**Charles Forsdick**
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Travel and Exile
Postcolonial Perspectives

edited by Charles Forsdick
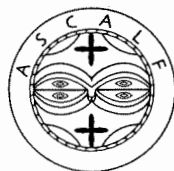
ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF
CARIBBEAN AND AFRICAN LITERATURE
IN FRENCH

Travel and Exile: Postcolonial Perspectives

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Introduction

The three essays that make up this volume were originally presented as papers at the *Exils/Exiles* conference, held in May/June 2001 at Herstmonceaux Castle, East Sussex, and organized by Lieve Spaas and Teresa Lawlor, both of Kingston University. Other papers presented at the conference will appear in the following publications: *Imaginaire et Ecriture de l'Exil*, ed. by Tivadar Gorilovics (University of Debrecen Press and Presses Universitaires de Toulouse, 2002), *Body, Visuality and Exile*, ed. by Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff (Berghahn Books, Polygons Series, 2003), and *Exile, Language and Identity*, ed. by Magda Stroinska.

For over a decade, ASCALF has been central to the development of Francophone Studies in both the UK and Ireland. Through the international dimensions of both its conferences and publications, the Association has also been instrumental in responding to the growing demand for information about and analysis of literature in French produced outside France (and also by authors of, generally, African origin, working in France itself). The Association's title reveals, however, its initial commitment to study of the Francophone Black Atlantic. Andy Stafford's contribution to this volume reflects this ongoing interest in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, revealing the persistent need for carefully attenuated consideration of specifically French-language accounts of the intercultural exchanges inherent in transatlantic crossings. Yet from the outset, ASCALF's implied remit has been a wider one, encompassing not only other geographical areas (especially North Africa and the Indian Ocean) but also other media (in particular film and song).

This widening of perspective has not resulted in a dilution of purpose, however, for the Association has resisted any drift towards the study of a hazily defined Francophonia, a glory hole of French-speaking cultures (settler colonies, settled colonies, various other countries in which one of the means of communication is French) whose shared linguistic characteristic tends to obscure their radically different and often opposing historical trajectories. Accordingly, although ASCALF's title has not made this explicit, its overarching concern has been increasingly with the Francophone dimensions of postcolonial literatures and cultures, with the epithets 'Francophone' and 'postcolonial' understood here in their most inclusive senses, encompassing metropolitan and non-metropolitan production from the time of initial colonial contact to the contemporary moment.

From the outset, the wider field of post(-)colonial studies has been beset with controversies concerning nomenclature, with an abundance of articles devoted to its prematurely celebratory overtones or the ambiguities of its hyphenated or non-hyphenated forms. However important such debates may be for those working in the field as they seek definitional or conceptual clarity, they have tended to eclipse central aspects and to obscure major paradigm shifts inherent in the emergence of the critical ideas associated with postcolonialism. This shift is reflected in the title of a 1992 collection of essays edited by Anna Rutherford and drawn from the landmark conference marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of ACLALS (Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies): *From Commonwealth to Post-Colonial* suggested that the term 'Commonwealth literature' was no longer an adequate description of the Association's object of study, and that there was a need for a more rigorous term, 'Post-Colonial', not only to reflect linguistic and cultural differences but also to take account of the neo-colonialist asymmetries that continue to dictate relations in the English-speaking world. That similar debates are now triggered by the term 'Francophone' suggests that a parallel shift is currently underway amongst those who study the literatures in French that have emerged in the aftermath of colonial contact.

The move 'from Francophone to Postcolonial' is reflected in the launch of the series—*ASCALF Critical Studies in Postcolonial Literature and Culture*—of which this volume is the initial title. It is anticipated that the short studies to appear in this series will not only complement ASCALF's other publications—the *Bulletin* and *Year Book*—, but will also contribute actively to the development and definition of the rapidly growing field of Francophone Postcolonial Studies. On the one hand, the shift implied by the emergence of this field mirrors that suggested by Rutherford's title; on the other, it is linked to a more complex development in the postcolonial domain, whereby an area of study that had originally existed as the preserve of English Literature departments is slowly opening to contributions from elsewhere and eventually achieving its full transdisciplinary potential.

Harish Trivedi's acerbic observation that 'the postcolonial has ears only for English' (Trivedi 1999: 272) was an attempt to highlight the role of indigenous languages in the actual experience of postcoloniality—a role often obscured by the Anglocentric biases of postcolonial criticism. Implicit in such criticism, however, is an equal awareness of the often hidden roots of postcolonial thought in material written in languages other than English. If one accepts Graham Huggan's characterization of postcolonial criticism as 'the provisional attempt to forge a working alliance between the—often Marxist-inspired—politics of anti-colonial resistance, exemplified in the liberationist tracts of Fanon, Césaire and Memmi, and the disparate, allegedly destabilising poststructuralisms of Derrida, Lacan, Althusser and Foucault' (Huggan 2001: 260), then the French-language roots of the field become tellingly apparent. Robert Young's recent and important history of postcolonialism is one of the first substantial studies to explore these roots (Young 2001), complementing a growing number of other recent texts that have illustrated the need for a more active dialogue between mainstream postcolonial theory and often little-known French-language material (Apter 1999, Bongie 1998, Britton 1999, Cooper 2001, Haddour 2000, Lionnet 1995, Miller 1998, Norindr 1996, Rosello 1998, Woodhull 1993).

Yet I use the word 'mainstream' advisedly. For, as Graham Huggan has explained, there is a risk that through the progressive commodification and anthologization of postcolonial material a critical orthodoxy will emerge dependent on an academic star system and on the manageable chunks of decontextualized knowledge regularly recycled in 'readers' (Huggan 2001: 252-57). One of the most stimulating aspects of Francophone Postcolonial Studies is its potential contribution to the reorientation of the field. For not only does it allow a reconsideration of much of the source material from which postcolonial theory has emerged, but also it provides access to a vast archive that has previously received little attention. Despite the translations of Edward Said's principal works and the prolific efforts

of critics such as Jean-Marc Moura, France remains unreceptive to postcolonial criticism.

Yet a caveat is required. While underlining postcolonialism's indebtedness to a tradition of French 'high theory', Celia Britton and Michael Syrotinski stress the need for cautious reflection. In their introduction to the special issue of *Paragraph* devoted to 'Francophone Texts and Postcolonial Theory', they explain that '[t]he point is not that we need to uncover hidden genealogies allowing us to trace the roots of both postcolonial theory and *francophonie* to shared French origins, but rather that it is important to resist assumptions about its identity, and the contexts to which it can or cannot apply' (Britton and Syrotinski 2001: 5). It is precisely those working on French-language material outside France, operating at the confluence of a number of scholarly traditions, who are in a position to resist such reduction, to develop dialogue, and to steer postcolonial studies in new, perhaps unexpected directions. The principal aim must be to ensure that Francophone Postcolonial Studies exports more than it imports, and ensures that it makes an active contribution to wider debates instead of relying on other scholarship to set its agendas and steer its courses.

The three contributions to this volume all illustrate this potential contribution of French-language material to more general postcolonial debates. Each draws on existing English-language criticism (Edward Said, Paul Gilroy, James Clifford, bell hooks). They relate this to texts in French in order both to trigger a dialogue and to illuminate issues that have previously received little attention, whilst at the same time insisting that there is a specificity to Francophone postcolonial material with which more general conclusions must be qualified. Charles Forsdick's essay on Edward Said reminds the reader of the roots of this critic's work in French and Francophone material, and uses a variety of twentieth-century material written in French to explore the complex interaction of exile and travel on which much of the Saidian project depends. Andy Stafford's essay on the Francophone Black Atlantic engages with Paul Gilroy's seminal work in this field, but argues for the need for a model of transatlantic postcolonial cultures that accounts for specific elements of French-language cultures. Siobhán Shilton's

consideration of Ousmane Socé and Azouz Begag, offering a concrete illustration of ideas sketched out by James Clifford in his essay on 'traveling cultures', creates a bridge between the experience of alienation inherent in the travel of a colonial subject and the 'exilic' estrangement of children of North African origin in contemporary France.

That this first volume in *ASCALF Critical Studies in Postcolonial Literature and Culture* should focus on the closely related themes of travel and exile is fitting. Postcolonial criticism is itself an instance of what Edward Said has termed 'traveling theory', whereby a diverse body of (for the most part French-language) thought has travelled— often across the Atlantic—and been translated to emerge in new configurations with fresh emphases; but at the same time, like comparative literary studies in the earlier twentieth-century, postcolonial criticism is grounded in the actual experience of exile. Scholars working on French-language literatures and cultures tend increasingly to underline the intercultural sensitivity on which our work depends, stressing the fact that our work—and that of our students—depends on constant movement between and within cultures. These issues are particularly apparent for those whose work concerns them either with colonial and postcolonial material or with cultural representations of travel and mobility. This volume reveals the rich interactions of these fields, and outlines the major contribution that Francophone Postcolonial Studies has to offer not only to the general field of Postcolonial Studies but also to the wider, burgeoning area of Comparative Cultural Studies itself.

CF
Liverpool
November 2001

Travelling Theory, Exiled Theorists

CHARLES FORSDICK

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Although 'travel' and 'exile'—both as practices and concepts—are invariably dealt with separately, kept apart according to competing, often contradictory processes of self-protection, their proximity as modes of displacement is increasingly becoming a critical commonplace. One of the benefits of postcolonial approaches to exile is that they bring a historical, material dimension to the occasional haziness of postmodern understandings of the term (Shohat 1992: 122). Whereas travellers—predominantly, as critics of the proliferation of travel metaphors in contemporary theory are right to insist, white, male, Western, upper- or middle-class—employ the geographical, discursive and ideological aspects of the journey as elements in a process of self-distinction, exiles endeavour to protect the integrity and specifically political nature of their displacement from absorption into such practices of colonial exploration or (more latterly) neo-colonial leisure.

Such a polarization is, of course, excessively schematic, failing to reflect the eloquent etymological ambiguities of exile—the Latin *exsilium* implies a clear sense of banishment, whereas the possible Greek root *alasthai*, 'to wander', steers the term back to a more generic understanding of travel. In addition, it omits a series of other, related categories integral to any (albeit impossible) typology of contemporary figures of displacement—with 'figures' understood here in the polysemic sense of that word: geographical outlines,

individual characters, representative emblems, metaphorical allusions. As the widespread practice of anti-tourism suggests, travel is often defined in terms of such exclusion: the traveller identifies himself not with positive attributes, but by distancing himself from other characters, many of whom—unlike the stay-at-home, homebody, or *érudit en chambre*—are similarly in (some form of) transit: tourists, indigenous carriers, soldiers, explorers, ethnologists... In his attempt to define 'le seul voyage qui vaille', Jacques Lacarrière undertakes such a process of elimination:

Eliminons d'emblée un certain nombre de voyages: le voyage d'affaires (celui du représentant), le voyage d'amour (limité à deux et le plus souvent à Venise), le voyage civil forcé (l'exilé, le déplacé, le déporté), le voyage militaire forcé (guerre), le voyage d'aventure (l'explorateur), le voyage d'agrément (tourisme), le voyage clandestin (espionnage), le voyage scientifique (archéologue, géologue, ethnologue), le voyage militant (tournées électorales à l'île de la Réunion par exemple), le voyage missionnaire (prêtres et pèlerinages). (Lacarrière 1992: 105)

Lacarrière's list, far from exhaustive, is an imagined, selective catalogue whose underlying principle is a belief in the possible purity or authenticity of travel and the elevation of a particular type of Western traveller as its privileged practitioner. What interests me most in his list is its fiction of unrelatedness, the denial of connection between journeys that are often not only simultaneous, but also may share the same spatial parameters and even means of transport. When it comes to remembering, reinventing, and textualizing these journeys, there is a distinction—although not necessarily always a clear one—between, for instance, the poetics of ethnographic fieldwork, of the naval log book, of journalistic travel writing, and of travel literature itself. However, such a distinction is not as clear-cut in relation to the actual practices of travel, for any hermetic imperative of self-distinction is eroded and broken down in what Mary Louise Pratt has described as the 'contact zone', a space criss-crossed by very different journeys, but where various itineraries temporarily converge and are forced to interact. One such zone is the airport departure lounge, one of Marc Augé's 'non-lieux' of supermodernity, an interlinked network allowing the rapid, efficient

transit of people and goods: e.g. the hermetic spaces of motorized transport, motorways, railways, airports, and—Augé adds—'les camps de transit prolongé où sont les réfugiés de la planète' (Augé 1992: 48). Augé is undoubtedly inspired here by Lévi-Strauss's comments in *Tristes tropiques* on the concrete, geometric block of the hotel in Goiania, itself compared to 'une aérogare', where the guest is described as 'toujours passager et jamais résident' (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 141). For their different reasons, Lévi-Strauss and Augé describe the spatial implications of the generalization of 'transit' and the associated erosion of an earlier understanding of 'travel'. Whereas Lacarrière excludes from his definition 'le voyage civil forcé (l'exilé, le déplacé, le déporté)', the two anthropologists elaborate an understanding of global space in which a series of journeys, hitherto segregated, are forced to coexist.

