the end of the Civil War also resulted in compensation payments being made to the former slave owners. But unlike the French and British colonies, abolition led to the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau; a US federal government agency that was supposed to administer reparations in the form of '40 acres and a mule' to freedmen and women during the Reconstruction era. As W.E.B. Du Bois commented, the Bureau failed on numerous fronts, not least of which was 'to carry out to any considerable extent its implied promises to furnish the freedmen with land'.[10] Its untimely

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[4] Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Comprendre les réparations: Une réflexion préliminaire', *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, 44 (2004), 25–40 (pp. 26–29).

[5] Emmanuel Terray, *Face aux abus de mémoire* (Paris: Stock, 2006), p. 22.

[6] While Appiah acknowledges some of these consequences, he also dismisses them by stating that 'globalement parlant, dans le Nouveau monde, le racisme n'est qu'historiquement et faiblement lié à l'esclavage'; Appiah, p. 32.

[7] Françoise Vergès, *Abolir l'esclavage: Une utopie colonial. Les ambiguïtés d'une politique humanitaire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), p. 183. See also Laurent Blériot, 'La loi d'indemnisation des colons du 30 avril 1849: aspects juridiques', *Contributions à l'histoire de l'esclavage. Revue historique des Mascareignes*, 2 (2000), 147–61. It is worth noting that the first slavery abolition decree of 4 February 1794 rejected the idea of paying indemnities to the former masters.

[8] Vergès, p. 184. Schmidt describes the situation in France's colonies after abolition for '[ceux] qu'on appela les "nouveaux libres" [qui] se virent exclus de toute décision, de tout débat, de tout choix réel […], malgré l'exercice du suffrage "universel" et la façade démocratique qu'il suggérait'; Nelly Schmidt, *La France a-t-elle aboli l'esclavage? Guadeloupe-Martinique-Guyane (1830–1935)* ([N.p.]: Perrin, 2009), p. 227.

[9] Loi n° 46-451 du 19 mars 1946 tendant au classement comme départements français de la Guadeloupe, de la Martinique, de la Réunion et de la Guyane française, https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000868445 (accessed 17 August 2017); Loi N° 46-645 du 11 avril 1946 tendant à la suppression du travail forcé dans les territoires d'outre-mer, https://www.contreculture.org/-AL%20Abolition%20du%-20travail%20forc%E9.html (accessed 17 August 2017).

[10] W.E.B. du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994: first publ. Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1903), p. 22.

closure in 1872, long before its work was complete, left 'a legacy of striving for other men', which stimulated the early African-American struggles for reparations that continue to the present-day.[11]

If the exact conditions of abolition differed from one colony and colonial system to another, commonalities can be nonetheless be identified in the repeated failure of imperialist and federal governments to provide the necessary socio-economic systems and protective structures for those who had been freed, and to find effective ways of encouraging social advancement to lead to de facto equality.[12] By the end of the twentieth century, shared grievances among colonized and oppressed peoples led to the establishment of the first transnational efforts to unite pan-Africanists through the Pan-African Conferences (PACs) held in 1900 (London), 1921 (London, Paris, Brussels), 1923 (London, Lisbon), 1927 (New York) and, most importantly, in 1945 (Manchester). These events (especially the fifth) effectively 'marked the beginning of the end of European colonial rule in Africa and the Caribbean', as well as the consolidation of a growing pan-African social movement out of which contemporary movements for reparations would emerge.[13]

The Abuja Proclamation represents a key moment in this history. In December 1990, the First International Conference on Reparations, held in Lagos, led to the creation the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP), set up by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Its remit was 'to pursue the goal of reparations to Africa', with precedents being offered by the 'reparations to Jews for the Holocaust, and the movement in the United States for reparations to African-Americans'.[14] Its lasting significance lies, however, in having established 'the legitimacy of a transnational movement for reparations'.[15] In 1993, a second conference was held in Abuja, sponsored by the GEP, which resulted in the issuing of the Abuja Proclamation calling 'upon the international community to recognize that there is a unique and unprecedented moral debt owed to the African peoples which has yet to be paid'.[16] In response, groups were formed at a national level, such as the Africa Reparations Movement in the UK (1993), led by the late MP Bernie Grant, whose early day motion called attention to the Abuja Proclamation and was signed by 46 Labour MPs, including the party's current leader, Jeremy Corbyn.[17]

The three-year preparatory period leading to the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (UNWCAR) would help to consolidate this transnational movement, notably through the work of the Regional Conference

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[11] Du Bois, p. 24. See, for example, Mary Frances Berry, *My Face Is Black Is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations* (New York: Vintage, 2006).

[12] See, for example, Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), which locates the roots of twentieth-century black insurgency in the US in the post-abolitionist period. See also Schmidt's *La France a-t-elle aboli l'esclavage?* (2009), which traces the plight of the former slave colonies and the 'nouveaux libres' after abolition.

[13] Kehinde Andrews, 'We need to revive the revolutionary spirit of the Pan-African Congress', *Guardian*, 15 October 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/15/revolutionary-spirit-pan-african-con-gress (accessed 18 August 2017).

[14] Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, 'Reparations to Africa and the Group of Eminent Persons', *Cahier d'Études Africaines*, 44 (2004), 81–97 (p. 84 and p. 87). Examples of African-American movements include the founding of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'Cobra) in 1987 and congressman John Conyers Jr's now infamous H.R.40 bill first submitted in 1989 and every year since: 'H.R. 3745 Commission to Study Reparation Proposal for African Americans Act', 101st Congress (1989–1990), 20 November 1989, https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/house-bill/3745 (accessed 11 September 2017).

[15] Michael T. Martin and Marilyn Yaquinto, 'Reparations for "America's Holocaust": Activism for Global Justice', *Race & Class*, 45 (2004), 1–25 (p. 14).

[16] 'The Abuja Proclamation', http://ncobra.org/resources/pdf/TheAbujaProclamation.pdf (accessed 22 August 2017).

[17] Bernie Grant, 'Early Day Motion 1987: Abuja Proclamation', 10 May 1993, http://www.parliament.uk/business-/publications/business-papers/commons/early-day-motions/edm-detail1/?edmnumber=1987&session=1992-93 (accessed 22 August 2017).

for Africa and the Africa and African Descendants Caucus.[18] They issued calls before and repeatedly during the UNWCAR, the trace of which can be seen in the final Durban Declaration, which not only stated that 'slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so', but also that 'victims of human rights violations […have] the right to seek just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered'.[19]

The two decades since the UNWCAR have seen a proliferation of reparation campaigns that have often run alongside the different anniversaries relating to abolition. Commemorative efforts have, in turn, provoked public interest in understanding the history of slavery and its contemporary consequences. Activism in this area has been additionally bolstered by the emergence of newer campaigns, such as the Caribbean Community (Caricom) Reparations Commission's (CRC) calls for European governments to participate in the 'Caricom Reparations Justice Programme', and by international support, including the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and their recent calls for the US to engage in a process of reparatory justice for African-Americans.[20] Although national governments have typically dismissed and/or ignored these calls, support continues to be offered at an international level, which provides these claims with important legal precedents and therefore with a legitimizing framework. Where then, within this global context, can we situate the reparations movement in the French Republic and how ought we to assess the state of the reparations 'debate' in France today?

Legislation: Debating Reparations and the Taubira Law

It was the 1998 commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the abolition decree that propelled the history of slavery back into France's public consciousness. Unsurprisingly, the official speeches made no mention of the reparations paid to the former masters, preferring to celebrate instead the Republic as a benevolent abolitionist exemplified by Victor Schœlcher. This narrative enabled the state to distance itself from the figure of the enslaver, while simultaneously silencing the connections between the Republic and its repressive colonial practices after 1848.[21] In contrast to the state, over one hundred *associations*, mostly from the overseas departments, organized a silent march in Paris on 23 May 1998 to honour the memory of those who had been enslaved. This resulted in the collection of ten thousand signatures, petitioning the French government to recognize slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity. Not only did this echo the calls issued by Glissant, Chamoiseau and Soyinka earlier that year, but also resonated with the action undertaken by the Comité International des Peuples Noirs (CIPN) back in 1992 when they protested in front of the Trocadero against the five-hundred-year celebrations of Christopher Columbus by calling for slavery to be recognized as a crime against humanity.[22]

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[18] Martin and Yaquinto, p. 14. See also the 'Report of the Regional Conference for Africa (22–24 January 2001)', http://dag.un.org/handle/11176/234465 (accessed 22 August 2017) and the 'WCAR Report of African and African Descendants', October 2001, https://academic.udayton.edu/race/06hrights/OppressedGroups/AfricanDescendants/WCARReport01.htm (accessed 22 August 2017).

[19] 'World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance Declaration', 31 August–8 September 2001, http://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf (accessed 22 August 2017), p. 6 and p. 18.

[20] Caricom Reparations Commission, '10-Point Reparation Plan', http://caricomreparations.org/caricom/caricoms-10-point-reparation-plan/ (accessed 22 August 2017). See also Hilary Beckles, *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide* (Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2013). 'Report of the Working Group of Experts in People of African Descent on its Mission to the United States of America', 18 August 2016, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/183/30/PDF/G1618330.pdf?OpenElement (accessed 8 September 2017).

[21] Nicola Frith, '"Working Through" Slavery: The Limits of Shared Memories in Contemporary France', *Irish Journal of French Studies*, 13 (2013), 17–39 (p. 24).

[22] Édouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau and Wole Soyinka, 'Déclaration du manifeste de 1998 sur l'esclavage', 11–13 March 1998, http://www.lesmemoiresdesesclavages.com/centrehistorique.html (accessed 11 September 2017);

In response, Christiane Taubira-Delannon, the former *députée* for French Guiana and later *ministre de la Justice*, submitted a proposal 'tendant à la reconnaissance de la traite et de l'esclavage en tant que crimes contre l'humanité', which called for the creation of a committee of experts to examine 'les conditions de réparation due au titre de ce crime'.[23] In her report that preceded the first reading, she qualified this statement by suggesting that the committee examine 'les modalités de réparations, *d'ordre purement moral*, due au titre de ce crime' (emphasis added).[24] She listed some possible examples, such as improving access to education, rehabilitating sites of memory and attending to the unequal distribution of land and wealth, and made it clear that 'il ne s'agit en aucun cas d'envisager des indemnisations financières'.[25]

The ensuing debates trace the process by which the legal concept of reparations (which ought to accompany any formal acknowledgement of a crime against humanity) became *politically* severed from the process of providing that recognition. Responses to the inclusion of reparations in the final wording were split. On the right, members of the Rassemblement pour la République rejected the proposal, seeing the law as a further example of unnecessary repentance and fearing that it would open the door to financial payments. The left and far left (especially the Parti communiste français) pressed for the inclusion of reparations in order to stop the law from becoming 'un simple affichage politique' intended to clear the conscience of the state, while also ensuring the law would result in real social change.[26]

On 10 May 2001, the law was passed, but with certain compromises. Notably, the role of the committee was settled as guaranteeing 'la pérennité de la mémoire de ce crime'. This marked a significant departure from its original mission, now with a commemorative remit that was more limited, but less controversial. This telling absence led the Guadeloupean poet, author and historian, Oruno D. Lara, to criticize the law as little more than half-hearted 'sham' or a 'government farce', and the result of debates that had been 'carefully orchestrated behind closed doors' in the context of a period in which reparation movements were gaining momentum during the preparations for the UNWCAR.[27]

What the discussions also reveal are the roots of a discursive and political rupture that has become progressively more entrenched. They suggest two differing concepts of reparations. Voices on the centre and right tended to define reparations as an immoral financial transaction to individual claimants; a form of reparations that was deemed unacceptable across the hemicycle. Whereas voices on the left and far left expressed a desire to nuance the term by including the adjective 'moral' in reference to their desire for social justice. Indeed, when evoked in the above debates, reparations are only ever 'moral' in a bid to separate this type from the politically unviable idea of financial payments. But the risk of potential misunderstanding and the desire to achieve political consensus, as well as the context of the UNWCAR, resulted in the word being removed, and with it a legislative gap that would kindle a series of social movements dedicate to seeking reparatory justice from the French state and its financial institutions.

Communication du MIR, 'Guadeloupe: C'est aujourd'hui que le Comité International pour les Peuples Noirs fête son 25ème anniversaire', http://theblacklist.net/forum/topics/guadeloupe-c-est-aujourd-hui-que-le-comite-international-pour-les (accessed 11 September 2017).

[23] 'Proposition de loi tendant à la reconnaissance de la traite et de l'esclavage en tant que crimes contre l'humanité', 22 December 1998, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/propositions/pion1297.asp (accessed 1 October 2015).

[24] Christiane Taubira-Delannon, 'Rapport', 10 February 1999, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/rapports/-r1378.asp (accessed 11 September 2017).

[25] Taubira-Delannon, 10 February 1999.

[26] Danielle Bidard-Reydet warned against 'la tentation d'une reconnaissance de simple "bonne conscience"'; Sénat, 'Reconnaissance de l'esclavage en tant que crime contre l'humanité', 10 mai 2001, http://www.senat.fr-/seances/s200105/s20010510/sc20010510002.html (consulté le 20 juin 2015). See also Assemblée Nationale, 'Compte rendu intégral', 18 février 1999, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/cri/-html/19990168.asp (accessed 30 June 2015).

[27] Oruno D. Lara, 'In Defence of Reparations', *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire*, 3 (2001), p. 147. Taubira acknowledged the forthcoming UNWCAR in her comments and noted that this law would mean that 'la France pourrait s'énorgueillir d'avoir été le premier État à faire de la traite négrière un crime contre l'humanité'; Taubira-Delannon, 10 February 1999.