James Clifford sees this situation, in part at least, as a meeting not only of itineraries, but also of narratives: 'we need to listen to a wide range of "travel stories" (not "travel literature" in the bourgeois sense)' (Clifford 1997: 38). Such an opening up of the field of the travel narrative necessitates radical revisions not just in its definition, but also in its practice. Travel literature, as a genre, depends not so much on the indistinctness of intergenericity as on the constant voguing of transgenericity, on the discursive glide between different modes of writing the journey. Jean-Didier Urbain has gone further and developed his thesis that every 'voyage' is in some way 'clandestin', either blind to its own motives or insistent on their dissimulation, in order to suggest that the same gliding is perhaps characteristic of the journey itself (Urbain 1998). For the traveller can, suddenly and even imperceptibly, be transformed into tourist, the tourist into traveller. Perhaps surprisingly, the same can be true for exile. Not only can the motivations of exile change, so that, in Victor Hugo's case, an enforced political exile on Jersey becomes a subversive self-exile on Guernsey (Urbain 1998: 54); but also the traveller can be transformed, mid-journey, into an exile: Geneviève Mouillaud-Fraisse signals, for instance, the case of Julio Cortázar, Argentinian expatriate in Paris: 'Un écrivain comme Cortazar a pu à

un' moment, sans avoir bougé de Paris, passer du simple voyageur, écrivain argentin résidant en France, au statut d'exilé, quand la dictature lui a barré le chemin du retour' (Mouillaud-Fraisse 1995: 225).

At the root of this article is a questioning of the reverse of this process—i.e. the possible transformation of the exile into the traveller. It has been triggered by a close reading of Edward Said's work and by an engagement with the rich conceptual currency that emerges from it. Travel and exile exist side-by-side in Said's work, whether it be critical, observational or autobiographical, and the two concepts occur in a variety of configurations: complementary, contrastive, and ambiguously overlapping. Similarly, Said identifies himself as both exile and traveller. Each notion operates in Said's work as a 'keyword', with that term understood according to its specific application by Raymond Williams to any item of vocabulary when 'the problems of its meanings seemed […] inextricably bound up with the problems it was being used to discuss' (Williams 1976: 15).

I foreground Said in the full knowledge that 'travel' and 'exile' are terms that resonate throughout postcolonial theory and criticism in general and that he has no monopoly over them. In postcolonial considerations, it is in particular the locatedness of the theorist or critic (or of the object of his or her study) that is not only pertinent but also subject to close critical scrutiny. When that locatedness is characterized as 'exilic', there is an associated need to explore what C.L.R. James, in *Beyond a Boundary*, calls: 'movement, not where you are or what you have, but where you come from, where you are going and the rate at which you are getting there' (cited in Clifford 1997: 17). The focus on Said will represent an important case study with wider implications. For as Robert Young has shown in his considerations of the shift from colonial to postcolonial hybridity in *Colonial Desire*, there is a need to avoid a tendency in the shared vocabulary of postcolonialism that allows certain terms to be salvaged from earlier usage and recycled in a contemporary context without necessarily recognizing the complex and problematic shifts they have undergone (Young 1995). The aim of this article is to

suggest that Said's shifting and interwoven uses of 'travel' and 'exile' allow a more attenuated grasp of these specific terms, the fluid ambiguity of which ultimately undermines the idea that postcolonialism has become a critical orthodoxy mediated only through selected celebrity figures.

The centrality of exile to Said's work is undisputed, but Tim Lawrence is right to insist that it operates as an 'uneasy and shifting linchpin' (Lawrence 2001: 300). It is to be seen not only as a theoretical or metaphorical figure, but also as a highly personal experience or as an ordeal undergone by others *en masse*. These two understandings are constantly interwoven and interdependent, stressing at once (to borrow Said's own term) the overwhelming 'wordliness' of exile, as well as the possibilities for its transformation into an 'alternative' critical strategy (Said 2000: 184).

Said's first publication, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*, focuses on a major exilic figure who has continued to haunt his writing and thought; and it is significant that his latest publication, a series of essays written over four decades, takes as its main title *Reflections on Exile* (the subject of a 1984 essay originally published in *Harper's Magazine* as 'The Mind of winter: reflections on a life in exile'). This is a significant collection, for it reflects Said's repeated claim that the anti-genre of the essay is the form most suited to the exploration of exile and most appropriate to emerge from its experience.[1] Said tends to use 'exile' as Clifford uses 'travel', as a 'translation term' that is perhaps ultimately 'overworked' so that it 'get[s] us some distance *and* fall[s] apart' (Clifford 1997: 39). As a result, the claims of critics such as Ahmad or Gellner, who have seen his use of exile as primarily rhetorical, are, on closer inspection, poorly founded. For Said has never claimed any reductively representative status for himself; nor, despite the privileging of Conrad and Auerbach, has he endeavoured to accord such representativity to any other exilic figure. What emerges from the title essay 'Reflections on Exile' is a multi-layered understanding of exile and an awareness that just as the trajectories of different travellers coexist, so do different experiences of exile:

Paris may be a capital famous for cosmopolitan exiles, but it is also a city where unknown men and women have spent years of miserable loneliness: Vietnamese, Algerians, Cambodians, Lebanese, Senegalese, Peruvians. (Said 2000: 176)

This stretching of the term and full exploration of its semantic field are, therefore, well-illustrated in 'Reflections on Exile', in which 'exile' represents: a generic experience—'the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place' (Said 2001: 173); a central Modernist experience of individual estrangement; a modern experience of collective loss and displacement (and here Said is drawn into the semantics of migration, where the plural form of an 'exile' is increasingly 'refugees'); a highly personal experience relating to Said's own situation; and a general critical strategy dependent on marginality to dominant cultures and outsider status. The initial literal meanings coexist and provide a shorthand *résumé* of the elaborate, multi-volume reflections on exile that Said's output represents: from modernist exile in the study of Conrad (Said 1966) and the essay on Auerbach (Said 1991: 1-30), through his commentary of Jean Mohr's photographs of ordinary Palestinians in *After the Last Sky* (Said 1986), to the recent personal memoirs of *Out of Place* (Said 1999). It is only once these diverse understandings have been worked through that their final epistemological implications are allowed to emerge, and that Said builds on the experience of exile exemplified by figures such as Aimé Césaire, C.L.R. James and (increasingly) himself.

These exiles are all characters who, as Said himself states in the introduction to *Reflections on Exile*, combine a 'metropolitan intellectual pedigree' with an 'alternative consciousness' (Said 2000: xxvi). They are fluent in—yet constantly dislocated from—the cultures in which they reside, mindful to such an extent of their lost home that they belong nowhere and that their existence becomes 'contrapuntal'. Said recognizes, however, that this sense of being 'always out of place' (Said 2000: 180)—the term appears in the essay on exile fifteen years before it re-emerged as the title of his memoir—may lead elsewhere: to the desire for stability in permanent

immigration, to 'an exaggerated sense of group solidarity, and a passionate hostility to outsiders' (Said 2000: 178), or to the hopelessness of immobility when movement breaks down—a state epitomized perhaps by the photograph of the scrapped, wheel-less car in *Out of Place*: 'We linger in nondescript places, neither here nor there; we peer through windows without glass, ride conveyances without movement or power' (Said 1986: 21).[2]

Yet it is only in relation to these possible responses that his own vision of exile can emerge. For Said, exile exists in an antithetical, dialectical relationship to nationalism, the creation by which of a monolithic, exclusive heritage is an attempt to 'fend off exile', to 'fight to prevent its ravages' (Said 2000: 176). Yet Saidian exile transforms these 'ravages' into a privileged subject position, into the paradoxical 'pleasures of exile' (Said 2000: 186) that permit what can perhaps be most accurately described as 'travelling criticism':

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason and necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (Said 2000: 185)

I dub this practice 'travelling criticism' as its terms are so closely related to Said's comments on an ideal for postcolonial education in 'The Traveller and the Potentate', where the model for academic freedom is 'the migrant *or* the traveler' (Said 2000: 403, my emphasis):

Travelers must suspend the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals. Most of all, and most unlike the potentate who must guard only one place and defend its frontiers, the traveler *crosses over*, traverses territory, and abandons fixed positions, all the time. (Said 2000: 404)

The acceptance that migrancy and travelling are complementary as opposed to competing experiences is in stark contrast to Said's earlier (literal as opposed to epistemological) understandings of travel. Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia are right to signal the

centrality of travel to Said's work—and readings such as theirs privilege this over exile as its 'linchpin'—, but, as with exile, there is a need to explore the complex emergence of the term and the concepts it describes.[3]

The understanding of Western travel that emerges from *Orientalism*, for instance, counters any Humanist understanding of the journey as a means of self-enrichment and views the Oriental itineraries studied as acts of confirmation of Western selves and of their ultimate closure to otherness. With representations of Asia and North Africa transformed into a vast archive of interdependent texts, travel does not so much transgress boundaries and undermine fixed hierarchies as ensure the consolidation and perpetuation of these. Such negative overtones are echoed by Said's different (now figurative) use of travel in *The Word, the Text and the Critic*, in which the phrase 'traveling theory' first appears. In tracking the stages involved in the journeys of different theories between cultures— what he calls 'the transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of theories and ideas' (Said 1991: 226)—, Said asks whether such movements represent a gain or a loss, and whether they result in organic continuation or complete transformation. The example of Lukács's *History and Class* consciousness, travelling via Lucien Goldmann in 1950s Paris to Raymond Williams in 1970s Cambridge, leads Said to conclude that when a theory travels—is removed from its initial context and transformed into an interpretative device—it tends to become domesticated, with its initial insurrectionary force both diffused and defused.

That this essay coincides with the beginnings of Said's distancing of himself from Critical Theory is far from coincidental, and its implications can be applied to his own repeated refusal to adopt the vocabulary of postcolonialism or accept absorption of his work into it.[4] Implicit in this refusal is perhaps Said's own fear that postcolonial theory, dependent itself on the transatlantic journeys of a diverse body of Francophone thought, has travelled in a similarly dilutory way. The potential shortcomings of the initial notion of 'travelling theory' are signaled, however, in the introduction to *New Formations* 3 (1997)—'How does theory travel? One way, which Said himself

doesn't deal with, is literally through the movement of people'—, in which the 'remarkably mobile body of theory' associated with Bakhtin is taken as an illustration of this idea (3-4). Said himself reacted to this ultimately negative use of travel in the 1982 essay in *Raritan* by revisiting the notion twelve years later and suggesting that the travels of particular bodies of theoretical work may actually be reinvigorated by border crossings (Said 1994b: 264).

Returning to Lukács, but considering the emergence of his work in Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre*, Said claims that there is a potential re-infusion of radicalism. He accordingly revisits and re-qualifies the conclusions of his previous piece: 'The work of theory, criticism, demystification, deconsecration, and decentralization […] is never finished. The point of theory therefore is to travel, always to move beyond its confinements, to emigrate, to remain in a sense in exile' (Said 1994b: 264). This valorization of travel and its association with exile is echoed in an almost contemporary work, *Culture and Imperialism*, in which travel is again adopted in a positive sense and associated with the oppositional, disruptive 'voyage in' of a number of colonial intellectuals. Said's determination to cling on to 'travel' as an item of critical currency, despite what James Clifford calls the 'historical taintedness' of the term,[5] reflects the ultimate ambivalence of exile and its unwillingness to act as the vehicle for the ideas to which Said attaches it. On the one hand, as Ashcroft and Ahluwalia make clear, mobility is not always a practical possibility for the exile who may often be 'locked in one place' (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999: 27); on the other, there is a constantly underlying questioning in Said of what happens when exile comes home, when—to borrow Clifford's terms—'dwelling-in-travelling' becomes simply 'dwelling', when constant dis-location becomes permanent re-location.

In what strikes some critics as a startling comment in *After the Last Sky*, Said claims that he prefers 'wandering'—i.e. the *alasthai* of exile—to 'return'; for this feared return is characterized by 'horrid clanging shutters' (Said 2000: 150) and the transformation of the experience of exile into religious fundamentalism or virulent nationalism. This is not evidence of a longing for perpetual exile, but

rather an oblique statement of Said's position on any future Palestinian state—Patrick Williams states this succinctly: 'what matters is not just achieving statehood, but precisely what kind of state it will be' (Williams 2001: xxiv). The already cited essay on 'The Potentate and the Traveler' explores this particular dilemma in the context of South Africa, asking what will happen to national education in a post-apartheid state once the exiles have returned. The ideal of the traveller, dependent 'on motion, on a willingness to go into different worlds, use different idioms, and understand a variety of disguises masks and rhetorics' (Said 2000: 404), becomes central to Said's writing. In an essay on 'Yeats and Decolonization' (later rewritten and incorporated into *Culture and Imperialism*), for instance, there is a quotation of Neruda's claim, in 'Deber del Poeta', that: 'through me, freedom and the sea // Will call in answer to the shrouded heart' (Said 1988: 20). When questioned by David Barsamian on his understanding of that passage, Said replied:

The idea is that human beings are not closed receptacles, but instruments through which other things flow. The idea is of the human being as a traveller, who can have imprinted upon him or her the sights and sounds and bodies and ideas of others so that he or she could become an other and can take in as much as the sea and therefore release the shrouds and the barriers and the doors that are so much part of human existence. (Said 1994: 61)

It is in this comment that the potential openness and plural vision of the exile is generalized to be presented, in the figure of the traveller, as a model for an intellectual life. A similar point emerges from Said's Reith Lecture on 'Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals', where travel and exile even seem temporarily to coalesce as the journeys of Marco Polo, one of the archetypal 'Orientalist' travellers of *Orientalism*, are granted a new significance:[6]

An intellectual is like a shipwrecked person who learns to live in a certain sense with the land, not on it, not like Robinson Crusoe whose goal is to colonize his little island, but more like Marco Polo, whose sense of the marvelous never fails him, and who is always a traveler, a provisional guest, not a freeloader, conqueror, or raider. / Because the exile sees things in terms of what has been left behind and what is actually here and now, there is a double perspective that never sees things in isolation (Said 1994a: 44).

* * *

This essay has suggested that although specifically Saidian notions of 'travel' and 'exile' emerge from Said's work, the two terms have both undergone a long gestation, have been—in the author's terms—'worked through', and that it is in this process that their related 'historical taintedness' has been explored to such an extent that they are no longer contradictory but rather intertwined and even complementary. In *Out of Place*, Said states that the core of his memories depends not only on language, but also on geography: 'especially in the displaced form of departures, arrivals, farewells, exile, nostalgia, homesickness, belonging, and travel itself' (Said 1999: xiv). The memoir presents an enigmatic image of Said, constantly desiring travel whilst in exile, yet experiencing that travel itself as a further exile: 'To me nothing more painful and paradoxically sought after characterizes my life than the many displacements from countries, cities, abodes, languages, environments that have kept me in motion all these years' (Said 1999: 217).

In Said himself—presented as 'a cluster of flowing currents' (Said 1999: 295) as opposed to a unified individual—, travel and exile co-exist, conflict, intertwine, overlap. Just as Bart Moore-Gilbert argued that 'the often profound paradoxes, even confusions within the argument of *Orientalism* do not derive in the first instance from Said's incompatible epistemological positions and methodological procedures, [but] arise primarily from [his] recognition, conflictual and uneven as this often is, that colonial discourse is in fact fractured in its operations, aims and affective economy' (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 43-44), so Said's reflection on the unstable inter-relationship of travel and exile ultimately reflects Said's recognition that postcolonial approaches to displacement are themselves inevitably composite and fractured.

Culture and Imperialism explores the idea of 'intertwined territories, overlapping histories' (Said 1993: 1-72), and it is from this more

complex, layered grasp of geography and history that the critical tool of Saidian counterpoint emerges. Exile and travel, far from being self-sufficient and independent practices, are themselves intertwined and overlapping. Whereas the relationship between exile and nationalism is dialectical, that between travel and exile is more openly contrapuntal. Commenting on James Clifford's efforts in the early 1990s to expand the frontiers of 'travel', a very hesitant bell hooks concedes that 'to answer the questions he poses is to propose a deconstruction of the conventional sense of travel, and put alongside it, or in its place, a theory of the journey that would expose the extent to which holding on to the concept of "travel" as we know it is also a way to hold on to imperialism' (hooks 1992: 173). References to travel in the Routledge *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* support this idea by explicitly linking the notion to colonial journeys (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1998: 96). I would suggest in conclusion that close attention to exile's relation to other journeys allows instead a prizing open of 'the conventional sense of travel' and leads to a heightened awareness of its often dissimulated ideological motives; but at the same time, it encourages a more openly comparative and inclusive approach to interconnected spatial practices—and to the literature, or to the (equally, or sometimes more important) silences, that these have engendered and continue to engender.[7]

Notes

[1]   See Marrouchi 2001: 63-65. In the introduction to *Reflections on Exile*, Said reasserts, in a reference to his former Columbia colleague Fred Dupee, the idea that 'the art of the essay [is] a way of exploring what [is] new and original in our time regardless of professional hobbles' (Said 2000: xiii). On this subject, see also Williams 2001: xiii.

[2]   For a fuller commentary on this photograph, see Osborne 2000: 143-44.

[3]   See Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999: 26: 'One of the most characteristic aspects of Said's deeply complex theoretical position is that, while situated for most of his working life in one place, at Columbia University in New York, his whole orientation, his preference, his psychological disposition, has been

towards travel. Travel, both actually and geographically, but more particularly metaphorically, for it is in travel and movement across boundaries that Said feels that the true heterogeneity, the true complexity and the wonder of life can be unravelled'. An updated and revised version of this text was published in the Routledge Critical Thinkers series in 2001.

[4]   For a full and illuminating discussion of Said's relationship to postcolonial theory, see Williams 2001a.

[5]   Clifford writes: 'I hang on to "travel" as a term of cultural comparison precisely because of its historical taintedness, its associations with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents, and the like. I prefer it to more apparently neutral, and "theoretical", terms, such as "displacement", which can make the drawing of equivalences between historical experiences too easy' (Clifford 1997: 39).

[6]   In Dennis Porter's critique of *Orientalism*, one of the earliest to appear, Marco Polo is one of the case studies used to reveal the existence of counter-hegemonic voices within a united tradition of Orientalist discourse (Porter 1983).

[7]   James Clifford describes 'a very large domain of comparative cultural studies: diverse, interconnected histories of travel and displacement in the late twentieth century' (Clifford 1997: 18), and a similar, entirely unconnected project has emerged from the work of Jean-Didier Urbain, who has proposed in *Secrets de voyage* an understanding of journeys in which the 'voyage forcé' of exile plays a specific role in a more complex and inclusive approach to contemporary mobility (Urbain 1998: 53).

Travel in the French Black Atlantic: dialoguing and diverging between Aimé Césaire and Edouard Glissant

ANDY STAFFORD

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Finding the French Black Atlantic

'The Sea is History', suggests the St. Lucian poet and Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott. He might have said also: 'History is sea'. For, as the British sociologist Paul Gilroy has argued cogently in his seminal 1993 work *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*, it is, in modern history, the experience of the transatlantic slave trade that has made Black people—Africans—the first subjects of modernity. Not only were Black slaves the first and most extreme examples of contemporary mass exploitation and mercantilism based on skin colour, but also the victims were confronted with a choice of Hegelian dimensions: remain a slave and justify the master's existence, or die by suicide and deny the Master's *raison d'être*.

This 'negative dialectical choice' can be found in mid-Atlantic narratives: one need only think of the moving sequence in Stephen Spielberg's (otherwise flawed) film *Amistad*, where slaves slip quietly overboard. There is no heroic grandeur in this, but is all the more poignant for it. We can see this negative dialectical choice also in the Senegalese Sembene Ousmane's short story 'Le Voltaïque', where the story is told of how Africans, it is believed, forged the cultural

practice of scarring the body. An African, Amoo, in the Volta region of West Africa, chased by (Black) slave-traders first leaves his mother to die and then repeatedly cuts his cherished daughter's skin so that no slave-trader will accept what amounts (for slave-traders) to damaged goods. This defiant cruelty plays out a 'dialogue', across the Atlantic, with Guatemalan anti-imperialist struggle as figured by the playwright Armand Gatti, in his one-act play *Le Quetzal*, in which suicide is the seen as the ultimate defiance of imperial subjugation. Interestingly, both of these pieces are written at about the same time: Gatti's play in 1958, and Sembene's short story in 1962, just as colonial control is being finally overthrown.

This 'dialogue' across the Atlantic continues. Sembene's story, involving a certain African slave-trader called Momutu, prefigures Aimé Césaire's 1966 play, *Une Saison au Congo*, about the anti-colonialist Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba, assassinated in 1961 by the CIA and Belgian intelligence, having been delivered to them by none other than Mobutu, the maverick and brutal leader of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) for the following thirty years. In his play Césaire calls this perfidious African character Mokutu. So with Mokutu and Momutu, it is hard, in both Sembene's and Césaire's works, not to think of Mobutu.