Political Machinations: Calls for Reparations and the Bicentenary of the Haitian Revolution

The 'debate' on reparations did not end with the passing of the 2001 law. During the successive bicentenary years that marked the death of Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution in 2003 and 2004, the matter would repeatedly resurface. This time, however, its focus was more specific since it related to the 'dette d'indépendance' or the 'rançon de l'esclavage' that the newly formed Republic of Haiti was forced to pay to France in exchange for its freedom.[28] Although the initial sum of 150 million gold francs (1825) was reduced to 90 million in 1838, the 'debt' would not be paid in full until 1946, impoverishing Haiti in the process.[29]

In January 2003, Taubira was the first to raise the subject by calling upon the French government to look into the restitution of this 'debt', suggesting that 'L'équivalent de six années de recettes budgétaires de l'Etat haïtienne pourrait servir de base'.[30] Whereas the 1998–2001 debate resulted in the erasure of the term reparations, a new response was provide in 2003, this time using a substitutionary strategy: to avoid the question, the government spoke instead of development aid, thereby suggesting that the 'debt' has been retrospectively repaid. Restitution was swept aside by the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères who spoke instead of the 83 million euros that France had donated to Haiti since 1994.[31] As a standalone figure, this sum may appear sizeable, but its significance is sharply reduced when placed in the real context of France's annual development aid budget. The previous year, in 2002, France had given a total of 4,414 billion USD in development aid, of which only 17 million USD went to Haiti, or 0.0004%. Moreover, since 1994, its contributions to Haiti had been steadily falling.[32]

The clouding of the issue through the substitution of one term (restitution) for another (development aid) had the additional advantage of enabling the Ministry to seize the moral high ground by implying France's 'generosity' towards Haiti. In doing so, France is repositioned, not as the perpetrator, but as the moral hero, while Haiti becomes the blameworthy party: 'en dépit de cet engagement massif, peu de résultats ont été enregistrés en termes de développement', a result that is blamed on Haiti's 'mauvaise gouvernement et la dégradation de la sécurité'.[33] France has nonetheless 'maintenu intégralement son aide à Haïti, en la réorientant [...] vers les actions bénéficiant directement à la population, notamment à la paysannerie'.[34] The suggestion is that where Haiti has failed, France has succeeded and is therefore exculpated from any further responsibility.

This, however, was not the end of the question. A month later, the Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, made a more pointed call, issued on the bicentenary of Louverture's death, which specified that the debt owed amounted to 21.7 billion USD.[35] To contain this problem, a 'Comité indépendant de réflexion et de propositions sur les relations Franco-Haïtiennes' was set up under Régis Debray and its report published in 2004.[36] The opening pages

[28] For more on these terms, see Frédérique Beauvois, 'L'indemnité de Saint-Domingue: "Dette d'indépendance" ou "rançon de l'esclavage"?', *French Colonial History*, 10 (2009), 109–24.

[29] Louis-Georges Tin, *Esclavages et réparations: Comment faire face aux crimes de l'Histoire* (Paris: Stock, 2013), p. 19. See also Louis-Georges Tin, *De l'esclavage aux réparations: les textes clés d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Les Petits Matins, 2013).

[30] Christiane Taubira-Delannon, 'Question No 9924', 6 January 2003, http://questions.assemblee-nationale.fr/-q12/12-9924QE.htm (accessed 3 July 2015).

[31] Taubira-Delannon, 6 January 2003.

[32] All statistics on national aid contributions are available from http://www.aidflows.org (accessed 8 July 2015). Specific year contributions from France to Haiti can be found on http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/haiti/net-bilateral-aid-flows-from-dac-donors (accessed 8 July 2015).

[33] Taubira-Delannon, 6 January 2003.

[34] Taubira-Delannon, 6 January 2003.

[35] Agence France Presse, 'Haïti réclame 21,7 milliards de dollars à la France', *Le Monde*, 7 April 2003, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2003/04/07/haiti-reclame-21-7-milliards-de-dollars-a-la-france_31597-0_1819218.html?xtmc=aristide_et_reparation&xtcr=12 (accessed 4 September 2017).

[36] Comité indépendant de réflexion et de propositions sur les relations Franco-Haïtiennes (CIRPRFH), 'Rapport au Ministère des affaires étrangères, M. Dominique de Villepin, du Comité indépendant de réflexion et de propositions

dismiss reparations as 'sans objet', before accusing Aristide of muddling up history with legal demands that have no 'fondement juridique, sauf à requalifier juridiquement des actes appartenant au passé et à admettre une inadmissible rétroactivitié des lois et normes'.[37] This oft-cited argument where *slavery* is concerned conveniently overlooks the legal precedent offered by the Matteoli mission and the restitution of Jewish goods, and ignores the fact that the Taubira law's retrospective requalification of previous 'laws and norms' means that these crimes against humanity are imprescriptible; that is, not subject to any statute of limitations.[38]

A month after the publication of the Debray report, Aristide was forcibly removed through a collaborative US–France mission, leading to calls by Caricom and the African Union for a formal investigation. Some analysts have linked this to the mounting popularity of the Haitian president's calls for reparations.[39] While this link cannot be definitively proved, as Tin notes, it is worth adding that shortly after Aristide was replaced with Gérard Latortue (a UN official), the new president 's'empressa d'expliquer que cette demande de réparation et de restitution était tout à fait ridicule, et même totalement illégale'.[40]

Litigation: Grassroots Activism and Testing the Case for Reparations

Silencing Aristide did not mark the end to calls for reparations, any more than the strategic removal of this term from the Taubira law. Notably from 2005 onwards, citizen-led *associations* located in the French Republic would begin exploring litigation routes to legitimize reparations for the descendants of those who had been enslaved. Having achieved a partial legislative victory in 2001, the year 2005 thus marks a new strategic departure being the point at which the 'debate' moves from the political into the legal arena to begin battling its way through the French courts.

The first groups to issue legal proceedings against the French state were the Mouvement International pour les Réparations (MIR), formed in 2005 by Garcin Malsa, the former mayor of Sainte-Anne in Martinique, and the Conseil Mondial de la Diaspora Panafricaine (CMDP), formed in 2000 by the late historian, Kapet de Bana. Submitted to the Tribunal de grande instance in Fort-de-France, the case calls for France to recognize its responsibility for the 'préjudice matériel et immatériel que subit actuellement le peuple martiniquais descendants d'africains déportés et mis en esclavage sur le sol martiniquais'. In a clear reference to the original wording of the Taubira law, it requests the establishment and public financing of a 'collège d'experts' with a remit to 'évaluer le préjudice subi par le peuple martiniquais du fait de ces crimes contre l'humanité'.[41]

It was not until 2008 that the Tribunal de grande instance would be recognized as responsible for processing this grievance, while the case was repeatedly deferred until 15 November 2013 when it resulted in a legal dispute over the wording of the Taubira law. The state defended its position by maintaining that 'à aucun moment la loi Taubira n'a prévu de réparation matérielle mais qu'elle parle uniquement de "réparation symbolique et réparation

sur les relations Franco-Haïtiennes', January 2004, http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_haiti.pdf (accessed 30 June 2015).

[37] CIRPRFH, p. 11 and p. 13.

[38] Matteoli (December 2000); Décret n°2000-657 du 13 juillet 2000 instituant une mesure de réparation pour les orphelins dont les parents ont été victimes de persécutions antisémites, https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/-affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000582825 (accessed 4 September 2017).

[39] See Paul Farmer's useful summary, 'Who removed Aristide?', *London Review of Books*, 15 April 2004, https://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n08/paul-farmer/who-removed-aristide (accessed 4 September 2017), pp. 28–31.

[40] Tin, *Esclavages et réparations*, p. 45.

[41] A transcript of the original complaint can be found here: 'Martinique: plainte pour réparation, l'Etat français assigné devant ses propres tribunaux!', http://archives-2001-2012.cmaq.net/fr/node/21234.html (accessed 4 September 2017).

morale'".[42] In response, the legal team of the associations stated that 'La loi Taubira parle de réparation morale donc implicitement cela induit une réparation matérielle'.[43] Once again, the conceptualization of reparations was split between the meaning of 'moral' and whether or not that implied material consequences. The case was further undermined by the fact that in February 2013, magistrates in France's uppermost legal institution, the Cour de Cassation, had ruled in a separate case that the Taubira law was not a normative law. In a worrying contravention of the right of *associations* 'de défendre la mémoire des esclaves et l'honneur de leurs descendants' against racism and discrimination, the Cour de Cassation stated that the Taubira was only declarative — that is, purely commemorative — and could not be used to prosecute those wishing to deny slavery as a crime against humanity (unlike the Holocaust).[44] Hopes were raised once more when in 2014 the Tribunal de grande instance in Fort-de-France recognized 'la permanence du prejudice subi par les descendants d'esclaves' and therefore the admissibility of the case, but were dashed when the case was finally thrown out.[45] Worse, by 2017, the French state had reportedly obtained from the Supreme Court an end to all further judicial demands for reparations.[46]

Despite these significant setbacks, the work of these *associations* continues to build momentum at both trans-departmental and regional levels. In 2011, the Guadeloupe-based CIPN joined forces with MIR to organize a conference on reparations, and in May 2017 they lodged a similar grievance to MIR and the CMDP, but this time with the Tribunal de grande instance in Basse-Terre, the results of which are pending.[47] Moreover, across the Caribbean region, MIR and the CIPN have responded to the calls issued by Caricom by setting up their own 'national' committees on reparations.[48] Although these committees only hold the status of *associations*, their existence provides an important Francophone voice within a growing Caribbean movement, which will soon be strengthened with the inauguration of a Centre for the Study of Reparations at UWI Mona.

Commemoration: Hollande's Presidency and 'Moral' Reparations

The above litigation efforts have received only sparse media attention, limited almost exclusively to the regional presses, such as *France-Antilles*. But during Hollande's presidency, the subject of reparations would repeatedly make the national news. The election of a socialist president not

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[42] R.L., '200 milliards d'euros pour la réparation de l'esclavage', *France-Antilles*, 15 November 2013, http://www.martinique.franceantilles.fr/actualite/faitsdivers/200-milliards-d-euros-pour-la-reparation-de-l-esclavage-229432.php (accessed 5 September 2017).

[43] R.L., 15 November 2013.

[44] Arrêt n° 456 du 5 février 2013 (11-85.909) – Cour de Cassation – Chambre criminelle, https://www.cour-decassation.fr/jurisprudence_2/chambre_criminelle_578/456_5_27256.html (accessed 5 September 2017). Loi du 29 juillet 1881 sur la liberté de la presse, Article 48-1, https://www.legifrance.gouv-.fr/affichTexteArticle.do?cidTexte=-LEGITEXT000006070722&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006419816 (accessed 5 September 2017). See also Bernard Jouanneau, 'Apologie de l'esclavage avec la "permission" des juges', *Mediapart*, 12 March 2013, https://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/les-invites-de-mediapart/article/120313/-apologie-de-lesclavage-avec-la-permission-des-juges (accessed 5 September 2017).

[45] G.G., 'Le mouvement pour la réparation invité du Caricom', *France-Antilles*, 2 November 2014, http://www.martinique.franceantilles.mobi/actualite/faitsdivers/le-mouvement-pour-la-reparation-invite-du-caricom-278373.php; Pierre Carpentier, '10 Questions aux candidats sur la Réparation de la traite négrière et de l'esclavage', *Mediapart*, 19 March 2017, https://blogs.mediapart.fr/pierre-carpentier/blog/190317/10-questions-aux-candidats-sur-la-reparation-de-la-traite-negriere-et-de-lesclavage (accessed 5 September 2017).

[46] Carpentier, 2017.

[47] 'Esclavage. L'état assigné en justice, décision début septembre', *Ouest France*, 2 June 2017, http://www.ouest-france.fr/societe/justice/esclavage-l-etat-assigne-en-justice-decision-debut-septembre-5035945 (accessed 5 September 2017).

[48] G.G., 2014. See also CCN, 'Barbade. Le Conseil National Guadeloupéen pour les Réparations tisse des liens avec la Caraibe', 12 October 2016, http://www.caraibcreolenews.com/index.php/focus/item/6862-barbade-le-conseil-national-guadeloupeen-pour-les-reparations-tisse-des-liens-avec-la-caraibe.

only coincided with the increasing momentum of reparations movements worldwide, but also marked the beginning of renewed efforts at political lobbying. Led by the media-canny Conseil représentatif pour les associations noires (CRAN), this campaign would result in a 'debate' on reparations being played out in the national media, which in turn led to a discursive shift in the political language being used around slavery commemoration and the strategic endorsement of 'moral' reparations.

Even before Hollande's election, the legitimation of reparations had been making gains, notably after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti when a petition signed by writers, intellectuals and politicians was published in *Libération* insisting once again that France pay back the independence debt.[49] Two years later, the CRAN launched an appeal in *Le Monde* calling for an end to the taboo over slavery reparations by means of a public debate, which was followed by several meetings with the then Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault in which the issue was reportedly discussed.[50] Indeed, the year 2012 was ripe for associations to begin intensifying their political efforts. Unlike Sarkozy's anti-repentant stance, Hollande had made election promises to support cultural projects relating to colonialism and slavery, and had appointed Christiane Taubira as Minister for Justice and Jean-Marc Ayrault, the former *député-maire* of Nantes (historically France's foremost slave port), as Prime Minister.[51]

To maximize its media impact, the CRAN's October appeal was published during Hollande's visit to Dakar, Senegal, and Gorée Island, a key site of memory on the UNESCO Slave Trade Route. The national presses reported that Ayrault's government was preparing to discuss the topic of reparations, prompting an urgent response by Élysée advisors denying that this was the case.[52] Having been refused a public debate, the CRAN switched to a legal course of action. During the president's first speech for the eighth 'National Day for Commemorating Slavery, the Slave Trade and their Abolitions' (2013), news broke that the CRAN had lodged a case against a major public financial institution, the Caisse des dépots et consignations (CDC), for having administered the debt paid by Haiti to France, and therefore for its complicity in a crime against humanity.

As a result, the 10 May speech of 2013, which had only once attracted significant media attention during its first invocation in 2006, became national news. This time, the president had been forewarned, his address offering an indirect, but clear response to the action taken by the CRAN, summarized by *Libération* as 'oui à la mémoire, non à la réparation matérielle'.[53] 'Le seul choix possible, c'est celui de la mémoire', stated Hollande, while reparations were defined as 'impossibles', using an argument lifted from the Martiniquais politician and poet, Aimé Césaire, whose response to reparations was far more nuanced that the president opportunistically suggested.[54] Although Hollande's response was negative, the year 2013 is significant for being the

[49] Comité pour le remboursement immédiat des milliards envolés d'Haïti, 'M. Sarkozy, rendez à Haïti son argent extorqué', *Libération*, 16 August 2010, http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2010/08/16/m-sarkozy-rendez-a-haiti-son-argent-extorque_672275 (accessed 7 July 2015).

[50] Collectif, 'Appel pour un débat national sur les réparations liées à l'esclavage', *Le Monde*, 12 October 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2012/10/12/appel-pour-un-debat-national-sur-les-reparations-liees-a-l-esclavage_1774364_3232.html (accessed 6 July 2014).