Sembene's parallel with current African politics is however a little more complex, as Momutu's treachery towards fellow Africans takes place in another time (that of slavery). But the allegorical suggestion is that, to narrate the history of resistance to slavery in 1962 is to reinforce a critique of both neo-colonialism and its crony clients, such as Mobutu.[1]

The historical depth and significance of the Black Atlantic go further. The relationship between the slave trade and the first experience of modernity by Africans has led many to see a parallel with another outrage of exile and extermination, located at the other end of modernity's troubled trajectory, namely the Holocaust. The French Jew and resistance activist André Schwarz-Bart's novel *La Mulâtresse Solitude* (1972)—which follows two generations of African women across the Atlantic and into slavery, the daughter becoming a 'marron', a defiant escapee from slavery—followed his prize-winning

historical novel *Le Dernier des justes* (1959) which traced anti-semitism and resistance through history.[2] Indeed, though Paul Gilroy rightly warns of the dangers of comparing Slavery and the Holocaust—i.e. what we might call an analogical view of history—, his analysis of Black Atlantic cultural forms draws on Jewish experience and thought.[3]

The beauty of Gilroy's analysis however is also his 'anti-anti-essentialism'. For 'anti-anti-essentialism' helps us negotiate the complex relationship between determinism and freedom within agency and cultural identity, without falling into crude racial categories, but also avoiding postmodernist utopias of purely fluid identity. In relation to the Caribbean, Gilroy's anti-anti-essentialist strategy in *The Black Atlantic* opens up the question of cultural identity given a history of exilic travel. And, although his theoretical investigation clearly centres on modernity as *vécu* (lived experience), Gilroy's historical analysis has the advantage of continuing to posit the deep connections between racism and slavery.

Gilroy's book has inspired others to work on Black Atlantic Studies. Alasdair Pettinger's anthology of Black Atlantic travel texts, *Always Elsewhere*, is salutary. Yet, given the brief overview above of the 'dialogue' in the French Black Atlantic, his anthology of English-speaking texts (by Equiano, Douglass, Wright, Beryl Gilroy, to name but a few) serves only to make us think of the equivalent anthology missing in French.[4] Indeed, markedly absent in Francophone studies is any consideration of the Black Atlantic phenomenon in its totality (between France, Africa and the Americas). Romuald Fonkoua's collection of essays (1999), on discourses of travel specifically between Africa and the Caribbean, manages to avoid, despite other strengths, the postcolonial question: there is no attempt to posit a synthesis of Black Atlantic culture in French. And similar to Petrine Archer-Shaw's recent book on Negrophilia in 1920s France (2000), Michel Fabre's extensive work tends to concentrate on North American Blacks visiting France.

So, though such studies are part of a Black Atlantic secondary corpus, none goes as far as to bring together the written experiences

of the French Black Atlantic, and consider them, as has been done in English by Pettinger, within a politicized history of exile, travel and cultural exchange. Language, history and tradition all suggest that any primary corpus in French will look different from its Anglophone counterpart.

My first aim, however, in this article is not so much to establish this primary corpus, but to make a preliminary consideration of the relationship between Africa and the Caribbean in the French-speaking world. This I consider to be the urgent cultural-theoretical task—if any anthology is to be assembled—, as this relationship will influence the weight given to both West African and Caribbean cultures, and that given to the theme of exilic travel narratives. I will then analyze, briefly, a crucial debate within this, namely the archetypal 'return to Africa', as represented by Martinican poet and playwright Aimé Césaire, and by his compatriot the novelist, poet and theorist Edouard Glissant. Since both are from Martinique, one of a number of islands that—in historical terms—have to be excluded from the category of the 'post-colonial', the weight of slavery, History, upon its creole culture is all the more complex.

Triangular Circuits

It is important to stress though that Black Atlantic Studies is not concerned simply with the legacy of slavery. As the section in Fonkoua's collection of essays entitled 'voyage à l'envers' (ethnography in reverse) suggests, the French Black Atlantic has a rich tradition of turning the tables on French ethnography. One need look no further than the line of writers running from Ousmane Socé,[5] through Bernard Dadié, Pius Ngandu Nkashama, to (most recently) Alain Mabanckou.[6] There are doubtless many others who could figure in this reverse ethnography of the French Black Atlantic.

The transatlantic trip from Africa to the United States should not be ignored either—Dadié and then Emmanuel Dongala are known for their narratives of trips to New York (1964 and 1967

respectively), following Senghor's famous 1955 ode to the city. Furthermore, we may now even speak of an important move of Haitians to Canada; such that even the triangular dialogue—'the trialogue'—could itself be neologistically updated, to a 'quadrologue'!

My question is, however: is there any one element in this complex constellation of travel and exile in the Black Atlantic experience that we may wish to privilege?

Caribbean-Africa-Caribbean: Privileged Dialogue?

There is no doubt that, within the French Black Atlantic, cultural practices and phenomena have travelled. Orality is perhaps the best example—'paroles de nuit' are a central feature of both West African and Caribbean cultures, even to the extent that writers, on both sides of the Atlantic, have been exercised regularly by the paradox of writing oral stories down, in collections of short stories and 'contes'. Similarly, Voodoo practices and myths, such as 'legba', the guardian of the crossroads of life, have survived the Atlantic journey and exilic enracination in a new land, albeit with different levels of modification, adaptation and application (see Munro 2000: 23-24).

Indeed, there is no better endorsement of the African-Caribbean connection than in the words of the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire: 'Je suis à la jonction de deux traditions: américain par la géographie, africain par l'histoire' (quoted in Ngal 1994: 13). It may be seen as ironic then that, given this paper's aim to establish the depth of the transatlantic 'dialogue', my first example in this article explicitly *undermines* the replication of cultural forms across the Atlantic.

Sembene's short story about the origins of tribal scars is at pains to underline that scarring exists *nowhere* across the Atlantic: it is a purely African phenomenon (Sembene 1962: 192). It would be easy of course, in response, to see Sembene's short story as a dialoguing precursor of the spirit of 'marronnage'. The Caribbean phenomenon of marooning, in which slaves escaped the plantations by hiding in the hills, could be seen to be in 'dialogue' with Amoo as he disappears into the African hinterland to hide from slave traders, and

finally defies them with his desperate disfiguring of his daughter.[7] But, given Gilroy's placing of the experience of slavery at the earliest—therefore, presumably, central—experience of modernity, maybe we should stress the contradictory, paradoxical, at times deaf dialogue in the Black Atlantic.

Again, it is Aimé Césaire who underlines the paradox of being from Africa and yet at the same time not from Africa: 'L'Afrique, même si je ne la connais pas bien, je la sens. Elle fait partie de ma géographie intérieure' (1967 interview, quoted in Brichaux-Houyoux 1993: 16). Indeed Césaire plays out this ambivalence towards Africa in his poetry. Not surprisingly, then, his stunning surrealist poetic blast, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, is a classic Black Atlantic text in French, written by a Martinican whose ancestry was involved in a slave revolt in 1833 (Ngal 1994: 21-26), and who goes to France in the 1930s, meets Africans for the first time in Paris, sets up the first journals of Negritude, and then publishes his epic poem.

The 'return' in the poem is brilliantly ambiguous: clearly about Martinique, from the start, Césaire/the narrator draws a pessimistic picture of 1930s Martinique, painting a vivid picture of a downtrodden, colonized people. The following is a description of the main town of Martinique, Fort-de-France:

Au bout du petit matin, cette ville plate—étalée, trébuchée de son bon sens, inerte, essoufflée sous son fardeau géometrique de croix éternellement recommençante, indocile à son sort, muette, contrariée de toutes façons, incapable de croître selon le suc de cette terre, embarrassée, rognée, réduite, en rupture de faune et de flore. (Césaire 1983: 8-9)

Eventually, in the *Cahier*, Césaire sees the Martinican people standing up for themselves. Yet this is only envisaged and exhorted *after* a promotion of 'blackness', Negritude, which passes necessarily across the Atlantic and through an Africa that Césaire had never visited.

Césaire himself had cemented the deep African/Caribbean link with parallel works on murdered Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba and a biography of Toussaint Louverture, the Haitian leader of the only successful slave revolt of the modern period. For one critic, Victor Hountondji, the *Cahier* is concerned with a deeply spiritual

exile from Africa (Hountondji 1993). In an attempt to overcome feelings of exile, there is a returning to 'roots' in Césaire's poetry that will become highly problematic for Edouard Glissant, for reasons that will be explored below.

In the *Cahier* Césaire plays out many of the contradictions that Gilroy has described (following DuBois) as 'double consciousness'. The best example is when the narrator watches a black vagrant sitting in the Paris underground, and is simultaneously complicit in, and yet empathetic with this victim of discrimination (known as the 'Comique et laid' sequence; Césaire 1983: 40-41). Significantly, this scene takes place in Paris. It is the 'trialogue' that exists in Césaire's consciousness (between France-Martinique-Africa) that opens up the 'solution' for Caribbean identity (and for Black people in general), placing a consideration on the history of slavery as the crucial element. The 'malédiction' which comes 'd'au fond de la cale', as the poem suggests about itself, represents a key moment in the turning round of Martinicans, away from their wretched, downtrodden state, and, finally becoming 'debout', as they look towards national and social liberation. Toussaint Louverture becomes emblematic for Césaire here. Indeed, for the Guadeloupean novelist Daniel Maximin, speaking in 1998 during the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery, the resistance to slavery is the only aspect of the event worth commemorating (Maximin 1998: 10-12).

However, if the Caribbean, Africa and Europe play out in Césaire's work a 'circuit triangulaire'—to borrow Martin Munro's expression (Munro 2000)—, this is not a straightforward arrangement. In his fifth chapter, Munro shows how critics tend to see the Caribbean Césaire in dialogue with, and in search of, his African roots, accordingly underestimating the European dimension. Munro points not only to Césaire's education and erudition in the European (especially French, of course) tradition, but also to the very mix of European culture at the heart of the meeting between Carib and Arawak indigenous cultures (or what was left of it post-Columbus) and African exiled culture. Munro's example of rhythms in Césaire's poetry shows how, in a miscegenation of cultural forms

that Césaire has imbibed, European religious singing is mixed with indigenous and exilic song. It is all too easy, he suggests, to see rhythm in Césaire's *Cahier*, as a purely African phenomenon that has travelled across the Atlantic. Munro's emphasis on the 'circuit', on the movement of cultural forms and practices, in all directions, requires then complex negotiation and navigation. There is perhaps 'no return to roots' in Caribbean consciousness; put another way, the complex tradition/modernity debate that exists in Africa does not pertain to the other side of the Atlantic; or rather perhaps it is all the more complex for the hybrid Caribbean experience. It is here that theories of *créolité* come into their own.

Divergences of History: (hi)stories

History, of course, is central to our analysis of the relationship between Africa and the Caribbean. There is something ahistorical, for example, about a recent claim—heard in a talk on African music given in the Ivory Coast—that rap is African. Though clearly aware of a deep transatlantic dialogue, this claim underplays if not ignores for example the role of New York Black culture.

Moving away from a totalizing notion of history, Edouard Glissant, compatriot and former pupil of Césaire's, has tried to promote the cultural and historical contradictions of being Caribbean as a key element of identity. Creole culture in the Caribbean, Glissant seems to be arguing, is not a diasporic or exilic culture, a mere outpost of African society. The true Africa has a veil drawn over it for the Caribbean descendant.[8]

More problematically, Glissant's work tends now to question the slave trade as a crucial determinant in Caribbean cultural identity.[9] In a 1994 essay, 'Le chaos-monde, l'oral et l'écrit', Glissant criticizes Western tradition's obsession with foundational myths and legitimizing discourse—the promised land, the putting down of roots, ownership and appropriation of the land, scientific attempts to understand the Other (and therefore to own the other—he uses here a neat play on the word 'com-prendre'). Against these myths Glissant insists upon the fluid, ephemeral, oral, hybrid, non-possessive nature

of Caribbean culture. This idea is based on the complete absence of a foundational myth in Native American culture:

Dans les mythes du Popol-Vuh et du Chilam-Balam, il y a une création du monde. Mais ce qui est intéressant dans ces mythes amérindiens, c'est [...] qu'il y ait un 'trou' entre la création du monde et le début de l'histoire, c'est-à-dire le premier homme. La pensée du mythe fondateur occidental ne pourrait pas admettre ce 'trou'. C'est aussi pourquoi dans les mythes amérindiens, l'homme ne se considère pas comme le propriétaire, mais comme le gardien de la terre. Comme celui qui est là pour l'honorer, l'entretenir, non pas la violer, non pas la souiller. Pourquoi? Parce que ce trou, cette absence, qui se creuse entre la création du monde et le début de l'histoire mythique et l'apparition du premier homme, c'est le signe béant que la légitimisation de la propreté et de l'appropriation de la terre n'existe pas. (Glissant 1994a: 120-21)

Problematically perhaps for an account of the role of slavery in the foundation of Caribbean identity, Glissant claims that this lack of a foundational myth defines contemporary Caribbean creole culture, *antillanité*, Caribbeanness. This 'trou' leads to a chaotic conception of the world, in the positive sense of the word, in which world cultures have a 'poetics of relation', speaking to each other on an equal footing and in a subterranean fashion.

This idea is a more recent feature of Glissant's work, what we might call the 'rhizomatic turn'. Here he has borrowed quite openly the metaphor of the rhizome from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. We do not have 'roots', like a tree, in the manner that Césaire might have suggested in his poetics—remember the passage cited above in which Martinican people were, according to Césaire's *Cahier*, 'alienated from its flora and fauna'. For Glissant, creole culture is everywhere, rhizomatically linked across the Caribbean (and increasingly throughout the World), like a network of mushrooms—invisible but stretching for miles, spawning in the earth, but not voraciously 'owning' it, as a tree might.

It is interesting to note however that, like other Caribbean Francophone writers, Glissant does not openly reject Césaire's root-based metaphor of identity, based on a 'return' to Africa. Glissant's 'poétique de la relation' grows out—if we can excuse the expression—of the Cesairian world-view.[10] Indeed, Glissant, like so

many other Caribbean writers, was heavily influenced by Césaire in his early career.

In the 1950s, not only was Glissant an activist in Martinican independence groups, he was also writing for the left-wing journal *Les Lettres nouvelles* in Paris, alongside Maurice Nadeau, Roland Barthes and Geneviève Serreau. His poetry in this crucial period of the 1950s displays a deep attachment to exilic history. The '4e Chant' in *Les Indes*, 'Péripétie', begins with '[l]a Traite' (Glissant 1955: 135); and in *Le Sel noir* (1960), central titles are 'Afrique' and 'Plaie'. Yet we can already find in this early poetry stirrings of his ambivalence towards the idea of African 'roots'. In *Le Sel noir* he declares: 'une autre terre m'appelle. C'est l'Afrique et ce ne l'est pas' (Glissant 1960: 107). He begins to underline too that the Caribbean people is 'né d'un bouillon de cultures' (Glissant 1998: 20). Nevertheless, Glissant's writings in the 1950s also hold the same consciousness of a triangular circuit that we saw in Césaire: the brief essays that make up his collection *Soleil de la conscience*, originally published in the 1950s, display his attachment to Paris, in a highly Cesairian fashion, and recognize that an Atlantic 'hole' exists for Caribbeans, which may then have been more foundational (mythically or not) than his later writing may subsequently accept: 'L'Atlantique qu'il nous faut traverser,' Glissant suggests poetically in 1955, 'c'est la chaotique ténèbre que font nos lumières mêmes' (Glissant 1998: 72).

This early dialectical view of the chaos within the Black Atlantic links, of course, to Glissant's more recent writings on 'Le Chaos-monde' (1994a), and anticipates his attempts to reduce, or get past, an Africa-dependent identity. By positing a poetics of relation in which cultures have multiple exchanges and contacts, but do not control or own each other (or anything it seems), Glissant—whose very name seems to fit this post-structuralist vision—sets up creoleness and creolization as a positive, globalized, Proudhon-style chaos.

The transitional text by Glissant here is his 1981 *Le Discours antillais*, where the rhizome metaphor is first used—interestingly, Gilroy criticizes the English translator of this key text for suppressing Glissant's reference to *Mille-Plateaux* (Gilroy 1993: 31).

As Mireille Rosello has pointed out, *Le Discours antillais* underlines the necessity of 'détour' in the 'retour', in any journey from the Caribbean across the Atlantic, and this detour must take in France (Rosello 1993: 177). Though part of a 'traite à rebours', the large movement of *Antillais* towards France is, according to Glissant, a crucial moment in the discovery of Caribbeanness (Glissant 1981: 34).

So, clearly, in *Le Discours antillais* Glissant is aware of the need for a 'return' to Africa, to find '"la part africaine" [...] si longtemps méprisée, refoulée, niée' (Glissant 1981: 35). But this justification of Negritude needs also to accept that there are detours to be made. Just as we saw with Césaire, there is in Glissant's Atlantic consciousness a triangular circuit, rather than a dyadic dialogue. Such is Glissant's ongoing engagement with the history of the slave past, this triangular world in which both Glissant and Césaire operate, that it was ironized by Glissant in his play *Monsieur Toussaint* as a reversal of the triangular trade.[11]

Thus Glissant is in no way involved in denying History—on the contrary, his story 'Le Premier voyage' replays Atlantic exilic slave narratives, in the reversal operated by the 'return' (Glissant, 1994b). But history is reconfigured, its weight reassessed, Negritude is seen as a necessary, but fundamentally finished stage towards what he calls 'Relation': the belief that the whole world is creolized, and, by extension, that 'race' is no longer a relevant political or cultural category.[12] Indeed, in the essay which accompanies 'Le Premier voyage', 'Le Chaos-monde', he begins to reassess, if not exclude—I would argue in a rather voluntarist and polemical fashion—French culture, in favour of a creolized culture.[13] He lays down the gauntlet to Occidental (and specifically French) culture: creole orality will soon replace the ossified Western literary tradition, sold out as the latter is to a purely visual, televisual (i.e. non-literary) cultural communion. The sarcastic, caustic *créole* story, devoid of a foundational myth, will become the new Literature (Glissant 1994a: 121).[14]

This promotion of creolization in Glissant's writing today is a leap of faith in the future. For the question is, does it ignore or wish away Martinique's (and Guadeloupe's) continued colonial status (even though officially both islands are no longer colonies, but simply part of France)? His 'vision prophétique du passé' (Glissant 1986: 7) seems to stumble on questions of postcoloniality. Critics today may argue over Césaire's failure or otherwise to achieve liberation and social improvements in Martinique.[15] But Glissant now runs the risk of leaving history—and therefore the future—behind.

In his 1955 piece on Césaire's *Cahier* (Glissant 1969: 143-50)—and repeated more generally in a discussion in a 1959 debate on African Democracy[16]—Glissant had discussed the relation between Césaire's poetry and a non-liberated Martinique. Not only is Glissant's 1955 analysis interesting for its geological attachment to earth, but also he predicted that Césaire's poetry would not be properly understood and appreciated in Martinique *until* full freedom had been achieved:[17]

Ces œuvres de Césaire *prendront* leur plein sens quand elles seront intégrées à une littérature du pays même […]. L'œuvre risque de pâlir, de ternir (quand même prise en charge ailleurs, en France ou en Afrique par exemple), si elle ne reçoit pas de son pays l'approbation: si la terre où elle se boute demeure absente: décérébrée, assimilée: non créatrice. […] Autrement dit: il faut que la terre ait palpité au moins une fois dans sa liberté totale, pour que le poème, qui a signifié la terre, s'installe à jamais dans sa vérité. (Glissant 1969: 149-50; Glissant's emphasis)

Nearly fifty years after writing this, Glissant's prediction of a world of creolized 'diversalité'—to quote the neologism developed by Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant (1999)—in which diversity and universality are combined, seems to want to sidestep, or leap over, the historical and geo-political barrier—independence, postcoloniality—and proceed to challenge French culture with a creolized but non-liberated (world) culture. In positing this chaotic creolized world culture, fully diverse but linked rhizomatically, Glissant seems to be ignoring a number of important elements.[18] Firstly, Césaire was 'wrong': the need for Negritude has not been surpassed, in the way that Césaire had predicted in the 1950s (Césaire 1955: 29). The geographical outrage of *les Antilles* as part of

France—not to mention Europe—suggests a 'slavery hangover', as does the persistence of racism in the world. The Sartrean voluntarism so evident in Fanon's claim at the end of *Peau noire masques blancs*— 'Je ne suis pas prisonnier de l'Histoire' (Fanon 1952: 186)—has an echo in contemporary theories of *créolité* such as Glissant's. Jean-Godfroy Bidima's critique of Césaire as 'romantique' (Bidima 1997: 20-21) leaves me wondering whether Glissant himself is no more than a 'post-romantic'.

Conclusion

Since the Francophone Caribbean became a region of France in 1958, a new exile has been taking place in its society, described by Césaire as 'genocide by substitution', whereby Francophone Caribbeans have had to leave, either Haiti because of persecution, or the French colonial islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, to live in metropolitan France, due to a lack of jobs and opportunities. Half of French-speaking Caribbeans are now estimated to live in France (Spaas 2000: 116).[19]

In Guadeloupe and Martinique there was a double exile: the transatlantic slave trade, and then deep discrimination by the colonial authorities. So perhaps a new exile is troubling Caribbean 'citizens' of the French Republic—a third, triple exile. The view of postmodernity in Glissant's writing and his conception of history, like that of Depestre's view of exile (see Munro 2000: 248-49), seems to me to be dangerous both in terms of morale and of politics. For this is precisely the big debate at the heart of the Black Atlantic, and perhaps one of its defining features: not only what is the weight of history, but also: what is its part in liberation? All the more reason to remember that the Sea is History, and but also that History is Sea.

Notes

[1] For an analysis of Sembene's 1962 collection of short stories, see Murphy 2000: 40-66.

[2] This epic novel, though causing much controversy, won the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 1959.

[3] Sembene's short story 'Le Voltaïque' makes this connection obliquely, for there is a common belief suggested in the short story that, on the back of the slave trade, the Whites were making black skins into shoes (Sembene 1962: 206). See also Stafford 1998.

[4] Pettinger's anthology does include one (translated) Francophone piece, 'A Spirit from the Mountains', an extract from Kpomassie 1981, as well as a useful 'Further Reading' section that includes Francophone material (Pettinger 1998: 283-87).

[5] Apart from the ethnographic 'turning of the tables' in Socé's classic 1937 novel *Mirages de Paris*, there is a 'Black Atlantic moment' in the deeply moved (and moving) account of the Duke Ellington concert at the Salle Pleyel (Socé 1964: 164-66).

[6] Alain Mabanckou's novel *Bleu, blanc, rouge* (1998) brilliantly sends up both the pull of France on African societies, and the myth of France that is created within the African imaginary.

[7] The coastline liminality of the slave-trade, in opposition to which Sembene's 'Voltaique' hinterland sets itself up, can be seen in the recent work by the British-Zanzibar visual artist Lubaina Himid.

[8] Glissant's fictional prose—especially in its most recent manifestations—has emphasized the inability to recognize Africa, or rather the mythical form that Africa takes to his (and other Caribbeans') eyes. See Bonnet 1999.

[9] Paul Gilroy has categorized the four conceptions in the definition of Black 'identity' thus: the integral, clean or absolute self, the relational or intersubjective self, the plural self, double or split, and the fragmentary, unintegrated self; and, stressing that this is not an evolutionary list, he places Glissant's in the second category (Gilroy 1995: 22). My thanks to Anne-Marie Fortier for drawing my attention to this article.