[51] Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Françoise Vergès and Marc Cheb Sun, 'Manifeste pour un musée des histoires coloniales', *Libération*, 8 May 2012, http://www.liberation.fr/culture/2012/05/08/manifeste-pour-un-musee-des-histoires-coloniales_817262 (accessed 4 June 2014). For more on Ayrault's work with Nantes-based associations, see Emmanuelle Chéral, *Le Mémorial de l'abolition de l'esclavage de Nantes: enjeux et controverses, 1998–2012* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012).

[52] AFP, 'Matignon réfléchit à "réparer" l'esclavage', *Le Figaro*, 12 October 2012, http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2012/10/12/97001-20121012FILWWW00550-matignon-reflechit-a-reparer-l-esclavage.php (accessed 6 July 2014).

[53] 'Hollande et l'esclavage: oui à la mémoire, non à la réparation matérielle', *Libération*, 10 May 2013, http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2013/05/10/esclavage-hollande-refuse-toute-reparation-materielle_902048 (accessed 1 July 2014).

[54] François Hollande, 'Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la traite, l'esclavage et leurs abolitions', 10 May 2013, http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/147001022.html (accessed 18 June 2014). See

first time a president uttered publically the taboo of reparations in relation to slavery. What would follow was the emergence of far more explicit distinction between the state's overt support of memory on the one hand and its rejection of reparations on the other.

The only exception to this was in 2015, when the official line appeared suddenly to have shifted. On this occasion, an address was to be given during a presidential tour of the Caribbean, including Haiti, making Hollande the first French president to have made an official visit to the Republic. The 10 May speech was delivered in Guadeloupe during the inauguration of the large-scale memorial project *Mémorial ACTe*. During his address, Hollande turned to the difficult subject of Haiti's 'rançon de l'indépendance' (which had featured once again in le CRAN's 2014 campaign[55]), before making the unprecedented statement that his forthcoming trip to Haiti would be marked by a settlement of that same debt: 'quand je viendrai en Haïti j'acquitterai à mon tour la dette que nous avons'.[56]

The statement might have been greeted with a standing ovation, but it gave rise to a brief moment of political panic, with the Elysée issuing an immediate counter-response that quashed any suggestion of financial restitution and confirmed that Hollande was referring to a 'dette morale' only.[57] The French press saw Hollande's bold remark as a political and diplomatic 'gaffe', further exacerbated by images of the president being assailed by 'groupes de manifestants, soigneusement tenus à l'écart, [qui] réclamaient à grands cris "restitutions" et "réparations", ou encore affichaient une pancarte […]: "Argent oui, morale non"'.[58] Unsurprisingly, his speech in Haiti was a rather more muted affair, with the president focusing on the heroes of emancipation and revolution, while the history of slavery was largely swept aside in favour of a narrative about French-Haitian solidarity.[59] The repayment of the debt, while not explicitly mentioned, amounted to promises to contribute to Haiti's educational programme and professional development, and build a new Institut Français.

In the speeches of 2016 and 2017, only indirect references were made to debts owed or reparations, which continue to be dismissed using Césaire's extrapolated quotation.[60] More interesting perhaps is the discursive shift from 'un devoir de mémoire' in the earlier speeches to a new desire for 'un devoir d'action', which was linked to the announcement of Hollande's legacy project: the 'Fondation pour la mémoire de l'esclavage'. This long-awaited memorial project,

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also Nicola Frith, 'Saving the Republic: State Nostalgia and Slavery Representations in Media and Political Discourses', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 23 (2015), 213–32 (p. 224).

[55] In 2014, the CRAN was joined by the Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme (Licra), the Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH) and a number of trade unions to call for the restitution of Haiti's 'debt', as well as the creation of a 'fond national de soutien aux réparations' funded by business and institutions that had historically benefited from slavery; Licra, 'Abordons la question des réparations de l'esclavage', 9 May 2014, http://www.licra.org/-communique/abordons-question-des-réparations-l'esclavage (accessed 7 July 2015); Anne Chemin, 'La traite en héritage', *Le Monde*, 2 May 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2014/05/02/la-traite-en-heritage_-4410558_3224.html#LhAiOA5tlBGQCjBd.99 (accessed 6 July 2015).

[56] François Hollande, 'Discours du président français lors de l'inauguration du Mémorial ACTe à Guadeloupe', 10 mai 2015, http://www.elysee.fr/videos/discours-lors-de-l-039-inauguration-du-memorial-acte/ (consulté le 13 mai 2015).

[57] Laure Bretton, 'En Haïti, Hollande répare sa boulette de la dette', *Libération*, 12 May 2015, http://www.liberation.fr/-politiques/2015/05/12/a-haiti-hollande-repare-sa-boulette-de-la-dette_1308411 (accessed 7 July 2015).

[58] David Revault d'Allonnes, 'Hollande en Haïti: "On ne peut changer l'histoire, on peut changer l'avenir"', *Le Monde*, 12 May 2015, http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2015/05/12/hollande-en-haiti-on-ne-peut-pas-changer-l-histoire-on-peut-changer-l-avenir_4632478_823448.html#FjIaItdlHWkEzKvq.99 (accessed 13 May 2015).

[59] 'La France s'est toujours portée aux côtés d'Haïti, sans doute parce qu'elle était consciente de l'histoire que nous avons unie, […] mais aussi parce que la France, elle est animée d'un esprit qui est celui qui a toujours donné du sens aux combats que nous avons menés, pas simplement pour nous-mêmes, mais pour une cause universelle'; François Hollande, 'Discours du président français lors de sa visite officielle en Haïti', 12 May 2015, http://www.elysee.fr/videos/discours-a-port-au-prince/ (accessed 26 June 2015).

[60] 'L'esclavage, comme l'avait dit Aimé Césaire, n'est et ne sera jamais une "note à payer", mais un devoir d'action'; François Hollande, 'Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la mémoire de l'esclavage', 10 May 2016, http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/167001425.html (accessed 11 September 2017). See also François Hollande, 'Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la mémoire de l'esclavage', 10 May 2017, http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/177001044.html (accessed 11 September 2017).

promised under Chirac and shelved under Sarkozy, will now finally see the light of day under Macron.[61] Hollande reaffirmed the state's commitment in his final address in 2017 when spoke of the need to go 'jusqu'au bout de la reconnaissance', which is not reparative justice, but rather an institutional form of cultural memorialization.

Conclusions

This brief analysis spanning a twenty-year period, from the debates over the Taubira law to the end of Hollande's presidency, reveal both consistencies and divergences in political attitudes towards reparations. Consistency lies in the state's anxious desire to privilege the supposedly unifying processes of memorialization over any politically risky engagement with the 'divisive' subject of reparations, while discursive shifts can be noted in the state's increasing willingness to use the vocabulary of reparations, but only on its own terms. The actions of activists have, at times, successfully forced reparations into the public domain, but this has only given rise to a new political discourse on 'moral reparations' designed to shut down the potential for a meaningful discussion on the consequences of slavery. The use of this phrase during Hollande's mandate is a far cry from the kinds of ethical forms of reparative justice suggested during the discussions on the Taubira law, its usage now functioning as quick way to dismiss 'material' reparations as illegitimate. Within this restrictive framework, no space is given to reflect more deeply on what 'material' reparations might look like. Instead, they are deemed 'impossible', immoral, even anti-republican and a risk to social cohesion.[62] Within the hands of the political elite, the important process of remembering slavery has thus become a means to avoid any engagement with addressing its ongoing effects in society today.

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[61] Note, however, that the original project defined by Édouard Glissant in *Mémoires des esclavages: La Fondation d'un centre national pour la mémoires des esclavages et de leurs abolitions* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007) is different from that outlined in the 'Rapport de préfiguration', and has resulted in the withdrawal of the Institut du Tout-Monde from all further planning; 'Mémoire de l'esclavage, devoir d'avenir. Rapport de prefiguration de la Fondation pour la mémoire de l'esclavage, de la traite et de leurs abolitions', March 2017, http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/17-4000191/index.shtml (accessed 11 September 2017).

[62] For example, a public statement issued by the Ministère des Outre-mers stated that, 'La mémoire et la transmission de la mémoire constituent la seule réparation valable à ce crime contre l'humanité. Elle est infiniment plus importante et unificatrice qu'une compensation financière, toujours source de divisions' ; Ministère des outre-mers, 'Journée nationale de commémoration des abolitions de l'esclavage: La mémoire et la transmission de la mémoire, seule réparation valable à ce crime contre l'humanité', 15 May 2013, http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/?journee-nationale-de-commemoration-des-abolitions-de-l-esclavage-la.html (accessed 1 July 2014).

Postgraduate Work in Progress
Métissage and Exile in Kim Lefèvre's Autobiographical Narratives

On 7 April 1989, Franco-Vietnamese writer and translator Kim Lefèvre was invited to speak on Bernard Pivot's influential literary television programme *Apostrophes*, an indication of her rising commercial and critical success in France. In an interview strikingly entitled 'L'Humiliation', Lefèvre spoke candidly about her racial identity:

> quand je suis arrivée en France et que je dis que je suis vietnamienne, les gens me croient tout à fait tout de suite. Alors qu'au Vietnam, si je dis que je suis vietnamienne, on me regarde et on me dit 'non, tu n'es pas vietnamienne, tu es métisse'.[1]

It is this *métissage*, and the forms of exile and estrangement within her own family that her mixed-race, gendered identity provokes, that this article sets out to examine in Lefèvre's two autobiographies: *Métisse blanche* (1989) and her sequel *Retour à la saison des pluies* (1990).[2] The term *métissage* held different connotations across the French empire: as Owen White explains, the term was even used by indigenous peoples themselves in West Africa during the colonial period.[3] Lefèvre's situation, however, is exceptional: the specific socio-political context of colonial Indochina in which her literary surrogate Kim is born and raised means that she has espoused the French thinking which associates *métissage* with inferiority. For Françoise Lionnet and Françoise Vergès, in contrast, *métissage* is a productive model of resistance within the postcolonial context. In this article, I argue that Kim's status does not lend itself to paradigms which exalt the positive potential of *métissage*; rather, it is synonymous with exile and estrangement. This is the first study to analyse how Kim's racial and gendered otherness, rooted in the colonial context, is perpetuated in postcolonial, independent Vietnam. Other analyses tend to focus on only one of Lefèvre's autobiographies. For example, Jack A. Yeager has analysed *métissage* in colonial Indochina in *Métisse blanche*, while Lily V. Chiu has examined the narrator's reconciliation with Vietnam in *Retour*.[4] The novels can function separately, as *Retour* repeats key episodes in Lefèvre's life already described in *Métisse blanche* in sufficient detail to avoid disorientating a reader unacquainted with her life. I demonstrate, however, that a more complete representation of her exile can only be formed when the two texts are read in parallel, because this reading generates new insights into how racial and gendered exile shapes both the colonial era and the postcolonial period. I argue that the two narratives must be read together in order to gain a more complete picture of the complexities of Kim's childhood in Vietnam, and to investigate how her relationship with both Vietnam and France develops throughout her life.

In *Métisse blanche*, Lefèvre describes her sentiments of exile within colonial Vietnam during the 1940s and 1950s. At this time, Vietnam was still ruled as part of the 'Union indochinoise', a colonial expanse created in 1887 through the union of the French colony of Cochinchine — the southern third of Vietnam — with France's protectorates of northern Tonkin and central Annam in Vietnam, and the protectorates of Laos and Cambodia. The narrator Kim, a representation of Lefèvre herself, is an illegitimate girl of mixed French and Vietnamese

[1] Kim Lefèvre, 'L'Humiliation', *Apostrophes*, France 2, 7 April 1989 [my transcript].

[2] Kim Lefèvre, *Métisse blanche: suivi de Retour à la saison des pluies* (Paris: Éditions Phébus, 2008). In the edition used in this article, the texts are published together; *Retour à la saison des pluies* (subsequently referred to as *Retour*) begins on p. 347.

[3] Owen White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa 1895–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 5.

[4] See Jack A. Yeager, 'Blurring the Lines in Vietnamese Fiction in French: Kim Lefèvre's *Métisse blanche*', in *Postcolonial Subjects: Francophone Women Writers*, ed. by Mary Jean Green, Karen Gould, Micheline Rice-Maximin, Keith L. Walker, and Jack A. Yeager (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 210–26; and Lily V. Chiu, 'The Return of the Native: Cultural Nostalgia and Coercive Mimeticism in the Return Narratives of Kim Lefèvre and Anna Moï', *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 19.2 (2008), 93–124.

origin. An embodiment of her mother's betrayal of Vietnam through her illicit relationship with a French army officer, Kim's *métissage* provokes both her internal alienation and her geographic displacements across Vietnam. Rejected before she is even born by her father, she is also temporarily abandoned by her mother, and sent away to a French colonial orphanage when she is six. Her mother considers that there, Kim will receive a French education, a tool of social mobility. The novel charts Kim's traumatic childhood as the family are relocated across Vietnam, escaping from the brutal war of decolonization fought against France between 1946 and 1954. Indeed, so great are her sentiments of alienation that she leaves for Paris in 1960, having won a prestigious scholarship to continue her studies there.

Lefèvre's sequel *Retour* jumps forward thirty years to her return to Vietnam. As the *Apostrophes* interview confirms, Kim feels fully accepted by the French who are not obsessed with racial origins. In the first part of the novel, the adult narrator begins to reacquaint herself with the Asian community in Paris which she has neglected for so long. The second section, depicting Kim's physical return, is much shorter, symbolizing, according to Kate Averis, that the return project is as much about a return to the past as a return to Vietnam.[5] While Kim finally makes peace with her family, she is, however, unable to perceive Vietnam as 'home'. She is a tourist who ultimately will return to her present life in Paris once her journey into the past is complete.