[10] Glissant accepts none of Deleuze's and Guattari's three modes of nomadism as part of the rhizome: '[l]e rhizome n'est pas nomade', he declares in 'Note 1' of 'Littératures nationales' (Glissant 1981: 197), instead 'il s'enracine, même dans l'air'. This nodal, but not nomadic aspect of the rhizomatic function means that the rhizome, because not 'de souche', is predisposed 'à "accepter" l'inconcevable de l'autre'; and this leads for Glissant to a potentiality of growth which does not infringe: 'le bourgeon nouveau toujours possible, qui est *à côté*'.

[11] Interestingly, Glissant seems to repeat at the end of the *Le Discours antillais* Césaire's view at the start of the *Cahier* of the Martinican people's down-trodden state (see, for example, Glissant 1981: 465).

[12] Though biologically 'race' is a redundant category, politically (therefore culturally) it still exists because of the persistence of racism. The strength of Gilroy's anti-anti-essentialism is that it does not ignore, abstractly, the existence of racism. 'Race' is perhaps, ironically, a white person's problem more than a Black person's (if we are not talking about the *vécu*). In other words, to eliminate racism, we have to say where it comes from and why white people are prone to it: History, including slavery (as well as colonialism and xenophobia), is crucial in this. Glissant's promotion of *histoires* over *Histoire* risks overlooking explanation as a transformatory category. My only regret is that Gilroy's recent set of essays (2000) appears to have abandoned anti-anti-essentialism.

[13] Given the large exclusion from the French canon of African and Caribbean writers—in the recent Pléïade *Anthologie de la poésie française du XXe Siècle*, only Damas, Glissant, Césaire, Senghor are represented (and with the exception of Senghor, all are from French *Départements* in the Antilles)—Glissant's challenge is an audacious one.

[14] There is surely a 'debate' to be analyzed between Glissant's view of a non-existent 'mythe fondateur' in the Caribbean, and Kateb Yacine's self-conscious (i.e. 'artificial') creation of one with respect to Algerian nationhood in his classic 1956 novel *Nedjma*.

[15] See Confiant (1993) for a stinging critique of Césaire's political record with respect to decolonization and social protest; and Lilyan Kesteloot's defence (1995), in a special issue of *Présence Africaine* devoted to Aimé Césaire.

[16] See *Les Lettres nouvelles* 3 June 1959, 40-43.

[17] In *Le Discours antillais*, Glissant reiterates this point in his argument for 'détour': the *Cahier*, he argues, will soon be more popular in Senegal than in Martinique (Glissant 1981: 35). Celia Britton underlines Glissant's support for Fanon in the 1950s and early 1960s (Britton 1999: 201). Though perhaps the archetypal Francophone Black Atlantic figure, who, by going to Algeria and adopting it, links all of Africa to the Caribbean, Fanon is however, as Britton suggests, not understood in the Caribbean, rather like Césaire's *Cahier*. Indeed, the sarcastic, caustic and sceptical (carnivalesque?) nature of Caribbean culture in French, 'la parole antillaise', which Glissant underlines (Glissant 1994a: 121), may be due to the fact that Guadeloupe and Martinique have not (yet) achieved postcoloniality, that, despite the historical resistance to slavery, the French Antilles are no closer to being liberated.

[18] Glissant refuses to use the term 'la créolité', tinged as it is with essentialism, preferring to speak of 'la créolisation'. Richard Burton has had a recent spat with Raphaël Confiant in which he argues that Creole language and

culture (in Martinique at least) are less triumphant than has been claimed by champions of creole culture (Burton 1997: 264-65). This is hinted at by Rosello too (1992: 52). However, in questioning the basis of *creolité*, there is a danger of falling into the myths of afrocentrism, as Ama Mazama has recently, and quite self-consciously, done: see A. Mazama (aka Marie-Josée Cérol), 'Critique afrocentrique de *L'Eloge de la créolité*' (in Condé & Cottenet-Hage 1995: 85-99). A more circumspect questioning of *creolité* is provided by Kathleen Balutansky's reading of Condé's 1989 novel *La Traversée de la Mangrove* (in Condé & Cottenet-Hage 1995: 101-11).

[19]   This is the subject of Daniel Boukman's play *Les Négriers* (1971).

Journeys between Cultures, Journeys within Cultures: understanding travel and exile in Ousmane Socé and Azouz Begag

SIOBHÁN SHILTON

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Holding on to the concept of 'travel' as we know it is also a way to hold on to imperialism. (hooks 1992: 173)

The pathos of exile is in the loss of contact with the solidity and the satisfaction of earth: homecoming is out of the question. (Said 2000: 179)

What is at stake is a comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling *and* traveling: traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling. (Clifford 1997: 36)

Although separated by generation and sociopolitical context, Ousmane Socé's *Mirages de Paris* (1937) and Azouz Begag's *Béni ou le Paradis Privé* (1989) share a quest for self-definition and come to terms with the problem of synthesizing two cultures, one dominant, the other marginalized. Socé's text depicts a journey from Senegal to Paris, during the time of the Colonial Exposition of 1931, by Fara, an *évolué*. Begag's contemporary text depicts the journeying (both actual and metaphorical) of Béni, a child of North African origins, born in Lyons to Algerian parents; he travels *literally* within French society and *internally* within himself. The purpose of this article is to

consider these journeys to and within the metropolitan 'contact zones' of Paris and Lyons in both a colonial and a postcolonial context, examining them in relation to travel and exile. These texts widen the definition of these concepts, contributing to an understanding of travel more complex than that commonly accepted in contemporary France.

Recent attitudes to travel in France are exemplified by the manifesto of the *Pour une littérature voyageuse* movement (edited by Michel Le Bris in 1992), which might be seen as a continuation of the traditional notion of travel literature. The traveller is restricted to a white, male European who, like the colonial explorer or adventurer whose route he retraces, is in search of Otherness. Such definitions exclude other types of travel such as exile, which is explicitly rejected in the manifesto; among Lacarrière's list of journeys to be excluded (on the basis of their inferiority to 'flânerie') is 'le voyage civil forcé (l'exilé, le déplacé, le déporté)…' (Lacarrière 1992: 105).

The texts of Socé and Begag challenge these definitions, disrupting vectors by countering the traditional colonial centrifugal direction of journeys to the 'periphery', searching for the *integration* of Self and Other and, most importantly, rethinking exile as a form of travel. This article proposes to elucidate the complex relationship between travel and exile, looking at these concepts both literally and epistemologically. It will consider usually occluded modes of 'travel', examining the interrelationship of seemingly fixed categories such as exile and tourism, normally presented as polar opposites. It will also attempt to distinguish between the frequently conflated concepts of exile and immigration as they emerge in these texts.

My analysis of these works will begin with a discussion of Fara's journey to the metropole and his double exile from the cultures of both colonizer and colonized. Socé's protagonist's *literal* exile, first from the village of his birth, then from Senegal, is accompanied by a series of experiences of *metaphorical* exile. This will be followed by a consideration of Begag's 'Beur' novel,[1] which does not involve *literal* travel or exile. Although texts by authors of North African descent, who did not themselves experience the actual exilic journey undergone by first-generation immigrants, might not be classed as

travel literature, 'Beur literature' provides a corpus through which we may explore travel literature differently.

As opposed to constituting *travel* literature, this corpus might be seen as a 'literature of dwelling'. The literal movement of the protagonist in Begag's novel between the centre (Lyons) and the periphery (the *banlieue*) might, of course, be counted as 'travel'. However, as this movement is frequent and repeated, it would seem to correspond with James Clifford's notion of 'traveling-in-dwelling' (Clifford 1997: 36). Béni is required to 'travel' between cultures on a daily basis. As a *passeur* or translator, he might be seen as one of the marginalized 'travellers' Clifford includes in his article 'Traveling Cultures' (Clifford 1997: 25). Primarily, Begag's novel uses the concepts of travel and exile *metaphorically*.

The child of immigrant parents is not *literally* in exile. However, Begag's novel shares many aspects of the imagery and language of exile. Although Béni is not geographically displaced and has not undergone a *physical* rupture, he also shares the feelings of solitude and alienation common to exilic experiences. Indeed, he refers to his attempt to wrench himself from his parents' culture as a 'rupture' (Begag 1989: 119).

Despite the difference in their contexts, the figures of the *évolué* and the child of North African descent are doubly exiled in a similar way from the cultures they strive to reconcile. As they do not belong simply to *one* territory or culture, it is, in a sense, impossible for them to 'return home', a notion Le Bris's manifesto seems to take for granted. This article will consider both texts in relation to the 'myth of return', exploring whether the idea of 'home' may be defined in a Francophone context, and conclude that perhaps the only viable solution for *inbetween* figures such as Socé and Begag is to create a new space, or an 'imagined territory', in writing (Lay-Chenchabi 2001).

Finally, the article will address the way in which both texts call into question the familiar notions of culture, ethnicity and identity by using the metaphor of 'travel' *epistemologically*. Clifford suggests that if we rethink culture in terms of travel, 'then the organic, naturalizing

bias of the term "culture"—seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, and so on—is questioned' (Clifford 1997: 25). If subjects are seen as mobile, boundaries become arbitrary and such notions are revealed to be mere socio-cultural constructions. The metropolitan 'contact zones' depicted by Socé and Begag illustrate Clifford's declaration that 'the great urban centers could be understood as specific, powerful sites of dwelling/traveling', as places of 'departures, arrivals and transits' (Clifford 1997: 30). The diversity of travellers and transnational influences in their works destabilizes the metropole and challenges the idea of a cohesive French 'national' identity. Socé's text of 1937, which threatens the Colonial Exposition's efforts to confirm France's superiority as an imperial power is, in a sense, prophetic of the more complex postcolonial habitus depicted in Begag's text of 1989, which challenges definitions of 'Frenchness' in the context of mass immigration and increased globalization.

By foregrounding 'travel' as a way to understand culture, Socé and Begag de-essentialize Self and Other, destabilizing the colonizer/colonized hierarchy. In this way, they might be said to decolonize the concept of 'travel', ridding it of the imperialist connotations it has in much contemporary travel literature in France. They challenge the 'ethnographic posture' (Clifford 1997: 30) inevitably adopted by the Western traveller, reversing the direction of the objectifying gaze and revealing the 'Other' to consist of multiple, fragmented 'others' which cannot be defined. By endowing these others with movement, Socé and Begag reveal their view of identity as a fluid, dynamic construct and challenge the fixed categories that are the basis for their condition of exile.

Le Voyage à l'Envers: Fara as Traveller and Exile

The first experience of exile undergone by Fara, Socé's protagonist, coincides with his entry into the 'école coloniale', which represents an important rupture for the évolué (Ní Loingsigh 2001). His journey to the capital literally exiles him from his native village and is the first in a series of exilic experiences—both literal and metaphorical. Fara's

geographical estrangement from the metropole, which he has been taught to consider as the 'véritable centre historique, politique et culturel' (Ní Loingsigh 2001), causes him to feel exiled from the colonizer's country, despite only having visited it through texts and images. His identification with the French culture through literature, as well as his acquisition of the French language and accession to the written word, result in his simultaneous alienation from his culture of origin. Before he actually leaves Senegal, Fara is already in a liminal position, being doubly exiled from both communities. He has not been literally *banished* by either culture, but his double consciousness has resulted in his experience of exile as an existential condition. He travels to France, his imaginary 'home', in order to heal the rupture.