Métissage: **Cross-Cultural Encounters**

In postcolonial discourse, identity is posited as fluid and unstable, always in perpetual transformation as cultures unite across national borders. Although Édouard Glissant acknowledges that all cultural encounters are enriching, he in fact prefers the notion of creolization to *métissage*. While *métissage*, according to Glissant, is 'une rencontre et une synthèse' between two cultures which ultimately converge to form a single culture, creolization is a more dynamic and open process of cultural exchange and difference, a constant *métissage*.[6] Glissant defines 'relation', the final element of his conceptual triad, as 'totalité en mouvement': all cultures and identities are related to each other in absolute totality, equally and simultaneously.[7]

A more positive interpretation of *métissage* is most frequently associated with Lionnet's work. In 'The Politics and Aesthetics of Métissage' (1998), Lionnet considers the racial implications of *métissage* before adopting it as an aesthetic concept and reading practice.[8] Drawing on anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's idea of thought as a form of *bricolage*, Lionnet points out its etymological roots: the term *métis*(*se*) stems from the Latin *mixtus*, and refers to cloth made from different fibres.[9] She explains that the label emerged in the French colonial period and denotes peoples of mixed race, with one French parent and one parent indigenous to the local culture.[10] Lionnet retains this term in French in her work, arguing that there is no neutral English equivalent. Terms such as 'half-breed', 'mixed-blood', and 'mulatto' carry negative connotations because 'they imply biological abnormality and reduce human reproduction to the level of animal breeding'.[11] However, she nonetheless persists in using the term, thereby choosing to overlook these negative colonial implications: the label *métis* carries very specific historical and moral judgments. Roger Toumson focuses on this problematic aspect of *métissage* in *Mythologie du métissage* (1998), in which he traces the colonial mythology surrounding the term.[12] As he notes, in

[5] Kate Averis, 'Neither Here nor There: Linda Lê and Kim Lefèvre's Literary Homecoming', *Women in French Studies*, Special Issue, 'Women in the Middle' (2009), 74–84 (p. 80).
[6] Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p. 46.
[7] Glissant, p. 147.
[8] Françoise Lionnet, 'The Politics and Aesthetics of Métissage', in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison, WI; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 325–36.
[9] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962); and Lionnet, p. 328.
[10] Lionnet, p. 327.
[11] Lionnet, p. 327.
[12] Roger Toumson, *Mythologie du métissage* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998).

the colonial period *métissage* symbolized 'animalité, hybridité, stérilité', and other images associated with 'la dégénérescence physiologique, intellectuelle et morale'.[13] He explains these negative connotations by conceptualizing *métissage* in Freudian terms of totem and taboo. For Freud, the master–slave relationship mirrors that between a father and his child, in which sexual relations are forbidden; sexual relations between a master and his slave, and between members of a group who share the same totem, are also taboo. The *métis* born from such a relationship becomes 'un mélange d'attraction et de répulsion'.[14] Indeed, in colonial Indochina, most mixed-race peoples were born from a subservient relationship between white French males in a position of power and indigenous women. These anxieties surrounding the term remain deeply embedded within the consciousness of formerly colonized communities. It is problematic, therefore, to associate *métissage* with an empowering and enriching cultural exchange for these groups without any consideration of specific historical contexts.

Vergès, meanwhile, examines the *métis* figure in the French colonial period on her native island of Réunion. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, she charts the history of the term from its first introduction into the French vocabulary in the thirteenth century.[15] Her historical contextualization seems to contradict Lionnet's assertion that the label originated in the French colonial era. Vergès is aware of some of the problems of *métissage* in contemporary cultural studies — she notes that Turkish writer Yachar Kemal criticizes the untranslatability of the term and prefers the concept of 'grafting' which demonstrates how cultures have 'impregnated each other', while Cuban essayist Antonio Benítez-Rojo equates *métissage* with 'reduction' and 'synthesis'.[16] Vergès is also sceptical about the positive 'marketing' of hybrid cultures which are presented as mysterious and exotic, and available for consumption by a largely white audience. In 'Post-Scriptum' (2002), she argues that urban centres are advertised and promoted in terms of their hybridity, which is celebrated as a marker of the contemporary transnational world that is no longer divided by race, class, or ethnicity. She comments scathingly that 'one cannot spend a week in Paris without being reminded of the high value of hybridity and *métissage* [*sic*]': yet there is an evident gap between marketing and social realities for the groups being depicted.[17] Vergès chooses to employ the concept, however, because of its historical importance within the French empire, and because, she claims, it was appropriated by colonized peoples themselves as a form of resistance.[18]

Conceptualizing mixed-race identities as *métissage* is, then, fraught with tensions. Many postcolonial writers and critics have tended to overuse concepts such as hybridity, *métissage*, and transculturality, while only referring to the realities and privileges of those adopting these terms themselves. It must be stressed, however, that *métissage* focuses on duality rather than multiplicity, and implicitly carries colonial undertones of impurity and abnormality. Moreover, the rift between academic discourses of identity politics and the realities of everyday experiences means that the individuals who suffer from their status as *métis* are often overlooked, in favour of those who view mixed-race identities as a source of cultural and political enrichment. Lefèvre's autobiographical writing offers a counter-argument, by nuancing the views of critics whose understanding of the concept is predicated on the belief of it being one of inherent contestation and resistance, with an altogether more complex, and deeply troubled, lived experience of being mixed race.

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[13] Toumson, p. 94.

[14] Toumson, p. 106.

[15] Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 28–29.

[16] Yachar Kemal, 'Entretien avec Altan Gökalp', *Le Monde*, 13 July 1993, p. 2; and Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, trans. by James E. Maraniss (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), p. 126.

[17] Françoise Vergès, 'Post-Scriptum', in *Relocating Postcolonialism*, ed. by David Theo Goldberg and Ato Quayson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 349–58 (pp. 356–57).

[18] Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries*, p. 9.

Lefèvre as Counter-Model of *Métissage: Métisse Blanche*

Although Lionnet maintains that the term *métis* does not contain any adverse biological or sexual implications, in Lefèvre's writing it is a loaded term which signals inferiority.[19] Kim's French blood is figured as a symbol of her mother's transgression of Vietnamese social norms by pursuing a sexual relationship with a French officer, and thereby colluding with the colonial enemy: 'on mettait tout ce qui était mauvais en moi sur le compte du sang français qui circulait dans mes veines'.[20] As this quotation indicates, society in colonial Indochina was deeply marked by race, and any character traits seen as negative are regarded as French. While the French scorned mixed-race individuals because they posed a threat to the purity of the French race, the Vietnamese population regarded them as a useful scapegoat who could be blamed for the inequalities of colonial society. Kim dreams about having an accident which would drain her of her French blood. She feels Vietnamese, even though legally, she is French, after a decree published on 8 November 1928 granted French citizenship to *métis* children in Indochina who had been abandoned by their French father.[21] Yet she despises France because it represents her own father, whose name she does not even know until she is an adult, when her mother writes to her from Vietnam.

Kim's childhood is characterized by abandonment and displacement. Unable to look after Kim herself, and afraid of her volatile Chinese husband, her mother sends her to a French orphanage in Hanoi, because, as she is told by her husband, 'le futur Vietnam indépendant n'aurait pas besoin de ces enfants bâtards'.[22] It was common practice for the French colonial government to persuade families to entrust *métis* children to the state: boys would be useful as civil servants, while girls would receive preparation for their future maternal role. It is Kim's family, though, who wish to rid themselves of the burden of looking after her, further demonstrating her subordinate position within her family. At the orphanage, she is forced to shed her Vietnamese identity and embrace a new French identity: she is given the French name 'Éliane Tiffon', and is required to speak exclusively in French. Rather than feeling comforted by living among other young *métisses*, she feels bewildered, because she does not self-identify as a mixed-race individual, but, rather, as Vietnamese.

The narrator becomes even more confused about her national affiliation when she learns about the possibility of being sent to France to escape the threat of war. Here, Lefèvre plays on the notion of 'la mère patrie', which linguistically combines the maternal symbolization of France with the *father*land. Kim is instructed by her teachers to conceive of France as her 'mère nourricière', whose duty it is to defend and protect its citizens across the empire; yet for her, France is a distant and hostile country about which she has no knowledge.[23] As Yeager comments, 'the narrator associates Viet Nam with her mother, France with her father'; it thus seems counter-intuitive for her to associate the colonial power with a maternal, protective role, because for Kim, Vietnam has a duty to act as a mother figure and educate her, rather than France.[24] Young Kim, therefore, does not subscribe to colonial ideology, and seek the kind of identity promoted by the 'mission civilisatrice'. Although some girls are sent to the metropole, the narrator is eventually reunited with her mother, and remains in Vietnam.

Kim later experiences exile as a form of imprisonment when the family move to her mother's native village of Van Xa, south east of Hanoi. One day, the communist Viet Minh army arrive in the village, seeking revenge for the massacres carried out by the French. Her mother is afraid for Kim's safety, and hides her in a large earthenware jar used to collect rainwater. Kim is

[19] Lionnet, p. 328.
[20] *Métisse blanche*, p. 20.
[21] Emmanuelle Saada, *Les Enfants de la colonie: Les métis de l'Empire français entre sujétion et citoyenneté* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2007), p. 13.
[22] *Métisse blanche*, p. 45.
[23] *Métisse blanche*, p. 67.
[24] *Métisse blanche*, p. 67.

'morte de peur', and presumes that her mother has abandoned her once again.[25] As Nathalie Nguyen remarks, 'the jar, in times of peace an ordinary household item, became a place of refuge but also a prison'.[26] While the mother's intentions to protect her daughter are commendable, she is in fact propagating the dominant colonial ideology: being of mixed-blood is something to be concealed, not embraced. This is an emotion shared by Kim's stepfather, who subscribes to the colonial ideology which equates *métissage* with sterility, deviance, and illegitimacy. He simply ignores her presence; even when Kim steals money from him in a bid to gain his attention, he 'posa sur [elle] un regard qui exprimait tout le dégoût qu'il éprouvait pour [s]a race bâtarde', and then orders his own children to avoid all contact with her.[27]

Lefèvre skilfully intersects issues surrounding *métissage* with wider gender debates in traditional Vietnamese society. When Kim is fifteen, she has an affair with an older married man, Duc. She is emotionally manipulated by this man who, as her choir-master, holds a position of authority. Realizing he has upset her after teasing her about her racial difference, he quickly explains that he is attracted to her precisely because she is not completely Vietnamese: 'quand je te regarde, tu m'es à la fois familière et étrangère. Et j'aime ça'.[28] While Duc is not scornful of her heritage, like her stepfather, he too is unable to see past her racial difference. This bodily objectification and exoticization is undoubtedly as damaging to the narrator as her rejection: she is reduced to her biological racial components and denied an individual subjectivity.

Kim's mother is also obsessed with her daughter's racial heritage. She enrols Kim in the French education system, separating her from her half-siblings who continue to attend schools designed by the French for the Vietnamese population because they are not of French descent. In fact, the children do not even attend school until they are teenagers because, according to Kim's stepfather, a bastion of patriarchal society, 'la place d'une fille était à la cuisine'.[29] Kim is reluctant to attend a school run by people with whom she cannot identify at all. On seeing the uniform her mother has made for her, she screams that she 'préférerai[t] mille fois rester annamite et ignorante' than wear a French-styled uniform.[30] Problematically, her mother has taught her to associate Frenchness with intelligence, and Vietnamese identity with ignorance; yet as a child, Kim resists the denigration of her maternal culture.

Métisse blanche concludes with Kim's permanent departure to Paris to continue her studies, after attending the prestigious Couvent des Oiseaux in Dalat. Reminiscing about her past with her family before she leaves, her mother predicts that her daughter will never return to Vietnam, because she will finally feel at home within her own community in France. Perplexed by this, Kim asks 'mais de quelle race suis-je donc?'.[31] She continues to be haunted by her mixed-race identity, because it prevents her from belonging to Vietnamese society.

Return and Reconciliation

> Les dés sont jetés, j'ai enfin pris la décision de retourner au Vietnam. Après trente ans d'absence.
> Trente ans, c'est une mesure, une quantité. Mais pour moi, c'est une plage qui s'étend entre mes vingt ans et aujourd'hui.
> C'est une vie.
> Ma vie.[32]

[25] *Métisse blanche*, p. 88.
[26] Nathalie Nguyen, 'Landscapes of War: Traumascapes in the Works of Kim Lefèvre and Phan Huy Duong', in *Land and Landscape in Francographic Literature: Remapping Uncertain Territories*, ed. by Magali Compan and Katarzyna Pieprzak (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 88–103 (p. 92).
[27] *Métisse blanche*, p. 108.
[28] *Métisse blanche*, p. 218.
[29] *Métisse blanche*, p. 169.
[30] *Métisse blanche*, p. 152.
[31] *Métisse blanche*, p. 343.
[32] *Retour*, p. 355.

Retour opens with this evocative reflection on the narrator's long absence from Vietnam. The above passage is peppered with six short, disjointed phrases, which convey the rupture of exile on her life. She then compares her life in Vietnam to 'un long fleuve dont l'amont serait si éloigné qu'il me paraît à présent enveloppé de brume', so hazy is the memory of her past.[33] Yeager examines Lefèvre's use of water imagery throughout her texts, noting that 'in Southeast Asia water connects land masses and facilitates communication', and suggests that the memory of water connects Kim to her family even when she is apart from them, particularly given the reference to water in *Retour*'s title.[34] Yet in the above passage, water is not a unifying image. The reference to a 'long fleuve', coupled with the negative adjective 'éloigné', suggests that the narrator feels extremely far removed from Vietnam, her own source. Furthermore, the mystic image of the source of the river shrouded by 'brume' indicates that while Vietnam reluctantly remains a cornerstone of her identity, she does not look favourably on her memories of Vietnamese life. In fact, as Lefèvre later explains, Vietnam '[lui] a rendu la vie intenable au point de le quitter'.[35]

To protect herself from this traumatic past, Kim separates herself entirely from everything associated with Vietnam. Ching Selao reads Kim's self-imposed exile as a reaction against the rejection she suffered due to her racial 'impurity'. Drawing on the references to blood which are so prevalent in both narratives, Selao argues that Kim wants to protect herself from 'une "contamination identitaire"', for which she was punished in Vietnam.[36] Retaining this imagery of the body, Selao then uses the metaphor of skin to describe the narrator's anxieties about her identity, arguing that Kim wants to 'changer de peau' when she arrives in France in order to efface her Vietnamese identity entirely.[37] This idiom suggests a desire on Kim's part to shed her old identity permanently and adopt new attitudes and behaviours. While Kim declares that her French 'seconde peau' is 'plus dure et plus résistante' than her Vietnamese identity, Selao describes it as extremely fragile: 'ainsi, l'identité, qui se forme par identification avec les gens de la société d'accueil, n'est qu'une illusion dont l'assurance peut, à tout moment, être ébranlée'.[38] Through this metaphor, Selao implies that the narrator's French identity is less fixed and stable than she claims in *Retour*, an assertion which supports my own reading of the ambiguities of Kim's position.

Kim's spatial and psychological distance from Vietnam could also be interpreted as a punishment which she chooses to inflict on all those who shunned her because of her racial difference. She remarks that she does not want to reconnect with 'ceux qui avaient partagé [s]a vie jadis', and had treated her so badly during her childhood in Vietnam.[39] As Eva Tsuquiashi-Daddesio argues, although these thirty years are not given much textual space in *Retour*, they represent 'une période idéologique plus complexe' than the other two spatio-temporal dimensions (her childhood in Vietnam, and her present life in France), because they involve a negotiation between her Vietnamese past and her French present.[40]

During this time, Kim intentionally avoids all contact with her family and with Vietnamese life in Paris. She never ventures into the thirteenth *arrondissement*, a district with a growing Vietnamese community due to the mass arrival of the 'boat people', when almost one-and-a-half million Vietnamese refugees fled by boat to Europe in the aftermath of the Vietnam

[33] *Retour*, p. 355.
[34] Jack A. Yeager, 'Kim Lefèvre's *Retour à la saison des pluies*: Rediscovering the Landscapes of Children', *L'Esprit créateur,* 33.2 (1993), 47–57 (p. 53).
[35] *Retour*, p. 357.
[36] Ching Selao, 'Deuils et migrations identitaires dans les romans de Kim Lefèvre et Linda Lê', in *Problématiques identitaires et discours de l'exil dans les littératures francophones*', ed. by Anissa Talahite-Moodley (Ottowa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2007), pp. 275–97 (p. 280).
[37] Selao, p. 280.
[38] *Retour*, p. 433; and Selao, p. 280.
[39] *Retour*, p. 358.
[40] Eva Tsuquiashi-Daddesio, 'L'Empire maternel et colonial chez Kim Lefèvre', *Synergies Afrique Australe*, 1 (2005), 47–53 (p. 49).

War.[41] In order to be accepted in France, then, it emerges that Kim must remain estranged from both Vietnamese culture and her family. Problematically, though, she believes her integration into French society to be successful. Towards the end of *Métisse blanche* — and in a disruption of narrative time — the narrator comments on how willingly France, unlike Vietnam, has welcomed her: 'car ce que le Vietnam m'avait refusé, la France me l'a accordé: elle m'a reçue et acceptée'.[42] However, she seems unaware that she has paid a heavy price for this acceptance in France. She has negated her Vietnamese identity and cut herself off entirely from her family and the Vietnamese diasporic community in order to integrate into Parisian life. France does not accept her as a *métisse*, but as French: the only way she has been successful in France is by conceiving of herself as two different people, 'vietnamienne pendant [s]on enfance, française par la suite'.[43] She still feels she has no other option but to prioritize one element of her identity over the other. In Vietnam, she was required to conceal her French identity. In France, even though her French identity is not imposed on her by legal or social frameworks, she believes she must eradicate her Vietnamese identity in order to belong there. Equating the narrator's *métissage* with exile offers new perspectives on her life in France. Averis claims that *Retour* 'affirms [Kim's] new rootedness in France', the country she now considers her home.[44] It is troubling, however, to propose that Kim can feel rooted in France only through a model which requires her to neglect one side of her identity and cut herself off from Vietnam, no matter how badly she may have been treated there. In fact, Kim's increasing desire to rediscover significant locations of her childhood in Vietnam suggests the eruption of a latent, repressed need to reconnect with the country, implying that her French identity is less stable than she had perhaps assumed.

The publication of *Métisse blanche*, and the media attention provoked by literary success, accentuates Kim's desire to reconnect with Vietnam. In the second section of *Retour*, the setting moves to Vietnam, where Kim seeks to rebuild her broken relationship with her family and with her native land. She is struck by guilt: guilt for abandoning her family, but also for leading a comfortable life in France. This chasm is symbolized by her gifts for her family: her mother treasures the French cheese 'comme s'il s'agissait d'un bijou précieux', explaining that she has not eaten any since the reunification of the country in 1975, because communist Vietnam had been isolated from the rest of the world.[45] The narrator is rapidly made aware of the privilege she has experienced in France, and how her diasporic existence has permanently altered her relationship with her family: 'je prends brutalement conscience que je suis la plus grande en taille, la mieux habillée, la mieux nourrie'.[46] She feels like a stranger among her own family, and is ashamed of her economic privilege. By assimilating into French society and abandoning her Vietnamese identity, she has improved the material conditions of her life. Her success has been achieved at a cost, though, because it has increased the already-significant gulf between herself and her family.

Kim then revisits important locations of her childhood, such as the tranquil Couvent des Oiseaux in Dalat. Once a prestigious French colonial school, it is now a state-run university which has been neglected by the government. The lush garden is spoilt by the presence of small shacks, and Kim describes the area as a 'camp de réfugiés', a problematic description because this hyperbolic and insensitive phrase implies a level of desperate poverty going beyond the situation with which she is faced.[47] Neglecting to consider the social progress instigated by the Vietnamese government, Kim focuses exclusively on the negative transformations that the country has undergone. Vietnam is now independent, but the narrator remains trapped within this colonial mindset which pits France against Vietnam. She appears to subscribe to the idea

[41] Chloé Szulzinger, *Les Femmes dans l'immigration vietnamienne en France: de 1950 à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 2009), p. 21.
[42] *Métisse blanche*, p. 342.
[43] *Retour*, p. 435.
[44] Averis, p. 79.
[45] *Retour*, p. 456.
[46] *Retour*, p. 463.
[47] *Retour*, p. 497.

that any French *mise en valeur*, or the economic, moral, and cultural development, of the country has been undone in the wake of the French departure in 1954.[48]

If we return to the interview on *Apostrophes*, it seems that while in her public appearances, Lefèvre declares that she has accepted her Franco-Vietnamese identity, these sentiments of optimism are not matched by her literary *œuvre*. In her writing, she describes how as a child Kim is shunted across Vietnam; she then severs all ties with her family; and even when she finally returns to Vietnam, her relationship with her family is strained. By examining the issues associated with mixed-race identities across both of Lefèvre's texts, this article adds to critical discussions which nuance our understanding of *métissage* as a concept of inherent contestation and resistance. While for Vergès and Lionnet, *métissage* is a positive model of identity, for Kim it renders her life more complicated, because it is rooted in colonial thinking about mixed-race identities. In fact, the disconnection she experiences as a result of her racial difference seems more closely associated with the paradigm of exile, rather than with *métissage* as a form of resistance. Whereas her grandmother suggests to her that she is 'un alliage, ni or ni argent',[49] Kim is never able to embrace her *métisse* identity as a kind of blend, or alloy, but rather appears condemned to experience it as the impossible collision of two incompatible cultures, and the cause of separation, anxiety and exile.

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[48] For a detailed account of the propagandist value of the *mise en valeur* policy, see Nicola Cooper, *France in Indochina: Colonial Encounters* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 29–42.
[49] *Métisse blanche*, p. 39.

BOOK REVIEWS

Algeria Revisited: History, Culture and Identity. Edited by RABAH AISSAOUI and CLAIRE ELDRIDGE. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. 266 pp. Pb. £26.35. ISBN: 9781474221030

In the light of the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence, Eldridge and Aissaoui conceived of a volume that is not only timely but genuinely engaging. Divided into three sections, it offers a range of disciplinary perspectives on Algeria's history and its fraught entanglements with France. The focused, scholarly introduction to the volume establishes the intellectual frame and primary theme: the continuing need to understand the legacies of Algeria's war of independence. The first section is composed of contributions that offer historical insights into colonial Algeria in the opening decades of the twentieth century. The three chapters complement and augment each other and at the core of each is careful archival research. Samuel Kalman's chapter on banditry in the Constantinois region of eastern Algeria notes that it was, in part, a political response to conscription and to the French colonial system in general. Extreme repressive measures taken by the Prefect and army in the wake of riots that occurred in MacMahon (Aïn-Touta) in 1916 included 'aerial bombardments, *razzias* (raids) against rebel *mechtas*, and crop destruction' (p. 31), reminding us of forms of colonial violence that stretched from the nineteenth century to that same region in May 1945. And if the repressive violence of 1945 was taken by many as a prompt for the war of independence (1954–62), the two other chapters recall the political initiatives that demonstrated a desire to gain recognition through non-violent political channels. Michelle Mann and Rabah Aissaoui offer different approaches to the Young Algerian movement that emerged amongst the French-educated Muslim elites. Mann examines the response of the Young Algerian movement to the Muslim Draft, first announced in 1912, and Aissaoui's absorbing analysis focuses on the role of Emir Khaled, grandson of Emir Abd el-Kader. He and the Young Algerians, argues Mann, occupied a 'marginal political space where national possibilities were been imagined within the constraints of a colonial order that consistently suppressed alternative voices and dissent' (p. 71). And Arthur Asseraf offers a fascinating insight into the Algerians elected to the French Assemblée Nationale in 1958 and evicted by an *ordonnance* in 1962.

Part Two, on identity construction and contestation, offers five chapters on cultural production. The first three deal with literature and the final two are on cinema. Blandine Valfort reminds us that while Jean Sénac's name is often cited, his work is largely neglected. Not only does Valfort's chapter make Sénac a compelling subject but her focus on his relationship to language (his regret not to have mastered Arabic) resonates with Rachida Yassine's examination of Assia Djebar's intense engagement with the language of the colonizer in *L'Amour, la fantasia*. If the ground she covers is familiar to scholars of Djebar, Yassine's treatment is scholarly and nuanced and works well as a thematic link between the earlier chapter on Sénac and the following chapter on Maïssa Bey written by Samira Farhoud and Carey Watt. These three chapters make the convincing case that the 'act of writing, whether in the form of *écriture féminine* or homosexual writing, attempts to reinvent itself beyond such [binary] limits and to escape fixed identities in order to create an intercultural dialogue' (p. 113). The shift to cinema in the final two chapters of this section offers two very different approaches to understanding Algeria through cultural production. Patricia Caillé's review of Algerian cinematic production and the ways in which it has been read, and possibly distorted, by ideological viewpoints, asks us to reflect on what we understand by 'Algerian Cinema'. She ends with a paradox 'Algerian cinema constructed from the standpoint of an elitist French film culture centred on a community of film-makers has *de facto* done away with the abstract project national cinema was meant to serve' (p. 168). Where Caillé looks at the category and its ideological constructions, Sophie Bélot offers a speculative, close reading of *The Battle of Algiers*. There's always a risk in this — not everyone will agree that

the scene where the FLN women prepare themselves to plant the bombs in the European quarter brings 'ritualistic trance dances' (p. 179) to mind — yet the chapter is welcome in making us draw upon theory (Jacques Derrida's writings on the secret) to rethink Algeria. The risk is worth taking, Bélot makes us think.

Part Three, 'Remembering Algeria', brings the triptych to a conclusion with two very strong chapters. In their respective chapters, Jennifer E. Sessions and Claire Eldridge focus on the memory of the *Pied-noir* community. Sessions provides a riveting account of relocation of the statue of the Duc d'Orléans from Algiers to a small traffic circle in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine and does so within the broader context of postcolonial commemoration as it intertwines with local and national French politics as well as urban politics and liberal regionalism in the 1970s. Eldridge's chapter perfectly complements that of Sessions. It is a rigorous examination of the evolution of memory activism within the *Pied-noir* community focusing on its response to the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence and tracking its waning influence and declining numbers. The conclusion of the book stands on its own. Here, James McDougall examines the relationship between culture and politics in Algeria between 1967 and 1981, brilliantly arguing that the suppression of open political dissent in newly independent Algeria resulted in political struggles being played out upon a contested cultural terrain. This was given particular expression in the state's attempt to co-opt religion into its nation-building programme. McDougall writes that 'socialist progress was informed and legitimized by the state's appropriation of strategic resources in the cultural field: the definition and promotion of Islam and of Muslim values' (p. 240). It was a policy that came back to haunt the state in the 1990s producing exclusionary forms of identity and the horrific violence of the 'black decade'.

The judiciously selected and juxtaposed chapters in this compelling collection offer real insights into moments of Algerian history and culture across more than a century and in doing so offer a variety of approaches to how we might think of Algeria 50 years after independence. Scrupulously edited, the volume contains chapters that make a genuine contribution to the field of Algerian studies (and memory studies more generally) and it offers itself as a perfect companion to Patricia M. E. Lorcin's 2006 volume *Algeria and France, 1800–2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*. Both are essential reading.

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Spaces of Creation: Transculturality and Feminine Expression in Francophone Literature. By ALISON CONNOLLY. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2016. 150 pp. Hb $80.00. ISBN: 9781498539364

Alison Connolly's book sets out to explore the relationship between women's writing of mother–daughter relationships and transculturality. The study draws on a selection of well-known texts by Francophone writers in order to demonstrate the development of mother–daughter relationships when placed in a transcultural context. Connolly opens by bringing together theories of *créolité* elaborated by Édouard Glissant, explorations of the development of a 'feminine' creoleness in the work of Maryse Condé, and Wolfgang Welsch's discussion of transculturality as the fact of undergoing transition in one's cultural identity without attempting to emulate another cultural identity. The study identifies important research questions — notably that of how notions of transculturality might need to adapt or develop to accommodate the specific circumstances of women. Connolly also highlights the problem whereby transculturality fails to account for the deeply hierarchical relationships between cultures that tend to result from

multiple contemporary forms of displacement, though one could argue that transculturality does not purport to nor set out to resolve this.

The first chapter of Connolly's text is a theoretical discussion working through notions of *créolité*, of women's writing, of transculturality and of postcoloniality. Her analysis goes on to weave between novels by Ying Chen, André and Simone Schwarz Bart, Gisèle Pineau, Abla Farhoud, Malika Mokeddem and Assia Djebar, all groundbreaking writers from across the Francophonie, in order to elaborate on the interrelationship between women and transculturality. The second chapter discusses the role of cultural context in influencing the emergence of women's voices. According to Connolly, transculturality has a crucial impact on women's expression. Her study explores how displacement, exile, absence, loss and death are recurrent factors in mother–daughter relations across transcultural spaces. The third chapter focuses on the specific environment inhabited by the feminine protagonists in the works under discussion. Complemented by a discussion of ecocriticism, the chapter considers how the natural world is frequently allied to women's self-expression, as well as how both earthly and otherworldly spaces facilitate or stifle expression. The final chapter builds on Connolly's discussion of the afterlife in the previous chapter to elaborate on death as central to women's self-expression, notably demonstrating how different modes of mourning influence mother–daughter relationships, and how writing permits the endurance of women's voices beyond the grave.