Fara journeys to France not as an 'exile' but as a 'traveller'. His knowledge of texts such as Dumas's *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, on which his preconceptions of Paris are based, fills him with a sense of adventure and a longing to visit Paris (Socé 1964: 15). Like the travellers of Le Bris's manifesto, he is seduced by the 'sonorités magiques' of the names of towns. Fara's exoticizing of Paris might be seen as an ironic reversal or appropriation of the conventional 'ethnographic posture' inevitably adopted by the Western traveller. It would seem that the link between travel and textuality, reminiscent of Said's evocation of space as an archive, is still important for contemporary French travel writers who praise figures such as Conrad and Stevenson and aim to trace their steps, subconsciously clinging to the conventional sense of travel as a way of holding on to imperialism.[2] Fara's 'voyage à l'envers' challenges colonial journeys to the 'periphery', making the supposed 'centre' into the object of his gaze, thereby beginning to decolonize the concept of travel as we know it.

Unlike that of the Western traveller, however, the culture of Fara's destination constitutes a part of him; his search in Paris will therefore be for integration into the dominant host community, in contrast to the Occidental traveller's voluntary estrangement and his attempts to maintain the opposition between Self and Other. The journey to the metropole by the colonized évolué breaks down the

opposition between familiarity and strangeness, home and abroad, centre and periphery, common to traditional travel texts.

However, upon arrival in Paris, Fara shifts from 'traveller' back to 'exile', a condition he cannot escape and which literal travel will not heal. He 'returns' from exile only to be disillusioned and alienated, as Paris does not correspond to his imagined 'home'. His *actual* journey is a disappointment compared with his previous *interior* journeys to the metropole. His familiarity with certain place names and monuments, rather than making him feel at home, gives rise to a nostalgia for the images and texts that preceded the reality of Paris, that is, the 'mirages de Paris' imagined during his childhood in West Africa. The 'real' Paris does not correspond to the iconic notion of 'Frenchness' that had been imposed upon him: 'où étaient les personnages habituels de ses lectures?' (Socé 1964: 32).

Socé reveals the myth upon which representations of the Other are based and which texts transmit as the absolute truth. Travel, for Fara, becomes a process of defamiliarization. His alienation is heightened by the host community's rejection of him, and Fara's metaphorical internal exile is compounded by his literal exile from his country of origin. Despite his efforts to heal the rupture he experienced in Senegal, he has never left the space of inbetweenness he is forced to occupy.

Before examining the exilic experience of Begag's protagonist it is necessary to distinguish briefly between two types of 'traveller': the exile and the immigrant. It could be said that as Fara's attitude to France evolves, his identity as a traveller shifts from exile to immigrant and back to exile (if we take his desire for acculturation and for settlement in Paris to mean he is an immigrant, and the subsequent rejection of this desire by the host culture to mean he is an exile). In fact, he becomes an 'immigrant in exile' (being *literally* exiled from his country of origin and *metaphorically* exiled by the host community), which is not to say that these types of traveller are one and the same, but that it is possible to be both simultaneously; the immigrant is one type of exile. The case of Begag's protagonist reveals that it is also possible to be an exile without being an immigrant, or a traveller in the traditional sense.

Metaphorical Exile in *Béni ou le paradis privé*

Despite the shift in context from colonial to postcolonial, there appear to be many similarities between the figures of the *évolué* and the child of North African descent. Begag's protagonist, Béni, is also metaphorically exiled from both the dominant and marginalized cultures to which he feels he belongs and, like Fara, is relegated to a space of absence. As I have suggested above, although Begag's novel does not include the experience of *literal* exile, it shares many aspects of the language and imagery of exile. Béni is not an immigrant. He did not experience the rupture that his immigrant parents experienced in coming to France, and is, therefore, not literally *in exile*. However, he is forced into the *position* of the exile by the dominant community who treat him as if he *had* emigrated from Algeria to France. In the case of the child of North African descent, the concept of 'exile' must be considered *metaphorically*—as an externally imposed existential condition.

Despite being born in France, which *he* sees as his home, Béni undergoes a very similar experience of exclusion from the French community to Fara. The hierarchical colonial structure informing relations between France and her colonies in the 1930s is, in a sense, transposed to a new 'contact zone'—that of the postcolonial metropole, where it dominates, albeit intangibly, relations between the city centre and the *banlieue*.

Hargreaves (1995: 36-37) makes a distinction between how the children of North African immigrants are generally perceived (i.e. the 'ethnicized' group to which they belong), and how they perceive themselves (i.e. what their 'ethno-cultural' group is). Béni is perceived as being foreign—as part of the ethnicized North African population, even though he is, and feels, French, belonging only marginally to the ethno-cultural North African community. He is treated as a foreigner by certain teachers, and is congratulated for speaking such correct French! Similarly, in *Mirages de Paris,* Jacqueline (the white French woman with whom Fara has a relationship) is

surprised that Fara can speak the language so well (Socé 1964: 46); she is unaware that being from a French colony, he is a French subject. Despite his desire for integration, Béni, like Fara, is categorized on the basis of empirically observed criteria.

Béni's experience of exclusion is highlighted in the episode where he is turned away from a nightclub, *Le Paradis de la nuit*, as a result of his appearance. This 'paradise' (in the centre of Lyons) is perhaps symbolic of his rejection from the French community which might also be seen as a 'club privé' where prospective members must meet certain criteria. As Béni, borrowing the language of exile, ironically says: 'Je n'ai rien de ce qu'il faut pour être normal' (Begag 1989: 167); he is exiled to 'purgatory' (the peripheral *banlieue*).

Myths of Return: The Exile's Resistance to Homecoming

In a similar way to Fara, Béni also feels marginalized within his family's community due to his French education. He does not identify with his parents' desire to return to Algeria, which, of course, would not constitute a *return* for him. Although Béni feels deep affective ties to the culture, religion and language of this distant place with which he has always been encouraged to identify, he would 'lack the competence and […] the commitment necessary to function effectively within the "home country"' (Hargreaves 1995: 132). As Hargreaves states: 'For young people born and brought up in France, resettlement in the "home country" would not in fact be a "return" at all, but an act of emigration tearing them away from their deepest roots' (Hargreaves 1995: 135).

His father's talk of arranged marriages and of 'returning' to Algeria clash with Béni's love for a French girl, symbolically named France. Béni feels compelled to choose between the two cultures by which he is constantly torn apart. Posing his Koran chain on the table, he thinks: 'Entre France et mon père, j'ai choisi la blonde' (Begag 1989: 110). According to Béni, 'la rupture était consommée' (Begag 1989: 119). However, the novel reveals the impossibility of such a choice, the other culture constantly reasserting its presence in the mind of the protagonist. Béni's experience is one of *double* exile from 'home',

understood on the one hand as his ethnic background and on the other as pragmatic, legal, willed 'Frenchness'. He is forced to dwell between two worlds.

What is the meaning of 'return' for the colonized *évolué*? In Fara's case, as in Béni's, it would seem that 'homecoming is out of the question' (Said 2000: 179). After Jacqueline dies in childbirth, his friend Ambo advises Fara to return to Senegal, claiming that such a journey will heal the 'mal de Paris' from which he is suffering: 'on en guérit toujours par l'éloignement' (Socé 1964: 172). But Fara knows his exilic condition will not be healed by return; he will always be haunted by the memory of Paris, by 'ces traîtres retours du passé' (Socé 1964: 174). On the other hand, in France 'il ne serait qu'un étranger' (Socé 1964: 176). Like Béni, he is torn between two worlds, belonging to neither territory completely—'il éprouvait autant de douleur à quitter Paris qu'à ne pas retourner au Sénégal' (Socé 1964: 72). The last scene shows Fara on a bridge over the Seine symbolizing, as Miller points out, a suspension between Europe and Africa (Miller 1998: 87). His vision of the village of his birth seems typical of the exilic figure's longing for the idealized space he has left behind (Ní Loingsigh 2001). However, the juxtaposed reality of Paris, followed by the superimposed mirage of Jacqueline confirms the impossibility for Fara of choosing one culture over the other, questioning the notion of 'return' to a 'home country'.

The 'inbetween' figures of the *évolué* and the child of immigrant parents, by their very existence, reveal the binary geography of exile to be a myth. What Ní Loingsigh characterizes as their 'double étrangeté' results in a 'contrapuntal awareness' (Said 2000: 186) that makes them resistant to homecoming. Both texts reveal that the idea of 'home' in a Francophone context is not synonymous with a single territory, culture and language (the monolithic 'home' on which travel traditionally depends). As Said states: 'We take home and language for granted; they become nature, and their underlying assumptions recede into dogma and orthodoxy' (Said 2000: 185). These non-metropolitan travel texts challenge such orthodoxy; they transgress boundaries of thought and experience and break out of

the 'barriers which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory (but which) can also become prisons…' (Said 2000: 185). Their renegociation of boundaries and of the space between cultures challenges the notion of 'French culture' as an autonomous national entity and illustrates Hargreaves's view that 'like the culture of every other nationally defined space, it is composed in part of elements which extend and in some cases originate beyond the country's frontiers' (Hargreaves 1995: 92).

Rethinking Culture and Identity in Terms of Travel

Clifford also stresses the importance of 'forces that pass powerfully *through*' these sites of dwelling/traveling (Clifford 1997: 28), suggesting that cultures be rethought 'as sites of dwelling *and* travel…' (31), as practices of 'traveling-in-dwelling' and 'dwelling-in-traveling' (36). As Wolff points out, 'For Clifford, the metaphor of "travel" assists in the project of de-essentializing both researcher and subject of research' (Wolff 1993: 226), or, for our purposes, (former) colonizer and (former) colonized. The texts of Socé and Begag foreground the idea that 'travel' is a way to understand cultures. In this way, they challenge the fixed, essentialist notions of identity on which hierarchical colonial or neo-colonial structures depend and reveal identity to be a fluid, dynamic construct.

Fara's journey might be seen in terms of 'dwelling-in-traveling'. As Fara's identity shifts from traveller to immigrant, his mode of travel shifts from *horizontal* (getting there) to *vertical* (being there). Similarly, the journey of an ethnographer in the colonial period (such as that detailed by Michel Leiris in *L'Afrique fantôme*, published three years before the publication of Socé's text, although the journeys they describe are almost simultaneous) would include stages of immobility or 'vertical' travel in the specific sites in which he had chosen to conduct his research. The metropolitan site of Paris becomes Fara's 'field'. However, this site of dwelling is also a site of travelling.

The Colonial Exposition's objective to stage-manage and fix difference is undermined and disrupted by Fara's presence. The binary opposition between colonizer and colonized, between the French spectator surveying the reconstruction of his nation's Empire and the indigenous subjects on display in the pavilions, is shown to be illusory from the moment Fara enters the exposition. As an *évolué*, he fits into neither role (Miller 1998: 72). In contrast to the fixed, 'rooted' exhibits, Fara is *mobile* and free to circulate around the Exposition. He appropriates the gaze of the French spectator, which, in a sense, he 'deterritorializes', combining it with his knowledge of the other culture to which he belongs; his double consciousness lends him a 'double gaze'.

We witness the strangeness of Fara's vision—seeing the image of the reality he has just left behind, and knowing (as an educated French-speaking individual from Senegal) that this re-creation is based not upon reality but upon texts. He wonders what the woman in the pavilion might be thinking, thus emphasizing her subjectivity; from being the passive object of the colonizer's gaze, she becomes an active 'seeing' subject (Miller 1998: 81-82). As well as giving her the power to see, he endows her with 'movement' by revealing her status as a 'traveller'.