The work's greatest strength is its attentiveness to the role of ageing and death in the emergence of transcultural expression. Connolly posits this thematic from the opening pages of the study, with her initial focus on the character of Mariotte in the Schwarz-Bart's *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes* (Editions du Seuil, 1967). The study is less convincing in its negotiation of the multiple theoretical frameworks it sets out to explore. While Connolly raises crucial questions surrounding the interaction between these various frameworks of understanding, further clarity would have been helpful in aligning the theoretical notions she integrates with the specific topic of mother–daughter relationships. At times, then, the link between transculturality, women's expression, and mother–daughter relationships is not clearly outlined. Closer reflection on the merits or redemptive potential of self-expression, or lack thereof, would have been interesting, since these seem to go without saying. Connolly's conclusion evaluates the trajectory that led her to write her book, as opposed to returning to the highly valuable research questions raised throughout the study. The reader is therefore left somewhat uncertain as to the author's overarching argument. That said, the study provides an excellent springboard from which to reflect upon the questions raised.

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La Fabrique des classiques africains: Ecrivains d'Afrique subsaharienne francophone (1960–2012). By CLAIRE DUCOURNAU. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2017. 444 pp. Pb 27€. ISBN: 9782271081582

Since Alain Mabanckou's assumption of the first artistic chair at the Collège de France in 2015–16, the time seems ripe for some reflection on the dynamics of consecration in and around African literature written in French. Claire Ducournau's *La fabrique des classiques africains: Ecrivains d'Afrique subsaharienne francophone (1960–2012)* offers a comprehensive and persuasive account of recent decades. The subtitle here is only slightly misleading: the major focus of the book is actually from 1983 to 2008, a period beginning with Senghor's election at the Académie française and ending with the *littérature-monde* manifesto. (A reader interested in dynamics before 1983 can consult Ruth Bush's recent *Publishing Africa in French*, which serves as a helpful companion study.) Drawing on sociological, ethnographic, and archival research, Ducournau focuses here on two

main 'protagonists' in the production of African classics: cultural intermediaries (prizes, literary magazines, agents, editors, festivals) and the writers themselves. A substantial prologue explores the *littérature-monde* manifesto. Part One looks at institutions of legitimation, focusing on prizes and literary magazines while Part Two offers a data-driven sociological study of African writers working in French between 1983 and 2008. During this timeframe, Ducournau identifies a number of tendencies that characterize recent African literature in French: the rise of the novel at the expense of poetry; the emergence of more female authors onto the scene; the rise in authors basing themselves outside of Africa; and the increasing professionalization of media-savvy authors. Shifting between her two protagonists, Ducournau demonstrates how a sociological approach yields insights into the resources and constraints that permit African writers working in French to accede to literary consecration.

As this sketch indicates, this study inscribes itself in a long lineage of sociological work on literature in the tradition of Bourdieu. By examining the encounter between the space of artistic possibilities (field) and the background of a given cultural agent (habitus), this approach can offer powerful accounts of unsuspected currents shaping literary production. But work in this tradition can also sometimes be guilty of a certain critical overconfidence, bulldozing past its own limitations and offering totalizing perspectives on its objects of study. The risks of this are acute in the case of African literature in French. How ought one to work with Bourdieu's concept of a literary field, which presumes a certain amount of consolidation and relative artistic autonomy, where these qualities are in relatively short supply? And how ought one to study habitus on a continental scale? Fortunately, Ducournau is well aware of these challenges and one of the great strengths of this book is its theoretical flexibility. Ducournau adapts rather than applies a Bourdieusian approach. Instead of a 'field', for example, Ducournau sensibly frames her analysis around the concept of an African 'literary space'. This affords her greater methodological creativity and the ability to attend to contingency and variation, while nonetheless conserving an investment in empirically documenting the constraints and possibilities that condition artistic production.

The result is a survey with remarkable temporal and geographic sweep that offers some convincing reappraisals of major phenomena in recent African writing in French. For example, Ducournau's reading of the *littérature-monde* manifesto elegantly unpacks this intervention. Ducournau combs through the editorial affiliations of the signatories to show that, despite the manifesto's loud proclamation that 'le centre [...] n'est plus le centre', many of its signatories were already consecrated or on the way to being so by the French literary establishment, above all by Gallimard. Ducournau combines this research with an ethnography of the 'Étonnants-Voyageurs' festival in Bamako that helped launch the manifesto. There she uncovers simmering discontent among local Malian authors who were alienated from the festival itself and not invited to sign. Rather than 'unmasking' the manifesto, Ducournau invites us to think about the range of forces at play and to situate it in the larger and unfolding history of African literature written in French. The book's chapter on the 'Grand Prix littéraire de l'Afrique noire' is another original and perceptive contribution. Ducournau traces the prize's origins from the era of *littérature coloniale* through the present day, raising questions about its role in the consolidation of a canon of African literature in French. Her later chapters on the cohort of writers in the 1980s and 90s are fascinating: switching between an analysis of a database of about 400 writers and discussions of the trajectories of individual authors such as Alain Mabanckou and Fatou Diome, Ducournau traces the major developments of this era. As compelling as many of the chapters are, sometimes the conclusions they work toward are a little less surprising. For example, it is helpful to see the biases of French literary magazines documented with unimpeachable precision, but the conclusions Ducournau reaches are unlikely to shock anyone familiar with such institutions. The book also occasionally suffers from a daunting ratio of data to argument. On the whole, though, its commitment to thorough exposition is more of an asset than a liability.

Reflecting on the stakes of her study, Ducournau contends that by investigating the relationship between a given author's trajectory and the possibilities and constraints of a literary

space we can 'enrich our understanding' both of that author's project, but also of the stylistic and technical features of the works themselves (p. 392). The book largely backs up the first part of this claim, by offering a wide-ranging panorama of the dynamics that shape contemporary Francophone African writing. But the second half of the suggestion — that sociological analysis might also open up possibilities for readings of individual texts — is more hinted at than consistently pursued. This is unfortunate, because Ducournau's forays into closer analysis of literary texts or para-texts are often revelatory, although fleeting: a comparison of the styles of Kourouma and Hampâté Bâ is insightful; an account of how the word *brousse* came to be part of the title of Monénembo's first novel makes for a brilliant framing anecdote. Over the course of reading this substantial study, one wishes for perhaps a few more sustained attempts to link a cartography of literary space with more granular readings of language, style, or form. But even if a multiscalar optic is more gestured toward than extensively pursued, Ducournau's wide-angle analysis of the play of forces, resources and institutions that shape African writing in French generously opens the door for a variety of new critical engagements and will invite further discussion for years to come.

TOBIAS WARNER
UC DAVIS

From Empire to Exile: History and Memory within the Pied-noir and Harki Communities, 1962–2012. By CLAIRE ELDRIDGE. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. 337 pp. Hb £75.00. ISBN: 9780719087233

The phenomenon of 'memory wars' in France in recent years has involved disputes over commemoration of the legacies of the Algeria's war of independence and decolonization. Major flashpoints such as the controversial 2005 law that sought to promote French colonialism in Algeria as a positive endeavour have also brought to wider attention the disputes between groups seeking recognition from the French state and a prominent position in the public sphere. In this engaging and original study, Claire Eldridge outlines the deep roots of postcolonial memory conflicts and traces developments in France concerning a range of actors connected to the Algerian War in the five decades since its end. In doing so, she challenges the conventional periodization of a war that was forgotten in France until the collective breaking of silence in the 1990s. Eldridge focuses on two populations shaped by the fallout from Algerian independence and experiences of resettlement in France: *Pieds-noirs* (former European colonial settlers) and *harkis* (Algerians who served as auxiliaries in the French military forces). In addition to the discussion of periodization of remembrance of the war in France, Eldridge's introduction provides a useful and wide-ranging survey of theories of collective memory before turning to outline her approach to studying memory in the public domain. In assessing the contrasting forms of representation and relations to the French state among *Pieds-noirs* and *harkis*, Eldridge draws on a wide range of media and vectors of transmission of memory.

In the first half of the study, covering the years following the conflict, alternation between the two populations highlights contrasting relations with the French state and forms of representation. For the *Pieds-noirs*, as Eldridge outlines, the development of a distinct community in France with specific interests was founded on a condition of exile. On the basis of successful economic integration and the achievement of reparations, community associations representing *Pied-noir* interests turned to the pursuit of a cultural agenda and claims to protection of a community heritage. It was in the absence of official French recognition or discussion of the conflict, moreover, that Eldridge traces ways in which associations developed a narrative of victimization of former settlers and supported the development of memory activism. In contrast

to the prominence achieved by representatives of former settlers, the profile in France of *harkis* as a group characterized by silence was informed by a lack of associations and the absence of social frameworks of memory. Consistent with her interest in the connections and interactions between communities, Eldridge is particularly strong on the ways in which *Pied-noir* activists both spoke on behalf of *harkis* and co-opted their experiences to further their own claims. The subsequent emergence of independent *harki* memory activism resulting from a generational shift and a desire for clearer recognition therefore also involved a shift in relations with other communities of memory and the French state.

In the second half of her study, covering the period from the 'memory boom' of the 1990s up to the fifitieth anniversary of Algerian independence in 2012, Eldridge assesses the further developments of memory activism for both communities in the context of an ever-greater level of competition for prominence in the public sphere. Where the growth of official French recognition of the Algerian War since the Chirac presidency has seen advances in commemoration in the public space, Elridge also analyzes the changing strategies employed by representatives of *Pieds-noirs* and *harkis*. For *Pied-noir* activism, greater competition contributed to a hardening of political attitudes and a turn to a defence of community interests against the claims of other groups. At the same time, the growth in prominence of *harki* memory resulted from new forms of advocacy and representations of experiences, particularly focused on the administrative system and the peripheral locations to which they were confined. In the final two chapters of the study, Eldridge presents a detailed and nuanced assessment of contemporary conflicts of memory and the battle-grounds on which disputes take place. In particular, the upping of the stakes of memory activism through the pursuit of judicial actions has increasingly had the effect of putting the French state in the role of arbiter of claims to victimization. It is ultimately the prevalence of multiple, competing claims to recognition that leaves details of the Algerian War unfinished in France and lacking in any definitive settlement for a plurality of memories.

Overall, Eldridge's study provides consistently thorough and insightful analysis of the underlying factors that shape disputes in France over the commemoration of colonial past and the consequences of the Algerian War. Her study offers a compelling guide to a bitterly contested memorial landscape in contemporary France and the persistently tense conditions of interaction between the state and a range of competing interest groups.

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Rwanda Genocide Stories: Fiction After 1994. By NICKI HITCHCOTT. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015. 229 pp. Hb £80.00. ISBN: 9781781381946

Insightful, thoroughly researched, and exceptionally engaging, Nicki Hitchcott's *Rwanda Genocide Stories* examines the relationship between position and perspective in fiction written about Rwanda's genocide of 1994. This often interdisciplinary study emphasizes the work of Rwandan authors such as Gilbert Gatore and Scholastique Mukasonga who, as Hitchcott notes, have often been overlooked by international theorists. Reading their fictional texts alongside those produced by the primarily non-Rwandan Fest'Africa writers tasked with visiting Rwanda and writing about the genocide, Hitchcott organizes her book to investigate how tourists, witnesses, survivors, victims, and perpetrators are represented in genocide fiction (although, as Hitchcott frequently acknowledges, these subject positions are inherently unfixed). While arguing that fiction has an important role to play in the processes of commemoration and post-genocide healing, *Rwanda Genocide Stories* considers the questions that authors and readers must ask themselves upon

writing, and encountering, literary responses to Rwanda's genocide.

Following a first chapter that comprehensively outlines both the relatively scant history of Rwandan fiction pre-1994, and the current, tentatively emerging culture of fictional writing and reading, is 'Tourists'. In this chapter, Hitchcott traces the ambivalence in the texts of the authors participating in the 'Ecrire par devoir de mémoire' project. Dubbing these writers 'literary dark tourists' (p. 57), Hitchcott analyses the work of Véronique Tadjo, Boubacar Boris Diop and Abdourahman Waberi amongst others alongside that of exiled Rwandan returnee Joseph Ndwaniye to interrogate how these writers employ specific narrative techniques, genres and tropes to communicate their own anxieties and ethical questions about writing the genocide as outsiders. Considering the political dimensions of identity and the potential for exploitation in these texts, Hitchcott highlights the specific sensitivities required by both authors and readers of Rwandan genocide fiction.

The monograph's third chapter, 'Witnesses', asks if, and how, fiction writers can perform the task of bearing witness. In addition to an illuminating discussion regarding the complexity of the term 'witness' in the Rwandan context, this chapter also makes note of the way that gender-based violence — an important feature of the genocide — figures in fictional literature. Drawing on the work of Vénuste Kayimahe, Anicet Karege and Révérien Rurangwa among others, Hitchcott demonstrates the fascinating differences between the ways that Rwandan and non-Rwandan writers interact with the genocide: while some non-Rwandan writers refuse to describe the genocide altogether and make no attempt at witnessing, Rwandan writers purposefully emphasize the horror of 1994. Drawing on Dominic LaCapra's notion of 'empathetic unsettlement', this chapter forces consideration of the dynamics of subjectivity and positionality at play in, and behind, these texts.

In addition to illuminating the opposing demands of speech and silence expected from survivors in various settings, the book's fourth chapter examines the ethical implications of fictionalizing survivor lives. The chapter notes that survivors are often not protagonists in genocide fiction, and draws on the work of Tadjo and Monique Ilboudo to argue that when the survivor figure does feature, they are often presented as lost and isolated. In addition, Hitchcott expertly demonstrates how authors like Kayimahe use fiction to criticize a society where survival is now coupled with stigma. Following a thorough discussion of Rwanda's ethnopolitics, Hitchcott notes that survivor anxieties surrounding belonging, identity and voice are shared by the non-Rwandan, or non-survivor writers that construct stories about these lives. While acknowledging the problematics of aiming for complete identification with survivors, the chapter considers the contribution fiction can make to the representation of violence and history of those who lived through it.

The question of how to commemorate Rwanda's genocide has occupied many since its end, and Hitchcott's fifth chapter, 'Victims', interrogates if and how fiction functions as memorial. Claiming that physical memorials focused on statistics cannot fully capture the scale of death, the chapter employs a range of texts to argue for the humanizing potential of fiction. While examining the implications of writers like Koulsy Lamko and Tadjo invoking real-life victims such as Antonia Locatelli and Theresa Mukandori in their work, the chapter explores the motif of haunting present in many genocide fiction texts. Exploring the idea of victimhood further, Hitchcott interacts with these texts and the work of theorists such as Michael Rothberg and Zoe Norridge to consider the Holocaust as a comparative framework for Rwanda's genocide and notes how fiction might pro-voke the reader's own creation of multidirectional associations.