Fara makes us aware of the actual journeys these subjects have undertaken for the creation of the Exposition. They are in transit, having been brought, coercively, from their country of origin, to serve as the passive objects of the French gaze and to reassure the colonizer of his superiority, before being repatriated. The indication of 'mobility', of intersecting histories and multiple points of view exposes the instability of the model on which colonial domination is based, affirming the *presence* of diverse identities within unified constructs (such as they are perceived by the creators of the Exposition). The revelation of objectified exhibits as travellers challenges the Exposition's implicit demonstration of the 'End of Travel'.[3]

It should be noted here that the Exposition, like the Bal Nègre that Fara and Jacqueline visit, is a *tourist* location. Does this automatically make Fara a tourist? Although he is able to visit these sites *in the manner of* a tourist, assuming the gaze of the French spectator, his 'contrapuntal awareness' means he is not and never

will be a tourist; his inevitable role in such contexts is that of guide or interpreter for the tourist Jacqueline. It would seem that exile and tourism cannot be experienced simultaneously; however, these episodes do bring together the supposed polar opposites of travel in an unexpected way.

Socé unites a multiplicity of travellers and powerful travelling forces at the Bal Nègre. He reveals 1930s Paris to be not only the *origin* of journeys but also a place of transit or destination for travellers of various origins and motivations. Diverse subjects of the African Diaspora are brought together by the Bal Nègre where Cuban, Martinican and Senegalese exiles, visitors and entertainers meet European tourists, and various cultural influences are united (Socé 1964: 50-62).

The solidarity between subjects of the African Diaspora seems to point to the affirmative side of exile, a phenomenon normally associated with solitude and alienation. Cultural movements like Negritude would emerge from such diasporic conjunctures. However, despite its colonial context, Socé's text also seems to answer Clifford's specifically *post*colonial question: 'To what extent is one group's core another's periphery?' (Clifford 1997: 25) by dragging a list of usually occluded travellers from their assigned place in the margins to the centre stage. Such a network of 'routes' and transnational influences destabilizes the metropole, threatening the parameters of the nation and exposing the myth of the 'centre' as a stable entity. As Kaplan states: 'The large metropoles that draw waves of new populations are dynamic, shifting, complex locations that *exchange* goods, ideas, and culture with many other locations' (Kaplan 1996: 102).

Given the potentially celebratory tone of such postmodern claims of levelling and hybridity, the apparently pessimistic closure of the novel, where Socé's ambitious projects for *métissage* seem thwarted, comes as a surprise to today's reader.[4] The death of Jacqueline seems to put an end to Fara's hopes for integration. A synthesis of the two cultures only seems possible in the imagination, or in death. He plunges into the mirages before him, presumably drowning in the Seine. Fara's tragic conclusion might be explained by the fact that he

strives towards the postcolonial ideal of the child of immigrant parents, which is still unrealizable in the context of a colonial reality.[5] Is Begag's contemporary novel more optimistic about integration? How is the concept of 'travel' used epistemologically to represent 'French culture' in a *post*colonial context?

A shift from the experience of the *évolué* to that of the child of North African descent might be seen in terms of a shift from 'dwelling-in-traveling' to 'traveling-in-dwelling'. As I explained above, Béni does not *literally* travel from one culture to another but is required to migrate *metaphorically* between cultures on a daily basis. His ability to 'code-switch' permits Béni to assume the interlingual role of *passeur* or interpreter for both cultures. It is as a translator of French for his parents, as well as an interpreter of his culture of origin for the reader, that Béni is a 'traveller'.

'Travelling' not only between two cultures, but moving between various and multiple socio-cultural identities, Béni also journeys '*intra*lingually' (Cronin 2000: 17-19) between groups that are not necessarily defined on the basis of ethnicity. As Hargreaves explains, Béni 'establishes his French credentials without directly identifying himself with a specifically national representation of French culture' (Hargreaves 1995: 106). Since his aim is to integrate without abandoning the Algerian elements of his identity, but while remaining on a par with his French peers, he identifies with sub- or supra-national elements within the French cultural space (Hargreaves 1995: 105). He refers to himself not as French but as 'Lyonnais'. More specifically, he is from 'la Croix-Rousse', in the suburbs of Lyons, which is revealed by his accent. On the other hand, he identifies with American movie stars and uses English expressions, to which he is probably exposed by the mass media. The postcolonial site of dwelling/travelling is shown to be even more complex than the urban centre depicted by Socé, due to increased immigration as well as the increased proliferation of a complex variety of cultural forces traversing the space from the outside as a result of post-war globalization. The need to rethink culture in terms

of travel is all the more necessary in such a transnational and hybrid context.

How does Begag use the metaphor of 'travel' to de-essentialize both colonizer and colonized, Self and Other? In a similar way to Socé, Begag demythifies perceptions of the Other as a monolithic entity by revealing the heterogeneity of the Other. In Socé's text, Fara refutes the common view that all Blacks in France are Senegalese, distinguishing, for Jacqueline's benefit, between Martinicans, Americans, British, Cubans etc. (Socé 1964: 54), thereby breaking up the opposition between Blacks and Whites. He insists elsewhere in the novel that ethnicity is just one of the many aspects of identity, declaring that 'ce qui fait un homme c'est encore plus sa culture et ses idées que la coloration de la peau' (Socé 1964: 148) and adding that 'tout est métis'. This assertion is still pertinent, indeed more so, in the postcolonial context of today's multi-ethnic France.

Significantly, Begag's novel was written in 1989, the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, with this date being an important time for revising definitions of 'Frenchness'. Begag too challenges these definitions by showing the *banlieue* to be composed of diverse and heterogeneous Others, amongst whom there are further hierarchies.[6] Béni's English teacher treats him as a foreigner even though he himself is Italian and is ironically more 'foreign' than Béni who was born in Lyons. Michel Faure, a 'pied-noir' in his class who *was* born in Algeria, is not conspicuously 'foreign' and is therefore not treated as such (Begag 1989: 42-43). Although the Italian and the 'pied-noir' are literally exiled from the country of their birth, they are not internally exiled within the French community, as the metaphorical *condition* of exile is not imposed upon them. Paradoxically, they attempt to heal their literal experience of 'rupture' by imposing the exilic condition upon figures such as Béni. *Metaphorical* exile seems to depend on the place from where the subject—or his parents—has travelled.

Mobilizing Exiles, Decolonizing Travel

Although both Béni and Fara are unable to escape the externally imposed condition of exile, as 'travellers' whose double consciousness enables them to shift between identities, they are equipped to use the host community's stereotypes of them to their advantage, thereby challenging its homogenizing preconceptions of the Other. A counterstereotypical strategy evident in both novels is that of 'double mimesis', where the subject in question mimics a version of him/herself provided by the ethnic stereotype of them (Silverman 1989, cited by Rosello 1998: 41). When Béni and his friends risk getting into trouble with the police for transforming a site of commemoration, 'le haut lieu des fusillés de la Duchère', into a football pitch,[7] he appropriates the Algerian accent he is expected to have, using his foreignness as an excuse (Begag 1989: 62). Similarly, Fara's friend at the Exposition masquerades as an authentic 'native', claiming 'Je suis du pays; j'ai été capturé il y a deux mois seulement!' (Socé 1964: 36), in order to trap spectators into buying his 'authentic' objects.

Despite such moments of resistance, the *évolué* and the child of immigrant parents cannot ultimately escape their fate of being exiled to a space of betweenness. Like Socé, Begag is ambiguous as to whether the cultures between which he is torn apart can be reconciled. The mirage ending his novel, where Béni imagines flying off to 'le Paradis de la lumière' with a shadow we might interpret to be France, parallels the ending of *Mirages de Paris*. According to Socé and Begag, can a synthesis only exist in the imagination? Or might they be saying that integration *is* attainable only so long as essentialist notions of identity are recognized as purely mythical constructions? Both texts positively resist such essentialism through their use of the metaphor of 'travel'.

When Fara's journey to France does not end his exile, *literal* 'travel' is rejected in favour of *epistemological* 'travel'. If subjects are mobile and boundaries arbitrary, their difference cannot be fixed and they cannot be (metaphorically) exiled. In Begag too, metaphors of

mobility operate to destabilize fixed and ethnocentric categories of Self and Other, challenging attempts to ethnicize and exile figures such as Béni.

Begag's text leaves *literal* 'travel' behind. Literature by children of North African descent could be seen as a kind of '*post*-travel literature'. The author of immigrant parents writes *as a result of* the journey that has already been completed by those parents. Travel no longer signifies literal journeying outwards, from a monolithic 'home' and back again. Rather it is about epistemological journeying *within* cultures, as a *result* of literal journeys. The journey, unlike that of the canonical Western traveller, is no longer centred on one individual, whose travel text is seen as a faithful representation of Otherness. Post-travel literature hints at multiple, criss-crossing vectors; it is open-ended and in process—or *in transit*, like the decentred 'travellers' it portrays. This corpus allows us to explore travel literature differently by moving from an agoraphilic obsession with spatially remote other worlds to the 'contact zone' of the Self, signaling a paradigmatic shift from a geographical to an ontological understanding of travel.[8]

The texts of Socé and Begag redefine the concepts of travel and exile, revealing them to be inextricably linked. In contrast to a fixed, exclusive notion of the traveller, they demonstrate the traveller's shifting identity, as well as the interrelationship between, and coexistence of, diverse experiences of travel. Furthermore, they use the concepts of travel and exile to represent culture and identity in non-essentialist ways, illustrating the fact that as well as being a painful experience, the exilic journey can lend itself simultaneously to critical possibilities.

Most importantly, these texts decolonize travel, presenting the reader with the experiences of historical exilic subjects, writing Empire back into the history of twentieth-century travel literature in French, expanding it to implicate a much wider Francophone space than has previously been acknowledged, and thereby forcing a new relationship between former imperial centre and former colonial periphery. With regard to recent attitudes to travel literature in France as exemplified by the *Pour une littérature voyageuse* manifesto, an

inclusion of non-metropolitan travel texts would widen the perspective of a movement that claims to transgress national boundaries. Without such a focus on postcolonial international relations, it cannot write what it purports to write: 'une littérature qui dise le monde'.

Notes

[1]   The epithet 'Beur' has acquired problematic, pejorative overtones in recent years; for a preliminary discussion of these, see Durmelat 1998.

[2]   See hooks 1992: 173. I am thinking particularly of Le Bris's praise of Stevenson; although certain contributors to Le Bris's manifesto (1992) do not *deliberately* hold on to imperialism, their identification with the heroes of earlier travelogues seems at least to reveal their nostalgia for the colonial era.

[3]   By bringing 'elsewhere' to France, the Colonial Exposition erases the distance between 'here' and 'there', implying that there is no more 'there' to be discovered; it is no longer possible to travel in the conventional sense of exploring and conquering 'unknown' spaces.

[4]   I have interpreted Kaplan's ambivalent comment as celebratory; however, considering the attention she pays to postcolonial journeys, it is possible that she views such levelling pessimistically, given the rise of new hierarchies in the metropole.

[5]   However, Socé sows an ambiguous seed of hope for *métissage*: it is implied that Fara and Jacqueline's child survives his parents' deaths.

[6]   Maspero 1990 also reveals the *banlieue* to be composed of diverse and heterogeneous 'Others'.

[7]   This transformation of a site of commemoration into a football pitch, despite the sign warning against this (Begag 1989: 59), might be interpreted as an implicit mockery of official efforts to defend and preserve Republican ideology.

[8]   It is Jean-Didier Urbain who comments on the 'tyrannie agoraphile' of traditional travel literature (Urbain 2000: 8).

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Notes on Contributors

Charles Forsdick is James Barrow Professor of French at the University of Liverpool. He is author of *Victor Segalen and the Aesthetics of Diversity: Journeys between Cultures* (OUP, 2000).

Siobhán Shilton is a graduate of the University of St. Andrews. She is currently a postgraduate researcher at the University of Liverpool on an AHRB-funded project exploring 'New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French'.

Andy Stafford is Lecturer in French at Lancaster University. He is author of *Roland Barthes, Phenomenon and Myth* (EUP, 1998).