How, asks the book's final chapter, does fiction represent the genocide's perpetrators and the often barbaric acts they committed? Drawing on her corpus once more, Hitchcott demonstrates how Diop, Camille Karangwa and Benjamin Sehene employ fiction to apportion culpability to the Catholic Church and highlight the failure of international justice. Others, she notes, turn to fiction to emphasize both the mundane lives of the men turned murderers, and the frequently complex circumstances of perpetration. But in addition to suggesting that fiction allows both writers and readers to consider perpetrator motives, Hitchcott — utilizing Diop's

Murambi — simultaneously acknowledges their essential unknowability. While demonstrating how fiction can blur the boundaries between perpetrators and victims, the chapter features a fascinating discussion about the appropriation of pain and victimhood that invokes the work of Ruth Leys and Cathy Caruth. Fiction, argues Hitchcott, provides insight into the complicated nature of blame and guilt in Rwanda and much-needed nuance to the ethnopolitical assumptions made regarding the perpetrators of its genocide.

Hitchcott's *Rwanda Genocide Stories* offers so much in addition to the excellent literary analysis it presents. The book is replete with rich historical and contextual detail, compellingly argued and strongly interdisciplinary. Through focused, in-depth analyses, Hitchcott demonstrates how both reading and writing fiction about Rwanda's genocide demands the constant consideration and negotiation of identities and subjectivities. Fiction, the book argues, points to its limits even as it demonstrates the possibilities it houses for the representation of the many complex people and circumstances it describes. But in spite of these difficulties, *Rwanda Genocide Stories* argues that through its ability to provoke ethical, active responses, fiction remains a valuable lens through which to probe the human condition.

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Les Veuves créoles, comédie. Edited with an Introduction by JULIA PREST. Cambridge: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2017. 100 pp. Pb. £10.99. ISBN: 9781781882641

The anonymous *Les Veuves créoles, comédie* (1768) is one of the first plays from the French West Indian colonies to have been published. This new MHRA edition with an introduction, notes and bibliography by Julia Prest makes this play accessible to researchers and students in domains such as theatre history, Caribbean history, and early modern French theatre studies.

The play itself is a typical example of the comedy of manners, with a 'local' Caribbean twist. Set in the town of Saint-Pierre in Martinique, the plot follows the misadventures of three widows, sisters Madame Grapin and Madame Sirotin and their niece Mélite, at the hands of the metropolitan Chevalier de Fatincourt. The Chevalier, who in fact factitiously ennobled himself on his arrival in Martinique to gain the approval of the local elite, as was customary for many a metropolitan travelling to the colonies, tricks the three women into believing he wishes to marry them. The brother to two of the widows, Monsieur de La Cale, finds his sisters' attitudes ridiculous, suspecting the Chevalier of being more attracted by the widows' fortunes than their persons. In fact, La Cale wishes to have the Chevalier marry his daughter Rosalie. A series of misunderstandings ensue. After the painful revelation is made to Madame Sirotin and Madame Grapin of the Chevalier's deception, the sisters set about unveiling his misdeeds to their brother. The Chevalier's ill intentions are soon revealed to all, and he flees, wifeless. The play ends with Rosalie marrying the intended object of her affections, Fonval.

Prest's edition of *Les Veuves créoles* starts with a well-documented and informative introduction to the play and the cultural and political contexts in which it was written and performed. The introduction also furnishes the reader with points of reflection on the play itself. These include the figure of the widow in early modern French drama and her status within French Caribbean society, and the comedic devices of early modern French theatre. The bibliography incorporated in this edition provides primary and secondary sources available to readers interested in further exploring the field of early modern French Caribbean theatre.

As we learn in the Introduction, theatre in the eighteenth-century French Caribbean, whose focal point was Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti) but also reached Martinique and Guadeloupe, was deemed by local society as a means of cultural betterment. Theatre had the

potential to save the white population from degeneration and miscegenation, and to 'civilize' the free persons of colour. Indeed, due to the commercial nature of theatre, it was one of the first cultural institutions to admit persons of colour in the audience. The segregated audience as described by contemporary sources is, Prest claims, indicative of the racial segregation present in colonial societies at the time, which transpires in the play's cast comprising secondary characters who were most certainly black domestic slaves.

Drama was therefore a cornerstone of the cultural and social scenes in the French Caribbean colonies, and the most popular plays were comedies, and pieces that came from and were set in the metropole. Hence despite the play's local setting, it did not meet with widespread success amongst an audience who preferred plays from metropolitan France. However, *Les Veuves créoles* does problematize the status of the French colonies in a context where it was deemed 'that socially inferior colonies existed for the benefit of the socially superior métropole' (p. 21). In villainizing the metropolitan character in the play, the Chevalier de Fatincourt, the author foregrounded the moral superiority of créole society over the metropole.

In compiling this edition, Prest aims to reveal how the play could be 'of considerable interest today in the context of renewed and ongoing research into the story of French colonialism and, increasingly, in colonial and créole drama' (p. 5). This edition of *Les Veuves créoles* is a concise and riveting introduction to these research areas, and would in addition provide an ideal teaching tool.

VANESSA LEE
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French Mediterraneans: Transnational and Imperial Histories. Edited with an Introduction by PATRICIA M. E. LORCIN AND TODD SHEPARD. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016. ix + 426 pp. Pb $65.00. ISBN 9780803249936

While in relatively recent scholarships the study of the Mediterranean region has increasingly meant to focus on the early modern world, *French Mediterraneans* shifts the focus to the modern Mediterranean in particular in the French transnational and imperial context. More precisely, one of the goals of this volume is to 'revea[l] the French element in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century making of [a] singular Mediterranean' (Introduction, p. 1). Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Todd Shepard, the volume editors, are careful to acknowledge in a very concise and focused introduction that this singular Mediterranean is a longstanding Western conception. The emphasis on the French element for contributors to *French Mediterraneans* is to produce a methodological approach to thinking '"France" and "French" histories in ways that embrace historiographical presumptions and questions from outside of French history', while complementing discussions of the Mediterranean in modern history (p. 3).

Confirming the proposed methodology, *French Mediterraneans* is intentionally broad in scope and achieves a robust interdisciplinary study in Mediterranean Studies. Also, a majority of contributors to *French Mediterraneans* are not historians of France or the French Empire, but rather historians of the Ottoman Empire, of Jews and Judaism, of the Maghreb, and the Arab Levant. Divided into three sections, essays of this collection look at the maps, migrations, and margins across the Mediterranean with direct or more indirect references to France and the French from the late eighteenth century to decolonization up until the 1960s.

The first part, 'Rethinking Mediterranean Maps (Maps to Rethink the Mediterranean)', highlights traveling historical momentum through the mobility of people and cross-cultural influences in the region. In '*Révolutions de Constantinople*: France and the Ottoman World in the Age of Revolutions', Ali Yaycioğlu considers the work by Antoine Juchereau de Saint-Denis

(1778–1842), *Révolutions de Constantinople*. The French *émigré* and military engineer delivers a portrayal of a troubled Oriental Mediterranean, in the geographic sense, at the Age of Revolutions, revealing the significance of intense revolutionary movements in a Mediterranean context. In a second chapter, 'Barbary and Revolution: France and North Africa', Ian Coller reveals the external reverberations of the French Revolution considering a circulation of letters and correspondence in reaction to the event across the Mediterranean. As for Andrew Arsan's contribution, '"There Is, in the Heart of Asia, … an Entirely French Population": France, Mount Lebanon, and the Workings of Affective Empire in the Mediterranean, 1830–1920', it goes back on the emergence and maintenance of France's informal empire in the Eastern Mediterranean using the language of kinship and filiation. In the last chapter, 'Natural Disaster, Globalization and Decolonization: the case of the 1960 Agadir Earthquake', Spencer Segalla considers how architectural choices for the reconstruction of Agadir can be of use in reflecting politico-cultural alignment or disagreement with France through commercial ties.

The first two chapters of the second section entitled 'Shifting Frameworks of Migration (Migrations across the Mediterranean)' clearly support the ongoing discussion in *French Mediterraneans* of Mediterranean interactions at multiple levels including the global and local; the individual and collective, but gloss over the play of hardly avoidable power relations, at least until proved otherwise. While Edhem Eldem's chapter, 'The French Nation of Constantinople in the eighteenth century as Reflected in the Saints Peter and Paul Parish Records, 1740–1800', looks at cross-community marriages between French and local groups in the Levant, this study contains an underlying element relatable to strategic alliances formed to assert hegemonic power in the Mediterranean. As for Marc Aymes, he tells the story of Vaḥdetī Efendi, a nineteenth-century Ottoman forger, in 'An Ottoman in Paris: A Tale of Mediterranean Coinage', reminding us of the active role of sometimes obscure figures in shaping knowledge away from high-profile statesmen or intellectuals, but that is not without having us wonder about the relegation of those to a dusty shelf or worse in the first place. Moving on to Julia Clancy-Smith's contribution, 'From Household to Schoolroom: Women, Transnational Networks, and Education in North Africa and Beyond', the focus is on the biographical documents of three North-African women who, through their access to learning, managed to break down patriarchal dominance. Clancy-Smith's study is an opportunity to identify the failures of the colonial educational system, especially for Muslim girls, in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. As for Mary Dewhurst Lewis, her chapter, 'Europeans before Europe: the Mediterranean Prehistory of European integration and exclusion', reveals conflicts of jurisdiction between imperial powers, in particular Italy and France, in Tunisia for much of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century. Yet it also highlights compromises and consensus between those revealing, according to Lewis, European sensibilities.

In the last part, 'Margins Remade by the Mediterranean', contributors reflect on the implications of European presence, either physical or symbolic, in the Mediterranean region and especially in North Africa during colonial times. In a first chapter, 'Dreyfus in the Sahara: Jews, Trans-Saharan Commerce, and Southern Algeria under French Colonial Rule', Sarah Abrevaya Stein links up European anti-Semitic attitudes and stereotypes in the immediate aftermath of the Dreyfus affair (1894–1906), with the evolution of daily relationships between Muslims and Jews in Algeria. In a similar vein, Susan Gilson Miller ('Moïse Nahon and the Invention of the Modern Maghrebi Jews') refers to the reflections of Moïse Nahon, a Tangier writer and thinker, to consider the social and cultural consequences of the institution of colonial power for relations between Maghrebi Jews and Muslims in Morocco. As for Ellen Amster, her contribution entitled 'The Syphilitic Arab? A Search for Civilization in Disease Etiology, Native Prostitution, and French Colonial Medicine' adds on to the ongoing dissection of forms of colonial power in this last part of *French Mediterraneans* by commenting on the invention of a distinctive pathology of the colonized body, the 'syphilitic Arab'. Amster shows not only that medical claims concerning impaired colonized bodies helped draw the line between metropole and colonies, French subjects and non-citizens, but also the colonial hold on health education and programs. Finally,

with 'From Auschwitz to Algeria: The Mediterranean Limits of the French Anti-Concentration Camp Movement, 1952–1959', Emma Kuby considers the field study initiated by an international team of Nazi concentration camp survivors in 1957, to consider the putative use of concentration camp system in Algeria. In doing so, Kuby suggests necessary adaptive strategies in case of comparative case studies, showing in the present study inadequacies in the use of a stable definition of 'concentration camp' to account for French colonial abuses.

French Mediterraneans goes beyond simply claiming to offer a transnational study in context, and rather performs the transnational through its eclecticism. An eclecticism that expresses itself through the wide range of materials and perspectives covered, and offers some inspiring methodological reflections for advocates of a transnational Mediterranean basin. There could be greater precision about the collection's historical anchoring linking up the imperial element and the modern Mediterranean. While there is a strong focus on colonial times and ties throughout *French Mediterraneans*, there seems to be discreet analytical hints as to what could be an invitation to say more about how or whether transnational and imperial histories continue on after and since decolonization and manifest themselves in contemporary Mediterranean.

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***Backwoodsmen as Ecocritical Motif in French Canadian Literature*: *Connecting Worlds in the Wilds*.** By ANNIE REHILL. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2016. xv + 205 pp. Hb $75.00. ISBN: 9781498531108

Annie Rehill chooses the term 'backwoodsmen' to cover two distinct types of colonists — *coureurs de/des bois* and *voyageurs* — both of whom played a distinctive role in the colonization of North America, roles which have become part of the Francophone Canadian imaginary. Perhaps what distinguishes these two figures from Rehill's chosen designation 'backwoodsman' is the emphasis, evident in the French terms, laid upon mobility and rootlessness. The mode of life of the *coureur de bois* consisted of more or less extensive periods of travel, through what, to European eyes, was considered wilderness, of encounters with the indigenous population and of a widening network of trading relationships built up through exploration, communication and negotiation. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the *coureurs de bois* operated independently, often spending long periods living with the Amerindian hunting and trapping communities with whom they traded, finding partners and fathering children. But by the late seventeenth century their independent (and individualist) status was becoming suspect to the authorities. The French government acted to control and direct the fur trade by introducing a system of permits, in accordance with which *voyageurs* were required by law to be registered to travel with a team of hired hands to trade with the Amerindian suppliers of fur or, indeed, to open up routes for the timber industry which developed rapidly in the nineteenth century.

Rehill's study opens with an overview of this historical context and then moves on to establish her methodological approach, positioning herself within recent debates in the field of ecocriticism. She adopts a pragmatic line, both aware of urgent environmental concerns and also recognizing the complexity of relations between human activities, human societies and the natural world. In this she engages with Michel Serres's *Le Contrat naturel*. The literary and cultural analysis at the heart of her study considers the texts in relation to ecocritical thinking, but also employs elements drawn from Bakhtin, Deleuze and Guattari, as well as a range of literary historical studies of Francophone Canadian literature. Rehill discusses four very different works spanning over one hundred years: Joseph-Charles Taché's *Forestiers et voyageurs: Mœurs et légendes canadiennes* (1863); Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine* (1916); Léo-Paul Desrosiers's *Les Engagés du*

Grand Portage (1938); and Antonine Maillet's *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (1979). While many readers will be familiar with *Maria Chapdelaine* and *Pélagie-la-Charrette*, both bestselling texts, written respectively by a Breton and an Acadian author, the work of *québécois* Taché and Desrosiers is far less fashionable. But Rehill's corpus, while selective, is very well chosen, presenting as it does a range of 'backwoodsmen' figures in settings ranging from the 1770s (Maillet) to the early twentieth century (Hémon).

The four texts are treated in chronological order of composition, the works of Taché and Hémon in one chapter, with a chapter each devoted to Desrosiers and Maillet. The author's aim is not to hold up the (literary) figure of the *coureur de bois* or of the *voyageur* as models of good environmental practice. Rather, she reflects in each case on how the author constructs the figure, recognizing the distinctive historical and geopolitical contexts of each work, while also seeing the constant transformations of the figures of the *coureur de bois* and the *voyageur* as embodying an ongoing process of becoming 'that is always in the process of adapting, transforming, and modifying itself in relation to its environment' (Serpil Oppermann, quoted p. 37). But this positive, dynamic aspect is only one element of a more complex picture. As the study of individual texts reveals, both the *coureur de bois* and the *voyageur* can be seen to function as a bridge between the indigenous and European cultures, moving between 'les pays d'en haut' and urban Canada. But both the *coureur de bois* (operating independently and illegitimately) and the licensed *voyageur* were intimately involved in the work of colonization and of capitalism, exploiting the resources of North America and the indigenous population in the desire for maximum profit. Individual texts lay the emphasis differently on the positive and negative aspects of the figure. Maillet's novel (at the greatest historical remove from its setting in the 1770s) emerges as the most positive, perhaps because the reappropriated figure of the *coureur* (and *coureuse*) *de bois* plays an active role in the survival of the Acadian people and the renaissance of Acadian culture in the twentieth century. It is also the text which, through its playful use of the fantastic, is the most explicit in its construction of the *coureur de bois* as a mythical, even magical being. But even here, the *coureur(e) de bois* is at best an elusive figure, something which relates to a much wider issue in Francophone Canadian writing and beyond. If the *coureur de bois* represents a cultural bridge, the reader rarely crosses the bridge. The narrative does not accompany Hémon's François Paradis or Maillet's *coureurs de bois* when they live and work with Amerindian communities. The absence of representation of the indigenous way of life, or of *métissage*, means that the images of interculturalism gleaned from the texts are mostly one-sided; while the *coureur de bois* opens up lines of flight towards nature/the wilderness/the aboriginal population, the indigenous figure is still identified with nature, beyond the bridge.

Any good book should raise more questions in the reader's mind than it can hope to answer. Rehill's selection of texts, her historical and literary analyses and her thinking with and against current ecocritical work raise important questions about the value and the viability of 'cross-cultural reflection and collaboration' (p. 185). Building cultural bridges, whether in human patterns of behaviour or in literary representation, remains a work in progress.

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Thiaroye 1944: histoire et mémoire d'un massacre colonial. By MARTIN MOURRE. Préface by Elikia M'Bokolo. Postface by Bob W. White. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017. Pb 20 €. ISBN: 9782753553453

> 'La France demande aux Noirs de mourir pour elle, et n'est même pas fichue de les traiter comme des hommes.'
>
> Patrice Nganang, *La Saison des prunes* (Paris: Philippe Rey, 2013), p. 372.

Passions run high over what happened at Thiaroye in the early morning of Friday 1 December 1944. They ran high at the time, leading to the shooting by the French military authorities of an indeterminate but large number of *tirailleurs sénégalais* (at least 35, but possibly as many as 300), and still do, to the point where two French historians have taken their disagreements to court. Martin Mourre, qualified in both history and anthropology, seeks dispassionately to present and contextualize the massacre, both *en amont* and *en aval*.

His first chapter offers an overview of the prehistory: that of the French colonization of West Africa, of the establishment, in 1857, of the *tirailleurs sénégalais* and of the tensions involved. The events at the holding camp at Thiaroye are presented in his second chapter with as much precision as is possible given the contradictions, discrepancies, self-serving reports, summary judgements and downright lies which emerge from the painstakingly analysed documentary evidence. Inevitably, in view of the illiteracy of most of the *tirailleurs*, this is heavily weighted in favour of the French authorities. The African riflemen had been prisoners of the Germans for up to four years and were being returned home. They were claiming their right to back-payment and the usual discharge bonus. Rather than recognize the legitimacy of this, a decision was taken to interpret their claim as mutiny and to resort to force. The appalling result had repercussions which resonate to this day, memorial manifestations and manipulations in Senegal being the subject of Mourre's last four chapters. (The focus is almost exclusively on Senegal, although the *tirailleurs* ***dits*** *sénégalais* came from all over French West and Equatorial Africa.) They present chronologically reactions prior to independence, then under successive presidents: Léopold Sédar Senghor (1960–1980), Abdou Diouf (1980–2000) and Abdoulaye Wade (2000–2012). Responses in literature and film (adumbrated in articles in the *ASCALF Bulletin* which Nicola Macdonald and I presented, starting from the fiftieth anniversary of Thiaroye with 'The Thiaroye massacre in word and image', n° 8 (1994), pp. 18–37, not noted here) are thus seen in a diachronic context and the nature of their evolution traced, right up to the recordings by rappers of recent years. An impressively extensive series of archival researches and interviews underpins the interpretation of these evolving reactions.

The massacre at Thiaroye can be seen as an extreme but not unparalleled metaphor of the violence of colonization. Its memory, insofar as it still alive in the Hexagon, has continued to vitiate relationships between France and her formerly colonized subjects, since the attitude of the military authorities, in denial at the time, has infected French society, thinking and attitudes more generally. Their contempt is a lasting canker. In Senegal, on the other hand, Mourre demonstrates that it is still very much a live and painful issue, indeed increasingly so since local politicians have reduced their kowtowing to French ones. The latter have either denied Africa a history (Sarkozy) or made only partial reparation by handing over copies of carefully selected documents to Dakar archives (Hollande), still tending to justify the unjustifiable and continuing, perhaps in subtler but still insidious ways, the iniquities of *la Françafrique*. Equality of respect there was not, nor, by and large, is.

Martin Mourre's book makes a major, many-faceted contribution towards a full diagnosis of the running sore of Thiaroye. His daunting list of sources and extensive bibliography, in double columns, run to some thirty pages but still do not detail individual contributions to newspapers (nevertheless specified in footnotes). These are followed by indexes of names (but

these regrettably exclude those of critics) and of places mentioned. For those who want to bring themselves up to date with what is known about the Thiaroye massacre, with its secondary literature, and with what still needs to be researched about it (Armelle Mabon is working on this with similar admirable tenacity), while reflecting on it as an appalling example of French attitudes towards Africans in the context of colonialism and even post-colonialism, this is the book to read and to recommend to all university libraries.

ROGER LITTLE
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Women Writers of Gabon: Literature and Herstory. By CHERYL TOMAN. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2016. 170 pp. Hb £52.95. ISBN: 9781498537209

Cheryl Toman's study focuses on recent published Gabonese novels authored by women writers. This in itself should make it a valuable a contribution to our understanding of how the literary system in former French colonies of Africa has been developing, and, importantly, how this development has been recognized or not in the international academic and literary worlds. 'The Literary history of Gabon', she writes, 'is remarkable in many ways, but what makes this literature especially unique from all the others on the continent is the sheer number of Gabonese women novelists and their overall importance in African literary history' (p. xi). Notwithstanding their importance, Toman argues convincingly that the literature she is presenting here has been woefully neglected by Western academics and publishers. Citing Irène Assiba d'Almeida's insightful study *A Rain of Words*, she locates the work in 'the empty canon: unknown, unpraised, uncritized' (p. 7).

The explanation Toman offers is a familiar one. Women writers are systematically overlooked by Western and African critics and commentators, and she produces evidence to this effect. The argument presented here, that influential figures of the Francophone literary world and the Western academies value male writing over female writing, is hardly news. But the evidence presented to support this argument does bring the reader to reflect on the ways the Western norm, subconscious or otherwise, to conflate multiple intellectual characteristics with binary biological characteristics to the advantage of (white) males (as attested in the intellectual occupations throughout the Western world), operates also through those postcolonial elites that chose to inherit these gendered ideologies from the former European occupier. Furthermore, the author also deploys her evidence drawn from the history of novel-writing in Gabon, to reveal how multiple discriminations can result in rendering certain individuals invisible in our literary and critical circles. Citing the case of Gabon's first novelist, Angèle Rawiri, she notes that Rawiri's first novel *Elonga* (1980) is still under-researched and remains in some quarters unacknowledged as the first novel (in the Western style), '[I]t is clear that there are additional obstacles the African woman writer confronts if she does not choose to write an overtly feminist novel; it is even more likely that her work will fall into the "empty canon"' (p.7). In essence, it appears that exclusion operates both at the act of writing and, in a case where the work has overcome that barrier, at the point of reading.

Other chapters explore works in French of Fang writers Justine Mintsa, Sylvie Ntsame, and Honorine Ngou. Here the author embarks on a deeper engagement with sociological context and the novel as political discourse. As Mintsa herself states a novel's themes are its political instruments (p. 59). The richer contextual detail offered in these chapters includes fascinating insights into pre-colonial or extra-colonial modes of literary expression, such as the Fang mvet (p.80). The book concludes with brief introductions of a younger generation of Gabonese women writers including Edna Merey-Apinda, Alice Endamne, Nadia Origo, Miryl Eteno,

and Elisabeth Aworet.

A substantial proportion of the central chapters of the book, already relatively short at 170 pages, is devoted to plot and character summaries. Perhaps the lack of attention paid to these works, as Toman argues in her introduction, warrants this focus on storyline. In addition, a generous use of citations from the novels provides further points of entry into this neglected body of literature. There is tremendous scope here for productive new lines of analytical enquiry. This study puts the spotlight on what is clearly a gap in literary and academic writing on African literary production in French. While it is clear from Toman's forensic exploration of literary criticism on Gabonese and African writing in French that this body of work has gained an unusually low level of recognition from the academy, feminist literary discourse from Gabon has made some contribution to multidisciplinary socio-cultural studies of postcolonial Francophone Africa. The potential of this work to engage more widely across disciplinary boundaries and enrich other fields of postcolonial studies is evident, the book abounds with references of sociological and political significance inviting exciting new modes of engagement. Toman has worked with Gabonese women writers for several years and her research included field trips to Gabon. The rich literary review that has emerged from these encounters is an insightful introduction to a unique literary scene and a sound point of departure for future research.

CLAIRE GRIFFITHS
UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER

CONFERENCE REPORTS

SFPS Postgraduate Study Day 2017: Trespassing Time and Space: The Postcolonial Encounter in the Francophone World Lancaster University, 16 June 2017

The annual postgraduate study day of the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies was hosted this year by Lancaster University and co-sponsored by the Yves Hervouet Fund (providing travel bursaries), the Department for Languages & Cultures at Lancaster University, and The Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies. Postgraduate students from all over the UK came together to debate the postcolonial encounter in the Francophone world.

The first panel of the day united speakers around the theme of Aesthetic Encounters. Antonia Wimbush (University of Birmingham) opened the discussion by taking us on an intellectual journey through the autobiographical narratives of Kim Lefèvre, a Francophone writer who grew up in colonial Vietnam and left for France in 1960. The paper analysed the narrator's *métissage* through the lens of exile, offering an original critique of postcolonial strategies of identity formation which propagate colonial frameworks. Second, Jordan Phillips (UCL) delivered a paper on Daniel Boukman, a writer, activist, teacher and journalist from Martinique. The paper located his play *Les Négriers* (written in 1968/9, published in 1971 and performed throughout the 1970s) in its historical and intellectual context to establish a multi-sited, multi-moment performance history. Phillips also pertinently explored how we might re-read the play in our current political context. Finally, Yasmine Boubakir (Lancaster University) spoke about discrepancies in the literary portrayal of Algerian and non-Algerian female characters in two works of Algerian literature: Rachid Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* and Amine Zaoui's *La Chambre de la Vierge*. Focusing on religion and colonialism as determining factors, the paper argued that Algerian female characters are repeatedly associated with sexualized descriptions and roles, while non-Algerian females are more intellectually and morally evolved.

The second panel of the day was entitled Socio-Linguistic Encounters. Phoebe Grant-Smith (University of Sheffield) examined the intersection of gender and race in social exclusion from a linguistic perspective. Using a corpus of news programmes taken from *France 24*, her paper compared and analysed the linguistic features of the speech of male and female white French native speakers, and male and female second- and third-generation immigrant French native speakers from the Maghreb. The following speaker, Hadjer Chellia (University of the West of Scotland) also analysed the sociolinguistic profiles of immigrant Maghrebi speakers. However, her paper interrogated specifically the case of immigrant PhD students from Algeria and their use of French in the UK. Finally, Sarah Mechkarini (University of Birmingham), delivered a paper on the themes of alienation and rebellion in Mouloud Mammeri's *Le Sommeil du Juste*.

The third panel of the day, on Socio-Cultural Encounters, began with a paper by Fabrice Roger (University of Bristol). His paper addressed diverse representations of Islam in the early years of the 'War on Terror' by comparing Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Qui a tué Daniel Pearl?* And Jason Burke's *Al Qaeda, The True Story of Radical Islam*. Roger stated that his main objective was to reflect on the construction of culture and what is deemed as acceptable culture in both the UK and France through the textual analysis of significant voices that have made themselves heard in mainstream media since 9/11. This was followed by Sarah Budasz (Durham University) who delivered a paper entitled "'Un pays rebelle à l'action des siècles": Encountering the Past and the Other in Nineteenth-Century Travels to the Orient'. Budasz showcased how classical texts act as a frame through which French travellers could apprehend their encounters with the oriental other. Finally, Dylan Sebastian Evans (Royal Holloway) presented his paper: 'C'est donc ma parole contre la sienne', which scrutinized debates about, and representations of, gang rape in contemporary France.

In addition to the three panels, Berny Sèbe (University of Birmingham) delivered a keynote paper on researching the Sahara, and Nicola Frith (University of Edinburgh) led a

professional development workshop. The day concluded with an interdisciplinary roundtable, where participants of the day engaged in a productive discussion on the future of francophone postcolonial studies with faculty from the departments of Languages & Cultures, History, and English/Creative Writing here at Lancaster University. The study day was organized by PhD students Kirsty Bennett and Foara Adhikari from Lancaster, Nicola Pearson from Bristol, with generous assistance from the President of the Society, Charlotte Baker.

KIRSTY BENNETT, LANCASTER UNIVERSITY, AND
NICOLA PEARSON, UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

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

The deadline for the receipt of articles to be included in the spring 2018 issue is 15 January 2018.

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

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